Myths of Enki, The Crafty God

Samuel Noah Kramer
John Maier

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For Milly and Helen

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Introduction

George Steiner entitled his book on the theory of translation, aptly enough, *After Babel.* In that work Steiner insisted that "inside or between languages, human communication equals translation." *Myths of Enki, The Crafty God* is a book of translations, and it does not escape, any more than other books of translations, the consequences of Babel. On the one hand, we cannot understand exactly and exhaustively the messages sent by the persons closest to us—those with whom we share a common language and a common culture. How, then, can we hope to understand complex literary works written three, and in some cases four, thousand years ago—in the case especially of Sumerian, which has no relatives among the thousands of languages known to us today?

On the other hand, we can take some consolation that translation between languages—the ordinary sense of the term translation—was a problem faced early in the history of writing. In this book are literary works in three ancient languages, Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite. From the third millennium B.C. onward, the scribal schools of Mesopotamia worked through the problems of translation. The scribes prepared bilingual and even trilingual dictionaries. They struggled to equate forms in languages that were not even members of the same language families. They even noted discrepancies between the pronunciation of a word and its spelling.

The Sumerians of the third millennium B.C. had their own version of the Babel story, one called "The *Nam-shub* of Enki" (presented here in chapter 7). The story is itself an incantation (a *nam-shub*). It tells of a Golden Age when humans had no fear of snakes, lions, or wild dogs, when there was but one human language. What disturbed this harmony was "the contender," the god named Enki. He changed "the speech in their mouths, he having set up contention in it." This is a rather unexpected move, for Enki was the one god among the hundreds worshiped by the Sumerians who, time and again, was praised as the benefactor of humankind.

Myths of Enki, The Crafty God is a book of translations from the earliest literature of the world. Ancient Sumer, located in southern Mesopotamia, the area that is now southern Iraq, recognized Enki as one of four gods and goddesses who

made up the highest level of the pantheon. For reasons that will become clear, the most important myths of Sumer concentrated on the enigmatic Enki. Enki was a creator god; with the mother goddesses he formed much of the universe known to the Sumerians, including a number of strange creatures whose origins are the subject of some of the myths. He was thought to control the "essences" and "fates" that kept the cosmos regulated.

Enki was closely identified with his major cult center, Eridu, near the marshes of southern Iraq and the Arabian Gulf. Because the "waters of life" were essential to the preservation of life, Enki as the god of underground waters and of the watery "abyss" was a fertility figure as well, and the myths include, for example, his filling the great rivers with his life-giving semen and traveling the canals to bless the people.

Enki's contests with other gods—and especially with the goddesses—are the subject of many of the stories. Enki's fights almost never involved him as a warrior, though. The contests are nearly always tests of cunning and magic.

The portrait of Enki that emerges from the extant Sumerian texts is rather enigmatic, paradoxical, and contradictory. In the hymns and in the hymnal passages scattered throughout the myths, for example, Enki is exalted and glorified as the all-wise, all-knowing leader of the gods, a wise counselor, a valuable friend, and generous benefactor of humankind, for whom he provides everything that is vital for well-being and prosperity. Enki is an expert master of the arts and crafts. Eloquent of speech, he pronounces the name of everything created. He is the king of the Abzu, the decreer of fates; the controller and distributor of the precious *me* (irrevocable, authoritative, universal laws—see chapter 3, below); the joy and terror of the seas and rivers; the lord of *the* land and father of all the lands; the older brother of the gods. Foremost in all things, he is the one whose command is unquestioned.

In the myths, on the other hand, these impressive powers, renowned qualities, and masterful accomplishments are by no means uniformly apparent. The mythographers, in fact, often paint Enki as a rather foolish fellow, sex-driven, self-indulgent, torpid, and heedless of the suffering of his fellow gods, prone to prepare carousing banquets without realizing the dangers and risks to which he exposes himself. The appointed guardian of the indispensable, priceless *me,* he has trouble holding on to them, and according to one mythographer actually lost them to Inanna and her city Erech. Even his role as human benefactor is put in doubt to some extent by his depriving humankind of the *me* of life; by his terrifying humans with his awesome, venomous word; by his putting an end to universal human speech and thus afflicting humankind with the babel of tongues—all because he was jealous of his older brother Enlil.

Enki, sad to say, suffered from an inferiority complex. For although the theologians, priests, and poets of his city Eridu attributed to him vast powers and prerogatives, they were unable to secure for him the position in the pantheon to which he aspired. For a long time he was fourth in the divine hierarchy, being preceded by An, Enlil, and Ninḫursag. It was only after centuries had passed that finally about 2100 B.C., he made it to third place by displacing Ninḫursag from her position—a costly victory for which he paid dearly. According to the mythographers, she kept on challenging his powers and achievements, and in one instance even brought him to the point of death.

Enki also suffered from an identity crisis. His very name, the complex *en-ki,* "Lord of the Earth," does not correspond to his position as king of the Abzu, the watery deep that was part of the Kur, the cosmic entity below the earth, the home of all kinds of evil demons and terrifying monsters. In fact, it is not unlikely that at an earlier period he was called En-kur, "Lord Kur," a name he acquired by conquering the monster-infested Kur. Some time about 2500 B.C., Akkadians introduced the name Ea for Enki. Ea is probably a Semitic word; its meaning and origin are unknown. The excavations at Eridu conducted by the Iraqi Directorate of Antiquities during the Second World War laid bare the oldest known temple in Sumer, a small room about four meters square that contained two altars. It is not unreasonable to assume that the deity worshiped there was Enki's earliest ancestor, who may have had some pre-Sumerian name. But no matter what his original name, Enki/Ea was, next to Inanna/Ishtar, the most human and most beloved of the Sumerian deities. The poets and bards of Sumer seemed to be happy singing of his glories and his follies.

Two items consistently identify the Enki of ancient texts and cylinder seal impressions: water and wisdom. In spite of the importance of both elements in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—not to mention the many religious traditions outside the ones that developed in the Middle East—historians of religion have not yet made much of Enki, either as the god whose essence is water or as a god with a peculiar kind of "wisdom" to impart.

Consider what one of the foremost historians of religion, Mircea Eliade, claims for the persistence of water symbolism in different cultures and different historical periods:

> Principle of what is formless and potential, basis of every cosmic manifestation, container of all seeds, water symbolizes the primal substance from which all forms come and to which they will return either by their own regression or in a cataclysm. It existed at the beginning and returns at the end of every cosmic or historic cycle; it will always exist, though never alone, for water is always germinative, containing the potentiality of all forms in their unbroken unity.[1]

Eliade finds that "in cosmogony, in myth, ritual and iconography, water fills the same function in whatever type of cultural pattern we find it: it *precedes* all forms and *upholds* all creation":

> Every contact with water implies regeneration: first, because dissolution is succeeded by a "new birth," and then because immersion fertilizes, increases the potential of life and of creation. In initiation rituals, water confers a "new birth," in magic rituals it heals, and in funeral rites it assures rebirth after death. Because it incorporates in itself all potentiality, water becomes a symbol of life ("living water"). Rich in seeds, it fertilizes earth, animals, and women. It contains in itself all possibilities, it is supremely fluid, it sustains the development of all things, and is therefore either compared to or even directly assimilated with the moon [ibid., p. 189].

Symbol of life, important in cosmogony, myth, ritual, and iconography, water is one of the primal elements Eliade surveys through world religions. Other elements he considers are "The Sky and Sky Gods," "The Sun and Sun-Worship," "The Moon and its Mystique," "Earth, Woman, and Fertility." He devotes several

chapters to vegetation rites and fertility cults, to sacred stones, sacred places, and sacred time. In the entire work Enki is mentioned in passing only three times—and not once in the chapter on water symbolism.

Two reasons why Enki has been avoided suggest themselves. Only a few, relatively late though very important literary texts, like the so-called Babylonian Creation Epic or *Enuma Elish* and *Gilgamesh,* have become known well outside the circle of ancient Near Eastern specialists. In works like *Enuma Elish* and *Gilgamesh,* Enki (called by his name in Semitic Akkadian, Ea) has well-defined but rather brief roles to play. The Sumerian Enki myths, in which virtually every aspect of the water symbolism Eliade details can be found, are still little known to the nonspecialist reader.

A second reason is that Enki is not a god easy to categorize. Other gods in the Mesopotamian pantheon seem easier to place. An, the sky-father, is like other *dei otiosi* who withdraw to the sky, become remote and inactive (ibid., pp. 64–66). The powerful, aggressive Enlil might also fall into a familiar category of a storm and fertility figure. The earliest group of four gods at the top of the hierarchy of gods included a mother goddess, known by many names, Ninḫursag, Ninmaḫ, and the like. And the aggressive younger goddess, Inanna (known in Akkadian as Ishtar), who pushed her way into the inner circle, is a fertility figure. The part she takes in the sacred marriage rites is a phenomenon seen elsewhere in world religion. She is the goddess of love, beauty, and fertility. Even the paradox of her deep association with war and destruction is not unknown elsewhere in the ancient world.

The fourth god in the quartet of high gods is Enki. As Eliade's comment above makes clear, he tends to think the water deity is usually feminine, and usually associated with the moon. Enki certainly has no obvious connection with the moon. As we will see in the Sumerian Enki myths, Enki is certainly associated with the creative principle, often as the male element paired with the Great Mother. The stories, though, as often as not, highlight the conflict between the male and female elements in the process of creation.

It may be, ironically, that Enki is the one god in the history of religion that best embodies the complex treated by Eliade in "Water and Water Symbolism."

The second characteristic of Enki is wisdom. "Wisdom" is a tricky concept to grasp in any age. The term today is charged with meanings derived from the Bible. Even in the Bible, though, "wisdom" ranged from the very mundane to the most profound intellectual and spiritual gnosis. The biblical Proverbs collects sayings of the sages like:

> Do not dine with a niggardly man [23:6].
>
> Do not waste words on a fool [23:9].
>
> Do not be chary of correcting a child,
> a stroke of the cane is not likely to kill him.
> A stroke of the cane
> and you save him from Sheol [23:13–14].[2]

Such practical advice, drawing general principles from ordinary experiences of human beings, is not to be found in the Enki texts in this book, although Enki is praised as the lord of wisdom. And a very different kind of "wisdom," also found in the biblical tradition, may or may not be evident in the Enki texts. In the Hellenistic Book of Wisdom, for example, Solomon praises God for giving him the "spirit of Wisdom":

> It was he who gave me true knowledge of all that is, who taught me the structure of the world and the properties of the elements, the beginning, end and middle of the times, the alternation of the solstices and the succession of the seasons, the revolution of the year and the position of the stars, the natures of animals and the instincts of wild beasts, the powers of spirits and the mental processes of men, the varieties of plants and the medical properties of roots. All that is hidden, all that is plain, I have come to know, instructed by Wisdom who designed them all [7:17–21].

This is followed by a list of attributes far removed from the ordinary, everyday wisdom of Proverbs:

> For within her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, active, incisive, unsullied, lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, sharp, irresistible, beneficent, loving to man, steadfast, dependable, unperturbed, almighty, all-surveying, penetrating all intelligent, pure, and most subtle spirits; for Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion, she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things. [Wisdom 7:22–24].

Enki is regularly given the epithet "lord of wisdom." Because the concept of wisdom was already complex very early in the ancient world and had dimensions other than the extremes found in the biblical tradition (e.g., in magic and rituals, in knowledge of entering and leaving the underworld), we have chosen to avoid "wisdom" when the Enki stories seem to demand shrewdness or cunning, the arts of the Trickster. Enki astonishes even the other gods with shocking solutions to apparently impossible problems. The English term "cunning" retains only a hint of its very early meaning, "learning" and "erudition," but it does keep something of the "knowledge of how to do something," the art, craft, and science especially of occult matters.

Perhaps "crafty" is the better term to use for the problem-solving Enki. Very little remains of its early meaning, "strong, powerful, mighty" (*OED sub* cunning and crafty), which is certainly evident in Enki. But the more familiar sense, that craft means "showing skill or cleverness," artful and wily, captures something of the "wisdom" of Enki. Enki is, in addition to the lord of magic and the great problem-solver of the gods, the god of craftsmen, including what we would now call artists and writers.

In particular, Enki is the father who imparts his knowledge to his son.

Enki was, perhaps more than any other ancient deity, essentially identified with the spoken and the written word. The importance of the word for an understanding of Enki has two implications for the translations in this book. First, we need to get the words right. All translations, of course, strive for that. In the case of Enki, the reader of Enki's words and the words used to describe the god must be wary, prepared for ironic turns, double talk, and wit even in the most sacred of

contexts. We have attempted to make the translations as clean and chaste as we could make them, faithful, we hope, to the elusive original text, but readable.

The apparatus that surrounds and sometimes submerges a scholarly text has been kept to a minimum and kept largely out of sight in the notes. We hope that the general reader for whom this volume is intended will become interested enough in the translations and brief commentaries to want to enter more deeply in the works Assyriologists are making available today.

The second implication of the Enkian word for our efforts in this volume is that we approach the texts as poetry. This is a volume of stories, hymns, chants, and parts of larger works, usually narratives. Except for a few cases in Akkadian and Hittite, the texts appear to the reader as lines of verse. Exactly what constitutes the regularity of Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite verse (if it exists at all in Hittite) is difficult to determine; but some principle of regularity seems to hold. They are "poetic" texts in that sense. But our concern for the poetry of these texts is somewhat different from versification. A well-made poem has a complex unity of part to whole. The individual word in the single line is part of a whole; the single line is part of larger wholes, verse paragraphs and the like; verse paragraphs make up coherent episodes and larger wholes. The point, certainly, is obvious enough, but tricky to handle in practice: the meaning of a word, a line, a paragraph must be understood in terms of the larger context, the discourse of which the smaller unit is a part.

With writings so ancient and alien as these, securing the small unit is difficult enough. The poems presented here were written on clay tablets in a difficult and complex writing system, known today as cuneiform (from the wedge-shaped characters impressed with a stylus into wet clay surfaces). The tablets were lost for thousands of years, at least since the early Christian era. In many cases, texts have broken apart, their signs obscured, and whole passages have been lost. Putting together a coherent whole involves more than just meditating on the wholeness of a text. It involves years of exacting labor, piecing together, say, a fragment that may have found its way to a museum in Istanbul with a duplicate (also fragmented) now at the University Museum in Philadelphia. Much is still unknown. Pieces of the puzzle can sometimes be reconstructed with some measure of certainty. Often the gaps are simply too great. The "hermeneutical circle" by which we understand the whole from the parts and understand the parts from the whole is often defeated simply because large parts are missing. Another consequence of building Babel.

The objectives of the book, then, are rather simple and straightforward. We want to let the texts speak for themselves in clear, direct language. We attempt to draw a portrait of a many-sided ancient god as he appears in literary works (myths, chants, hymns, letters, and magical texts). We let the texts illustrate certain poetic practices in a long scribal tradition. And we, finally, speculate on certain poetic, magical, and numinous qualities that we think are found in the poems.

Enki and the Mythographers

The past fifty years have witnessed a contribution to the humanities of major significance and consequence: the gradual, piecemeal, step-by-step recovery and res-

toration, translation and interpretation, of long buried and forgotten Sumerian literary works, by an international group of Assyriologists and Sumerologists. Most of these works were composed about 2000 B.C. and some a good deal earlier, although the great majority of them are copies and redactions inscribed on tablets that date no earlier than the first half of the second millennium B.C. Altogether there are about six thousand "literary" tablets and fragments now recognized and identified in museums and tablet collections the world over, and the contents of most of them are now available to cuneiformists in one form or another: copies, photographs, casts, transliterations. Many of these tablets and fragments are joins and duplicates whose texts have now been pieced together and reconstructed even if the originals are preserved in museums as far apart as Philadelphia and Istanbul, or London and Baghdad. As a result we now have the texts, wholly or in part, of some twenty myths; nine epic tales; over two hundred hymnal compositions of diverse genre, length, and content; a score of chants and dirges revolving about a Sacred Marriage rite; a score of City Laments and *mater dolorosa* types of liturgies; quite a number of dialogues, disputations, and essays; and more than a dozen collections of proverbs, precepts, maxims, riddles, and fables. Not a few of these ancient Sumerian compositions are now available to the humanist and nonspecialists in reasonably reliable translations and interpretations.

Only a century ago virtually nothing was known about Sumerian literature. The first inkling of its existence reached the modern scholarly world in 1875, when Henry Rawlinson, the "father of Assyriology," edited a volume of cuneiform texts in the British Museum, copied by another Englishman, George Smith, that included a number of bilinguals—that is, texts written in the Sumerian language with a line-by-line translation into the Semitic tongue first dubbed Assyrian, then Babylonian, and now known as Akkadian. Among these bilinguals that were excavated in the Ashurbanipal Library at Nineveh and could be dated to the seventh century B.C., there were several fragmentary poems relating to the cult of the goddess Inanna (the Semitic Ishtar), and her doomed husband and lover Dumuzi (the biblical Tammuz). More importantly, they also included a text that could be recognized as a Sumero-Akkadian literary catalogue consisting of an itemized list of quite a number of then unknown literary works, which could however be assumed to be lying buried in the ruins of Sumer.

Over the next six decades British, French, German, and American scholars published their copies of hundreds of tablets and fragments from the British Museum, the Louvre, the Berlin state museums, the Istanbul Museum of the Ancient Orient, and the Ashmolean Museum. But primarily because of the fragmentary state of most of the pieces, the reconstruction, translation, and interpretation of the compositions inscribed on them could not keep pace and lagged far behind. To be sure, there were innumerable duplicates among the texts inscribed on these tablets and fragments, and the gaps and lacunae in one of the compositions could frequently be pieced together from duplicating pieces. But to take full advantage of these crucial duplications and restorations, it is essential to have at hand as much of the source material as possible, much more than was available at the time. To help remedy this situation, Samuel Noah Kramer spent much of his scholarly career shuttling from museum to museum, identifying, cataloguing, copying, or helping the curators of the various museums to copy, the literary tablets and frag-

ments that had been lying in the museum drawers unstudied and unutilized. An account of these activities is available in Kramer's autobiography, *In the World of Sumer* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986).

Starting with the 1960s, younger scholars have continued this effort—so much so that in the near future Miguel Civil, Kramer's former assistant and associate in the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, will have ready for publication a comprehensive catalogue of almost all known Sumerian literary works together with a list of the tablets and fragments, published and unpublished, that belong to each—a crowning achievement of cumulative, cooperative Sumerological scholarship over the decades.

The restoration and reconstruction of the texts are, however, only the first steps in the process of making their contents available to the world at large. More difficult are their translation and interpretation, which are beset with myriad lexicographical and grammatical problems as well as pervasive contextual uncertainties, dilemmas, and enigmas. Even so, there has been considerable progress and accomplishment, and not a few Sumerian literary works can now be read in reasonably reliable translations. The early pioneering efforts came from the pen of the late great Adam Falkenstein, the penetrating studies of Thorkild Jacobsen and J. J. Van Dijk, as well as from Kramer's own attempts to get at the meaning of the texts he was identifying and copying. In the past twenty-five years a younger generation of cuneiformists—mostly students whom Falkenstein in Göttingen and Kramer in Philadelphia nurtured and fostered over the years—have devoted themselves to this thorny task, and have even begun to raise a new generation to follow in their footsteps. All in all, therefore, it is not unlikely that before the end of this century quite a number of new Sumerian literary works will see the light of day, as also improved and revised versions of older, outdated translations. Solid, concrete evidence of this promising humanistic achievement was the appearance in 1984 of the first volume of the *Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary,* edited by Kramer's successor in the University Museum, Åke Sjöberg, with the participation and cooperation of numerous cuneiformists, young and old.

Until 1944, the year when the first edition of Kramer's *Sumerian Mythology* was published as a memoir of the American Philosophical Society, the mythological tales inscribed on the hundreds of tablets and fragments lying about unidentified, uncatalogued, and unstudied in museum drawers were largely unknown, and Sumerian mythology were virtually terra incognita for the cuneiformist, let alone the humanist and lay reader. In the *Encylopedia of Religion and Ethics,* for example, edited by James Hastings and published in thirteen volumes between the years 1908 and 1927, there is a very long article entitled "Cosmogony and Cosmology" (IV, 125–79). It sketches the creation myths of virtually all the peoples of the world, ancient and modern, primitive and civilized, but not a word about the Sumerians. The collection entitled *Mythology of All the Races,* edited by L. H. Gray and J. A. MacCulloch and published in thirteen volumes between the years 1916 and 1932, includes one volume on Semitic mythology by Stephen Langdon. Langdon does attempt to sketch some of the Sumerian mythological concepts, but because of the very limited source material available at the time, as well as the serious linguistic problems that Langdon failed to treat adequately, its conclusions are quite untrustworthy and misleading.

The preparation and publication of *Sumerian Mythology* in 1944 followed a decade of Kramer's intensive study of the unpublished Sumerian literary tablets and fragments in the Museum of the Ancient Orient in Istanbul and in the University Museum in Philadelphia, many of which were first identified and copied by him. In the four decades that have elapsed since its first printing, the accumulation of new texts and deeper insights into the old, resulting from numerous contributions by various scholars, led him to review and revise most of the extant myths, and his new up-to-date translations will be published jointly with his French colleague Jean Bottéro in a volume entitled *La mythologie accadienne.* He has thus had the opportunity to sift, probe, and analyze their contents and reflect and ponder on their nature and character; on the motives and goals that inspired their composition; on the method and procedures utilized by their authors in originating, evolving, and developing their plot scenarios. Some of the insights, conclusions, and surmises resulting from this concentrated overview of Sumerian mythology will help to clarify and illuminate the more enigmatic and abstruse passages in the five major Enki myths published in this volume.

The extant Sumerian myths are fictitious tales composed by imaginative, inventive poets and bards educated in the Sumerian academy of learning, the *Edubba,* who after graduation served in the personnel attached to the temple, palace, or the *Edubba* itself. The point of departure, the motivating spark for each of these poetic tales, was the need to explain the origin of some theological credo such as the puzzling fate of certain death-doomed deities; the birth and lot of a number of rather minor deities; the superiority of one deity over another; the investiture of a deity with powers relating to vital human needs; the divine role in the rise or restoration of certain cities to power and glory; the divine role in important political events; the divine role in the origin of certain artifacts, plants, and commemorative chants; and the divine role in one man's apotheosis to godlike immortality; the divine role in events related to seasonal stagnation and revival of nature, and in the death of the king and his reincarnation. In the course of explaining and illuminating these theological credos, the poet introduces themes, motifs, ideas, incidents, and episodes, some of which may have been of his own invention and creation, but most of which were generally current in the theological and literary circles of his day, and not a few of which were no doubt survivals from hoary tradition, both written and oral.

The plot scenarios of the Sumerian mythographers consist primarily in episodes and incidents, actions and motivations, transplanted from the human scene to the world of the gods. The poets who composed these factitious and fictitious divine tales were not profound thinkers or metaphysical philosophers. By and large they accepted the current theological credos and dogmas without speculating seriously and meaningfully about their origin and validity. Nor were they visionaries imbued with pristine archetypal, cosmic insights. The fact that they lived some four to five thousand years ago hardly brings them closer to the primitive archetypal Homo sapiens than is the modern writer of fiction. The extant Sumerian myths, moreover, have little if any connection with temple rituals—by no means can they be characterized as the "rite spoken." Nor will they reveal any cooking recipe, tasty or otherwise, to modern structuralists, no matter how many layers they peel from their sense and meaning. In short, to judge from their contents, the Sumerian

The Hittite stories date from a rather brief period, the Sumerian texts that we have been considering present a longer and more complex historical development. Most of the texts are from the Neo-Sumerian Period (2200–1900 B.C.) and the Old Babylonian Period (1900–1600 B.C.), although both mythological texts and incantations may have their origins in the Old Sumerian Period (2500–2200). The Neo-Sumerian Period preserved Old Sumerian creations and "modernized" others. The Old Babylonian Period, thought by many specialists to be remarkably innovative in Akkadian literature, was not a creative period as far as Sumerian was concerned. Neo-Sumerian literature was gathered into something like a canon in Middle Babylonian times (1600–1300). By that time a standard curriculum was taught in the scribal schools of not only Mesopotamia but also Hattuša, Alalakh, Ugarit, and even Palestine (Megiddo) and Egypt (Amarna). The Cassite (or Kassite) scribes of the Middle Babylonian Period provided Akkadian interlinear translations of Sumerian works and otherwise set the format of works in a more or less systematic way. Sumerian is thought to have disappeared as a living, spoken language by the end of the Ur III Period (ca. 2100–2000 B.C.). The "post-Sumerian" Middle Babylonian and later periods (1600 B.C.–A.D. 100), when Sumerian was no longer spoken, did produce Sumerian compositions, but the language used often violated classical Sumerian and reflected Akkadian speech.[7]

Akkadian literature developed rapidly in the period of Sumerian decline as a living speech. When, during the Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian periods, the Sumerian canon was forming, wonderful new works like *Altra-ḫasīs* (the story of the flood) and a powerful version of *Gilgamesh* were written. Both have Sumerian forerunners, but the Old Babylonian versions are quite different from the Sumerian versions that have survived. The Middle Babylonian period did not show the originality of the Old Babylonian period. It was more a time of scholarly editing of older works, of converting them, of recasting and rewriting the tradition than of producing new literary works. W. G. Lambert concludes about the "second and last great constructive period in the history of Babylonian literature":

> The Cassite scholars of the Middle Babylonian period tended to live in the past, and lacked the inspiration of the earlier works. Even in language this is apparent. Middle Babylonian, the contemporary vernacular, is a development on Old Babylonian, but it was not generally used for literature. A special literary dialect, Standard Babylonian, was created during the Cassite period, which, so far as our knowledge goes, was never a spoken dialect. It appears to be the result of taking Middle Babylonian as a basis and attempting to restore certain Old Babylonian forms. . . . As in language, so in style. Self-consciousness results in a striving for stylistic effect, and some Cassite-period compositions are overloaded with rare words. The authors betray their very academic background and training.[8]

The Assyrians, like their rivals in the south, the Babylonians, spoke their own dialect of the East Semitic language, Akkadian. But Babylonian Akkadian dominated the literary scene. The Assyrians produced fewer original literary works than did the Babylonians. Still, Assyrian versions of works that exist in both dialects can be quite different from their Babylonian counterparts. In addition to different versions, Assyrians and Babylonians of later (first millennium) periods produced new

works.[9] Thanks to the collection of tablets by the Assyrian King Assurbanipal (ca. 650), a great many works that would otherwise have been lost are available in Neo-Assyrian texts. Although the period (1000–650) did not produce many original works, the great work known as *Enuma Elish* is thought to have been created near the beginning of the period. In new or very old literature, though, Enki/Ea is prominent throughout the lengthy tradition of Akkadian literature.

Five Enki Myths

Let us now analyze the five major Enki myths step by step in order to follow the author as he evolved and developed his imaginative, fictitious tale to explain some extraordinary event involving Enki, and the divine and human world in which he played a dominant role.

Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth

The spark that kindled the author's desire for composing the myth "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" (chapter 1, below) was his conviction that he could explain the reason for the somewhat surprising theological tenet that the god who was in charge of Dilmun, a great commercial center in his day, was a rather minor deity by the name of Enshag. It must have been Enshag's father, the all-wise Enki, the god responsible for Dilmun's prosperity, brilliance, and purity, who made him lord of Dilmun. Just how, and under what circumstances Enshag's appointment by Enki came about is the central theme of this rather complicated tale, which includes some motifs, incidents, and episodes that are as yet enigmatic and obscure.

Let us start with the theological credos and tenets that, as evidenced by various extant literary sources, were current and at the disposal of the author for constructing the plot of the tale. These include first the belief that Enshag, the god in charge of Dilmun, was the son of Enki and Ninḫursag. A priori, therefore, it was not unlikely that these two deities play a major role in their son's appointment to this rather important position. Secondly, it was the current belief that Enki and Ninḫursag were the parents of seven more deities: Abu, Nintula, Ninsutu, Ninkasi, Nazi, Azimua, and Ninti. These names, when analyzed closely, revealed to our author a rather curious and remarkable coincidence: each contained a one-syllable word designating an organ of the body—the *su* of Ninsutu, for example, means "tooth," the *ka* of Ninkasi means "mouth," the *zi* of Nazi means "throat," and the *ti* of Ninti means "rib." Inasmuch as these deities were all children of Enki and Ninḫursag, it was not unreasonable to conclude that the organs that these names included belonged to one or the other of their parents. Thirdly, it was well known to our author that, theologically speaking, Enki and Ninḫursag were bitter rivals. Each, for example, claimed third place—that is, the spot following An and Enlil, in the hierarchy of the pantheon. It would not be at all surprising, therefore, if this struggle led to some serious injury of one or the other. Given these theological credos relating to the genealogy of the gods, and the anthropomorphic views concerning their behavior, the author's train of thought when constructing the plot-scenario of the second half of the myth, the part beginning with Enki's self-indulgent con-

suming of the eight plants generated by Ninḫursag, can be followed with a fair degree of certainty.

It is his rationale for Enki's sexual exploits depicted in the first half of the myth that is enigmatic and obscure. None of the extant Sumerian literary works help to clarify and illuminate the reasons for the author's factitious description of the birth of the three goddesses Ninmu, Ninkurra, and Uttu. Very little is known about these deities, and what is known seems quite irrelevant to their role in the plot of the myth. It is not unreasonable to assume, however, that our mythographer knew what he was doing, and that he had his reasons for introducing these particular deities into his plot structure, but as of today they are totally out of our ken. No scholar has yet come up with an explanation that is reasonable and credible, although several have tried.

The text of "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" is based primarily on a fairly well preserved tablet excavated at Nippur and now in the University Museum; it was copied and published by Stephen Langdon under the title *The Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of Man* in *PBS* 10, part 1 (1915). Since then a fragment of unknown provenience has been published by Henri de Genouillac in *TRS* 62, but the nature of its contents was first recognized by Edward Chiera (see *JAOS* 54, 417); a careful, helpful collation of the text of the fragments was made available to Kramer by Jean-Marie Durand of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. A new edition of the text consisting of a transliteration, translation, and commentary was published by Kramer in 1945 in *BASOR* No. 1; a translation of the text was published later by him in *ANET*, pp. 37–41. In 1963 Gadd and Kramer published a duplicating fragment of the myth excavated by Leonard Woolley at Ur that helped fill in several gaps in the text and introduced a number of significant variants (see *UET* VI, pt. 1, no. 1, and the relevant comment in the introduction to that volume). P. Attinger has now reedited the text, "Enki et Ninḫursaga," in *ZA* 74. The translation and interpretation of the myth presented in this volume therefore differs to some extent from Kramer's earlier ones.

Enki and Ninmaḫ: The Creation of Humankind

The bitter rivalry between Enki and the goddess known by the the names Ninmaḫ or Ninḫursag is also the dominating motif in the myth "Enki and Ninmaḫ: The Creation of Humankind" (chapter 2, below). Moreover, this myth, too, may be divided into two sections, the second of which relates to the fashioning of the badly crippled *umul* (a weak or handicapped person; see chapter 2, n. 2) and the first to the creation of the model—humankind. In both sections it is quite possible to follow the author's thinking and reasoning as he invented the scenes and episodes that constitute the plot of the tale.

In the second section, for example, the author's prime purpose is to provide an answer to a twofold problem that must have been on the minds of many a Sumerian: the origin and existence of a whole group of crippled humans who, despite their handicap, had found useful employment in society. Convinced that this must have involved in some way the rivalry between Enki and Ninmaḫ, the two deities theologically endowed with the powers essential for the creation of humans, he envisaged the following scenario in his imagination. To celebrate the creation of

the perfect human being, the model human prototype, Enki arranged a sumptuous feast for the great gods, in the course of which he was acclaimed and exalted as the god of wide understanding and great deeds. At this, the resentful Ninmaḫ, flushed with drink and eager to humble Enki and discredit his handiwork, capriciously and arbitrarily created six crippled humans. But though he, too, was flushed with drink, Enki rose to the challenge and found useful and suitable work for all of them despite their handicap. But then, angered by Ninmaḫ's persistent and belligerent rivalry, he proceeded to create a fatally defective *umul,* and demanded that she find useful employment for him just as he had done for the six damaged humans she had fashioned. Ninmaḫ was unable to do so, and in some obscure way, this impotent *umul* helped to bring about the humiliation of the goddess, who finally had to admit Enki's superiority.

The creation of the perfect human prototype, the event that motivated the unfortunate and fateful banquet scene, is the theme of the first section of the myth. Availing himself of the relevant current theological tenets, and transplanting human actions and emotions to the divine plane, our mythographer evolved the following scenario. In "those days," after heaven had been separated from the earth and the gods had been formed by Enki and the mother goddess Nammu, the gods complain of the work they are forced to perform, digging canals and constructing buildings. Nammu takes their complaint to the resting Enki. It is Enki, then, who invents a plan to relieve the gods of their hard work by fashioning a new creature, humankind, to do the work. Since the process involves Ninmaḫ, who will establish the destiny of this new creature, the story very quickly involves the interaction of god and goddess—and leads to the contest between Enki and Ninmaḫ that is at the heart of the myth.

A sketch of the contents of this myth, based on two tablets, one in the University Museum and the other in the Louvre, appeared in *Sumerian Mythology* (pp. 68–72). In 1969 Carlos Benito published a valuable edition of the composition in his dissertation in the University Museum (pp. 20–76), which utilized four additional tablets and fragments, three of which are bilinguals. The translation and interpretation here presented are based on Benito's edition, but differ significantly from it in a number of instances.

Enki and Inanna: The Organization of the Earth and Its Cultural Processes

Unlike Ninḫursag-Ninmaḫ, the goddess Inanna was no rival of Enki in "Enki and Inanna: The Organization of the Earth and Its Cultural Processes" (chapter 3, below), as is evident from the two myths in which Enki and Inanna are the principal characters. Although she troubled him from time to time with her complaints and demands, he was never seriously vexed with her and in fact finally yielded and let her have her way. In the first of these tales, "Enki and Inanna: The Organization of the Earth and Its Cultural Processes," it was the author's primary intent to confirm and validate the powers and prerogatives that were attributed to Inanna by the theologians and mythographers of his day. To achieve his purpose, he introduced a dramatic scene toward the very end of the tale, in which an embittered Inanna is depicted as complaining angrily to Enki and claiming that she had been

discriminated against and neglected by him when he was organizing the earth. He had assigned powers, duties, and functions to any number of deities, but she had received no comparable rights and prerogatives. Enki, according to the author, not only did not take offense at her insolent accusations, but actually went out of his way to soothe and placate her and to shower her with blessings and benedictions.

To properly motivate this concluding scene, the author deemed it essential to depict Enki's organization of the earth in considerable detail, and thus provided us with quite a number of theological credos and mythological motifs virtually unknown from any other extant literary source: Enki's blessing of Sumer, Ur, Meluḫḫa, Dilmun, and Martu, and his cursing of Elam and Marḫashi; a detailed documentation of Enki's creative and resourceful deeds in providing for basic human needs related to food, shelter, and clothing, including the appointment of numerous deities to take charge of and supervise the varied and diverse cultural activities vital for human nature and human civilization. And because, unlike his superiors—the gods An and Enlil—Enki never became the leading deity of the pantheon, his authority to organize the earth and appoint deities virtually at will had to be justified and accounted for. The author therefore introduced his tale with several hymnal passages eulogizing Enki and stressing his very close relationship to An and Enlil, at whose behest and with whose cooperation he performed the extraordinarily farsighted and far-reaching tasks depicted in the main part of the myth.

Kramer first sketched the contents of this myth in *Sumerian Mythology* (pp. 59–62). That sketch was based on eight tablets and fragments then identified as belonging to the composition. In 1959 Inez Bernhardt and Kramer published an edition of the myth made possible by the addition of several other pieces, especially a large fragment of a six-column tablet in the Friedrich-Schiller University of Jena, which actually joined a similar large fragment in the University Museum. The tablet formed by this long-distance join across the ocean contained almost the entire text of the composition and enabled him to place correctly all other fragments then known as belonging to it. Since then at least fourteen additional pieces have been identified by Falkenstein, Sjöberg, and Civil, and a new and much more complete edition was prepared in 1969 as a dissertation in the University Museum by Carlos Benito. The translation here presented is based on the Benito edition of the reconstructed text.

Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech

In the myth "Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech" (chapter 4, below), Enki and Inanna are also the principal characters, but it is the goddess who plays the more prominent role. The intent of its author was to explain how the city Erech (Uruk) had regained its preeminence and leadership in the land, as well as to validate the cult practices relating to the adoration of its tutelary deity, Inanna. As he saw it, the rise of Erech to renewed greatness and glory could have come about only after it had acquired the precious *me,* the foundation of urban civilized life, and Inanna's cult of adoration could not have been instituted in the restored Erech without the sanction and blessing of her patron and ally,

Enki. However, these *me,* according to the theological belief current in his day, were in Eridu, in the Abzu, carefully guarded by Enki, who would not willingly turn them over to another deity and city. Our mythographer, therefore, found it necessary to devise a plot that would account for the transfer of the *me* from Enki's city Eridu to Inanna's city Erech. Accordingly, he contrived the following series of scenes and episodes, all revolving about Inanna's successful procurement of the *me* from their reluctant guardian: (1) Inanna, confident of her charms, voices her determination to journey to Eridu; (2) a festal welcome in the Abzu by Enki, featuring a carousing banquet in the course of which the drunken Enki presented to Inanna all the *me* under his charge; (3) Inanna's departure from Eridu in her "Boat of Heaven," loaded with the treasured *me;* (4) Enki's vain attempt to recover the *me* by dispatching his *sukkal* Isimud accompanied by a varied assortment of sea-monsters, with orders to intercept the goddess at each of the seven stops between Eridu and Erech; (5) Inanna's safe arrival in her city, and the unloading of the *me,* one by one, in its White Quay, amid the jubilation of the Erechites; and (6) Enki's gracious capitulation and reconciliation sealed with blessings and benedictions for its charming, ambitious goddess.

The contents of this myth were first sketched by Kramer in *Sumerian Mythology* (pp. 64–68). Since then several new fragments have been identified and published, and in 1973 Gertrud Farber-Flügge published a valuable edition of the composition entitled *Der Mythos "Inanna und Enki" unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Liste der ME* (1973). Our translation and intepretation are based largely on this study.

Enki and Eridu: The Journey of the Water-God to Nippur

The myth, "Enki and Eridu: The Journey of the Water-God to Nippur" (chapter 5, below), is the most poetic, imaginative, and pictorially graphic composition in the Sumerian literary repertoire. The primary intent of its author was to affirm and validate the greatness of Enki's temple, the renowned Abzu, his "Sea House" in Eridu. Though Enki was one of the four leading deities of the Sumerian pantheon, he still had to have the sanction and benediction of his superior, Enlil of Nippur, to assure the power and majesty of the Sea House. Beginning the composition, as expected, with a poetic, image-laden description of the temple's attractive ornamentation and decoration, the author evidently felt that it would be more dramatic to have Enki's *sukkal* (vizier) Isimud sing of its glory and splendor. Enki therefore composed a special chant for him that extolled the temple's architectural embellishments, and the resounding polyphony of its music, instrumental and vocal. Following Isimud's eulogistic, endearing chant, the poem introduces a scene that visualizes Enki and his temple rising out of the deep sea, a sight wondrous and terrifying to behold. The poet next depicts Enki loosening his boat from its moorings after loading it with food, drink, and musical instruments, and setting sail for Nippur. Once arrived at Nippur's divine dining hall, the *giguna,* Enki prepares a banquet for the assembly of the gods, a banquet that culminates in Enlil's eulogizing Enki's Abzu, especially as a house fit to be in charge of man's arts and crafts.

Kramer first sketched the contents of this composition in *Sumerian Mythology* (pp. 62–63). The sketch was based on the reconstruction of the text from eigh-

teen tablets and fragments. In 1969 his former student from Iraq, A. A. Al-Fouadi, published a carefully prepared, comprehensive edition of the myth as a doctoral dissertation under the guidance of his successor in the University Museum, Åke Sjöberg. The edition was based on a text reconstructed from close to fifty tablets and fragments, many of which had not been known when he published *Sumerian Mythology*. The translation and interpretation here presented are based largely on the Al-Fouadi edition.

Chapters 6 through 10

Our book begins with presentation and gradually adds commentary, analysis, and speculation. Chapters 1 through 5 present, with relatively little commentary and analysis, the extant Sumerian myths in which Enki is a major character. These chapters are almost exclusively the work of Sumerologist Samuel Noah Kramer; the final form of the translations was the responsibility of John Maier.

Chapters 6 through 10 are organized in a somewhat different fashion from the earlier chapters. Chapter 6, "The Enigmatic Enki," brings together a group of shorter works and small sections of longer works. Together these poems, all in Sumerian, allow us a glimpse of the many different features of Enki, especially in his relationships with humans (often through his cult). They are a diverse lot of texts, tied together by the concern for Enki's powerful Word. The works in the chapter have been edited by Kramer; the chapter organized and the translations put in final form by Maier.

Chapter 7 concentrates on one feature of the Enki literature that, if anything, grew rather than diminished when Eridu and the other Sumerian city-states declined. It is called "The Great Magician," and the feature is Enki's importance, from Archaic Sumerian times at least, in magic. It is not easy to separate magic from religion, literature, and even medicine in Mesopotamian thought. This is particularly evident in the magical texts known as "Marduk/Ea" rituals. These were the first Sumero-Akkadian texts investigated as a distinct literary genre. The instructions given by Enki to his son—who in later texts is identified as the Babylonian god Marduk—are set in an unvarying mythological setting. The son has noticed that a person is in deep distress, and the son, though a powerful god in his own right, is unable to help the person. The son appeals to Enki, who tells the son what to do and what to say in order to bring relief. The chapter includes a sampling of "Marduk/Ea" texts. Inasmuch as the magical rituals are closely associated with the passing of esoteric information, secrets of the gods, that motif is exemplified in a number of literary works involving Enki.

"The Persistence of the Enki Tradition," as Chapter 8 is called, traces the interest in Enki/Ea through Akkadian literature and through the small corpus of Hittite writings in which Enki/Ea appears. The works in this chapter demonstrate the attraction Enki continued to exert long after Sumerian disappeared as a spoken language. In general the Akkadian and Hittite stories do not feature Enki/Ea as the main character in the narrative, but his presence is usually a key to a significant turn (and often the resolution) of the story. Ironically, because Enki/Ea is not the main character in the stories, the episodes in which he does appear require rather

more comment and analysis than in the longer Sumerian myths presented in the earlier chapters. Maier is responsible for the selections that appear in the seventh and eighth chapters.

Chapter 9, "Traces of the Fugitive God," considers ways in which Enki myths continued to influence literature long after the names Enki and Ea had disappeared. The two main sources of Western thought, biblical and Greek, knew Enki but not the name or much of Sumer at all. Tracing a motif through many variations on the flood story is one way to detect Enki's presence. Another, illustrated by Greek and later myths of Cronus/Saturn, is to look at habits of thought and patterns in myths from cultures in many ways far different from Mesopotamia.

The final chapter, "Myth and Literature: Locating Enki," is frankly speculative about the god and the relationship between myth and literature. It does not attempt a general theory of Enkian myth, but it does try to tie together a number of very different strands from earlier chapters. Throughout the work a few unconventional features have been used—for example, in the way the very useful *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* is cited, and in the way lines of poetry translated from cuneiform sources have been presented typographically. Details are in the notes.[10]

Sumerian literature is so old and so remote that any interpretation is really an exercise in hermeneutics. That is to say, it is an attempt that forces us at every point up against our own expectations. Certainly the literary works do not look like the literature with which we in the modern world are most comfortable—the novel, for example, or lyric poetry. So we are forced to contend with our own preunderstanding of literature.

We tend to be uncomfortable with anonymous literature, in spite of what the New Critics of the twentieth century said about the biographical fallacy and the intentional fallacy. Very few authors are known. Except for Enḫeduanna, the poetess and high priestess, daughter of Sargon of Agade, little is known even about them. By and large, it must have been the poem that counted, not the name of the author.

We gain a sense of the Mesopotamian attitude to authors from a catalogue of texts and authors from the early first millennium B.C., the earliest document yet discovered about authorship in any civilization. The catalogue lists four classes of authors, apparently arranged in a hierarchical order: gods, especially Enki, who has the first place; legendary and very ancient humans, like the Seven Sages; and two classes of ordinary humans.[11] Whatever this may say about authorship, it is clear that the conception is very different from our own. The stream of tradition carries along the literary works, largely through scribal schools. Authorship was more a matter of the authority by which a text says what it says than the expression of an individual writer's "intention."

Trying to decipher difficult wedge-shaped signs on often very broken clay tablets is obviously the first concern of the interpreter. The greatest of care has to be taken in establishing the meaning of the words of the text. Then whatever can be gleaned from our still fragmentary knowledge of text types, genres, and poetics will be brought to bear on a specific text. It is tempting to borrow genres from the Hebrew Bible (hymns, psalms, proverbs) and from Greek literature (the epic, for example) because we are familiar with them. They must, however, be used with

caution. For the most part we are delighted if a good portion of the text yields a basic, "literal" meaning.

The very anonymity of the texts takes us back, not to individual authors, but to communities and institutions. The more we learn from archeology, historical records, archives, comparative religion, cultural anthropology, and theories of social development, the more we can begin to see the literary milieu of the ancient writers. Representation of the gods, the role of priesthood and temple in the economy, connections between myth, magic and ritual, the role of the writer in society are factors in the production of literary works.

Consider an ordinary Sumerian word, *en. En* is one element in the name of the god En-ki. By the third millennium B.C. a society with distinct classes had emerged in Sumer. A few families of what we would call princes were at the top and a labor force, including slaves, were below them. Priests appeared at the emergence of the urban revolution, and they gave a religious cast to social life in Sumer. Divine beings were given human form, and a representational art emerges. The temple was a redistributive center for the economy. Temples, increasing in size and complexity, become the centers of specialized bureaucratic skills like writing, needed for keeping accounts. At the head was the *en,* a political and priestly figure. The *en* is seen carrying baskets of offerings and construction materials to the gods, and he boasts of building temples.

By the Early Dynastic II Period (ca. 2600 B.C.), however, the *en* had become only a religious figure. The *lugal* and the *ensi* alternate as the titles of the chief political authority; then the *ensi* declines. The ordinary word for "king" becomes *lugal.* With the eclipse of the *en* and the expanded power of the *lugal,* there comes about as well an increasing concern for serious military activities and the importance of a war leader. This change is reflected in the development of an "epic" literature surrounding the great kings like Enmerkar and Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh boasts of building the immense walls of his city, Uruk (Erech), a good sign that a strong defense was needed against raiders from the outside. Centuries later in Akkadian literature divine kingship becomes the focus of an "epic" work, *Enuma Elish,* where the city god of Babylon is declared king of the gods, and his enthronement becomes the paradigm of the earthly king.[12]

For a time in Sumerian literature the two titles *en* and *lugal* appear together. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if the order in which they are used has any significance. Do the presence or absence of one or the other title signify a change in the social order? Certainly the existence of different titles in the same work presents a problem for translation. Are they both equally served by the English word "king?" Are they to be separated in order to understand the dynamics of the poem? Eventually *en* and its Akkadian equivalent decline, and more authority is vested in the palace at the expense of the temple.

Within this change may be glimpsed what Riane Eisler calls a "cultural transformation." She symbolizes the two stages of culture as the "chalice" and the "blade." In her cultural transformation theory Eisler distinguishes between a "partnership" society, in which diversity of role is not equated with inferiority and superiority, and a "dominator" society, in which roles—especially sex roles—are ranked on the basis of superior and inferior. Through much of human prehistory

the "partnership" society prevailed, but it was supplanted by the male-dominant and warlike "dominator" society. Although Eisler's theory rests mainly on Indo-European society, she feels that Mesopotamian history shows the same pattern of cultural transformation there. Certainly she thinks Mesopotamian myths were reworked to fit a dominator society.[13]

The change from *en* to *lugal,* then, could be considered one sign of a very large cultural transformation taking place in Mesopotamian society. The Enki literature participates in that change. The way Enki uses cunning and magic to solve difficulties rather than resorting to deadly force is perhaps related to the change. Another sign of the change is reflected in a theme that many of the Enki stories share: the contest between Enki and the goddess, especially the mother goddess. From the standpoint of Eisler's two basic models of society, the exaltation of Enki in Sumerian myth would represent a shift from the "chalice" to the "blade." The situation is complicated, though, because from another standpoint the later exaltation of the Enki's warrier son, Marduk, would represent a shift toward the "blade," with Enki's regime a vestige of the older "chalice" society.

What seems like a simple enough decision—to translate Sumerian terms like *en, lugal, nin,* and *nun* with our familiar male-dominated terms "lord," "king," "lady," and "prince"—turns out to be a complicated question. (The term *nin* is problematic because until one period in Sumerian history, it was used for males and females alike. Later it was used exclusively for females—hence, "lady"—but was retained in names of males like Ninshubur, the vizier of the goddess Inanna.) Translation and interpretation are both twisted in a double hermeneutical bind. We want to know what the words meant to the Sumerians, but we are forced to confront the complex history of our own stock of words.[14] What is needed is more than the "facts" of history. We need to keep the situation of the investigator in mind as we read and reread texts from a culture much removed from our own mind-set.

The first glimpse of the god who would inhabit the temple at Eridu (roughly 6000 B.C.) is seen in a small mud-brick building, barely thirteen feet square.[15] Excavators at the site found "great heaps of ashes . . . thickly intermingled with vast quantities of fish-bones," evidence of fish-sacrifce from a very remote period.[16] Much later, in the first millennium B.C., King Sennacherib recorded an offering to Enki of "pure sacrifices." Together with a "ship of gold," Sennacherib "cast into the sea a gold fish and a gold tortoise."[17]

Between that very early period with its tiny mud-brick temple and its fish-sacrifices and Sennacherib's offering of gold objects, a character appears in the cuneiform literature of Mesopotamia. Enki is a character in literary narratives that are so remotely ancient and alien to us that we need to ask: How can we even begin to understand such an alien presence? Yet to those who have seen literary theorists and critics in recent years struggle with the problems of understanding texts—that is, with "hermeneutics" and hermeneutical questions—the very challenge of such an alien literature is irresistible.

Something powerful beckons from those mud-brick temples and those crumbling tablets of earth, something seductive, irresistibly fascinating. There is still a fascination, as there once was, with that presence, situated in the depths, that the Sumerians named Enki.

George Steiner reminds us that the Kabbalah records a strange conjecture that a day will come when words "will rebel against man. They will shake off the servitude of meaning. They will 'become only themselves, and as dead stones in our mouths.' In either case, men and women will have been freed forever from the burden and splendour of the ruin at Babel." But, Steiner wonders, what will be the gain in that? This volume, like any collection of translations, is offered in the hope that we will not soon come to that end, when Babel will have been forgotten.

CHAPTER 1

Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth

"Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth"[1] is one of the more interesting, intricate, and imaginative myths in the Sumerian repertoire, but also one of the most enigmatic and frustrating. To judge from the end of the tale—and it is the end of a Sumerian composition that usually reveals the author's intent—the poet-priest who had originally composed it was primarily interested in explaining how and why the god Enšag had become "the Lord of Dilmun," the land where the action of the myth took place. According to our author, Enšag was presented by a grateful Enki with the lordship of Dilmun because he was one of a group of eight deities who had been engendered by the mother-goddess Ninḫursag for the purpose of healing Enki's eight ailing organs, all of whom had been blessed by Enki in one way or another. As for what had inspired our author with the conviction that these particular eight gods had been procreated for the purpose of healing the sick Enki—this was his observation of a superficial linguistic phenomenon that he evidently deemed highly significant: the name of each of these deities corresponded in part to the name of one of Enki's ailing organs.

Our author also believed that he knew how and why Enki's eight organs had become sick in the first place—Enki had eaten eight plants that Ninḫursag had generated from his semen that overflowed on the loins of the goddess Uttu, an act that so angered the goddess that she pronounced upon him the curse of death, and had a change of heart only after the mourning Anunna-gods had entreated and beseeched her to bring Enki back to life. As for Enki's sexual intercourse with the goddess Uttu that well-nigh caused his death, this, as the author imagined it, was the last of a series of sexual exploits that began with his impregnating first Ninḫursag herself, who then gave birth to the goddess Ninmu; this was followed by his impregnating his daughter Ninmu who then gave birth to the goddess Ninkurra; this in turn was followed by his impregnating his granddaughter Ninkurra, who then gave birth to his great-granddaughter Uttu.

To some extent, therefore, we can follow the plot of the myth step by step, as imagined by the author. But there are several motifs that are especially enigmatic and tantalizing. Thus it would be quite interesting to know why of all the plants known to him, the author chose the particular eight plants for his tale; or why he

decided that it was Enki's intercourse with the goddess Uttu, rather than with some other goddess, that generated the sprouting of the plants; or what had impelled him to imagine that the birth of Uttu was preceded by that of the goddess Ninmu and Ninkurra. It seems reasonable to assume that the author had his reasons for his choices and options, but as of today, these cannot be identified or even surmised. None of the currently known Sumerian theological credos or mythopoeic inventions shed any light on these questions.

The myth begins with a well-preserved introductory passage whose literal rendering is relatively assured but whose real meaning and implications are obscure and elusive. It depicts Dilmun as a land that is holy, pure, and radiant; a land where there are no birds to disturb its peace; where there are no wild animals preying on their victims; a land unfamiliar with sickness, aging, or (perhaps) death. As the poet puts it:

Holy the city. . . .[2] The land Dilmun is holy.
Sumer is holy. . . . The land Dilmun is holy.

The land Dilmun is holy, the land Dilmun is pure,
the land Dilmun is pure, the land Dilmun is bright.

After she lay in Dilmun with the one who is alone,
the place—after Enki had slept with his wife—
that place is pure, that place is bright.
After she lay in Dilmun with the one who is alone,
the place—after Enki had slept with Ninsikila[3]—
that place is pure, that place is bright.

In Dilmun the raven screaks no croaking sounds,
the *dar*-bird[4] sounds not the *dar*-bird's cry.

The lion kills not,
the wolf snatches not the lamb.
Unknown the wild dog that makes the kid bend low.
Unknown the grain-devouring pig.

The widow[5] spread malt on the roof:
birds above do not eat it.
The dove droops not the head.

The sick-eyed says not, "I am sick-eyed."
The sick-headed says not, "I am sick-headed."

Its old woman does not say, "I am an old woman."
The old man does not say, "I am an old man."

Unbathed is the girl: no flowing water fills the city;[6]
whatever crosses the river utters not. . . .[7]

On his side the crier does not turn round;
the singer makes no wail;
beside the city he utters no lament.

There now follows an address by the goddess Ninsikilla, Dilmun's tutelary deity. She complains that the land Dilmun, which he had given her, lacked sweet water and crop-bearing fields and farms.[8] Enki responds by blessing Dilmun with an abundance of water brought out of the earth by the sun-god Utu—the text of part of Enki's response is destroyed, but it can be restored from the passage that follows, which depicts Utu's performance of the propitious acts promised by Enki in his blessing, thus (53–64):

Utu, standing in heaven. . . .[9]

from the mouth that pours out the earth's water
he brought her sweet water from the earth.

He pumps the water into her large cisterns.[10]

From them her city drinks the wealth of water;
Dilmun drinks from them the waters overflowing.

Her well of bitter water is now a well of sweet water.
Her crop-yielding fields and farms turn out heaps of grain.
Her city is now the floodgate of the land,

Dilmun is the floodgate of the land.[11]

Now by Utu. on this day, it has become just that.[12]

The main action of the myth now begins with a depiction of Enki's sexual exploits, the first of which relates to his impregnation of the goddess Ninḫursag and the birth of Ninmu, thus (65–88):

The one who was alone, the cunning one, in front of Nintu, mother
of the land,
Enki, the cunning one, in front of Nintu, mother of the land,
has his phallus fill the ditches full with semen,
has his phallus glut the reeds with an overflow of sperm,
has his phallus tear away the noble cloth that covers the lap.

He spoke out: "No one walks in the marshland."
Enki said: "No one walks in the marshland."

He swore by the life of An.[13]

His semen that belonged to the one lying in the marshland,
lying in the marshland,
Enki directed his semen owed to Damgalnunna,[14]
poured that semen into the womb, Enki's semen,
poured that semen into the womb of Ninḫursag.

One day being her one month,
two days being her two months,
three days being her three months,
four days being her four months,
five days being her five months,
six days being her six months,
seven days being her seven months,
eight days being her eight months,
nine days being her nine months, the Months of Womanhood,
like fine oil, like fine oil, like precious oil,[15]
Nintu, mother of the land, like fine oil, like fine oil,
like precious oil,
gave birth to Ninmu.[16]

Enki now proceeds to impregnate Ninmu, who after nine days of gestation gives birth to the goddess Ninkurra, thus (89–108):

Ninmu came out to the bank of the river.[17]
Out of the marshland Enki reaches out, reaches out.[18]
He says to his *sukkal* Isimud:
"Should I kiss the young one, the beauty?
Should I kiss Ninmu, the beauty?"

His *sukkal* Isimud answers him:
"Kiss the young one, the beauty.
Kiss Ninmu, the beauty.
For my king I will blow up a vigorous wind.
I will blow up a vigorous wind."

Alone he set foot in the boat.
Then he lodged it on dry land.[19]

He took her, kissed her,
Enki poured the semen into the womb.

She drew the semen into the womb, Enki's semen.
One day being her one month,

two days being her two months,
nine days being her nine months, the Months of Womanhood,
like fine oil, like fine oil, like precious oil,
Ninmu like fine oil, like fine oil, like precious oil,
gave birth to Ninkurra.

Enki now proceeds to impregnate Ninkurra, who after nine days of gestation gives birth to the goddess Uttu, thus (109–27):

Ninkurra came out to the bank of the river.
Out of the marshland Enki reaches out, reaches out.
He says to his *sukkal* Isimud:
"Should I kiss the young one, the beauty?
Should I kiss Ninkurra the fair?"

His *sukkal* Isimud answers him:
"Kiss the young one, the beauty.
Kiss Ninkurra, the beauty.
For my king I will blow up a vigorous wind,
I will blow up a vigorous wind."

Alone he set foot in the boat.
Then he lodged it on dry land.

He took her, kissed her,
Enki poured the semen into the womb.

She drew the semen into the womb, Enki's semen.
One day being her one month,
nine days being her nine months, the Months of Womanhood,
like fine oil, like fine oil, like precious oil,
Ninkurra like fine oil, like fine oil, like precious oil
gave birth to Uttu, the voluptuous woman.[20]

Uttu would no doubt have gone forth to the bank of the river as did her mother Ninkurra and her grandmother Ninmu, and like them would have been impregnated by the sex-craving Enki, were it not for her great grandmother who counseled against it. Unfortunately the relevant passage is almost entirely destroyed, but to judge from what follows, Ninḫursag had instructed her to stay in her house and have nothing to do with Enki unless and until he brought her a gift of cucumbers, apples, and grapes. In any case when the text becomes intelligible, we find Enki in the process of obtaining products from a grateful gardener, thus (153–67):

Filling with water a second time,
he filled the ditches with water,
he filled the canals with water,
he filled the unsown lands with water.

In his joy . . . the gardener
hugs him, [says to him]:
"Who are you who [have watered] my garden?"

Enki answers the gardener:
". . . . [*line destroyed*]
[Bring me the cucumbers in their [?] . . .].
[Bring me the apples in their . . .].
[Bring me the grapes on their vine(?)]."

[He brought him the cucumbers in their(?)] . . . ,
He brought him the apples in their . . . ,
He brought him the grapes on their vine[?],
he heaped them up in his lap.

Having obtained these products, Enki brings them as gifts to Uttu, who now receives him joyfully and permits him to fondle and penetrate her (168–87):

Enki—his face turned green—grabbed the staff,
and headed for Uttu.

"You who make demands[?][21] in her house: open up!
open up!"

"You—who are you?"

"I am the gardener who will give you cucumbers, apples, and
grapes as a reward."

Her heart leapt as Uttu opened the door of the house.

Enki to Uttu, the voluptuous woman[?],
gives the cucumbers in their[?] . . . ,
gives the apples in their . . . ,
gives the grapes on their vine[?].

Uttu the voluptuous woman[?] strikes [her] *kab*,
claps [her] hands.[22]

Enki aroused Uttu,
took her, lay in [her] lap,

strokes and massages [her] body,[23]
took her, lay in [her] lap.
He pierced the young one, kissed her.
Enki poured the semen into the womb.

She drew the semen into the womb, Enki's semen.
Uttu the seductive woman says: "Oh, the power [in my] body!"
says: "Oh, the power inside!
Oh, my power on the outside!"[24]

Ninḫursag wiped[?] the semen from her body.[25]

It was from this semen of Enki that Ninḫursag in some way generated the sprouting of eight plants: the tree-plant, the honey-plant, the roadweed-plant, the *apasar*-plant, the thorn-plant, the caper-plant, a plant whose name is destroyed, and the *amḫaru*-plant.[26] But now Enki and his *sukkal* Isimud appear once again on the scene. For Enki decides to decree the fate of these plants, which meant that he would first have to eat them. Enki's activity of decreeing the fates spells disaster for the plants and, ironically, for Enki himself, since he falls gravely ill in the process. Or as the poet put it (196–216):

Out of the marshland Enki reaches out, reaches out.
He says to his *sukkal* Isimud:
"Of the plants I have not [yet] decreed[?] the fate,[27]
what in the world is this? What in the world is this?"

His *sukkal* Isimud answers him:
"My king, the tree-plant," he says to him.
He cuts it down for him. He eats it.
"My king, the honey-plant," he says to him.
He picks it for him. He eats it.
"My king, the roadweed-plant," he says to him.
He cuts it down for him. He eats it.
"My king, the *apasar*-plant," he says to him.
He picks it for him. He eats it.
"My king, the thorn-plant," he says to him.
He cuts it down for him. He eats it.
"My king, the caper-plant," he says to him.
He picks it for him. He eats it.
"My king, the . . . -plant," he says to him.
He cuts it down for him. He eats it.
"My king, the *amḫaru*-plant," he says to him.
He picks it for him. He eats it.

Now comes the denouement of the plot of the myth. Enki's eating of the eight plants generated by Ninḫursag so angered the goddess that she pronounced a curse upon him, asserting that she would not look upon him with the "eye of life" until he is dead. Fearing Enki's imminent demise, and not knowing what to do about it now that Ninḫursag has vanished, the Anunna-gods "sit in the dust." Whereupon the fox comes to the rescue. He speaks up before Enlil, the leading deity of the pantheon, claiming that he knows how to make Ninḫursag return to the gods, but demanding a reward for doing so. Enlil promises him a reward,[28] and the fox does succeed in bringing Ninḫursag back to the Anunna,[29] who now seize her garments and perform several other acts that must have caused the goddess to have a change of heart.[30] For we now find her seating the ailing Enki in her vulva[31] and asking him where he feels pain. Enki names one by one the eight organs that hurt him, and Ninḫursag proceeds to give birth to a corresponding healing deity. Finally, Enki, perhaps because he was grateful to Ninḫursag for bringing him back to life, as it were, proceeds to bless the eight newly born deities, the last of whom, Enšag by name, he destines to be "the lord of Dilmun." Here now are the two concluding passages of the composition: the Ninḫursag-Enki dialogue and Enki's blessing of the healing deities (250–78):[32]

Ninḫursag fixed Enki in her vulva:

"Brother, what hurts you?"
"My skull hurts me."
"I have caused Abu to be born for you."

"Brother, what hurts you?"
"My jaw hurts me."
"I have caused Nintulla to be born for you."

"Brother, what hurts you?"
"My tooth hurts me."
"I have caused Ninsutu to be born for you."

"Brother, what hurts you?"
"My mouth hurts me."
"I have caused Ninkasi to be born for you."

"Brother, what hurts you?"
"My throat hurts me."
"I have caused Nazi to be born for you."

"Brother, what hurts you?"
"My arm hurts me."
"I have caused Azimua to be born for you."

"Brother, what hurts you?"
"My rib hurts me."
"I have caused Ninti to be born for you."

"Brother, what hurts you?"
"My *ag* hurts me."
"I have caused Enšag to be born for you."

For the little ones which you have caused to be born . . . ,
Let Abu be the king of plants.
Let Nintulla be the lord of Magan.
Let Ninsutu marry Ninazu.
Let Ninkasi be the one who satisfies desire.
Let Nazi marry Nindara.
Let Azimua marry Ningišzida.
Let Ninti be the queen of months.
Let Enšag be the lord of Dilmun.

Oh Father Enki, praise!

CHAPTER 2

Enki and Ninmaḫ: The Creation of Humankind

"Enki and Ninmaḫ: The Creation of Humankind,"[1] is another imaginative, tantalizing myth whose meaning and interpretation are enigmatic and elusive. Primarily this is due to the numerous breaks and gaps in the text, as well as the obscurity of some of the key words and phrases. Especially disappointing and disheartening are the breaks in the concluding thirty lines of the text: it prevents us from grasping and comprehending the intent and purpose of the author in creating mythic tales. To judge from what can be gleaned from the extant fragmentary text, he was interested primarily in explaining and validating the superiority of Enki and his city Eridu over the goddess Ninmaḫ and her city Keš. In some obscure way, this involved the crippled, impotent *umul,*[2] created by Enki, and for whom Ninmaḫ could not find suitable employment in civilized society. The creation of a wretched creature such as *umul,* which the author must have deemed essential for the ensurance of Enki's superiority over Ninmaḫ, could hardly be conceived as a rational act by so wise and beneficent a deity as Enki. And so the author attributed it to a drunken contest between the two deities after they had become "high" on beer during a banquet of the gods. Rather ironically, this banquet, fraught with disastrous consequence for humans, was arranged by Enki to celebrate the creation of humankind in order to free the gods from the need of laboring for their food, an intricate feat involving primarily Enki, his mother Nammu, and the resentful, contentious Ninmaḫ. Human creation is depicted in the introductory section of the myth as follows (lines 1–37):

In those days
once heaven and earth [were split apart],[3]
in those nights
once heaven and earth [were severed],
in those years,
the years after the fates had been decreed,
once the Anunna were born,
once the goddesses were joined in wedlock,

once the goddesses had been allotted their shares
of heaven and earth,
after the goddesses . . . had been impregnated[?],[4]
had given birth,
after the gods had been forced to . . . their food
. . . for their own dining halls,[5]
the great gods labor,
the young gods carry baskets,[6]
the gods dig canals,
heap up their dirt *ḫarali,*[7]
the gods grind away,
grumble about their life:

In those days, the one with the cunning grasp,
fashioner of all the gods that exist,
Enki,[8] in the deep billowing sea—
into whose midst no one dares to gaze—
is lolling in his bed,
will not stir from sleep,
[while] the gods wail [and] mutter.

To the one who is lying in the deep,[9]
to the one who will not stir from his bed,[10]
Nammu, primeval mother,
who had given birth to all the great gods,
carried the wailing of the gods—to her son:
"You who are lying about,
you who are sleeping,[11]
you who will not stir from your sleep:[12]
the gods—my handiwork—are beating their. . . .[13]

Rise up, my son, from your bed,
practice your skill perceptively.[14]
Create servants[?][15] for the gods.
Let them throw their baskets away."

Enki,[16] at the word of his mother, rose up from his bed.

The god, once he examined a fattened holy kid . . . ,[17]
the cunning (and) perceptive one,
the one who guides the seeker,
the skilled one who fashions the form of things,
turned out the *sigensigdu,*[18]
Enki had them stand at his side, looks at them intently.

After Enki, form-fashioner, had, by himself,
put sense in their head,[19]
he says to his mother, Nammu:

"My mother, the creature whose name you fixed—it exists.
The corvée of the gods has been forced on it.[20]

Knead the 'heart' of the clay that is over the *abzu.*

The *sigensigdu* will nip off this clay.
You give it form.

Let Ninmaḫ act as your helper.

Let Ninimma,
Šuzianna,
Ninmada,
Ninbara,

Ninmug,
Musargaba,
Ningunna,[21]

serve you as you form it.

My mother, you decree its fate.
Let Ninmaḫ force upon it the corvée of the gods."

Following another very fragmentary six lines from which one can glean only a few significant words such as "man" and "birth," the poet introduces the banquet of the gods. It began joyously enough with the harmonious glorification by all the gods of Enki (called Nudimmud) and his wise deeds, but ended disastrously in the creation of a sad collection of human misfits (lines 38–109):

Enki looked on their . . . work with favor.[22] Their hearts rejoiced.

He set up a feast for his mother Nammu and Ninmaḫ.[23]

He makes Namtar, leader[?] of the lordly *sigensigdu,*
eat *gi-sag* as bread;[24]

for An[25] and Enlil, lord Nudimmud roasted holy kids.

All the great gods exalt him:[26]

"O lord of deep insight: who else is given your insight!

O Enki, great noble: who can do what you do!

You—like a fathering father—are the one who takes care of
the *me,* the . . . of all the lands."[27]

Enki and Ninmaḫ drink plenty of beer; their hearts race.

Ninmaḫ says to Enki:

"On the form of a man, good or bad,

I will decree a fate that is good or bad,
as I feel like it."

Enki answers Ninmaḫ:

"The fate that comes to you, whether it is good[28] or bad—I
will counter."[29]

Ninmaḫ took the clay that covers the *abzu.*
The first one she made into a man who when reaching could
not bend his rigid[?] hands.[30]

Enki, seeing the first man, who when reaching could not
bend his rigid[?] hands,
decreed fate for him, named him a servant of the king.[31]

The second she made into a man who could see though blind.[32]

Enki, seeing the man who could see though blind,
decreed his fate, gave him the art of song,
named him chief [musician][33] of the *ušumgal*-lyre before the king.

The third she made into a man with . . . paralyzed feet.[34]

Enki, seeing the man with . . . paralyzed feet,
gave him his *melam,* like a silver. . . .[35]

The fourth she made into a man who kept dripping semen.

Enki, seeing the man who kept dripping semen,
bathed him with "incantation" water, ...[36]

The fifth she made into a woman who could not give birth.

Enki, seeing the woman who could not give birth,
decreed a fate for her, built her a harem.[37]

The sixth she made into something without a phallus or a
vulva on his body.

Enki, seeing something without a phallus or a vulva on his
body,
to serve the one Enlil had called by name over the great
earth—[38]
the king—decreed as his fate.

Enki threw the brazier to the ground,
acted most deceitfully.[39]

The great lord Enki says to Ninmaḫ:
"For every one you have formed, I have decreed their fate,
have given them bread.
Now *I* will make some for you—and *you* decree the fate
of the newborn!"[40]

Enki made a form with a head . . . a mouth[?] in its
center[?].[41]

Says to Ninmaḫ:

"The phallus-made semen poured into the woman's womb had
made that woman give birth in her womb."[42]

Ninmaḫ . . . stood by at its birth.[43]

That woman brought forth[44] . . . a mouth[?] in its center[?].[45]

The second one he made into an *umul*—its head sick, and sick
its . . . -place,[46]

sick its eyes, sick its neck,

breath at an end, ribs shaky, lungs sick, heart sick, bowels
sick.

The hand that supported[?] his head could not put bread in
its mouth, its splintered[?] spine in pain,

shoulders drooping, feet shaky, it could not walk[?] to[?]
the field.[47]

Enki says to Ninmaḫ:

"For every one you formed, I decreed its fate,
have given it bread.

Now you decree the fate of the one I formed.
Give him bread."

Ninmaḫ, when she saw *umul,* turned to him.

She approaches *umul,* questions him—but he cannot speak.

She brought him bread to eat.
He cannot reach for it.

He cannot. . . . [48]

Having stood up, he cannot sit down,
cannot lie down,
cannot build a house,
cannot eat bread."

Ninmaḫ answers Enki:

"The one you made is neither alive nor dead.
It cannot lift a thing."

Enki answers Ninmaḫ:

"For the man with the rigid hands, I decreed his fate,
gave him bread;

for the man who was blind, I decreed his fate,
gave him bread;

for the man with paralyzed feet, I decreed his fate,
gave him bread;

for the man who kept dripping semen, I decreed his fate,
gave him bread;

for the woman who could not give birth, I decreed her fate,
gave her bread;

for the one without phallus or vulva, I decreed the fate,
gave him bread.
My sister, [now you decree the fate of *umul,*
give him bread]."[49]

There are two more lines to Enki's speech, but they are almost completely destroyed. Now follows Ninmaḫ's reproachful, accusatory answer to Enki consisting of sixteen lines, of which only the last six are fairly well preserved, but even these present numerous grammatical and lexical difficulties that make their translation and interpretation quite uncertain. As we tentatively understand their contents, Ninmaḫ denigrates Enki as one who (presumably because he lives in the Abzu, far from heaven and earth) has paid no heed to what happens in "the land" (that is, Sumer), and accuses him of not coming to her aid and (perhaps) of even betraying her when, presumably at the command of Enlil, her city was attacked, her temple destroyed, her son (the king) carried off into captivity, so that she fled Enlil's Ekur and became a refugee. And if all that is not enough, she protests that Enki is now trying to domineer her. Here now is a tentative translation of the passage (lines 123–28):

"See, you did not dwell in heaven,
you did not dwell on earth,
you did not bring your 'lifted face,' to the land.[50]
You did not dwell on earth.
Your word was not heard in the house built for me.[51]
You did not live on the earth.
You betray me in the city built for me:[52]
my city attacked,
my house destroyed,
my son taken captive.[53]

And here I am a refugee,
one who had fled the Ekur.[54]
And now I have not freed myself from your hand."[55]

There follows Enki's answer, which provides the denouement of the myth in which the existence of the *umul* seemed to play some role, but many of the crucial words and phrases are either broken or of uncertain meaning, and the interpretation and implication of the passage are tantalizingly ambiguous and obscure. Enki begins his speech with an attempt to soothe Ninmaḫ's resentment by talking up her power and authority and playing down his own, and by suggesting that she remove the wretched *umul* from her lap and perform two other actions (which are, however, unintelligible at the moment) thus (lines 129–33):

Enki answers Ninmaḫ:
"A word comes out of your mouth—who can alter it?
Umul, the crippled[?] [creature(?)]—
take him off your lap.[56]

. . . has surely looked with favor upon your work.
He has given[?] me an imperfect hand—
who can oppose him![57]

Take my . . . for[?] its[?] back[?],
put your hand on its mouth."[58]

There follows a line (134), which may be rendered, literally, "Now may my phallus be acclaimed, may it become a 'wisdom-endower.'" Its significance and implication in the context are difficult to fathom. It may be related in some way to the following two lines, which read (lines 135–36): "May the *enkum* (and) the *ninkum* exalt the. . . ."[59]

The next three lines are also quite fragmentary; as I understand their contents, Enki is pleading with Ninmaḫ, whom he addresses as his sister, and says (lines 137–39):

"O my sister, [do you extol my] heroic strength?[60]

[Do you utter] songs . . . ?[61]

The gods who hear them will . . .
the *umul,* let him build my house."[62]

The poet concludes his tale with these words (lines 140–41): "Ninmaḫ could not rival the great lord Enki. O Father Enki, sweet is your praise."

CHAPTER 3

Enki and Inanna: The Organization of the Earth and Its Cultural Processes

"Enki and Inanna: The Organization of the Earth and Its Cultural Processes"[1] is one of the longest and best preserved myths in the Sumerian repertoire. The majority of its 467 lines are well-preserved, and most of them can be translated with reasonable certainty, at least on the literal and superficial level. The portrait of Enki that emerges from this composition is significantly different from that portrayed in such myths as "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" or "Enki and Ninmaḫ: The Creation of Humankind." In this myth he is no sex-driven god impregnating goddess after goddess, and foolish enough to eat forbidden plants and bring upon himself the curse of death. Nor is he a rather indolent, torpid deity who has to be aroused from his slumbers by his mother to come to the aid of his fellow gods and relieve them from the hard labor forced upon them—a god foolish enough to let himself be inveigled into a contest that ends up in the disastrous creation of misfits and cripples. In our myth he emerges as an active, productive organizer and administrator who originates and operates the cultural processes essential to civilization, and does so creatively and resourcefully.

Even so, he had to endure at least one grumbling rebuke, and this from none other than the ambitious, aggressive Inanna, the goddess who according to the myth, "Inanna and Enki: the Transfer of the *me* from Eridu to Erech," virtually stole the precious *me* the authoritative, universal decrees, from under his nose. Which brings us to the author's intent and purpose in creating this tale. It is not primarily to exalt Enki and his great deeds, as one might assume from the fact that this takes up some three-fourths of the text (lines 1–365). Rather, as the last quarter of the composition reveals (lines 366–end), it is to justify and validate the impressive array of powers and prerogatives attributed to Inanna in the theological formulations current in his day—in short, this is but another "charter" type of mythological invention. All that precedes this last section is no more than background, a backdrop as it were for introducing the scene that begins with Inanna's complaint about the neglect she has suffered at the hands of Enki and concludes with the latter's placating response, including numerous blessings that no doubt enhanced the goddess' authority and prestige.[2]

The poet begins his tale with a diversified laudatory passage of 59 lines, the first 16 of which exalt Enki with special emphasis on his *mes*-tree and on his close inspection of the mysterious *ḫursag,* thus (lines 1–16):

Lord who walks nobly on heaven and earth, self-reliant,
father Enki, engendered by a bull,
begotten by a wild bull,[3]
prized by Enlil, the Great *Kur,*
loved by holy An,

king, who turned out the *mes*-tree[4] in the Abzu,
raised it up over all the lands,
great *ušumgal,*[5]
who planted it in Eridu—
its shade spreading over heaven and earth—
a grove of fruit trees stretching over the land,[6]

Enki, lord of the *ḫegal* the Anunna-gods possess,
Nudimmud, the mighty one of the Ekur,
the strong one of An and Uraš.[7]
Nudimmud, the mighty one of the Ekur,
strong one of the Anunna,
whose noble house set up in the Abzu is
the mast[8] of heaven and earth;

Enki who, lifting but a single eye, convulses the *kur,*[9]
where the bison is born,
the stag is born,
where the wild sheep is born,
the stag is born,
in the . . . , the meadows,
and the pits in the heart of the *ḫursag,*[10]
in the verdant . . . ,
the place where no one dares to enter,
there you have fixed your eyes like a *ḫalḫal*-reed.[11]

Following a rather fragmentary passage whose more intelligible lines depict Enki as a god who pronounces oracular decision to the assembled people,[12] the poet continues with a brief song of praise to Enki's fructifying, invigorating word, thus (lines 27–35):

[A word from you]—and heaps and piles stack high with grain.[13]
[In the land]—be it fat,
be it milk—
the stalls and sheepfolds produce it.

[The shepherd] sweetly sounds his *ilulamma*-song.[14]
[The cowherd] spends the day rocking the churn next to him.

You set out meals—the way it should be—
in the dining halls of the gods.

Your word: the young man thrusts it in to strengthen the heart.
He gores in the courtyard like an ox with thick horns.

Your word: the young woman sets it on her head as a lure.

The people in all their settled cities gaze at her in wonder.

Following two fragmentary, unintelligible lines, the text continues with the poet's glorification of Enki, especially for his care in assuring the security of the people (lines 38–51):

Lords and rulers
to thrill their hearts, to bring them joy[?]
Enlil, the Great *Kur,* has empowered you.

Enki, lord of *ḫegal,*
lord of wisdom,
lord beloved of An, ornament of Eridu,
who directs commands and decisions,
expert at fate-decreeing:

You have locked up . . . by day,
you have made the month enter its "house."[15]

You bring down the stars of heaven,
you have computed their number.[16]

. . . you have given the people a place to live.
. . . you have looked after them,
you made sure they followed their shepherd. . . .[17]

. . . you turned the weapons back into their "houses."[18]

. . . you kept the people safe in their homes.

Finally the poet concludes his introduction with a prayer to Enki to fructify the land, the domestic animals, and the fields, thus (lines 52–60):

Father Enki, come close to the seeded land:
let it bear healthy seed.[19]

Nudimmud, come close to the pregnant[?] ewe:
let it give birth to the healthy lamb.

he has placed in my hand the decreeing of the fates
at the place where the sun rises.[26]

"I am the one Nintu really cares for:
I am the one Ninḫursag gave a good name.[27]

"I am the leader of the Anunna-gods.
I am the one born a leading son of An."

Impressed by these grandiloquent claims, the Anunna-gods, according to our poet, pay Enki due homage (lines 81–85):

After the lord had proclaimed his loftiness,
after the great prince had pronounced his own praise,
the Anunna-gods stood up in prayer and supplication:
"Lord who stands watch over the arts and crafts,
expert at decisions, adored one—
O Enki, praise."

Enki, overjoyed at this acclamation and obeisance, now pronounces a second hymn of self praise, one that is considerably longer than the first. Beginning with a boastful glorification of his word and its powers, he continues with an idyllic portrayal of his temple and boat, the "Ibex of the Abzu," and concludes with a declaration of his determination to journey to Sumer and its neighboring lands (lines 85–132):

A second time, for the pleasure it gave him,
Enki, king of the Abzu, celebrates his own magnificence—
as is right:
"I am lord. I am the one whose word endures.
I am eternal.[28]

At my command stalls were built,
sheepfolds ringed about:
when it approached the above,
the *ḫegal*-rain poured down from above.
When it approached the below,
there was a high carp-flood.[29]
When it approached the green fields,
the heaps and piles of grain stacked high at my word.[30]

I built my house, the shrine, in a pure place,
gave it a good name.
I built my Abzu, the shrine, in . . . ,[31]
decreed for it a good fate.

My house—its shade stretches over the snake-marsh[?].[32]
My house—there the *suhurmaš*-fish wave their beards
among the honey-plants,[33]
its *gud*-fish wave their tails for me[?]
among the small *gizi*-reeds,[34]
its flocks of birds keep chirping in their nests. . . .[35]

Sacred songs and spells filled my Abzu.

The *magur*-boat,[36] the crown,[37] the Ibex of the Abzu,
brought me much joy in its midst:
over the grand marsh, the place I have chosen,
it swings its arms for me,
it stretches[?] its neck for me.[38]

Faultlessly the oarsmen[?][39] drew the oars.
Sweet songs they sing, delighting the river.
Nimgirsig,[40] the *ensi* of the *magur*-boat
holds the golden scepter for me,
steers[41] my boat—the Ibex of the Abzu—for me, Enki.

I—the lord—I will go,
I am Enki,
I will draw near to my land. . . .[42]

Let the [lands] Magan and Dilmun[43]
set eyes upon me—Enki.
Let the Dilmun boats be loaded[?] with wood[?].[44]
Let the Magan boats be filled sky high.
Let the *magilum*-boat of Meluḫḫa,[45]
transport gold and silver,
Let them take it to Nippur for Enlil,
king of the lands.[46]

To him who has no city,
who has no house,
the Martu—I furnished cattle as a gift."[47]

This ends Enki's second speech to the Anunna-gods who, having been duly impressed, once again pay homage to him, especially as the god in charge of the *me* (lines 133–39):

To the great prince who had drawn near to his land,
the Anunna-gods speak with affection:

"Lord who rides[48] the great *me,*
the pure *me,*
who stands watch over the great *me,*
the myriad *me,*
who is foremost[49] everywhere above and below,
at Eridu, the pure place,
the most precious place,
where the noble *me* have been taken in—[50]
O Enki, lord above and below, praise!"

Now that his powers and prerogatives had been twice acclaimed by the Anunna-gods, especially those relating to the irrevocable, authoritative, universal laws known as *me,* Enki was all set to start his journey to Sumer and neighboring lands. First, however, according to our poet, the cult personnel of his temple had to perform the necessary lustration rites for the purification of his temple. They also had to construct a staircase leading up to the good, noble quay of Eridu where his boat, the Ibex of the Abzu, would be moored, and to set up an *usga*-shrine where they could offer prayers to him as he was about to board his boat, thus (lines 140–54):

For the great prince who was passing through his land,
all the lords, all the rulers,
all the incantation-priests of Eridu,
the "linen-wearers" of Sumer,[51]
carry out the lustration rites of the Abzu,
stand watch over the holy places,
the precious places for[?] Father Enki,
cleanse the great house of the prince,
name its "stations,"[52]
purify the noble shrine, the Abzu,
carry into its midst the tall juniper,
the pure plant,
straighten the holy . . . ,
the noble water-courses of Father Enki,
build with skill the staircase of Eridu at the good quay,
moor[?][53] the Ibex of the Abzu at the good quay,
the noble quay,
set up the holy *usga*-shrine,
give voice in prayer after prayer there to him. . . .[54]

There now follows a fragmentary and rather obscure passage that depicts Enki boarding his boat, the Ibex of the Abzu,[55] to the accompaniment of such picturesque deportment as that of fish waving their tails for him among the reeds, following which various minor gods proceed to attend to the boat's paraphernalia, such as the standard,[56] the mast, the punting pole,[57] and the scepter,[58] while the fifty sea-

creatures known as *laḫama* speak tenderly to Enki and the oarsmen sing out to him. And so a confident Enki, for whom *ḫegal* prevailed on heaven on earth, comes forth to his land, Sumer, and blesses it richly, or as the poet puts it (lines 188–208):

Proudly the king stepped forth,
Father Enki came up to the land.
Because the great prince came up to his land,
ḫegal prevailed above and below.

Enki decrees its fate:
"Sumer, Great *Kur*,
mada of what is above and below,[59]
robed in enduring light,
settling the *me* upon the people
from sunrise to sunset,
your *me* are lofty *me*,
untouchable,
your heart is a maze,
inscrutable,
your life-giving womb,
the place where the gods give birth:[60] like heaven,
it cannot be touched.
It gives birth to kings who fasten the lasting diadem.
It gives birth to high priests who put crown to head.
Your lord, the honored lord, sits with King An,
on the dais of An.

"Your king, the Great *Kur*,
Father Enlil,
the father of the lands,
has blocked up the . . .[61] like a verdant tree.

The Anunna-gods, the great gods,
have taken up dwellings in your midst,
consume their food in your *giguna*
among your rare[?] trees.[62]

"House, Sumer,
have your many stalls built,
have your cows multiply,
have your many sheepfolds set up,
have your sheep be many,
have your *giguna* reach to the sky,
have your lasting shrine lift hand to heaven!"

Enki now turns to Ur, presumably the capital of Sumer at the time this composition was first written, a city depicted by the poet as prosperous, water-rich, tree-

shaded, a self-reliant city, a "firm-standing bull," "lofty as a mountain," and confers upon it the effective administration of its *me,* and a fate that would raise it "sky-high," thus (lines 209–18):

He crossed to the shrine, Ur,
Enki, king of the Abzu, decrees its fate:
"City with everything proper to it, water-washed,[63]
a firm-standing bull,
a dais of plenty in the *kur,* "knees wide open,"
lofty as a mountain,[64]
ḫašur-grove[65] wide of shade,
counting on its own strength,
you can well direct the *me* that have been perfected for you.
Enlil, the Great *Kur,* has pronounced your lofty name
above and below.
City whose fate has been decreed by Enki,
shrine Ur, you can rise high to heaven!"

From Ur Enki proceeded to Meluḫḫa and conferred upon it a rather extraordinary blessing that indirectly reveals no little information about its flora and fauna (lines 219–35):

He crossed to the *kur* Meluḫḫa.

Enki, the king of the Abzu, decrees its fate:

Black *kur,* your trees will be large trees,
they will be *mes*-groves of the *kur;*[66]
their thrones will be set in royal palaces.[67]

Your reeds will be large reeds,
they will be reeds of the *kur;*
heroes work them as weapons in the battlefields.

Your bulls will be large bulls,
they be the bulls of the *kur;*
their roar will be the roar of the bulls of the *kur.*

The great *me* of the gods will be perfected for you.

All the *dar*-birds[68] of the *kur* [wear] carnelian beards;
Your birds will be *ḫaia*-birds;[69]
their cries will fill the royal palaces.

Your silver will be gold.[70]
Your copper will be bronze-tin.
Kur, everything you have will [increase],[71]

your people will [multiply],
your male will go after his fellow male like a bull.[72]

Following two fragmentary, unintelligible lines,[73] we find Enki purifying Dilmun, which he placed under the charge of the goddess Ninsikil, assigning it lagoons and palm groves, thus (lines 238–49):

He cleansed and purified the *kur*-Dilmun,
set Ninsikilla in charge of it.

Lagoons[74] he allotted to the princely shrine.
Dilmun eats its fish.
Palm-trees he allotted to its fertile field.
Dilmun eats their dates.

He next turns to the lands Elam and Marḫaši, Sumer's perennial enemies, and curses them with ruinous defeat at the hands of Sumer:

. . . Elam and Marḫaši . . . ,
. . . who are all-devouring,
The king given power by Enlil
attacked their houses, attacked their walls;
their silver, lapis lazuli, [and] storehouses
he brought to Nippur for Enlil, king of all the lands.

To him who had no city,
who had no house,
the Martu—Enki furnished cattle as a gift.

Here ends Enki's preordaining of the destinies of lands and peoples, as envisaged by the poet. He now has Enki attend to crucial human needs for food, shelter, and clothing. Beginning with sweet, fresh water for drinking and irrigation, Enki is depicted in a metaphorical, image-laden poetic passage as joyously filling the Tigris and Euphrates with his semen as a bridal gift, and putting them under the supervision of the canal inspector Enbilulu, thus (lines 250–73):

Once he had turned his eye away from that spot,[75]
once Father Enki had raised it over the Euphrates,
he stood up full of lust like an attacking bull,
lifted his penis, ejaculates—
he filled the Tigris with flowing water.

A wild cow mooing for its young in the pastures,
the scorpion-infested stall,
the Tigris clung to his side as to an attacking bull.

He lifted his penis, brought the bridal gifts—
like a big wild bull he thrilled the heart of the Tigris,
[stood by] as it gave birth.

The water he brought is flowing water,
its "wine" is sweet.
The grain he brought is *gunu*-grain,[76]
the people eat it.

The Ekur, the house of Enlil, he packed with goods.
With Enki Enlil rejoiced,
Nippur exulted.

The lord fastened on the diadem of the *en,*
put on the enduring tiara of the king,
trod the ground on his left side:
ḫegal sprang out of the earth for him.

The one who holds a scepter in his right hand,[77]
who to make the Tigris and Euphrates "eat together,"
speaks words with an exulting[?] mouth[?],[78]
who carried away prosperity from the palace like fat,
the lord who decrees the fates,
Enki, king of the Abzu,
Enbilulu, the inspector of canals,
Enki placed in charge of them.

From the Tigris and Euphrates Enki turns to the lagoons and watery marshes that abound in southern Sumer, provides them with fish and birds, and appoints a fish-loving deity (the name is illegible) in charge of them, thus (lines 274–84):

He called the marshland:
stocked it with *suḫurḫi-* and *suḫur*-fish.[79]
He called the canebrake:
stocked it with full-grown reeds and green reeds. . . .[80]

The one from whose net no fish escapes,
from whose trap no . . . escapes,[81]
from whose snare no bird escapes,
. . . the son of . . . ,[82]
. . .[83] loved by the fish,
Enki placed in charge of them.

Enki now turns to the waters of the sea where he had erected an awesome, labyrinthine shrine that the Anunna-gods dared not approach, and appointed the sea-goddess Nanše in charge of it in all its breadth. Unfortunately this relatively

long, informative passage is fragmentary in part and largely unintelligible; the following very tentative rendering will provide the reader with at least a rough, approximate idea of its contents (lines 285–309):

A shrine Enki erected:
a holy shrine it is, its interior is like a maze;
in[?] the sea a shrine he erected:[84]
a holy shrine it is, its interior is like a maze;
a shrine whose interior is a twisted thread,
a thing unknown to man,
a shrine whose lower[?] station is the roving[?] *iku*-constellation,[85]
a holy shrine whose upper[?] station moves[?] toward the chariot-constellation,
a turbulent flood-wave . . .
its *melam* is awesome[?].[86]

The Anunna-gods, the great gods dare not go near it.

He sets up . . . ,
the palace [rejoiced(?)].

The Anunna-gods stood before him in prayer and suppliance;
for Enki they set up a lofty[?] dais in the [Sea-house(?)],
for the lord . . . ,
the great prince . . . ,
the *u*-bird. . . .[87]

The Ekur, the house of Enlil, he packed with goods.
With Enki Enlil rejoiced,
Nippur exulted.

The one who sets sail . . .[88]
in[?] the holy shrine,
the *innin* who induces copulation . . . ,
great flood-wave of the sea,
turbulent flood-wave,
the inundation of[?] the sea . . . ,
who springs forth out of the sea-foam[?] . . . ,[89]
the *innin* of Sirara,
mother Nanše,
the sea in all its breadth,
Enki placed in charge of it.

Enki concludes his creative water-related achievements by "calling" the rain "the waters of heaven," conducting them to the horizon as floating clouds, and appointing the rain-god Iškur in charge of them, thus (lines 308–16):

He called the rain,
the waters above,
fixed them there as floating clouds,
drives to the horizon their breath of [life(?)],[90]
turns the hillock into fields where emmer [grows(?)].[91]

The one who rides the great storm,
who charges with lightning,
who with the holy bolt blocks up the insides of heaven,
son of An,
the canal inspector of heaven and earth,
Iškur, the man of abundance[?],[92]
the son of An,
Enki placed in charged of it.

Now that the earth was provided with rain water as well as water for irrigation, it was ready for agriculture and food production. Enki begins this process by attending to plowing and sowing, thus (lines 317–24):

Enki trained the plow, the yoke, and the team,
great prince Enki furnished them with oxen that. . . .[93]
He opened the mouth of the holy furrow,
made grow the grain in the seeded field.

The lord who fastened on the diadem,
the ornament of the high steppe,
the tool-expert,[94]
farmer of Enlil,
Enkimdu, the man of ditch and dyke,
Enki placed in charge of them.

Enki then continues his food producing activity by supplying the cultivated field with a diverse assortment of grains and legumes (lines 325–33):

The lord called the seeded field,
stocked it with *gunu*-barley;
Enki stocked it with chick-peas, with lentils, with . . . ;[95]
heaped up in piles the *eštub*-barley,
the *gunu*-barley,
the *innuḫa*-barley;[96]
Enki multiplied the heaps and piles of grain;
With Enlil he spreads *ḫegal* through the land.

The one whose head and body are dappled,
whose face drips honey,

innin,[97] she
who breeds copulation,
vigor of the land,
the life of the Black Heads,
Ašnan, the good bread,
bread of all the earth,
Enki placed in charge of it.

From food Enki turns his attention to providing shelter for man, and does so in two steps. First he puts in working order the pickax and the brickmold, and appoints the brick-god Kulla in charge of them. After that he builds a model house on firm foundations and appoints Mušdamma, Enlil's master builder, in charge of them, thus (lines 334–47):

The great prince placed a string on the pickax,
guided the brickmold,
made it penetrate mother-earth as if it were precious oil.

The one whose pronged pickax is a corpse-devouring snake
that . . . ,
whose firmly set brickmold is a . . .
that sets the . . . straight.
Kulla, mighty[?] brickman of the land,
Enki placed in charge of them.
He fixed the cords, straightened the footers,
erected a house at the side of the assembly,
guided the lustrations.[98]
The great prince set down the footers,
fitted the brickwork upon them.

The one whose footers once laid down do not sag,
whose lasting house once built does not collapse,
whose vault reaches to mid-sky like a rainbow,
Mušdamma, great builder of Enlil,
Enki placed in charge of them.

From laying down foundations and building houses that are indispensable for life in cities, Enki turns to the hinterland, to the high steppe, and after covering it with luxuriant vegetation and multiplying its animal herds, he appoints Sumugan, "the king of the *ḫursag*" in charge of them (lines 348–56):

He gave the lofty steppe a holy crown to wear.[99]
To the high steppe he tied a lapis lazuli beard,
fastened on it a lapis diadem.

The good earth he lavished with teeming vegetation.[100]
He multiplied the herds of the high steppe,
placed them where they are supposed to be.
He multiplied the rams and wild rams in the pastures,
made them breed.

The hero who is the crown of the high steppe,
the king of the steppe,
great lion of the high steppe,
powerful,
the lofty hand of Enlil,
Sumugan, king of the *ḫursag,*
Enki placed in charge of them.

Still in the hinterland, Enki built stalls and sheepfolds, providing them with milk and fat for the dining halls of the gods, and appointed Dumuzi, the friend of An and the husband of Inanna, in charge of them (lines 357–66):

He built stalls,
directed cleaning of them.
He raised the sheepfolds,
stocked them with the best fat and milk.
He filled the dining halls of the gods with luxury.
In the verdant steppe he dispensed *ḫegal.*

The king,
the unfailing provider of Eanna,
friend of An,
the beloved son-in-law of valiant Sin,
the spouse of holy Inanna—
the *innin,*
queen of all the great *me,*[101]
who fosters copulation in the boulevards of Kullab—
Dumuzi, the *ušumgal* of heaven,[102]
friend of An,
Enki placed in charge of them.

Following two lines the poet has repeated several times as a kind of refrain (lines 367–68)—"The Ekur, the house of Enlil, he packed with goods. With Enki Enlil rejoiced, Nippur exulted"—we find Enki performing several rather enigmatic acts that are difficult to interrelate and to fit into the broader context. They involve the demarcation of boundaries, presumably between lands and cities, the establishing of special dwelling places for the Anunna-gods, and the appointment of the sun-god Utu to be in charge of the entire universe, thus (lines 369–79):

He fixed the borders,
marked them off.
Enki, for the Anunna-gods,
erected the *kiurra*[103] alongside the city,
set down fields and farms alongside.

The hero, the bull who bursts out of the *ḫašur*-forest,[104]
who roars like a lion,
the valiant Utu, the firm-standing bull
who proudly emblazons his power,
father of the great city,
the place where the sun rises,[105]
the great herald of holy An,
the judge, the one who makes decisions for the gods,
who has tied a beard of lapis lazuli,
who blazes out in holy heaven
out of the horizon,
Utu, son of Ningal,
Enki placed in charge of the universe in its entirety.

Finally Enki attends to human need for clothing. He introduced weaving, the "woman's art," and put Uttu, the goddess of clothing, in charge of it (lines 380–85):

He wove the *mug*-cloth,[106]
guided the *te*,[107]
Enki perfected the woman's art.
For Enki the people . . . the . . . -garment.

The one who is the dignity[108] of the palace,
the decorum[109] of the king,
Uttu, the unfailing woman of silence,
Enki placed in charge of them.

Enki had now presumably completed the complex task of providing for humankind's needs, including the appointment of a number of deities to take charge of specific operations assigned to them. But there was one deity—the ambitious, aggressive Inanna—who according to our poet felt that she had been neglected and discriminated against. She therefore came to Enki with the lamentful complaint that, whereas five of her sister-deities (Aruru-Nintu, Ninisinna, Ninmug, Nidaba, Nanše) had received certain rights and prerogatives relating to the human scene, she—Inanna—had been given neither post nor function. This remarkable and informative passage, thirty-seven lines in length, reads as follows (lines 386–422):

Then the one who had been left without a single post,
the . . . -woman[?], the young Inanna,
who had been left without a single post,
Inanna to Enki, her father,
entered his house,
wept,
muttered a complaint[?]:[110]

"Of the Anunna—the great gods—their fate
Enlil fixed for certain in your hand.

Me, the woman, why did you treat in a different way?
I, the holy Inanna: where are my functions?[111]

Aruru, sister of Enlil,
Nintu, queen of birth-giving,
she got the holy brick[?][112] of birth-giving
for her *en*-ship,
and carried off her umbilical-cord lancet,
the *imman*-stone,[113]
leeks,
she got the *silagarra*-vessel[114] of greenish lapis lazuli,
and carried off her holy consecrated *ala*-vessel,[115]
is now the midwife of the land.
The birth of kings,
the birth of *en*'s has been put in her hands.

My noble sister, the holy Ninisinna,
got the *šuba*-jewel,[116]
is now the lover of An,
and stands near[?] An,[117]
inciting the heart's desires.[118]

My noble sister, the holy Ninmug,[119]
the gold chisel,
the silver hammer[?],
the large flint knife,
her *antasurra,*[120] has carried off,
is now the metal/wood-worker of the land.
Fastening the lasting diadem on the one born king,
placing the crown on the head of the one born *en,*
have been put in her hands.

My noble sister, the holy Nidaba,[121]
got the measuring rod,

and tied about her arm the lapis measuring line,
proclaims all the great *me*,[122]
fixes the borders,
marks off the boundaries,
is now the scribe of the land.
Feeding the gods has been put in her hand.

Nanše, the noble *nin/en*,[123]
at whose feet the holy *u*-bird[124] stands,
is now the customs inspector of the sea.
Good fish, tasty birds,[125]
she grants her father Enlil in Nippur.

Me, the woman, why did you treat in a different way?
I, the holy Inanna: Where are my functions?"

So much for Inanna's bitter complaint.[126] Enki's response takes up the entire remainder of the composition, which consists of some forty-three lines. Unfortunately the last half of the passage is almost entirely destroyed, and even the first half is only partially intelligible. Enki begins with an exclamatory query that seems to express surprise at Inanna's disaffection and discontent, for according to him nothing has been denied her. Or in the words of the poet (lines 423–26):

Enki answers his daughter, the holy Inanna:
"What did I keep from you?
Innin, what did I keep from you?
What more could we add to you?[127]

Young Inanna, what did I keep from you?
What more could we add to you?

Enki then proceeds to enumerate some of the powers and functions that, as he evidently knew, Inanna already actually exercised, thus (lines 427–43):

"You proclaim the. . . .
The . . . has been adorned for you as a. . . .

"You put on there the garment 'the strength of the young man.'[128]
You introduced the words of the young man,
spoken words.

"You were put in charge of the crook,
the staff,
the wand of shepherdship.

"Young Inanna, what did I keep from you?
What more could we add to you?

"You interpret the oracular omens[129] of battles and combats.
You are no raven,[130]
but you recite the ill-omened words in their midst.
You have twisted there the straight thread.
Young Inanna, you have straightened there the twisted thread.[131]

"You put on a garment there,
you dressed yourself in linen there,
you wove the *mug*-cloth there,
you threaded the spindle there.
In your . . . you dyed the multi-colored . . . thread.

"Inanna, you have heaped up heads like dust,
you have cast heads about like seeds.[132]
Inanna, you have destroyed what cannot be destroyed;
you have conceived[?] the inconceivable[?].[133]

"You have removed the cloth from the *šem* of lamentations.[134]
Young Inanna, you have turned the *tigi* and the *adab*
back to their 'houses.'"[135]

Enki now turns from depicting Inanna's impressive powers and deeds,[136] especially those relating to the authority of the king and to the conduct of cruel, woeful warfare, and proceeds to bestow upon her numerous blessings. Beginning with some flattering words about Inanna's stunning appearance and indomitable spirit, he continues with the joyous announcement that Enlil has once again been moved to compassion for the land and restored it to its former position, thus (lines 444–49):

"You who do not weary the eye of your suitors,
Young Inanna, you who know nothing of fastening
the ropes on distant wells,[137]
Now has the heart of Enlil overflowed its banks,
he has restored it to its place.[138]
The heart overflowing its banks for[?] humankind,[139]
do not set up. . . .

Now follow the blessings for the goddess. Unfortunately, the relevant passage of seventeen lines is almost entirely destroyed except for a few verbal forms beginning with the Sumerian equivalent for "May" and "May he/they . . . for you."[140] The composition probably ends with the line:[141] "O Father Enki, praise."

CHAPTER 4

Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech[1]

This myth is of considerable significance for the historian of civilization and even more so for the cultural anthropologist. Anthropologically speaking it may be characterized as a "charter" myth—a divine tale that attempts to explain and validate the restoration of a Sumerian city to eminence and leadership, to prosperity and well-being. Even far more important from an anthropological point of view is its itemizing of ninety-four individual traits and features of Sumerian urban civilization as analyzed and dissected by the anonymous author who may have lived about 2000 B.C. or even considerably earlier.

The plot of the myth, which is relatively simple, draws its inspiration from two theological tenets then current throughout Sumer. The first was the belief in the existence from time primordial of a fundamental, unalterable, comprehensive assortment of powers and duties, norms and standards, rules and regulations, known as *me,*[2] relating to the cosmos and its components, to gods and humans, to cities and countries, and to the varied aspects of civilized life. Secondly, there was the conviction on the part of at least some of the theologians, that these *me,* although originally in the hands of the two leading deities of the pantheon, An and Enlil, were later turned over by them to Enki, the all-wise Sumerian sea-god who guarded them in his watery temple, the Abzu of Eridu. Consequently, the Sumerian city that sought to gain or regain supremacy and preeminence as a center of Sumerian civilization had to obtain these *me* from Enki by fair means or foul. And this is what our "Inanna and Enki" myth is all about: Inanna, the tutelary deity of Erech, procured the *me* from a drunken Enki and carried them off to Erech, where she was greeted jubilantly by its kings, high priest, and citizens, celebrating the return of the city to its former greatness.[3]

The myth begins with an introductory passage of approximately sixty lines, which is too fragmentary for a line-by-line translation. From what is legible and intelligible, however, it is clear that Inanna, wearing the turban head-dress known as *šugurra,* "the crown of the steppe," went forth in the steppe to visit and have sexual intercourse with the shepherd, probably Dumuzi, in his sheepfold. There, as she bent over, presumably for *coitus a tergo,* she was so taken with her "wondrous to behold" vulva, that she broke out into a song of self-glorification, closing with

her resolve to journey to the Abzu in Eridu to honor Enki and offer him a prayer (pp. 16–18).

The plot now begins with the words "In those days." "In those days," narrates the author, Inanna directed all alone her steps to the Abzu of Eridu. When she was but a mile from her goal, Enki, "who knows everything," directed his *sukkal,* Isimud, who was represented on cylinder seals Janus-like with two faces, to welcome the goddess with food and drink and to treat her like an intimate colleague, thus (pp. 18–20):

In those days, a young Inanna
to Enki's Abzu in Eridu
set her foot: the holy Inanna all alone.

In those days, the one of great wisdom—
who knows the *me* of heaven and earth,
who from his dwelling place knows then
the "heart" of the gods—
when holy Inanna had yet not come within a mile
of the temple at Eridu,
Enki, king of the Abzu,
who knows it all,
called his *sukkal* Isimud,
gave him these instructions:
"Come here, my *sukkal.*
Listen to what I say.

[*about six lines destroyed in large part*]

She, the young one, is about to enter the Abzu,
Eridu.[4]
Inanna is about to enter the Abzu,
Eridu.
Once she, the young one, enters the Abzu,
Eridu,
once Inanna enters the Abzu,
Eridu,
have her eat butter-cake,
have them[5] pour out for her cold water
that refreshes the heart.

You give her beer to drink in front of the lion,[6]
treat her like a friend, act towards her
the way a colleague would.
At the holy table,
the table of An,[7]
issue the greeting to the holy Inanna."

Isimud carries out Enki's instructions to the letter, thus:

When he had spoken to him in that way,
sukkal Isimud gave heed to the word of his king.

She, the young one, enters the Abzu,
Eridu,
Inanna enters the Abzu,
Eridu.
Once Inanna entered the Abzu,
Eridu,
She eats butter-cake.

They pour out for her cold water that refreshes the heart.
He gives her beer to drink in front of the lion.
He treats her like a friend, acts towards her
the way a colleague would.

At the holy table,
the table of An,
he issues a greeting to the holy Inanna.

Enki and Inanna then settle down to a prolonged drinking bout, competing with each other in the draining of many a liquor-filled bronze vessel of its contents. In his drunken state, Enki becomes expansively generous and proclaims that he will present, cluster by cluster, all the precious *me* in his keep, to his daughter Inanna, thus (pp. 20–22 and 97–115):

Enki and Inanna,
the two of them together[?],[8]
drink beer in the Abzu,
joy in the wine,
keep the bronze *aga*-vessels[9] filled to overflowing,
challenge heaven and earth [their] bronzes,[10]
[drain slowly(?) the *tilimda*-vessels,
the holy *magur*-boats].[11]

[After the beer was drunk,
after the wine had been enjoyed],
[Enki says to his *sukkal* Isimud],
["Come here, my *sukkal*.
Listen to what I say.
In the name of my power!
name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:

en-ship,
lagal-ship,
godship,
the noble, enduring crown,
the throne of kingship."[12]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:

the noble scepter,
the staff and nose-rope,
the noble dais,
shepherdship,
kingship."[13]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:

egizi-ship,
nindingir-ship,
išib-ship,
lumaḫ-ship,
gudu-ship."[14]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:

Truth,
?,
?,
Descent into the Nether World,
Ascent from the Nether World,
the *kurgarra*."[15]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!

I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:

the dagger and sword,
the *sagursag,*
the black garment,
the colorful garment,
the loosening of the nape-(hair),
the binding of the nape-(hair)."[16]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:

[*here follow seven* me, *all illegible*]."

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:

the standard,
the quiver,
the "working" of the penis,
the kissing of the penis,
the art of prostitution,
the art of speeding."[17]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:

the art of forthright speech,
the art of slanderous speech,
the art of ornamental speech,
?,
the cult-prostitute,
the holy tavern."[18]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!

I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:
the holy *nigingar*-shrine,
the divine . . . ,
the lover of An,
the resounding musical instrument,
the art of song,
eldership."[19]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:
heroship,
the art of being mighty,
the art of dissimulation,
the art of being straightforward,
the plundering of cities,
the setting up of lamentations,
the rejoicing of the heart."[20]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:
deceit,
the rebellious land,
the art of being kind,
travel,
the secure dwelling place."[21]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:
the craft of the carpenter,
the craft of the copper-worker,
the craft of the scribe,
the craft of the smith,
the craft of the leather-worker,

the craft of the fuller,
the craft of the builder,
the craft of the reed-worker."[22]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:
the [perceptive] ear,
the [power of] attention,
the holy purification rites,
the feeding-pen,
the heaping up of hot coals,
the sheepfold,
fear,
consternation,
dismay."[23]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:
the bitter-toothed . . . ,
the kindling of fire,
the putting out of fire,
the weary arm,
the . . . mouth,
the assembled family,
procreation."[24]

Holy Inanna took them in.

"In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
I will give to holy Inanna,
to my daughter—
and it will not be disputed:
the kindling of strife,
triumph,
counseling,
heart-soothing,
judgment-giving,
decision-making."[25]

Holy Inanna took them in.[26]

Following a break of approximately twenty-five lines, which may have depicted Inanna's being questioned by someone in the Abzu who was suspicious of her actions, we find the goddess itemizing the ninety-four *me* one by one and claiming that it was Enki who gave them to her. But she may still have encountered some obstacle blocking her departure from the Abzu with the *me,* for following another break of some twenty lines we find Enki, still evidently in an expansive mood, calling his *sukkal* and instructing him to make sure that the goddess arrive safely in Erech, thus (p. 26):

Enki says to the *sukkal* Isimud:
"My *sukkal* Isimud, my Sweet Name of An!"

"My king Enki, I stand at your service.
Tell me what you want!"

"The one who is set to leave for Erech-Kullab,
who is set to leave for the place where the sun [shines(?)]—
make sure she arrives there safely,
just as I ordered."

And so, the poet continues:

Holy Inanna gathered all the *me,*
loaded them onto the Boat of An,
shoved off the Boat of An from the quay.[27]

By this time, however, the effect of the beer had faded away, and on examining his Abzu Enki realized that the *me* were missing. He therefore summoned Isimud and, cluster by cluster, demands to know where they were, only to learn that he had given them to Inanna, thus:

When from the one who had drunk beer,
from the one who had drunk beer,
the beer had streamed out,
when from Father Enki who had drunk beer,
the beer had streamed out,
the great lord Enki scrutinized[?] his holy [Sea-House(?)]
the lord lifts his eyes to the Abzu,
King Enki scrutinized[?] Eridu.

Enki says to his *sukkal* Isimud:
"My *sukkal* Isimud, my Sweet Name of An!"

"My king, Enki, I stand at your service.
Tell me what you want!"

"*en*-ship,
lagal-ship,
godship,
the noble, enduring crown,
the throne of kingship—where are they?"

"My king has given them to his daughter."

Enki's question and Isimud's answer are now repeated in the text for each cluster of *me,* and Enki realizes that he has given away all the *me* in his keep. The nature of his reaction to this disturbing news, which may have been anger and frustration, is unknown, for the next fifty-five lines or so of the text are either entirely missing or quite fragmentary, and at present it is impossible to suggest a reasonable restoration of their contents.[28] When the text resumes, we find Enki making his first of six attempts to bring back the Boat of An and its cargo of *me* to Eridu, thus:

The prince says to his *sukkal* Isimud,
Enki addresses the word to the Sweet Name of An:
"My *sukkal* Isimud, Sweet Name of An!"

"My king Enki, I stand at your service.
Let me know what you want."

"Where did the Boat of An arrive?"

"It just arrived at the quay. . . ."

"Go! Have the *enkum*s seize the Boat of An."[29]

Isimud catches up with Inanna at this spot,[30] and informs her that Enki has commanded him to bring back the boat to Eridu, but that she may proceed to Erech. The goddess is enraged at Enki's deceitful behavior, and when the *enkum*s come to seize the boat, she calls upon her faithful *sukkal* Ninshubur,[31] who in some unexplained manner, succeeds in freeing the boat from the *enkum*s. The dialogue-laden passage reads as follows (pp. 32–34):

The *sukkal* Isimud says to holy Inanna:
"My queen, your father sent me to you,
Inanna, your father sent me to you.
Your father—what he has said is lofty,
Enki—what he has said is lofty,
his great words cannot be subverted."

Holy Inanna answers him:
"My father—what is it that he has said to you?
What is it that he has assigned to you?
What are his great words that cannot be subverted?"

"My king said to me,
Enki has assigned to me:
'Let Inanna keep going to Erech.
You turn the Boat of An back to Eridu.'"

Holy Inanna says to the *sukkal* Isimud:
"My father—how is it that he changed his word to me!
How is it that he broke his pledge to me!
How is it that he has dishonored his great words to me!
My father has spoken cunningly to me,
has assigned cunning to me.
Cunningly he pronounced "In the name of my power!
the name of my Abzu!
Cunningly he sent you to me."

Hardly had she formed these words in her mouth,
when the *enkum*s seize the Boat of An.

Holy Inanna says to her *sukkal* Ninshubur:
"Come, my faithful *sukkal* of the Eanna,
my *sukkal* of gracious words,
my *ragaba* of truthful words,[32]
you hand has not touched the water,
your foot has not touched the water!"[33]

Frustrated in his first attempt, Enki summons Isimud a second time (p. 34):

The *me* granted Inanna
—and the Boat of An—having been set free,
the prince a second time says to his *sukkal* Isimud,
Enki addresses the word to the Sweet Name of An:
"My *sukkal* Isimud, Sweet Name of An!"

"My king Enki, I stand at your service.
Let me know what you want."

"Where has the Boat of An arrived?"

"It just arrived at the holy. . . . "

"Go! Have the giants of Eridu[34]
—the fifty of them—
seize the Boat of An."

The *sukkal* catches up with Inanna a second time, and the text repeats verbatim the conversation between Isimud and the goddess as well as the latter's call to Ninshubur for help when the fifty giants of Eridu had seized the boat.

Enki tries four more times to have the boat brought back to Eridu; first with the help of the fifty *laḫama*-monsters of the sea;[35] then with the help of the "big fish"; next with "the watchmen of Erech"; and finally with the guardians(?)[36] of the Iturungal Canal, which was the last stop before the boat's arrival at Erech (pp. 36–48).

There follows a fragmentary, largely unintelligible passage of some seventeen lines that concludes with a brief plea by Ninshubur to her mistress. Inanna then addresses Ninshubur with these words (pp. 50–52):

"As far as I am concerned:
on the day the Boat of An
[enters] the gate Nigulla of Erech-Kullab,[37]
let high water sweep over the [streets],
let high water pass over the [paths],
let the . . . ,
let the . . . in joy.

[Let] the old men [dispense] heart-soothing,
[let] the old women [dispense] counseling,
[let] the young men [compete in] the force [of weapons],
[let] the little children [play] with joyous heart,
[let] Erech-[Kullab be festive.]

[*four lines destroyed*]

[Let] the docking of the [Boat of An bring] sweet water,
[let] the Boat of An [be greeted] with song by the *en,*
let him [deliver] great prayers,
let the king slaughter oxen,
[let him multiply sheep],
let him pour beer out of the cup.

Let the drum and tambourine resound,
let the *tigi*-music—so sweet—be conducted,[38]
let all the lands proclaim my noble name,
let my people sing the praises of me."

There follows a passage depicting the arrival of Inanna and her boat at the Nigulla gate and proceeding from there to their last stop, the "White Quay," where the goddess unloads the precious *me.* On the way she docks at the gate of the *gipar,* originally a "storehouse," but more importantly the place of the "sacred marriage" fertility rite (and the dwelling place of the human partners in the rite). (On the *gipar,* see *CAD sub gipāru,* 5, 83–84.)

On the day the Boat of An
[entered] the gate Nigulla of Erech-Kullab,
high water swept over the street,
[high water passed over the paths].

It reached the house of the maid, its base[?] . . . ,
It [docked by] the pure well,
her "head" well,
the *me* granted Inanna
and the Boat of An
[arrived] at the gate of *gipar,*
docked at the gate of the Enun.[39]

Holy Inanna hurriedly[?] . . .[40]
the place of[?] the Boat of An.

Once again Enki summons Isimud and now learns that the boat has docked at the "White Quay," thus (p. 52):

The prince says to his *sukkal* Isimud,
"My *sukkal* Isimud, my Sweet Name of An!"

"My king Enki, I stand at your service!
Let me know what you want."

"Where has the Boat of An arrived?"

"It arrived at the White Quay."

"Go!. . ."

The brief instructions to Isimud, probably no more than two lines, are lost,[41] as are the next five lines. When the text resumes we find Inanna unloading the ninety-four *me* (pp. 54–60), one by one, beginning with the *me* of *en*-ship and ending with the *me* of decision-making.[42] There follows a largely unintelligible passage of about twenty lines depicting the naming by a "woman" of several places in Erech, including the White Quay (p. 60). The myth concludes with a sixteen-line speech by Enki, destroyed in large part,[43] except for the last three lines, which can be restored to read as follows (p. 62):

"At your *gipar*-gate [may the *en*]
spend [the days in jubilation],[44]
[may] the sons of your city,
the sons of Erech,
live there [joyous of heart].

"And as far as you are concerned:
your city has indeed been an ally of Eridu . . . ,
to its former place it will, then, be restored."

CHAPTER 5

Enki and Eridu: The Journey of the Water-god to Nippur

"Enki and Eridu: The Journey of the Water-god to Nippur"[1] is one of the shortest myths in the Sumerian repertoire, and one of the best preserved—its 129 lines of text are virtually complete. It is a charter myth whose intent is obvious and manifest: the glorification of Enki's temple in Eridu known as the Abzu or as the Sea House, and the validating blessing of Enlil before all the gods assembled at Nippur. Structurally speaking, it consists of two principal parts: the first (lines 1–71) is devoted to the glorification of the temple; the second (lines 72 to the end) depicts Enki's journey to Nippur and the events that took place there after his arrival.

The author begins with an imaginative, poetic portrayal of the luminous, cheer-bringing temple built of silver and lapis lazuli and extensively adorned with gold, a temple whose very bricks are eloquent and resounding, and whose reed hedges roar like a bull, thus (lines 1–17):

In those days,
once the fates had been decreed,
after the year *ḫegal,* heaven-born,[2]
had broken through the earth,[3]
spreading through the land like plants and herbs,
King Enki,
lord of the Abzu,
Enki,
lord who decrees the fates,
built, of silver and lapis lazuli blended as one,
his house:
its silver and lapis lazuli, luminous as the day,[4]
the shrine sent joy through the Abzu.

The *mùš-kù,* with cunning hand turned out,[5]
breaking free of the Abzu,
press up to Nudimmud, the lord.

The silver house he built there,
decked it out with lapis lazuli,
adorned it overall with gold.

In Eridu by the bank he built the house,[6]
its bricks discoursing, and its echoes ring.
Reed hedges roaring like a bull,[7]
the house of Enki, resounding,
nighttimes the house carries praise to its king,
sings it sweetly.[8]

The poet now introduces Enki's faithful *sukkal* (vizier), the Janus-faced Isimud, and has him sing the praises of Enki's temple in a chant that tells us much about its architecture and (perhaps) its decoration, as well as about the rich, complex, instrumental and vocal music that resounded in it. First the "architectural" passage (lines 18–48):

Sukkal Isimud to king Enki
with affection speaks,
stands at the house,
pours forth the voice,[9]
stands at the brickwork,
gives voice:

"House built up of silver and lapis lazuli,
whose base is planted in the Abzu,[10]
treasured by the prince out of the Abzu,[11]
feared by the high Tigris and Euphrates:

"you send joy through the Abzu of Enki—

"your lock, unrivaled,
your bolt, a fearsome 'noble beast,'[12]
your roof-beam, the 'Bull of Heaven,'
a *mùš-kù* cunningly turned out,[13]
your mat, lapis lazuli,
adornment for the roof-beam,[14]
your vault, a bull with horns raised high,
your gate, a 'noble beast' gripping a man,
your doorsill, a lion rising up against a man—[15]
Abzu, pure place, decorous,[16]
Sea House: your king has set his foot towards you.[17]

"Enki, king of the Abzu,
adorned your foundation with carnelian,
honored you with sacred incantations.[18]

"House of Enki that fires the *lalḫar,*[19]
bull that presses closely to its king,
that roars with lust,
that reechoes in harmony,[20]
Sea House with reed hedges tied together by Enki,
you from whose midst the lofty dais is raised up,[21]
whose threshold is the arm of the heavenly *mùš-kù,*[22]
Abzu, pure place, where the fates have been decreed,
The cunning lord, king Enki,
Nudimmud, lord of Eridu,
in the 'wild ram's' midst—on which no man has ever gazed—[23]
has had your *abgal* loose his hair down over his back."[24]

Isimud's chant now continues with a description of the diversified musical sounds reverberating from the temple (lines 49–71):

"Eridu, beloved of Enki,
Sea House, brimming over with *ḫegal,*
Abzu, life of the land,
beloved of Enki,
House built on the edge,[25]
fit for the *me* of crafts,
Eridu, whose shade stretches over the midst of the sea,
the billowing sea, unrivaled,
the high river, awesome,
that strikes terror in the land,[26]
Sea House, powerful,
noble,
firm-standing,
House by the seaside,
a lion in the midst of the Abzu,
Noble House of Enki that pours wisdom over the land:

"your din, like the rising high river,[27]
makes music for king Enki,
sweetly at his holy house it plays it,[28]
the lyre,
the *algar,*
the harp,
the *algarsurra,*[29]
the *ḫarḫar,*
the *sabitum,*
the *miritum,*
that fill the house,

the sweet sound, the lip-freeing harp,[30]
there resound, according each its own feeling,[31]
eagerly the holy *algar* of Enki plays for him,[32]
the seven *tigi* resounded there.[33]

"Unbending the command of Enki,
[his] word thus firmly grounded."[34]

[Thus] at the brickwork did Isimud give voice,[35]
at the Sea House sweetly he sang.

Now that his temple had been built, Enki is ready to begin his journey to Nippur, the theme of the second half of the composition. Beginning with an imaginative portrayal of the temple as a mazelike mountain floating over the waters, surrounded by a lovely fruit-bearing garden in which birds nested and fish frolicked, the poet pictures Enki as rising up from the waters with fish rising on the waves alongside—a sight wondrous to behold, bringing joy to his Sea House and terror to the sea and the Euphrates, over which he made the South Wind rage (lines 72–84):

Once he had built it,
once he had built it,
once Enki had raised up Eridu,
the mazelike mountain floated upon the waters:[36]
at the borders flowing water was held fast
in the reed marshes;[37]
in its lovely gardens bearing fruit,
birds brood,[38]
the *suḫur*-fish frolics for him
among the honey-plants,
the *gud*-fish swings his tail for him
among the small *gizi*-reeds.

When Enki rose, rose for him the fish upon the waves.[39]

He stood at the Abzu, wondrous to see:
into the Sea House he brought joy,[40]
into the sea put fear,[41]
in the high river created terror,[42]
raised up the South Wind raging over the Euphrates.

The poet now pictures Enki loosening the boat from its moorings, taking hold of the tow-rope, and setting sail with a little snake as his punting pole and little reeds as his oars, while the river reechoes to him with a sound like that of a calf and a "good" cow. Then, evidently mindful of the banquet of the gods during

which he would receive his anticipated blessing, he slaughters many oxen and sheep, and brings them along with him to the *giguna* at Nippur together with the musical instruments *ala* and *ub,* thus (lines 86–97):

His punting pole—it is his *MUŠ*-god[43]—
his oars—his small reeds—
Enki, whose sailing forth fills the year with *ḫegal,*[44]
readily let loose the boat,
readily took hold the towing rope.[45]

When he slipped free of the house at Eridu,
the river for its king reechoed,
its voice the voice of a calf,
the voice of a good cow.[46]

Enki slaughters oxen,
multiplies sheep.

Where no *ala* had been, there he had one brought;
where no *ub* had been, there he had one brought.[47]

To Nippur all alone he made his way:
brought them into the *giguna* with him,
the Nippur shrine.

Once in the *giguna,* Enki sets about preparing the drinks and cakes essential to a joyous banquet. First he pours the beer and wine into large bronze vessels. Next he mixes the bran mash of the very best beer in the *kurkurru*-vessel and pours an equal measure of date syrup into its mouth. Finally he bakes the bran mash into refreshing honey-bread and gives it to Enlil to eat in his Nippur shrine (lines 98–105):[48]

Enki went for the beers,
went for the wines,
poured the wine into large bronzes,
distilled the emmer-beer at the same time,
mixed the bran mash in the *kurkurru*-vessel—
for the best beer[49]—
poured in equal parts date syrup at its mouth,
and baked this bran mash to one refreshing honey-bread.

Enki in the Nippur shrine
gives bread to his father Enlil to eat.

The preparation completed, the banquet is about to begin. First, however, the seating arrangement had to be taken care of in accordance with divine protocol: An was seated in the "high" place with Enlil alongside, and Nintu in a seat of

honor, and the other gods, the Anunna, took their seats one after the other. And so all of them drink and enjoy the beer and the wine, challenging heaven and earth as they drain the vessels of their contents (lines 106–13):

An he seated in the high place.
Next to An he placed Enlil.
Nintu he seated in a seat of honor.[50]
One by one the Anunna-gods took their seats.
These folks drink beer,
joy in the wine,
keep the bronze *aga*-vessels filled to overflowing,[51]
with the bronzes challenge even heaven and earth,
drain slowly [?] the *tilimda*-vessel,
the holy *magur*-boats.

Finally, after the drinking had come to an end, Enlil was filled with joy, and pronounced the expected blessing, primarily a glorification of Enki's temple (lines 114–27):

After the beer was drunk,[52]
after the wine was enjoyed,
after the dregs of the beer[53] removed
from the house,
Enlil was full with joy in Nippur.

Enlil says to the Anunna-gods:
"You great gods who are standing around,
you Anunna-gods who lead the assembly:

my son has built a house—Enki the king.
Like a mountain he reared up Eridu
out of the ground.
He built the house in a good place,
Eridu, the pure place,
where no one dares enter,[54]
house built of silver,
fretted out with lapis lazuli,
house where the seven *tigi* are conducted,
where spells are dealt out,
house that sacred songs and decorous turn into
a sweet location:
shrine Abzu, fit for the good arts of Enki,
for the *me* of crafts."

The poet now concludes the composition with the lines (128–29): "Eridu, the holy house, having been built—Father Enki, praise!"

CHAPTER 6

The Enigmatic Enki

In addition to the major Sumerian myths in which Enki is the main character or the focus of interest, a number of shorter pieces that shed light on Enki have survived. Among them are myths, hymns, and even a letter sent to him by one of his scribes. The pieces are quite diverse, from creation stories to stories in which Enki adopts the unusual role of battling hero. Of the nine poems gathered here, seven deal with the virtually untranslatable Sumerian concepts, the *me* and *giš-ḫur,* those "key words" and "patterns" that were thought to rule the universe. The *me,* which we have seen earlier in chapter 4, are not the exclusive possession of Enki, are nonetheless close to the very essence of the god whose creative (and destructive) word can bring order where there had been only chaos (and introduce disorder where there had been harmony). These pieces are perhaps closer to the Enki cult than are the longer myths. The hymns and prayers certainly involve humans in a more immediate way than do the stories, and they raise questions about the more sinister powers of the cunning god. If Enki is a beneficent creator, the human voices raised in distress and anxiety find other, unsettling qualities in the crafty one.

Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves

Of these shorter pieces, "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves" is filled with puzzling and tantalizing references to Enki's power over the *me* and the consequences, good and bad, for humankind of Enki's *me.* The translation of this strange and murky piece follows a commentary on each of the ten sections, or *kirugu.* (For a transliteration of the text and comments on the Sumerian, see the notes to this chapter.)[1]

This psalm or chant edited here is part of a long *balag*-composition consisting of more than sixty *kirugu* devoted to various deities. The *balag* was a musical instrument, originally a harp but later a percussion instrument, perhaps a drum. The word also designates the song accompanied by the *balag,* probably a dirge (*CAD sub balaggu,* 2, 38–39). To date, only two tablets inscribed with portions of this composition have been identified: (1) a very fragmentary piece excavated at

Nippur and now in the University Museum, published in *HAV* 13; it is part of a six-column tablet of which the reverse only is preserved, and contains parts of *kirugu* 46–48 of the composition dedicated to the goddess Ninisinna; (2) a fairly well preserved unpublished six-column tablet in the British Museum (BM 86535) that contains wholly or in part nineteen *kirugu:* 46–49 dedicated to Ninisinna, 50–59 dedicated to Enki, 60–64 dedicated to Abu.

Although the text of the ten *kirugu* that constitute the Enki psalm is fairly well preserved, its contents are extremely difficult to penetrate and interpret because of the poet's laconic, enigmatic, allusive, and elusive style, not to mention the lexical and grammatical difficulties that usually abound in Sumerian literary texts. The translation and interpretation presented here are therefore to be taken as a pioneering effort that may help to pave the way for deeper and more trustworthy attempts at some future date.

The ten *kirugu* that constitute the Enki psalm seem to be separate, unrelated entities, at least on the surface; the link between them may perhaps be Enki's relationship to humankind (*na-ám-lú-lu*$_6$, *lú,* and especially the Emesal *mu-lu*) which turns out to be by no means as favorable as might have been expected. Following is a very tentative summary of each of the *kirugu:*

The first *kirugu* (*kirugu* 50 of the composition) begins with the poet's exclamatory soliloquy about a song that involves the "raising of the arm," which is sung in the Abzu, also known as the *é-engur-ra,* not only to Enki but also to various deities that were members of his family. The poet then addresses Enki directly as the god who rides the waves and as the "twin" of the Euphrates River that causes oxen, sheep, and humankind to proliferate (lines 102–11). Having mentioned humankind, he continues with a narrative passage that may turn out to be of no little significance for Sumerian theology and mythology, once its ambiguities and obscurities have been clarified. As we very tentatively interpret it, the poet asserts that after human beings had multiplied, Enki brought them forth to his "house" and to his *me* that were in it, but then took away from the "house" the "*me* of life," and fastened to his breast other *me* he had especially sought out. Moreover he then commanded that humankind *(mulu)* must not covet the *me* (lines 112–22).

In the second *kirugu* (*kirugu* 51 of the composition), however, humanity is not mentioned. It begins with an exclamatory cry addressed presumably to the worshiper, to hail the Abzu and the *é-engur-ra,* and continues with a narrative passage portraying Enki as a successful fisherman: he casts his nets and a spell (?), and these bring up the fish with them (lines 123–34).

In the third *kirugu* (*kirugu* 52 of the composition) humanity *(lú)* is mentioned, and very much to its disadvantage. This *kirugu* introduces Enki's awesome word, which it depicts as a viper's venom that attacks human beings, and as a lion's (or scorpion's) venom that paralyzes a human being (lines 135–42).

The fourth *kirugu* (*kirugu* 53 of the composition) continues the portrayal of Enki's dreaded word; it is a floodwave that carries off humanity *(lú)* and inspires fear in the human body *(mulu)* (lines 143–48).

In the fifth *kirugu* (*kirugu* 54 of the composition) the poet, perhaps distressed by Enki's hostile attitude, prays to him to set his face to the *mulu*'s house: to his door, bolt, millstones, reed sieves, and gate (lines 149–56).

Evidently Enki responded favorably to the prayer. For according to the sixth *kirugu* (*kirugu* 55 of the composition), the poet, in addressing Enki, asserts that his face which presumably he had set to the *mulu*'s house, is actually communing with the *mulu* for the sake of the god's birds and fish as many as had been given names, as well as for the sake of his well-built temples and cities, as many as had been given names (lines 157–61).

Perhaps as thanksgiving for Enki's favorable response, the *mulu,* according to the beginning of the seventh *kirugu* (*kirugu* 56 of the composition) has Damgalnunna, Enki's spouse, bring grain to her husband. The remainder of the *kirugu,* however, though fully preserved, is altogether obscure because some of the key phrases are enigmatic. But the *mulu* is mentioned once again as filling the hand of the nursemaid, the *ummeda* (perhaps a designation of Damgalnunna), though it is not clear what it was that he filled it with (lines 152–71).

The *mulu* is also mentioned in the eighth *kirugu* (*kirugu* 57 of the composition), but in an obscure context; it seems to consist of a prayer by the poet to Enki to come (?) to the *mulu*'s house rich in possessions, the house where live his spouse and son, the Abzu where dwells the honest word (lines 172–77).

But, according to the ninth *kirugu* (*kirugu* 58 of the composition), Enki, who is sailing happily and joyously in his *magur*-boat as if it were his new *magur*-boat and as if it were his new chariot, keeps on "establishing" his word, and did not approach his house (lines 177–87).

As for the tenth and last *kirugu* (*kirugu* 59 of the composition), all that can be gleaned from its brief contents is that someone is speaking with Enki and repeating the exclamatory phrase, "Lo, the royal house!" (lines 188–93).

Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves

The First *Kirugu* (50)

Raise up the arm! Raise up the arm!
Song of Enki: raise up the arm!
Song of that holy master: raise up the arm!
Song of the master of the Abzu: raise up the arm!
Song of Damgalnunna: raise up the arm! [85]
Song of Asarluḫi: raise up the arm!
Song of Nammu: raise up the arm!
Song of Arae: raise up the arm!
Raise up the arm! Where is it sung?
Song of Enki: where is it sung? [90]
Song of that master of the Abzu: where is it sung?
Song of the holy master: where is it sung?
Song of Damgalnunna: where is it sung?
Song of Asarluḫi: where is it sung?
Song of Nammu: where is it sung? [95]
Song of Arae: where is it sung?

It is sung! It is sung!
It is sung in the Abzu,
power of the Prince;
It is sung in Eridu,
the sweet.
It is sung in the *é-engur-ra;* [100]
It is sung in the Abzu,
where the upright word stands.

Master, when you ride the floodwaves,
Enki, when you ride the floodwaves,
little waves attack for you
like oxen,
big waves array themselves for you
like a headdress. [105]

The river, the river teems with *ḫegal.*
The river, the princely river, teems with *ḫegal.*
Twin of the Euphrates it teems with *ḫegal.*

The river has teemed with teeming oxen,
The river has teemed with teeming sheep, [110]
The river has teemed with teeming humankind.

He made them come out to them in the house,
the Master—to his *me.*
He made them come out to them,
Master of the Abzu—to his *me,*
he made them come out to them in the house. [115]

He took away the *me* of life from the house.
He hunted out,
he hunted out the *me,*
he fastened them about his chest.
Master he is of the plenteous *me:*
for his *me* the *mulu* must not long.
Enki of the plenteous *me:*
for his *me* the *mulu* must not long.
He must not long—the *mulu* must not long—for his *me.* [120]
His command: "The *mulu* must not long for them."
His order: "The *mulu* must not long for them."

The fiftieth *kirugu.*

The Second *Kirugu* (51)

Hail the Abzu! Hail the Abzu!
Hail the Abzu,
power of the Prince,
Hail Eridu,
the sweet,
Hail the *é-engur-ra,*
Hail the Abzu
where the upright word stands!

Ah! The Master cast the nets,
Enki cast the nets,
He cast the first spell [?]:
it made the fish come with it.
Spoken out by the Master:
it made the fish come with it.

He reached the vermin rising from the earth out to the fish.
The Master reached the long net out to the fish.
The Master of the Abzu reached the long net out to the fish.

The fifty-first *kirugu.*

The Third *Kirugu* (52)

His word is a floodwave,
a floodwave that breeds fear.
The word of Enki is a floodwave,
a floodwave
The word of Damgalnunna is a floodwave,
a floodwave.
The word of the Master of the Abzu is a floodwave,
a flood-wave.

You are true with those who are true.
you are not true with those who are not true.
You are the venom of a viper set against humankind.

His word is the venom of a lion that does not come out
for the sake of humans.
His word is a floodwave,
a floodwave that breeds fear.

The fifty-second *kirugu.*

The Fourth *Kirugu* (53)

His word that engendered a floodwave carries humankind away [?].
The word of Enki that engendered a floodwave,
The word of Damgalnunna that engendered a floodwave,
The word of the Master of the Abzu that engendered a floodwave:

"Fear of you in my body,
fear [of you in my body],
the *mulu*—fear [of you in my body]."
The lo[rd]. . . .

The fifty-third *kirugu.*

The Fifth *Kirugu* (54)

Master, turn your face to the house of the *mulu.*
River Tigris,
master of the Abzu—to the house of the *mulu,*
fisher [?] of the sea—to the house of the *mulu,*
fowler of the mountain's base—to the house of the *mulu:*
to the door of the *mulu,*
to the bolt of the *mulu,*
to the millstone of the *mulu,*
to the stone pounder [?] of the *mulu,*
to the reed-sieve of the *mulu,*
to the *šašur* of the *mulu,*
to the gate of the *mulu,*
turn your face.

The fifty-fourth *kirugu.*

The Sixth *Kirugu* (55)

Master, your face *LI-bi-àm-ma,*
speaks with the *mulu.*
River Tigris,
Master of the Abzu, your face *LI-bi-àm-ma,*
for the sake of your fish and birds—
as many as have been called a name—
for the sake of your well-built houses—
as many as have been called by name—
for the sake of your well-built cities—
as many as have been called by name—
it speaks with the *mulu.*

The fifty-fifth *kirugu.*

The Seventh *Kirugu* (56)

Eh! *ellu!* come, come! come, come!
ellu! come, come!

Eh! The Queen brought the *mulu*'s grain,
Damgalnunna brought the *mulu*'s grain.
The master of the house
in the house *na-ám ga mu-un-di,* [165]
[?] *al-di àm-ma-an-da al-di.*
The *mulu* filled the hand of the nursemaid *é*-[?],
the *mulu,* the hand of the nursemaid *en-ga me bí-zu,*
en-ga me bí-zu en-ga me bí-zu.

What is in the corner *en-ga me bí-zu,* [170]
What is at the side *en-ga me bí-zu?*

The fifty-sixth *kirugu.*

The Eighth *Kirugu* (57)

Eh! *el-lu!* Master, *šen-BU-na*
al-lu-ru-da.

River Tigris,
master of the Abzu, *šen-BU-na,*
my master, to the house of valuables,
River Tigris,
master of the Abzu, to the [treasure-house], [175]
the house where the wife lives,
the house where the son lives,
to the Abzu where the upright word stands,
al-lu-ru-da.

The fifty-seventh *kirugu.*

The Ninth *Kirugu* (58)

The master did not come near,
the master did not come near.

The master sailed in his *magur*-boat,
setting out the master's word. [180]

The River Tigris,
master of the Abzu, did not come near,

The fisher [?] of the sea,
the master did not come near,
the fowler of the mountain's base,
the master did not come near.
As if in his new *magur*-boat he brought joy.
As if in his new chariot he carried cheer. [185]

The master sailed in his *magur*-boat,
setting out the master's word.

The fifty-eighth *kirugu.*

The Tenth *Kirugu* (59)

[?-*ÁG* with the master,
?-*ÁG*] with the master
[?]-*ÁG* with the master[?],
speaks with him.

Eh! Ah! the king's house! Eh! Ah! The king's house! [190]

River Tigris,
master of the Abzu! The king's house!
Fisher[?] of the sea! The king's house!
Fowler of the mountain's base! The king's house!
Eh! Ah! The king's house!

The fifty-ninth *kirugu.*

Enki's Struggle with the *Kur*

"Enki's Struggle with the *Kur*" is one of the unusual stories that depict Enki as a warrior. It is also one of the earliest versions of a motif that becomes common much later in the West: the slaying of the dragon. Three such stories have survived in Sumerian. In only this one is Enki a major character.

The story is unsatisfactory in the sense that the outcome of the struggle between Enki and the monster, the *Kur,* is not given in the text. The story is told as a prologue to the main narrative about the hero Gilgamesh in "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Nether World" (see Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981], pp. 168–70). The narrator cuts to the main story without making clear how Enki's struggle with the monster is resolved. There is little doubt, however, that Enki was victorious.

The Sumerian word *kur* is a difficult concept to interpret. One of its primary meanings is "mountain," and from that meaning *kur* developed as "foreign land," because the mountainous countries bordering Sumer were a continual menace to the Sumerians. The word also meant "land" in general. But, of more immediate interest to this poem, *kur* is also a cosmic concept, identified with the *ki-gal* or Great Below. Thus *kur* is also the "nether world." If *kur* is thus conceived as the

empty space between the earth's crust and the primeval sea, the monster, the *Kur* who in this story seizes the goddess Ereshkigal and carries her off to the nether world represents the sinister powers of the land of death.

In this passage, Enki, possibly acting against the *Kur* to avenge the violent abduction of the goddess Ereshkigal, is attacked with all kinds of stones. The *Kur* attacks Enki's boat, front and rear, using besides the stones the primeval waters as well.

Enki's Struggle with the Kur

In those days,
in those days far distant,

in those nights,
in those nights far distant,

in those years,
in those years far distant,

those remote days—
once all the useful things had been turned out—

those remote days—
once all the useful things had come to be prized:

once bread was tasted in the shrines of the land,

once bread was baked in the ovens of the land,

once heaven had been moved away from earth,

once earth had been split away from heaven,

once the name of humankind was fixed,

once An had carried heaven off,

once Enlil had carried earth off,

once Ereshkigal had been given over to the *Kur*
as a gift from them,

& *he* had set sail,
& *he* had set sail,

& the father had set sail for the *Kur,*

against the king were flung the small ones,

against Enki were flung the large ones.

Its small ones the stones of the hand,

its large ones the stones of jumping reeds,

the keep of Enki's boat

like attacking turtles overwhelm.

Against the king the water at the boat's prow

devours like a wolf.

Against Enki the water at the boat's stern,

strikes down like a lion.

Ninurta's Pride and Punishment

UET 6, no.2, contains part of the text of a Ninurta myth whose beginning and end were no doubt inscribed on tablets whose contents preceded and followed those of the extant piece.[2] Its contents may be sketeched as follows: the first four lines contain the concluding part of an address by Amar-Anzu to Ninurta, informing him that, because he (Ninurta) had attacked it (the Amar-Anzu) violently "at his command," it dropped the *me,* the *giš-ḫur,* the "tablet of destiny," of of its hand, and these have thus been returned to the Abzu (lines 1–4).[3]

Stunned by this news, Ninurta laments the loss of the *me* and the powers that go with them, a bitter plaint whose implication Enki apprehended in the Abzu (lines 5–9).[4] Rather surprisingly, we next find the Amar-Anzu taking his attacker Ninurta by the hand and "returning" him to the Abzu (lines 10–12).[5] There he is greeted joyously by Enki who blesses him as the victor over the "bird," an unrivaled hero whose name will be duly honored (lines 13–24).

This blessing, however, does not satisfy the ambitious god, who made secret, hostile plans against Enki (lines 25–30).[6] The latter, realizing that Ninurta meant to do him serious injury, sent his *sukkal* Isimud to eject him from the Abzu. Ninurta, however, not only refused to leave, but actually raised a hand against him (lines 32–35). Whereupon the troubled Enki fashioned a turtle out of the clay of the Abzu. The turtle proceeded to attack Ninurta who, however, counterattacked in self-defense (lines 36–41). Enki then had the turtle dig an "evil" pit into which he threw Ninurta alongside the turtle (lines 42–44).

He then added insult to injury by scoffing at the struggling Ninurta, calling him a mountain-destroyer who could not climb out of a pit, and yet had dared to think of killing him (lines 45–54). But now Ninmenna, that is, Ninḫursag, came to her son's rescue. Reminding Enki, "the plant-eater," that she had once saved his life, she no doubt demanded that he show his gratitude by delivering Ninurta from his sad predicament and saving his life.[7]

Ninurta's Pride and Punishment[8]

"At his command your weapon struck me, hard.

As I let go the *me* out of my hand,
its *me* turned back to the Abzu.[9]
As I let go the *giš-ḫur* out of my hand,
its *giš-ḫur* turned back to the Abzu.
[Its tablet of destiny] turned back to the Abzu—
I was stripped of the *me.*"[10]

At [the word of Amar-An]zu, the hero Ninurta was stunned,[11] [5]

[Ninmenna] gives out a wail:
"And what about me? Its *me* have not fallen into my hand.
I am not to exercise the *en*-ship of the Abzu.
He would not let [me] . . . ,
just like the one in the [shrine] Abzu."[12]

Father Enki in the Abzu knew the word [that one had spoken].[13]

Amar-Anzu took the hero Ninurta by the hand,[14]
with him drew near to Enki's place, the Abzu,
and thus was *utaulu* [?] returned to the Abzu by Amar-Anzu.

The Master was delighted with the hero.[15]
Father Enki was delighted with the hero.

The master Nudimmud speaks to him with [affec]tion:
"Hero! No god among [your] brother gods could have done so.
As for the bird which your mighty weapon has pinioned—
from now to eternity[16] [you will set] your foot upon its neck.

Let the great gods give [your heroic] strength its due.
Let your father Enlil do whatever [you] command[?].
Let Ninmenna not design anything like you.
Let her give no one the kind of awesomeness you possess.
Let her have no one grasp[?] it [awesomeness(?)] before you.
Monthly may your . . .
be constant in the shrine Abzu.
Let your name be proclaimed in the seat of honor."

The hero—his heart did not spring at this blessing.[17]

At his post, how[?] his face darkens,
how it pales!
His heart turns over great things.
His heart is hostile.
He . . . not his . . . ,
he . . . his body.
On the whole universe the hero Ninurta set his sights.
He told no one,
his heart did not. . . .
The great lord Enki, in his own heart,
grasped the meaning of the plan.

In his shrine Abzu he stirred up billowing waves.[18]
By the house the *sukkal* Isimud threatened[?] that one.[19]
The hero Ninurta refuses to come out,
and raised his hand against Isimud.

Against him Enki designed a turtle
from the clay of the Abzu.[20]
Against him he stationed the turtle at the entrance,
the gate of the Abzu.

Enki kept talking to him at the place of combat,[21]
luring him along to the place where the turtle stood.

With its sinews the turtle seized his back.
The hero Ninurta turned back against its "feet."[22]

Enki, as if perplexed, says, "Now what is this!"[23]

He had it scrape the ground with its claws,
had it dig an "evil" pit.
The hero Ninurta he tossed him into it alongside it.

The hero did not know how to ascend [from(?)] . . . ,[24]
The turtle kept on gnawing [at his fe]et with its [claws].[25]

The great master Enki says to him:
"From . . . I[?] have gathered[?] . . . ,
You who set your mind to kill me,[26]
[the brag]gart who makes big claims
I cut down,
I raise up.
Whatever made you set your mind against me!
What has your past taught you,
what indeed is its . . . ?[27]
To what place has your strength fled?
Where is your heroship?
You have destroyed mountains—
why is it that now you cannot rise up!"

Ninmenna learned of this situation.[28]
She rips the clothes on her body,
she . . . :[29]
"As for you, my plant-eater,
who carried *it* away from you?[30]
you, the one whose head does not shake with fear,
that . . . ,
who carried it away from you?
Enki, that thing that has no name,
its name that is 'the day that does not pour. . . .'
you, pitiless death,
who carried it away from you?"

A Creation Story

A work called "The Disputation between the Bird and the Fish" is introduced by a narrative of creation in which Enki is shown bringing the waters of the world together, ordering the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to their place, set-

ting up "stalls and sheepfolds" and then "cities and hamlets." Enki then sets out to inspect the reed marshes. He gives fish and bird their place in the cosmos and sets before them their *giš-ḫur,* the pattern of the cosmos, like the *me*—that is, their ruling principles.[31]

A Creation Story

Once [in those days] when a good-hearted fate had been decreed,
[and An and Enlil] had laid down its *giš-ḫur,*
[Nudimmud, the noble prince],
lord of the cunning grasp of things,
[Enki, the fate decreeing king],
the third of them,
brought [the waters of all the land] together,
set them in their places:
life-giving waters that breed the fecund seed
he tied to his hands,
Tigris and Euphrates,
he let fall from his side,
poured into them the waters of all the lands,
and cleaned up the small canals,
lay out there irrigation ditches.

Father Enki spread wide the stalls and sheepfolds,
furnished them with shepherd and herdsmen.

On the earth he set up cities and hamlets,
multipled the Black Heads,
supplied them with a king for "their shepherdship,"
raised him high for "their princeship,"
and made the king go out to all the lands
as a steady light.

Enki set out the marshes in order,
made grow there full-grown reeds and tender reeds.
He stocked the [swamps] and water holes,
lagoons with fish and birds.
He filled the high steppe with creatures breathing
as food for them.

As their charge he set up
the [table] of the gods' *ḫegal.*

Nudimmud, the noble prince,
lord of the cunning grasp of things,
once he fashioned . . . ,
filled the canebrake and the marsh with fish and bird,
assigned their posts to them,
set out before their eyes their own *giš-ḫur.*

The *Nam-shub* of Enki

The *nam-shub* is a speech with magical force. This one is in the form of a highly compact story. Something like the mythical Golden Age—an age when human beings lived at peace in nature and with one another—is linked in the story with what looks like a version of the Tower of Babel. All of the known world spoke the same tongue, worshiping the powerful Enlil. It is Enki who, for reasons that are not made entirely clear, sets up "contention" in the speech of humankind and brings the Golden Age to an end. He is the "contender," the great rival to Enlil in the story.

The story offers a glimpse of the Sumerian worldview. To judge from lines 6–10, the poet conceived of the universe as four major land divisions. His own country, Sumer, formed the southern boundary and consisted, roughly, of the territory between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. North of Sumer was Uri, probably consisting of territory between the two rivers, the land later of Akkad and Assyria. East of Sumer and Uri was Shubur-Hamazi, which no doubt included much of western Iran. To the west and southwest of Sumer was Martu, a vast area between the Euphrates River and the Mediterranean Sea, an area mainly of desert, including Arabia. In short, the world imagined by the Sumerian poet extended from the Armenian highlands in the north to the Arabian Gulf in the south, east to the Mediterranean Sea.

The *nam-shub* is a story within a story, lines 136–55 of the epic "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta." In the epic, Enmerkar, the rule of the city-state of Uruk, is determined to make a vassal state of the mineral-rich Aratta, now part of Iran. It is Enki who aids Enmerkar in his plan, instructing him to send a herald with the magical spell. The end of the epic is difficult to follow, but it appears that the people of Aratta did indeed bring gold, silver, and lapis lazuli to Enmerkar's city of Uruk.

The Nam-shub *of Enki*

Once, then, there was no snake,
there was no scorpion,
there was no hyena,
there was no lion,
there was no wild dog,
no wolf,
there was no fear,
no terror:
human had no rival. [5]

Once, then, the lands Shubur-Hamazi,
polyglot Sumer,
that land great with the *me* of overlordship,
Uri,
the land with everything just so,
the land Martu,
resting securely,

the whole world—
the people as one— [10]
to Enlil in one tongue gave voice.

Then did the contender—the *en*
the contender—the master
the contender—the king
Enki, the contender—the *en*
the contender—the master
the contender—the king
the contender—the *en*
the contender—the master
the contender—the king
Enki, *en* of *ḫegal,*
the one with the unfailing words, [15]
en of cunning,
the shrewd one of the land,
sage of the gods,
gifted in thinking,
the *en* of Eridu,
change the speech of their mouths,
he having set up contention in it,
in the human speech that had been one. [20]

Hymn to Enki with a Prayer for Ur-Ninurta

The following is a hymn to Enki, which is in part a list of epithets of the god and in part a recounting of the stories in which the high gods An and Enlil invested Enki with his special powers and privileges. The work ends with a prayer for the king, named Ur-Ninurta. Ur-Ninurta was the fifth ruler of the Isin Dynasty, a dynasty that came to power after the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur. The city of Isin became the capital of Sumer during this dynasty. The last section of the hymn captures in a few lines the duties of the Sumerian king and the close relationship he was thought to have with the gods. For a commentary on the language of the work, see the notes.[32]

Hymn to Enki with a Prayer for Ur-Ninurta

Master of the commanding eye,
the one who is seated on the earth,
whose heart, far-reaching, knows all things,

Enki, who spreads wisdom wide,
noble leader of the Anunna,

expert who instituted incantations,
word-rich,
the one who keeps his eye on decisions,

guide who gives advice from sunrise to sunset,

Enki, master of all the right commands:
I want to praise you the way you should be praised. [5]

An, your father,
king,
the master who brought all seeds forth,
who settled all the people on the earth, [6]

made you ward of the *me* in heaven and earth,
raised you up their prince—

to open the holy mouth of Tigris and Euphrates Rivers,
to fill them full with joy,

to make thick clouds give out the waters of *ḫegal,*
to make them pour down *heavy* rain on all the fields,

to raise high the head of Ašnan over the furrows,
to cover the steppe with grass and herbs,

to plant orchards and gardens of honey and wine,
to make them reach far like forests—

An, king of the gods, has made you author. [12]

Enlil, his noble *sag-kù-gál* name,
clothed in great awe, [13]

presented you:
you are the breeding master of all things,
a junior Enlil.

Of him who alone is god of heaven and earth,
you are his younger brother.

In your hand he has set all fate-decreeing below and above,
just like him.

The right decision that comes out of your mouth
is supreme[?].

With the god who makes the judgment clear,
for the people who live out even to the very edge of *kur,*

you tend their food and drink,
you are their very father.

O Master, they praise your noble name as their god,
the way they should.
It is a *sagidda.* [20]

O Nudimmud, have your holy worded word lavish Ur-Ninurta
with glory,
let him have no rival.
It is its *gišgigal.* [21]

Great master, you were first to walk on heaven and earth,
you made your name shine forth. [22]

O Enki, you gathered all the *me* that are,
you fixed them at the Abzu.

Of the holy dwelling place you chose,
the Abzu,
noble shrine . . . ,

you made its *me* foremost of the *me,*
you brought its *giš-ḫur* acclaim.

you made its shadow cover all the lands
from sunrise to sunset,

you made its awe and *melam* reach up to holy heaven,
like a heavy cloud,

you filled the Ekur with terror,
that holy dwelling place of An and Enlil.

Given a scepter in its midst
in keeping with
the *me* dealt out to all the great gods,

you create myriad . . . seed[?],
you planned and brought to life humankind. [30]

O Father Enki, when you take your seat
in your fate-decreeing dais
It is a *sagarra.* [31]

May king Ur-Ninurta who has been endowed with glory
by Enlil,

he for whom the house of wisdom
where you have gathered[?] expertise supremely

you will have opened:
become the leader of the Black Heads.

Terror fit for godship make the lion of kingship

shine out upon whatever he touches,
as long as humans live.

Once presented the heavy tribute of the lower and upper sea,
Ur-Ninurta will carry it all to the Ekur of lapis lazuli.

May Enlil,
having cast upon him his jubilant eye,

multiply good days and blissful years of life
during his reign. [40]

O Father Enki, clothed in great awe,
at your occult utterance [41]

let the Anunna, your divine brothers, rejoice with you.

O son of An, noble one,
who has accepted the glory they have given:
your praise is good.

It is a *tigi* of Enki.

Fragment of a Hymn to Enki

The text of this excerpt consists of the initial twenty-eight lines of a tablet that originally contained about sixty lines. Enki's name is not mentioned in the extant lines, but only Enki is a suitable candidate for the titles, epithets, traits, and characteristics depicted in this hymnal fragment. A commentary on the language of the hymn is found in the notes.[33] The term *en,* usually translated "master" or "lord," is left untranslated here to pick up the connection between the rather unusual concept and the name Enki. The hymn is virtually a descriptive definition of the complex concept, the *en.*

Fragment of a Hymn to Enki

En,
crafty at deciding for the gods,
their controller below and above,

who holds the staff,
decrees their fates,
makes the Anunna stand by,

who by himself gave the *me* of the whole world force,
the great *en* who . . . d the living,

you who flared forth as their godship,
who . . . ,

you whose orders make whatever is right flower,
who makes the *me* of heaven and earth steady, [5]
you who direct the enduring *giš-ḫur,*
the *en* who knows them well,

en who springs the seeds to life,
who crafts their good fate,
who calls the path they should take,

who makes their grand rituals
that . . .
grow right like a plant,

who hands out scepters,
assigns the right crowns,
speaks their grand name,

who orders their godship into future distant days
alongside heaven and earth,
who makes the *en*s endure forever,
who set his face . . . ,

en who is fit for crafty thinking,
good sense,
far counsel,
distant wisdom,
the right god who . . . ,
everything of his is mysterious,

who gives out advice,
the *en* who of himself brings comfort,
who makes it blossom like herbs,

en, whose heart is far away,
who never [wearies] of words,
whose knowing is spread wide,
adept, ruler, *en* whose eye is . . . ,
heart is wide,
who knows everything,

you make them grand for the gods,
you raise them high for the Anunna,

your *me* are better than their *me,*
chosen specially,
your precious *me,*
the *me* of whatever is crafty,
you are the right one to guard them,
your control has pressed upon them like a squall,
has covered them like the South Wind,
you have set it up for them like a stupor,
clamped it onto them like a . . . ,

Of your grandeur that is like a far distant mountain
—its . . . has been returned to you there.

Of the settled people
—you, *en,* are their father,
Of those who do not wander about
—you are their shepherd who seeks out food for them.[25]

You spoke to them like their father and mother,
you supply the people with food and drink.
You gave advice,
you passed along much wisdom,
you are a maker of work that is crafty.
You have opened your house that situates thinking,
that adds to wisdom.

[*Remainder of tablet fragmentary and unintelligible.*]

Hymn to Enki's Temple, the *É-engur-ra* of Eridu

In addition to hymns to the gods, the Sumerians composed hymns to the sacred places in which the gods were thought to dwell. The following is a hymn to the Sea House, the temple at Eridu known as the *É-engur-ra.* A commentary on the language of the poem is found in the notes.[34]

Hymn to Enki's Temple, the É-engur-ra *of Eridu*

House,
& ziggurat,
fashioned together with heaven and earth,
terrace of heaven and earth,
large banquet-hall,
Eridu,

Abzu, a shrine built for the Prince,
house, a holy banquet-hall where pure food is eaten,
where water is drunk from the pure canal of the Prince,
& mountain, a pure place, soap-scrubbed,
Abzu: your *tigi*-songs are of the *me,*
your large banquet-bowls were made the right way,
& into that gathering place where the gods settle—
your large & lofty assembly hall, the good place—
never a light pierces.

& House, your charge is purity unequaled.

Your prince,
the great Prince, has set a holy crown firmly on your foundation

Eridu,
the crowned, where the *ád* sprouts up,
where the large *ád* ascends,
the purifier[?],

shrine Abzu, your place,
your great place,
the place where you call to Utu:
there is your oven that "bears" the bread for dining,
& there is your ziggurat,
the lofty shrine that reaches to the sky,
& there is your large oven that rivals the banquet hall—
your Prince,
Prince of Heaven and Earth, whose word is not to be changed,
the . . . ,
the creator, whose . . . is rich in cunning,

has set up, O *É-engur-ra* his "house" on your foundation,
& has seated himself on your dais.

Letter of Sin-šamuḫ, the Scribe to Enki[35]

Finally, it is appropriate to have a composition from the hand of a writer, a scribe to Enki named Sin-šamuḫ. In it the scribe praises Enki/Nudimmud and reminds the god that his servant has done everything proper to his service to the Enki cult. Nevertheless "Namtar has come, and off to the 'place of deceit' has carried" him. No one has helped him in his plight. A "hostile god" brought up all the "sins" of which the scribe stands accused. A vivid description of his dreadful life follows, concluding with a terror common, perhaps, to all poets:

I, a writer who knows many things, am made a fool.

My hand has stopped writing.
There is no talk in my mouth.

He asks, of course, that Enki relieve his state, that Enki have his dear wife Damgalnunna and his son Asarluḫi intercede for him:

I want to live in your sin-absolving gate.

He will, in turn, testify to the people about Enki's power and mercy:

I have written you a letter.
Take pity on me.

Letter of Sin-šamuḫ, the Scribe to Enki

To Enki,
supreme *en* in heaven and earth,
whose nature[36] is without equal,

say:

to Nudimmud,
prince of the wide grasp of things,
who decrees the fates alongside An,

who passes out the right *me* to the Anunna—
their course cannot be turned—

the noble sage
who never stops watching from sunrise to sunset, [5]

en
who knows everything,
king of the deep,
the god who fashioned me,

say besides:

This is what Sin-šamuḫ, the scribe,
son of Ur-Nin- . . .

your servant, says:

"Since the day you put a hand on me—
[turned me] into a human being[37]— [10]

I have not missed pronouncing your name.
I [feared][38] you like a father.

Never a theft at your sacrificial feasts,
which I kept faithfully,
did I commit.[39]

Now, no matter what it is I did,
the verdict of my sin never ends.

And Namtar has come,
and off to the "place of deceit"[40] has carried me.
No welcome sign has any sought for me.

A hostile god has brought in my sins against me—
I could not find a limit to them.[41] [15]

The day that An seized the wealth of my house,

I confronted him with a head bowed,
though I was without sin.

Like a young . . .
I am paralyzed at the wrist.[42]

Like a wagon on the road when its yoke has split,
I stand immobile on the road.

I lay on a bed called "O! and O No!"
I let out a wail.

My graceful figure is stretched neck to ground.
I am paralyzed of foot.

My . . . has been carried off into the earth.
My frame has changed.

[At night][43] I cannot sleep,
my strength has been struck down,
my life is ebbing away.

The bright day is made a dark day for me.
I have slipped into my own grave.

I, a writer who knows many things, am made a fool.[44]

My hand has stopped writing.
There is no talk in my mouth.

I am not an old man,
but my hearing is heavy,
and my eyesight dim.

Like the apprentice to a diviner who was driven from his master's house
I am slandered everywhere[?].

My confidant does not come near me,
will not say a word to me.

My friend give me no advice.
or soothes my heart.

The man full of insults made a mockery of me.[45]
My fate has made me a different person.

My god, I rely on you:
what a thing it is to be human!

I, a boy, do not let the "place of deceit" rush over me
like water.

My house, that well-established nest—
its wealth is not at all secure[?]—

My well-built house—
its brickwork is not at all adorned.

Like tiny cedars planted in a foul place,
I bore no fruit.

Like the young date-palm planted by the towpath,[46]
my branches have not been pared down.

I am young, my days are unfulfilled yet.
Do not let me be carried off like this.
Do not let me wallow in the dust.

Once you let me be held fast in the place
where mother and father are not,
who will say my prayer to you?

Once you have tossed me into the place
where my kin do not gather,
who will carry my offering to you? [40]

Have Damgalnunna, your beloved wife,
carry it[47] with her to you like my mother,
have her bring you my sorrows.

Have Asarluḫi, son of the Abzu,
carry it with him to you like my father,
have him bring you my sorrows.
Let him lead with you to pity me,
have him bring you my sorrows. [45]

Today *I* bring my sins to you.
Seat me by the . . . ,[48]

Look down into the place where I have been thrown.
Take pity on me.
Turn my dark places to sunlight.

I want to live in your sin-absolving gate, I want
to voice your glory
I want to groan out my sins, I want
to assert just how great you are. [50]

In that place of heavy sin I want
to praise your compassion[?].[49]

Release me at the mouth of disaster, . . .[50]

I will testify to the people, I will
make it known in the land.

My god, it is you I fear.

I have written you a letter.
Take pity on me.

The heart of my god: have it given back to me."

CHAPTER 7

The Great Magician

Religion, magic, and medicine are so completely intertwined in Mesopotamia that separating them is frustrating and perhaps futile work. It is true that the world's first pharmacopoeia—the only medical text discovered from the third millennium B.C.—was written in cuneiform Sumerian, and it contained not a single reference to gods or demons.[1] But that was an exceptional text. In contrast, nearly sixty clay tablets on which incantations were written have survived from the period.

The purpose of magical rituals and exorcisms in Mesopotamia were much the same as in other cultures: to cleanse persons of evil influences by transferring the evil to other objects; to inflict injury on an enemy; and to ward off attacks. A. Leo Oppenheim has suggested that there is nothing particularly Mesopotamian in the use of magic, but interest in magic was certainly strong, as evidenced by the extensive literature of divination together with apotropaic rituals and witchcraft. Oppenheim did notice a significant shift in emphasis from the second millennium B.C. to the first millennium B.C., when the medical practitioner lost prestige to the "scientific" physician. The "scientist" in this case, though, means the one who collected omens and practiced what we would consider magic.[2] In any event, there was certainly no shift away from magic toward modern medical science in Mesopotamia.

Anthropologists and historians used to draw sharp distinctions between magic and religion, even attempting to derive religion from magic. Certainly we no longer deemphasize magic and the occult in the Greek and Roman societies in favor of their supposed "rationality." Judaism and Christianity were not immune either, as the popularity of the great god IAŌ, derived from biblical YHWH, in the Nag Hammadi Library, Qumran, and especially the Greek Magical Papyri attest.[3] (The Greek Magical Papyri, dating from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. know even "Ereschigal"—that is, Sumerian Ereshkigal.)[4] In Mesopotamia it is even more difficult to separate magic and religion than magic and medicine. If magic is, as Georg Luck defines it, "a technique grounded in a belief in powers located in the human soul and in the universe outside ourselves, a technique that aims at imposing the human will on nature or on human beings by using supersensual powers," it may be possible to distinguish between prayer and magic.[5] The

petition in Sin-šamuḫ's letter to Enki we noticed in the previous chapter is one thing; using the correct formula to force the gods and demons to do one's bidding is quite another. Yet we will see that the magical texts involving Enki do not allow such a clear-cut distinction.

Georg Luck points out that four different positions have been taken on the relationships between religion and magic. Magic (1) becomes religion; (2) has a common root with religion; (3) is a degenerate form of religion; and (4) fails, and is replaced by an attempt "to reconcile personal powers."[6] The positions do not appear to account for the persistence of magic through Mesopotamian history. Thorkild Jacobsen thinks three major phases of Mesopotamian religion can be discerned:

1. An early phase representative of the fourth millennium B.C. and centering on worship of powers in natural and other phenomena essential for economic survival. The dying god, power of fertility and plenty, is a typical figure.
2. A later phase, representative approximately of the third millennium, which adds the concept of the ruler and the hope of security against enemies. The phase has as typical figures the great ruler gods of the Nippur assembly.
3. Lastly, there is a phase representative of the second millennium B.C. in which the fortunes of the individual increase in importance until they rival those of communal economy and security. The typical figure is the personal god.[7]

Jacobsen discusses Enki among the individual figures of the third-millennium pantheon best known from the texts discovered at the holy city of Nippur, the gods "as rulers."[8] He does see something of a shift in emphasis toward sorcery and witchcraft in the later periods of Mesopotamian history, in the latter half of the second millennium and the first millennium. The later periods, he finds, are covered with "doubts" and "despair." The idea of the gods becomes increasingly coarse and barbaric. Demons and evil spirits "threatened life unceasingly."[9] The need for magic grew as Mesopotamian religion adjusted to new conditions. If the attributes of Enki as god of fertilizing water and as ruler of the universe may have received less emphasis when the Sumerian city-states declined, his intimate connection with magic made certain that he would maintain his powerful place in Mesopotamian religion.

The craft of Enki is nowhere better represented than in magic. The one who knows the secrets of the gods and the ways of the other world is, not surprisingly, the god who knows the words and rituals to control the spirits. A large number of texts preserved in the "stream of tradition" are incantation texts, and Enki is prominent in the tradition. (In the catalogue of texts and authors mentioned earlier, Ea is the first author mentioned, and the first item on the list is the "Magician's Corpus," largely if not entirely incantations.[10]

The texts are in the Sumerian language, but they have often been provided with an interlinear Akkadian translation. One type of incantation is particularly interesting because it contains a narrative and turns on the words spoken by Enki/Ea himself. The literary form is quite fixed, although within the form there is considerable variety. Of the four basic types of Sumerian incantations, one called by Adam Falkenstein the "Marduk/Ea" type is important to literary study precisely because of its mixing of story, speech, and magical force.[11] The result is often a

powerful, well-constructed, and strangely beautiful poetic composition. The "Marduk/Ea" incantations demonstrate an intimate connection between the religious, the magical, and the esthetic so complete that any attempt to pull away from the other will distort the whole (and remove the magic).

The following poem illustrates the literary form of the "Marduk/Ea" incantation. A man, suffering with "fever," goes before Marduk, Ea's son, who is usually identified as Asarluḫi. Marduk is unable to help the man, and so he goes before his father, Ea. The incantation includes the introductory theme, in which the diseases and demons afflicting a person are named, the person's suffering is described, and a three-part response given by Ea:

Water of the Reed Plant

"My son, you know [everything].
What you don't know—how can I add it to you?
Everything I know is yours to know.

"Cut the blade of a reed plant in half,
Have the water of life drip upon his hand. [5]
Let it pour out over his right hand.
Let it drip down on his left hand.

"The Dragon with his net of reed . . .
it will bind the mouth shut!"[12]

After the introductory theme, then, the "Marduk/Ea" incantation includes (1) the Marduk/Ea formula, which in its full form consists of Marduk asking Ea for help, and having Ea answer, "My son! What do you not know! How can I add to your knowledge? What do you not know? How can I increase it? What I know, you know also. Go, my son!" This is the central and most conventional part of the incantation, a solemn passing of magical power/knowledge from father to son. (2) The second part is the ritual, in which Ea tells (Marduk/the priest) what acts are to be performed. (3) The third is the concluding theme, in which the effect of the incantation upon the man and upon the disease/demon is indicated by the use of "precative" forms of the verb.[13] Modern linguistic philosophers, led by J. L. Austin and John Searle,[14] make a distinction between utterances that make statements about reality—saying something about something—which they call "locutionary" (or "propositional"), and "illocutionary" speech acts in which an act is performed *in* saying something. Illocutionary speech acts include promising, ordering, asserting, questioning, thanking, advising, and warning. In the case of Enki's words at the end of the incantation, powerful illocutionary commands do not so much describe what will happen but make it happen. In other words, word and performance are one—the very essence of magic.

Note that in the "Marduk/Ea" rituals the disease/demons are not destroyed. The series of words for various classes of demons can all be qualified as "good" or "evil." There is even a frequent mention of "evil" gods. The demonic, taking dreadful shapes and causing terrible damage, is not "good" or "evil" in itself, it

would appear. There is no cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil, such as appears in some Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, and Gnostic apocalyptic texts. "Good" and "evil" would seem to describe their effects on humans, perhaps just on individuals: a good demon brings good (health, including emotional well-being) to a person; an evil demon brings disorientation and a variety of physical and emotional ills. They are, perhaps, better conceptualized as contagion than, say, satanic forces in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The other point to notice is that the story, to our sensibilities, is left unfinished. There is no explicit conclusion to the narrative, no statement that the "fever" left the man and he revived. Such a statement would be unnecessary—and probably destructive of the power of the saying. It is not known what may have come first in history, a story about Ea and Marduk, which took on ritual form; or a magical saying that took on narrative form. If certain archaic Sumerian texts are ever deciphered, it is conceivable that a very early text will tell us what came first in the literary tradition. Probably, though, an argument that could take us almost to the invention of writing itself would not resolve the issue, for it is one no doubt buried deeply in an earlier oral tradition. One thing is certain. The "Marduk/Ea" incantation was not captured by the story contained within it. The writers do not give the text a narrative ending.

This example is relatively simple. The advice (lines 4–7) given to the son turns upon the reed-plant. The son is to take "a blade of the reed plant" and slice it in half. Its fluid, the "living water" or "water of life," is then poured or dripped over the hands of the one who is ill, seized by a demon. The reed is mentioned again in the complex of signs for the "net" mentioned in the final two lines *(gi-šuš-šuš-a-ba);* the sign for "reed," which points to the net's construction, is the first sign of the complex. With this "net" as his weapon, the "dragon" will "bind the mouth" of the demonic power that has seized the person. Note, as before, "dragon," *ušumgal,* can refer to demons, but it is also a divine epithet, as it is taken here.

The demons are listed in another well-designed Marduk/Ea incantation.[15] In the introductory formula demons have seized the person, causing him pain, rushing upon him, covering him and scorching him, tearing his soul and tossing him like billows. In his misery the man turns to Marduk, who in turn enters the house of Enki with a plea for the sick man. The spell *(inim-inim-ma)* against the *udug* is also called an *en-é-nu-ru* incantation at the top of the piece:

Lord of the Drum

Enki to his son
to Asarluḫi
answered:
"Son, what is it you don't know?
What can I add to it?
Asarluḫi,
what is it you don't know?
What can I add to it? [ii.5]
Whatever it is that I know
you know as well!

"Go, my son,
Asarluḫi.

"Take water from the great *anzam*-bowl; [ii.10]
pour it out.
The tamarisk and the *mashtakal*-plant
toss into its heart.
Sprinkle it over this man.
The censer and the torch: [ii.15]
have them brought to him.

"The *nam-tar* in the body of the man
like something fluid
will flow out of him!

"The kettledrum [ii.20]
of the hero of heaven,
whose terrifying roar
sweeps away everything evil where its voice is cast:
trust it. [ii.25]
Let it defend you!
The kettledrum
of the hero of heaven,
with its terrifying sheen:
let it boost you up! [ii.30]

"Vicious demon and vicious seizer: [iii.1]
break away!
Evil ghost and evil binder:
leave!
Vicious god and the evil one lurking: [iii.5]
go!
The malicious mouth and spit that forms malice:
pass by!
Dimme and Dima,
who spattered the man: [iii.10]
bolt!

"Heartache and sorrow,
sickness, migraine
that cover the man:
scatter! [iii.15]

"All the great gods
have cursed you:
steal away!"

It is a spell against the *udug.*

The power of the lines comes from the insistent use of the imperative and the imagery of surges and penetration. Ea advises his son Asarluḫi (Marduk) to use water, incense, and fire, and the beating of the kettledrum to break the power of the demons, as well as plants that, like the water, have been placed in the "heart" of the great metal *anzam*-vessel. (Note that a Cassite-period text identifies the medicinal plant *ú-in-nu-uš* as a symbol of Enki.[16])

The *nam-tar* (a word that sometimes means "fate" but is here a disease/demon) that has penetrated and taken hold in the body of the victim will flow out of the person "like something fluid," then to be dispersed, swept away by the "voice" of the drum. The drum "of the hero of heaven" is praised for its "terrifying sheen," its numinous power.[17]

Along with *nam-tar,* the list of demons is a familiar one in Sumerian. From the *udug,* which normally heads the list, and the gal_5-*lá,* originally a police official and secondarily a demon, the poet moves through a set of doubles, the first eight of which are characterized as *ḫul,* "evil."[18] (Notice the *dingir-ḫul* or "evil god" of iii.5.) The demons are, then, not so much radically "evil" but "unfavorable." Enki's powerful words do not annihilate the demons but remove them in a suitable way. And the demons can hardly be distinguished from the diseases they personify. The diseases appear to be mainly general categories of illness and conditions that are likely to be psychosomatic. The demons are evident in physical symptoms, but they also signify emotional conditions. One, the *a-lá-ḫul,* the "evil binder," for example, refers (at least in late texts) to "a personal psychic experience often described as a formless and featureless demonic power which engulfs the entire individual."[19]

J. V. Kinnier Wilson considers the collection of ritual texts known as *Šurpu,* whose purpose is the healing of sick persons, as an early treatment of neurotic and psychopathic states.[20] Three of the incantations are Marduk/Ea texts. One is particularly important because it is keyed to the actual performance of the ritual.[21] In the introductory formula, "an evil curse like a gal_5-*lá*-demon" has attacked a person: an "unwholesome dumbness" and "daze" befall the man. His god has left him. His mother—actual his *ama* ^{d}*Inanna,* "Inanna-mother," his Ishtar or "goddess"—has left him. His condition covers the man "like a cloak" and overwhelms him:

Master of the Oath

Enki replied to his son, Asarluḫi:
"Son, what you don't know—what could I add to it? [29/30]
Asarluḫi, what you don't know—what could I add to it?
Whatever I know, you know as well.

"Go, my son, Asarluḫi: [34/35]

"Take him to the pure house of bathing.
The oath—undo it.
The oath—release it:
so the vexing evil of his body— [40/41]
if it is the curse of his father
if it is the curse of his mother [44/45]
if it is the curse of his older brother
or the curse of a bloodshed unknown to him—
by voicing the spell of Enki, the oath [50/51]
like the onion it is peeled off!
like the date it is stripped off! [54/55]
like matting it is unraveled!

"Oath: by heaven cursed!
by earth cursed!"

The incantation begins with "an evil curse like a *gal*$_5$*-lá*-demon," and ends with the adjuring of the "oath." The whole of Tablet V–VI, from which this incantation is taken, is given over to this dangerous "oath." Erica Reiner, commenting that the word *(nam-erím/māmītu)* means "oath," holds that in *Šurpu* the term means something evil. She supposes that it refers as well to symbols and symbolic actions accompanying an oath. The numen, once invoked, would stay unbound until dealt with by a conjuration.[22] Kinnier Wilson considers the "oath" a compulsion to do or a compulsion not to do a certain act.[23]

The poem is a rich one, however conventional the design may be, a well-ordered piece. It contains brief, but elegant, touches. The "particularizing stanza" (29–31) provides an example, where "my son" in one line is specified as Asarluḫi in the second, whereas the rest of the line is repeated exactly. The long period (38–57), which begins with the command to "undo" the oath and ends with its undoing, is built up in stately fashion. The poet, careful to include all significant sources of trouble, names the curse of the father, the curse of the mother, the curse of the older brother, and even the curse of "a bloodshed unknown to" the victim of the curse. The list increases the formal unity of the period.

In the same way the poet develops three effective formal similes in the period.[24] The "oath" is peeled off like an onion, stripped off like dates, and undone or unraveled the way a woven matt is undone.

Ea's response is typical of a "Marduk/Ea" incantation. After the introductory formula, the Marduk/Ea formula (27–35) transfers knowledge and power from father to son. The ritual section (35–39) is extremely brief, and shades off into the concluding theme (38–59). Interestingly, our poem is followed in Tablet V–VI by a series of incantations *(en)* that elaborate the similes specified here. The onion is peeled and thrown into a fire. The dates are stripped and thrown into the fire. Matting is unraveled and, like the flock of wool, goat's hair, red wool, flour, and thread of subsequent incantations, consumed by flame. Tablet V–VI ends with two incantations, one spoken directly by a purification-priest, a "clean priest of Enki," a mes-

senger of Marduk; the last is an incantation addressed to "fierce Girru"—that is, the cleansing fire itself. Reiner notes[25] that the expiatory rite accompanied by the peeling of onions, the stripping of dates, and the unraveling of matting, is found elsewhere in the case of a king warding off the danger of an eclipse occurring in the month of Tammuz. Here, though, the danger is clearly the "oath."

Even more, the "Ritual Tablet" of *Šurpu,* Tablet I, ties our poem to the procedures outlined in that tablet. The incantation is mentioned by name there (I.rev.ii.12). Explicit instructions are given elsewhere on the tablet (I.16). To perform the *Šurpu* ritual, the priest is to set up a brazier, put trimmed reeds crosswise atop the brazier, and surround the whole with a magic circle of flour. Then he is to recite the incantation. When "An evil curse like a *gal*$_5$*-lá*-demon," is recited, the priest is to wipe off the afflicted person and to place the items (onion, dates, matting) in the person's hand. The patient then peels the onion and throws it into the fire, strips the dates, and unravels the matting. All are tossed into the flames.

It is worth noting that our Marduk/Ea incantation and only one other piece (an incantation with a brief narrative line) in Tablet V–VI are bilingual Sumerian/Akkadian texts. The rest of the tablet is written only in Akkadian.

Šurpu contains another Marduk/Ea incantation that is of interest because the long text contains a full mythological introduction and an impressive catalogue of gods evoked in the spell.[26]

In the mythological introduction, trouble breaks out from three planes of existence. From the Abzu comes the *dimītu*-disease. The "oath" *(nam-erím/māmītu)* descends from above. From earth itself, breaking through the ground "like weed" is the *dù-dù*-demon *(aḫḫazu).* They spread toward the four corners of the world, "scorching everything like fire." Suffering is widespread—extending indeed through the world. Cities, town, and country are devastated. Young and old wail in misery. The young man and the young girl are alike filled with despair. Disease, plague, epilepsy, scab, and gall overwhelm the population. "They have encountered the man from whom his god had withdrawn and covered him like a cloak,/ they have pounced straight upon him and filled him with venom." Fluids afflict him: cough, phlegm, spittle, slaver, and "invocation" and "oath." Dumbness and daze settle upon him. He roams around "day and night," wailing bitterly. It is this grim and terrible condition that catches the sight and compassion of Marduk, who is unable to help the man:

Cleansed of the Oath

Enki replied to his son, Asarluḫi: [45/46]
"Son, what you don't know—what could I add to it?
Asarluḫi, what you don't know—what could I add to it? [49/50]
Whatever I know, you know as well.

"Go, my son, Asarluḫi.

"Take seven loaves of pure coarse meal. [54/55]
String them on a bronze skewer.
Cap them with a bead of carnelian.

Wipe the man with it
the son of his god, seized by the 'oath.'
Have him spit on the dirt wiped off him. [60/61]
Cast the Spell of Eridu on it.
Take it out to the plain—a pure place.
Put it down at the base of the thorn-bush.
Drive out of his body the disease that has overwhelmed him. [65/66]

"Give over his 'oath' to the Woman of the Plain and the Field.
Ninkilim,
en of the Animals, will shift the grave sickness
to the vermin of the earth! [69/70]

"Damu,
the great conjuror, will speak words of good omen for him!
Nindinugga,
divine mother whose hands are cool,
Woman who Revives the Dead,
cools him with the stroking of her pure
hands. [73/75]

"And you, Asarluḫi,
the *en* of Mercy, who loves to revive the dead,
with your pure, life-giving spell—loosen his bonds.

"This man, the son of his god, is pure, clean, shining! [80/81]
Wash him clean like a stone bowl!
Scour him clean like a butter jar!
Give him over to Utu, leader of the gods!
And Utu
leader of the gods, will turn him over in turn into the timely
hands of the gods!"

The grand mythological opening of the piece, which spirals down from the cosmic to the earthly, from the population of earth to the various types of humans, comes to rest in the combination of spiritual, emotional, and physical ills attacking the individual. Something of the reverse of this comes at the end of the poem (which is also the end of the seventh tablet of *Šurpu*): earth, the nether world, and the celestial world are once again whole as the disease-demons are returned to their "natural" places and the man is purified. Hence the naming of the high gods, Marduk and Shamash (Utu) at the very end of the piece.

In the center of the poem is the imperative, "Drive out of his body the disease" that overwhelmed the person. The ritual involves food in the form of loaves of a coarse flour, bronze (a skewer), and stone (a bead of carnelian). The ritual takes care to remove the demon from the outside of the body, when it charges the son to wipe the man with the object that will substitute for the sick man; and to remove it from inside, when it has the sick man spit on the object. The object is then taken

to the wilds, the proper—and, note, "pure"—place, the place of demons and underworld figures.[27] There it is put at the base of a kind of acacia. The plant is itself significant, for it was used not only for fuel, but also for fumigation and in medicine and rituals.[28]

At that point the affliction is turned over to the care of a divine figure, the Woman of the Plain and Field, a figure who mediates between the wild (*edin,* Akkadian *ṣēru*) and the cultivated *(zag/bamâtu).* Like the others then evoked, she is a figure associated with the nether world.

The "oath" and then the man himself are given over to the great god, the sun, Utu/Shamash. He is by far the most powerful of the gods mentioned in the list, a god not only in his celestial aspect, but the divine Judge and Preserver of Right, a god of fate.[29] The other gods evoked are divided female and male. Together they cover chthonic, fertility, and nether-world domains and end with the high god, "first" or "leader" of the gods.

Kinnier Wilson thinks that witches involve a more dangerous, psychotic element in early "Babylonian psychiatry." There is usually an element of illusion, such that hallucinations and physical ailments are thought to have come from a source outside the one afflicted.[30] One of the Marduk/Ea incantations deals specifically with a sorceress, and includes "one of the fundamental procedures of Babylonian psychiatry," turning the tables on the witch.[31]

Like the others, the incantation is prefaced by a narrative that describes the suffering of the victim and names the power responsible. A "terrible tempest," and "evil eye" and a destroyer of children has afflicted the victim. It has besmeared the young ones with venom and slavers. It soon becomes clear that an act of sorcery is behind it. Someone has taken clay, "fetched from the Abzu," and a ball of hair. With the clay and hair an image *(alam)* of the victim was made. The image hidden underground, the sorceress then mixes spittle with the man's food and spikes his drink with venom. The result is a painful sickness:

Turning Back the Witch

Enki replied to his son, Asarluḫi:
"Son, what you don't know—what could I add to it?
Whatever I know, you know as well. [obv. 20]
And you—what you know, I know.

"Go, my son, Asarluḫi:

"Fill a *saḫar*-jug with pure water from the dike.
Tamarisk, the *innuš*-plant,
the young date plants,
the *šulhi*-reed,

"cypress,
white cedar, [25]

"the *dušia*-stone,
the agate and the "eye"-agate,
and the *mušgir*-stone,

"toss them all into the holy water basin.

"Her knot will be loosened! [rev. 1]
Her venom and slaver will be like small young animals!
Let the large net overwhelm the body of that sorceress!
Let her weaken in her heart like the serpent-god!
Let her own witchcraft bring down that sorceress
the way a young scorpion does! [5]
Let this sorceress dig into her own tendons
the way a pointed stake can!
Let the witchcraft that she inflicted rage against her!

"She will hack her breast with her own hand,
eat her own finger as if it were cheese.

"Let her mouth dry up. [10]

"Nergal, be the great lord of the world below
for this man!
Ninurta, be the fierce warrior, the leader,
for this man!
Utu, be the great judge of the gods, the port,
for this man!
Ningishzida, be the throne bearer of the land for
this man [?]!
Gibil [?] [15]

16–19 [*broken*]

"This man,
the son of his god, is pure, clean, shining!
Wash him clean like a stone bowl!
Scour him clean like a butter jar!
Give him over to Utu, leader of the gods!
And Utu,
leader of the gods, will turn him over in turn into the timely
hands of the gods."

The most striking feature of the poem is the section (rev. 1–10) directed against a female, described as a sorceress, a vivid, not to say lurid, catalogue in which the evil is turned upon the evildoer. Her magical "knot" will be loosened, the hold she has upon the victim. More gruesome is what happens to her. Her venom and slaver, full of magical force, will be weakened. A great weapon, a net, will overwhelm her; she will weaken and collapse. The sorcery turns inward: she will dig into her own tendons and lacerate her breast. She will eat her fingers. Her mouth will dry up, a sign that illness has taken hold in her. The lines burn with a great intensity.

The section is vivid, not the least because of the cluster of similes employed. Her venom and slaver will diminish "like tiny young animals." She will weaken in heart "like Niraḫ" (the serpent god). The "young of a scorpion," the pointed stake that digs into the tendons, and the fingers eaten "like cheese" point to a situation where magic and poetry are one, where the clever and striking phrase carries magical efficacy. The lines are in Sumerian and Akkadian, though it is worth noting that the fuller text, when the translation is not always identical with the first language (e.g., rev. 3, 4, 5, and 7), is always the Sumerian text.

The list of gods (rev. 11–19) is not complete, but the first few are powerful gods indeed. Nergal, once a celestial god, became king of the nether world (as above), when he became the spouse of Ereshkigal. Ningishzida is usually a chthonic god, but note he was one of the guardians of the celestial world in "Adapa," where the name was written simply Gishzida. Ninurta is the same warrior and dragon-slayer seen earlier. Note that the end of the poem is exactly like the incantation just considered. The epithets, though conventional to be sure, seem to move the afflicted man along a path from the nether world (that is, his illness) to the world of light, where he belongs (the healing).

The turn from the fierce power of the incantation against the witch to the quiet, pastoral world of our next piece is striking evidence of the range of effects possible within a highly conventional form. The poem is an incantation by which evil is directed out of the body of a king upon a sheep *(udu)* and a kid *(máš),* which carry away the evil (sin, sickness, demon) to the sheepfold and to the drinking place:

The en *of Sheep*

The *en* was going around the holy sheepfold,
the great *en*—Enki—was entering the holy sheepfold,

where the mother licked her lamb,
where the she-goat circled her kid, and

Enki to his son Asarluḫi [5]
said:
"Go, my son, Asarluḫi.

The sheep that fed on plants undisturbed

that drank water undisturbed
the sheep carried by his shepherd: [10]
it will be the king's!
With the spell that Asarre put together,

with the cleansing spell,

with the water of Ningirirm,

once you have cleaned the king,
the son of his god, in the proper way,
then Namtar and the Asig,
who fix themselves in the body of the king, [15]

the sheep will carry to its sheepfold,
the kid will bear them to its drinking spot!"

It is a spell of sheep brought for the king.[32]

The composition is beautifully balanced. Line pairs 1–2, 3–4, 8–9, 12–13, and 16–17 are symmetrically balanced. Parallelism is achieved, for example, in lines 1–2, by repeating elements (*en,* "lord," "master," "owner," and *amas,* the sheepfold), and by varying others (*gal,* "great," and the particularizing subject *en* = Enki). The two lines say virtually the same thing, with one contrast: Enki is described as "going around" the sheepfold, then "entering" it. The opening contrast, outside/inside, is reversed in the final lines of the poem (16–17), where the evil is taken away by the sheep (into the sheepfold) and by the kid (to its drinking place), giving the poem an "envelope" or framing pattern.[33]

Other examples of balancing are in lines 3–4, which divide the animals of the sheepfold in their motherly caring for the offspring into ewe and lamb, she-goat and kid; and different verbs are assigned as synonyms for "to care for." In lines 8–9, the life-giving elements are divided into food and drink, the "plant of quiet" (undisturbed in the sense that humankind has not intruded) and the "water of quiet."

How does the text characterize the evil? Quite unlike other examples we have seen, there is very little description. Namtar and the *a-sig (asakku)*[34] are dangerous, but they are not described at any length. *A-sig,* the demon—and the disease it causes—is found in lists of diseases, but it is not found in medical texts, and is likely to be a poetic term to describe the hold of the demonic upon the person.

One unusual feature about the poem is that the speech of Enki is the whole poem. There is no separate introductory theme. Here the evil is mentioned within the body of the speech. Although it is a Marduk/Ea incantation, the piece does not fit into standard ritual types. Van Dijk found a ritual text that outlined ten parts: the king is anointed; bathed; dressed in a linen garment; girded and given shoes. Then gold is prepared for a special crown. Certain exorcisms are read. The king swings a skipping-rope; another exorcism and a cult poem are read. Then the major exorcism is performed, and the king offers a lamb as a substitute. A consecration involving Asarluḫi takes place. And other exorcisms follow. Our text might fit into the ritual at step eight. Van Dijk concludes that the unusual ritual was an occasional piece, possibly for an unexpected visit of a king or against an unforeseen calamity.

The incantations presented so far are well-designed and straightforward Marduk/Ea texts. A late bilingual text from the series called *utukku lemnūti,* "Evil Demons," shows the way in which the form can be expanded in the direction of Akkadian epic and mythological poems. Anne Draffkorn Kilmer considers the lengthy incantation from Tablet 16 of "Evil Demons" a mythological explanation of a lunar eclipse.[35]

The introductory theme is a vivid description of seven demons, "evil gods," attacking the heavens. They are "butting storms," one a dragon, another a raging leopard, the south wind, the surging flood wave, a serpent, a lion, and a storm wind. Together they wreak havoc: darkness over the cities, dust storms, flood, and confusion. To these vivid, but conventional images, the poet adds a story about the high gods assembling to consider what to do. Enlil is the leader. With him Ea, Sin (the moon), Shamash (the sun), and Ishtar (the planet Venus) are prominent in the assembly of the gods. The poet alternates between describing the destruction and the gods' fears.

Finally, when the moon is eclipsed, Enlil sends a message to Ea by way of his vizier, Nusku. Nusku repeats the message to Ea in his watery abyss. Note Ea's reaction to the news. Kilmer translates the lines:

Ea in the *apsû* heard that word,
And he bit his lip [in anger] and "Oh Woe!" filled his mouth. [130]
Ea called his son, Marduk, and informed him of the matter.
"Go, Marduk, my son!
The son of the prince, Nannar-Sin, who is evilly dark in the sky—
His eclipse in the heavens is clearly visible.
The Seven, they, the evil gods, the fearless death-causers, they [140]

The Seven, they, evil gods, who, like the *abubu* [the Great Flood]
Rise up and sweep over the country,
Upon the land, like the storm they rise up.
Confronting Nannar-Sin, ferociously they encircle [him] completely.
Hero Šamaš (and) valiant Adad are helpless [150]
[. . ."].

After a break in the text in which, Kilmer thinks, Marduk rescues the moon, instructions are given that follow very closely the ritual section of the Marduk/Ea incantations. The text is very broken at this point, but the ritual appears to involve a multicolored cord or garment, the hair of a virgin lamb, a wooden club, and the recitation of the "Incantation of Eridu":

Perform the Incantation of Eridu. [205]
Bring him a censer,
a torch.
Wash him with the purest water,
and cleanse and purify the king,
the son of his god.

The text ends, not with a narrative success against the evil demons, but with the familiar concluding theme of a Marduk/Ea incantation. The demons are named

again, beginning with the *udug* and ending with the "evil *gallû,*" and they are removed by the words:

Great storms directed from heaven,
they are the evil gods!
They ascend to the heavens,
return to their dwellings!
The evil *utukku* and the evil *alû*—descend to earth!
The evil *eṭemmu* and the evil *gallû*—leave the city!
By the great gods you are exorcised!
Into the house they will not enter!
They will not break through the fence!
To the circuit of the palace they will not draw near. . . .
By Heaven you are exorcised! By Earth you are exorcised![36]

The Marduk/Ea form has been modified also in the following famous miniature, which contains what must be the shortest of Ea's speeches.[37] It is usually known as "The Worm and the Toothache":

Incantation against Toothache

After Anu created heaven,
heaven created earth,
earth created the rivers,
the rivers created the canals,
the canals created the marsh,
the marsh created the worm,
the worm went before Shamash, weeping,
before Ea he went, his tears flowing:

"What will you give me for my food?
What will you give me to suck on?"

"I give you the ripe fig
and the *armannu*-apple."

"What good are they to me, the ripe fig
and the *armannu*-apple?
Lift me up—and among the teeth
and gums let me live!
I'll suck the blood of the tooth
and gnaw the roots of the gums."

Set the pin and seize its foot.
"Because you said this, worm,
Ea will strike you with the power of his fist!"

After the mythological introduction, from Anu's creation of heaven down to the lowly worm, the poem looks more like one of the demands of Inanna for a greater share of the *me* than a Marduk/Ea incantation. But note that the ritual and concluding theme, greatly reduced, follow the formula of the conventional ritual texts, even as the ending concentrates on the hubris of the worm. In the contest with Ea's magic, the poor worm would seem not to have a chance.

Esoteric Advice

Enki is the god of secrets. The one who would know and use his advice must be prepared to listen carefully when the cunning god speaks. In particular, Enki knows the way in and out of the world below, the world of the dead, which to the Mesopotamian mind was a place of almost unrelieved terror. Something of the human being survived after death, below ground. Even with the most favorable death—the death of a man with many sons to care for his spirit and give him a measure of contentment in the nether world—there is never anything like the Christian yearning for escape from the suffering of this life into the bliss of the world beyond. Yet there were times when humans—and gods—needed to make the terrible journey, and Enki knew the way.

Before turning to the secrets of the nether world, though, it is well to consider the story of Adapa, the man who was offered the life of the gods but lost his chance. This is Ea's plan for Adapa. In the beginning of the story, Adapa had committed a major fault. He had broken the wing of the South Wind while Adapa had been fishing. It is to make good for his offense to Anu that Ea appears to be offering advice to Adapa. Adapa should make the difficult journey to heaven and mollify Anu:

Preparations for a Better Life

Here [15]
Ea, who knows of things above, touched him,
Adapa, had him wear his hair unkempt,
a dirty garment he made him put on,
and gave him this plan:

"So, Adapa, you are going before Anu, the king. [20]
Take the road to heaven.
When to heaven you have ascended,
at the gate of Anu on your approach,
at the gate of Anu the gods Dumuzi and Gishzida will be standing.
Seeing you, they will ask you: [25]
'Man, for whom are you changed in this way?

Adapa, for whom are you clothed in a dirty garment?'
'From our land two gods have vanished.
So I did this.'
'Who are the two gods who from the land have vanished?' [30]
'The gods Dumuzi and Gishzida.'
They will glance at each other and laugh.
A good word they will speak to Anu,
and the benignant face of Anu they will let you see.
As you stand before Anu, [35]
when the bread of death they offer you, you shall not eat it.
When the water of death they offer you, you shall not drink it.
When they offer you a garment, put it on.
When they offer you oil, anoint yourself.
The plan I am giving you, do not neglect. [40]
The words I have spoken to you, hold them tight!"[38]

Ea gives his instructions or "plan" *(ṭêmu)* to a favorite of his, the human Adapa. The advice is twofold. First, Ea tells Adapa to put on the garb of mourning, the *karru,* a ragged or dirty piece of clothing, and to wear his hair unkempt *(malû).* Adapa is to take the "road" to heaven. The guards at the gate are two gods usually associated with the nether world. The first, Dumuzi (or Tammuz) is the better known in literature because of his often stormy love affair with the goddess Inanna (Ishtar).[39] The second is a chthonic figure, Gishzida. The guardian gods will call attention to Adapa's human state, for it is odd that a human would approach the dwelling of the gods. Ea's advice is a bit of psychological trickery to win them over. He has changed himself over, he is to say, because the two gods have disappeared from the earth. With the "good word" of the guardian gods, Adapa will be ushered into the presence of Anu himself.

Ea's second bit of advice is how to act when Anu offers Adapa hospitality. When he is offered bread and water, he is not to eat or drink. He is, however, to take the garment offered him and the oil for anointing his body. Only the context will show how tricky the second part of Ea's plan really is.

Ea emphasizes that Adapa "seize" the words he has spoken. When the plan is actually put into effect, though, Adapa misses his chance at immortality. Where Ea had warned Adapa against eating the "bread of death" *(akala ša mūti)* and drinking the "water of death" *(mê mūti),* what Anu offers Adapa instead is the bread of life and the water of life. (Otherwise, the advice on the oil and the garment is followed in the proper way.) No sooner does Adapa make his mistake (a trick, really, of language), when Anu laughs at him.

If the Middle Babylonian version of "Adapa," from which Ea's speech here is taken, is the same in its ending as the Neo-Assyrian version that has also survived, Ea's cryptic advice has a variety of consequences, good and bad. Anu laughs and sends Adapa back to earth. (It is possible that *Anu* was trying to trick Adapa.) Had he drunk of the water of life and eaten the food of life, Adapa would have gained immortality for himself and for humankind generally.[40] As it is, Adapa's

mistake has lost the chance for immortality. But the human has seen the "benignant face" of Anu, and the Neo-Assyrian text points to the awful gift Adapa has been granted: "As Adapa from the horizon of heaven to the zenith of heaven / Cast a glance, he saw its awesomeness."[41] In that vision given to Adapa is revealed the gulf that separates the human and the divine. Adapa's failure to see through Ea's cunning words had already marked that very difference.

Besides the vision of heaven that is opened up to Adapa there are other consequences, according to the Neo-Assyrian version. Anu imposed something on Adapa; but Ea's city of Eridu, where Adapa had served him, is given a special status, and its priesthood is given an exalted destiny. The last lines of the story return to the beginning. In the beginning of the work, Adapa had offended Anu, and it was to become right with Anu that Ea had, it seemed, given advice that would make Adapa immortal. At the end, the consequences of Adapa's crime are noted in the "ill" he brought to humankind—and the disease that he brought to the bodies of human beings. The text turns at last to implore the goddess of healing to turn the disease aside.

Who is the Adapa of this story of crime and restitution, of immortality offered and lost? Adapa may mean "humankind."[42] The word *adapu* means "wise." The third-century B.C. Babylonian priest, Berossus, we saw earlier, wrote about a certain "Oannes" or ^{m}*uma-an-na,* who is none other than Adapa, according to W. G. Lambert:

> In the first year a beast named Oannes appeared from the Erythraean Sea in a place adjacent to Babylonia. Its entire body was that of a fish, but a human head had grown beneath the head of the fish and human feet likewise had grown from the fish's tail. It also had a human voice. . . . This beast spent the days with the men but ate no food. It gave to the men the knowledge of letters and sciences and crafts of all types. It also taught them how to found cities, establish temples, introduce laws, and measure land. It also revealed to them seeds and the gathering of fruits, and in general it gave men everything which is connected with the civilized life. From the time of that beast nothing further has been discovered. But when the sun set, this beast Oannes plunged back into the sea and spent the nights in the deep, for it was amphibious.[43]

(See the cylinder seal impressions discussed below.) In a list of authors and compositions (which began with Ea, the only god mentioned in the text as an author), Adapa's name follows Ea.[44] Adapa is the first antediluvian sage.

One of the late texts of "Adapa" (A) points out that Adapa is given "wisdom" by Ea, but not eternal life. The "sage from Eridu" is the very "model" of humanity. Ea makes him the "ointment priest" and "the observer of rites." Ironically, Adapa's main activities are in providing bread and water for the cult at Eridu. He does the baking with the bakers, provides bread and water, arranges the table, and clears the table. He is also a fisherman for Eridu (D text).

Still another text (B) provides a reason why Anu would offer Adapa the precious gifts of water and bread. Anu seems trapped once Adapa appears before him. Anu asks why Ea should have disclosed the "plan of heaven and earth" to Adapa. Adapa is, after all, nothing but an *amīlūta la banīta,* a "worthless human." Adapa may have been the "plan," a vision of the awesome heaven. But Ea's test had already anticipated Anu's response. Indeed, there is a marvelous trade-off; but once

again what the philosopher Heidegger called the "being-towards-death" of mankind is confirmed through Ea's cunning.

The curious Tablet XII of *Gilgamesh* contains advice on how to enter the nether world,[45] but the advice is given by Gilgamesh, not Ea. The friend of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, is trapped in the nether world because he had managed to ignore every piece of advice Gilgamesh had given him for a descent and safe return. When Enkidu is trapped, Gilgamesh turns to Ea for help. Ea does not release Enkidu from the world of the dead. Presumably, once a human is caught by the nether world, there is no return to life. But Ea does find a way so that Enkidu's "spirit" *(utukku)* can escape through a "hole" *(takkakbu)* to the nether world. The spirit of Enkidu will then tell an increasingly bitter account of the way the different persons in the world of the dead survive:

An Opening to the World of the Dead

The Father Ea gave him satisfaction.
To the warrior, the strong Nergal, he said:
"Listen, Nergal, warrior, hero!
Open up now a hole to the underworld
so the spirit of Enkidu will issue from the underworld
and tell all the ways of the underworld to his brother, Gilgamesh."[46]

There is an Akkadian version of Inanna's descent in which the goddess (Ishtar) finds herself trapped in the world of the dead, and only Ea can find a way to bring her back to life. Ishtar is dead in the land ruled by her sister, the goddess of death, Ereshkigal. Ea finds a way to get a new, strange creature into the "land of no return." Once there the creature will entertain Ereshkigal, and she will be tricked into a rash oath. The creature, Atsushunamir, will ask for the "life–water bag" whose waters will save Ishtar.

Ea's advice is not as detailed as the parallel account in the Sumerian version, but it demonstrates his command of the ways of the nether world:

A Creature Formed to Save a Goddess

Ea in his wily heart created a figure
and created Atsushunamir, the mime-priest:

"Up, Atsushunamir, direct your face to the gate of
the land of no return.
The seven gates of the land of no return
will be opened before you!
Ereshkigal will see you and take delight in your presence! [15]
When her heart is soothed, her mood bright,
have her swear the oath of the great gods.
Lift your head, and mark the waterskin:
'No, lady! Have them give me the waterskin.
I'll drink the water from that!'"[47]

The creature formed by Ea for the purpose has attracted a good bit of attention. His name may mean "his coming forth is brilliant." The priest whose role is created, ^{lú}*assinnu,* appears to have been a cult prostitute in the service of Ishtar; but more importantly, the *assinnu* was a mime-priest and a singer.[48] A variant calls the creature *kulu'u,* making it clear that the priest who is often associated with the *kurgarrû* is an actor, a member of the temple personnel of Ishtar who performs dances and music. The sexuality and the singing (usually lamentations) may both be related to the most important function of these cult figures: descending to and ascending from the nether world.[49]

As is the case often in Sumerian myths, Ea is deeply attached to the goddess Ishtar. It is appropriate that the story tell about the formation of a figure so prominent in her cult. In this case, too, Ea's advice is successful in reviving the goddess. For his part in it, though, the hapless *assinnu* is cursed with a terrible curse by the goddess who has lost her captive, Ereshkigal.

Finally, in another story involving the goddess of death, Ea gives advice to a god who wants to make the journey and then to escape the land of no return. The god is Nergal:

How Not to Act in the Land of the Dead

And he called out to give him advice:

"Traveler, do you want to . . . ?
Whatever oracles I give you, take them to heart:

"Whenever they bring a throne for you—
do not go and sit on it! [40′]
If the baker brings you bread—do not go and eat his bread!
If the butcher brings you meat—do not go and eat his meat!
If the brewer brings you beer—do not go and drink the beer!
If someone brings wash-water for your feet—do not go and
wash your feet!

"If she goes to the bath [45′]
to put on her . . . -garment
and bares her body to you—
for your part, do not lift your eyes to her
in the way of a man and a woman!"[50]

The "she" who will enter the bath, put on a special garment, and expose her beauty to Nergal is none other than Ereshkigal. (Recall that she is the sister of the beautiful Ishtar.) The "oracles" *(tērtu)* Ea pronounces are expressed in terse commands. What is normal for the upper regions is forbidden in the nether world. If Nergal expects to survive, he must turn down all those things offered by a good host—throne, bread, meat, beer, even wash-water. Nergal is warned to avoid the gifts of the nether world, and he follows Ea's advice—except for the last. The revealing of Ereshkigal's body has something of a deep mystery about it, certainly

a deep allure. The most difficult test for Nergal is Ereshkigal herself, and he is unable to keep away from her. Nergal is trapped forever in the world of the dead.

Ea's advice comes in a Neo-Assyrian version of "Nergal and Ereshkigal." In an earlier, Middle Babylonian version, Ea suggested that Nergal take with him fourteen disease-demons, and with their help Nergal is able to attack the court of Ereshkigal and bring her around with great violence to the point where she offers him lordship of the nether world. Here, Nergal has insulted the goddess, and must make amends. When he succumbs to her charm, the lovers embrace for a week. Nergal returns to the world above, but only temporarily. He is found there and returned to the nether world. He no sooner sees Ereshkigal, but they embrace again (for a week) and Nergal's fate is sealed, forever.

Images and Impressions

Images serve an important function in Mesopotamian religion and magic. A. Leo Oppenheim, in an important chapter on Mesopotamian religion, opened with a section called "Why a 'Mesopotamian Religion' Should Not Be Written." He then went on to discuss what he considered "central" to the cult and to private worship in Mesopotamia—the center, indeed, of Mesopotamian religion. What he found central was the image.[51] The care and feeding of the divine image, most often in human shape, were major duties of the priests, for the deity was thought to be present in the image. Images became the focus of sacrificial activities, and they were carried in ceremonies and processions. Meals were served to them. In certain rituals the mouths of the images were "opened" and "washed" (pp. 184–86).

Similarly, images were important in magic. Figures representing the god Dumuzi (Tammuz), for example, were formed and then destroyed by fire in the *puḫu* or "substitution" rituals. A person who was seriously ill and in danger therefore of entering the dreaded underworld would be saved if the dying god Dumuzi were taken as a substitute.[52] In much the same fashion we have seen in the "Master of the Oath" ritual above that the terrifying "oath" can be removed when onions, dates, and wool are tossed into the fire by a "clean priest of Enki." In one case an image of the god is consumed by the fire. In the other case physical objects are destroyed. Analogies are at work in both cases. The sick man is in some way like the dying god Dumuzi. The "oath" is in some way an affliction that can be peeled off, stripped off, or unraveled, as the "Master of the Oath" text suggests.

Not surprisingly, then, the visual representations of gods, demons, and sacred objects were thought to possess magic. Much of what we know about the visual representation of the gods and of stories about the gods comes from stone cylinder seals that were rolled out or stamped on wet clay. The cylinder seals identified the owner of property that had been stamped. Beyond this mundane function of identifying property, the seals—and one gathers, the seal impressions—were used as amulets.[53]

Cylinder seals and stamp seals have survived from the archaic period through the first millennium B.C. Mythological scenes do not appear on the seals much before the Agade period (ca. 2335–2155 B.C.), when they became very popular.[54] In that period new elements, mythological and epic themes like one god killing

another, enter the narrative art of Mesopotamia.[55] Although the scenes are often baffling, interpretation of some of the scenes has been attempted by comparing the scene to literary narratives. The god slain by another may, for example, represent the killing of Kingu in *Enuma Elish* (see chapter 8, below). According to Pierre Amiet, the gods represented on the seals are usually types, not individuals (pp. 40–41), so it is doubly difficult to connect mythological scenes on seals with specific myths known through literature. Amiet notes that of the supreme gods of Sumer and Akkad, An, Enlil, and Enki, "only the last has an identifiable image on cylinder seals of the Agade period" (p. 40).

From the fourth millennium on, a persistent motif in Mesopotamian visual art is the "god with streams" (see Figs. 1–3). A god, usually seated, appears with water flowing in streams either from a vase he holds or from his shoulders. Fish often swim in the stream. The flowing vase is always carried by a divine or semi-divine being, never a mortal. The basic idea seems clear enough: the divine "gift of fertilizing moisture in a thirsty land."[56] The complex history of the "god with streams" has, fortunately, been traced by E. Douglas Van Buren. The figure appeared in early Elam (now Iran), Sumer, and Akkad; it then spread through Babylon and Assyria into Cappadocia (modern Turkey), the Khabur region, and into other parts of Syria. It is dangerous to connect this figure with a single Mesopotamian god, for the "god with streams" may have represented a divinity in a local pantheon. The figure may also have represented a god whose name we do not know. There is little doubt, however, that for much of its long history—the history it shares with mythological texts—the "god with streams" was assimilated to Enki.[57]

Individual scenes are indeed difficult to interpret through the surviving mythological literature on Enki. The very popular representation of a bird-man, which warrants a full chapter in Van Buren's study of the "god with streams," may make more sense now that "Ninurta's Pride and Punishment" (chapter 6, above) is known. The Anzu-bird, having stolen the divine *me* from Enki, is brought into the presence of Enki by Ninurta, the hero who with Enki's help had been able to gain victory over the rebellious bird and had thus been able to bring the world into order once again. Yet many scenes on the cylinder seals remain unexplained.

The motifs that appear on the cylinder seals, however, are regular enough in their iconography that many can be identified. Together, the amulets display to a remarkable extent the full range of Enki images: Enki himself, the goddesses important to his stories, his family, vizier Isimud, attendants, birds, fish, monsters, boats, and even his Sea House.

Ann Perkins' observation, that Babylonian narrative art favors two ways of telling a story, may illuminate what otherwise would appear as a colorless and dull routine scene: the presentation of figures before the seated Enki. Perkins shows that one method of narration is to show successive episodes of a story, "often juxtaposed without clear delimitation" (p. 55). The more favored kind of visual storytelling, however, was the "culminating scene." In the culminating scene one group of figures, at one moment of time—usually the climax of a series of episodes—will stand for the whole story. Both ways of storytelling are basically symbolic.[58] The symbolic quality of the representation may have given the scene the magical force the amulet was thought to contain.

Fig. 1. "Judgement of the Bird-Man" (B.M. 103317). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

The range of Enkian images can be glimpsed in a few examples of the hundreds of cylinder seals that have survived.

Typical of the Agade period is the workmanship of the cylinder seal numbered by the British Museum B.M. 103317 (Fig. 1). The impression illustrates what Van Buren calls the "Judgement of the Bird-Man." Gods appear with flat caps on a single pair of horns, their hair tipping up behind in a stiff tail. A few straight lines indicate a beard. The arms look like sticks.[59] The eyes are immense. Seated on a raised platform, facing left, is the god with streams. He wears a flounced robe. From his shoulders streams flow and then fall in front of and behind him. Two fish swim just outside the front stream. An eight-pointed star is visible.

The god with streams gestures by his raised right hand that the god leading a prisoner is to come forward. The god salutes Enki with one hand and pulls the rope holding the prisoner with his other hand. The prisoner is bearded. Unlike the others in the design, the prisoner is bareheaded. He wears only a triple girdle at the point where the human features meet birdlike features—tails and wings, long bird legs ending in claws. The bird-man is being jerked forward both by the saluting god and by the god behind him, who seizes him by the wrist (pp. 41–42). If this is an episode from the story of Enki and Anzu-bird we know from the literature (chapter 6, below), it is significant that the culminating scene is not the theft of the divine *me* or the action scene of battle between divine forces. Rather it is moment of restoring order. The divine *me* are back in their proper place. Note that what is at stake—presumably what the Anzu-bird stole—is symbolized by a branch or spray of vegetation.

The Cylinder of Adda (B.M. 89115, Fig. 2; given its name from the owner of the seal, whose name is inscribed on the cylinder) has received a great deal of attention. Van Buren thinks that some of its features are so unusual that its authenticity has been called into question. The usually seated god with streams is standing. He

Fig. 2. "The Cylinder of Adda" (B.M. 89115). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

has one foot raised on a rock. The god faces left. He wears his usual crown, the horns of which indicate that he is divine. Fish swim up the two streams that emerge from his shoulders. Beneath his right foot is an ibex. Behind him is his double-faced vizier, known in the literature as Isimud.

The scene is crowded with important figures, and that makes it difficult to interpret the whole scene. From the left is a lion, then a god holding a large bow and arrow. If he attends upon the goddess to his left, the god could be the attendant of Inanna, Ninshubur. The goddess with one foot upon the mountain wears a conical horned cap and flounced dress. Between the major figures and the center of the scene a god with rays streaming up from his shoulders is seen, apparently rising between the mountains. He holds aloft a toothed scimitar. Noteworthy details are the great bird of prey that seems to be swooping downward toward the center, and the tree atop one of the mountains.

Van Buren sees in Enki's gesture a right hand stretched in exhortation (p. 28). She believes that the scene recounts the story of the Anzu-bird. If that is correct, the bird is poised to attack the tree, and a god is emerging to defeat him. Van Buren thinks the god is not the sun-god Utu (who is usually depicted with rays flowing upward from his shoulders), but Adad, one of the heroic figures who challenges Anzu—as we will see in the next chapter. More likely the god is the chthonic figure Ninurta, Enki's champion (who then, in "Ninurta's Pride and Punishment," which we have noted in chapter 6, above, attempts his own challenge to the rule of Enki).

Pierre Amiet, on the other hand, interprets the scene differently.[60] He too notes that the pose of the god with streams is a rare one. He takes it as the god in the attitude of a conqueror. In her survey of the god with streams motif, Van Buren had already observed a change in emphasis from the early Sumerian gods of the city-states, like Enki in Eridu, figures of fertility most of them, to warrior-gods in later periods. For the most part, as we have seen, Enki is rarely portrayed as a warrior in Mesopotamian literature.

Amiet thinks the three major figures in the Cylinder of Adda are all in ascending postures. They are a goddess, the rising sun-god, and the god with streams. The two attendants, on the other hand, are impassive. Only the eagle is descending. Amiet takes this to mean that we are seeing a great epiphany of nature in early spring. A young solar god leaves the mountain at the same time when a tree, symbolic of vegetation, is exalted (p. 45).

Van Buren sees many attributes of Enki represented in cylinder seal impressions. Enki is the "lord of the watery deep," the "lord of hidden, unfathomable knowledge" in the depth of his "house of wisdom." He was also the chief magician of the gods, the great exorcist. His purifying water was used in incantations and magic rites. Ruler of waters of the underworld, lord of rivulets and brooks, of plenteous harvests, Enki was also the god associated with other goods of the earth, metals and precious stones. He was the patron of metal work and crafts generally. Patron of foundations, he gave instructions for building things—as we will see in the story of the flood. The sacred water basin, an image of the Abzu, was set up in temples in honor of Enki. And the sacred tree grew up in his cult city of Eridu. His sacred symbols were the antelope, the fish, and the tortoise. The goat-fish is another figure associated with Enki. So close to Enki is the goat-fish, it comes to represent Enki himself.

What is significant is that most of the attributes and cult objects of Enki are found on the seals dealing with the god with streams. A seal from the Ur III period (ca. 2112–2004 B.C.), for example, combines a group of figures closely related to Enki (B.M. 103232, Fig. 3). Beneath the feet of the enthroned Enki is the goat-fish. A worshiper stands with his hands folded. His face and head are shaven, and he wears a fringed shawl. Two lions are outlined, and a large crescent stands out above them. The two streams issue not from the shoulders of the god but from the vase Enki holds.

Fig. 3. "The Enthroned Enki" (B.M. 103232). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

A seal impressed upon a clay envelope from the Old Babylonian period (dated in the twenty-ninth year of Hammurapi's reign, i.e., 1763 B.C.) even names the principal gods Enki and Damgalnunna (CBS 1273). In the Old Babylonian period cylinder seals were the only works of art to treat the flowing vase.[61] The seated Enki, his name inscribed next to him, faces left and grasps a vase with his outstretched hand. The goddess Damgalnunna has long hair extending over her shoulders. She too wears the horned cap indicating her divine status. On each side of her is a large star. The scene also contains a nude hero, a worshiper carrying a goat, and a god receiving the worshiper. One can just barely make out another goddess, another worshiper, and another nude hero in the picture. The nude hero holds in both hands a vase from which streams pour out. Van Buren notes (p. 88) that the seal shows Enki could be depicted without his flowing vase. The goat-fish near him is enough to identify the god. The complex suggests a narrative style that includes successive episodes of a story rather than the culminating scene.

Through the second millennium B.C., Van Buren thinks, magic became increasingly important in Mesopotamia, and the depictions of Enki in art came to emphasize his role as the great magician. Among the figures represented with Enki are his vizier Isimud, nude heroes, bull-men, the dragon, lion-headed fish and others we have seen already, the bird-man and the goat-fish. On first millennium Assyrian seals a common motif is a particularly interesting hybrid creature, half man, half fish.[62]

Berossus, a priest of Marduk at the time of Alexander the Great, claimed that at an early stage of the universe, when everything was darkness and water, a whole host of strange beings came to life:

> For men were born with two wings and some with four wings and two faces; these had one body and two heads, and they were both masculine and feminine, and they had two sets of sexual organs, male and female. Other men were also born, some with legs and horns of goats, and some with the feet of horses and the foreparts of men. These were hippo-centaurs in form.
>
> Bulls were also born with human heads and four-bodied dogs with fish tails growing from their hind quarters, and dog-headed horses and men and other beings with the heads and bodies of horses and the tails of fish and still other creatures with the forms of all sorts of beasts.[63]

The creatures recall, in some ways, the beings formed in the contest between Enki and Ninmaḫ in "Enki and Ninmaḫ: The Creation of Humankind" and also the monsters used by Enki to attack Inanna's boat in "Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech." Berossus follows his list of creatures, though, with the comment that the hybrid creatures were ruled by a "woman named Omorka," whose "Chaldean name was *Thalath,* which translated into Greek means *Thalassa* (i.e., 'Sea')."[64] From this it appears that Berossus's main source was *Enuma Elish.* In that work, as we shall see in chapter 8, below, the great goddess Tiamat (= *Thalath*) rules with powerful magic, and she creates a band of monsters to form an army against Marduk.

Of these many early creatures, though, the fish-man is perhaps the most interesting. One, named Oannes by Berossus, is the being that instructs humans:

> In the first year a beast named Oannes appeared from the Erythraean Sea [probably the Arabian Gulf] in a place adjacent to Babylonia. Its entire body was that of a fish, but a human head had grown beneath the head of the fish and human feet likewise had grown from the fish's tail. It also had a human voice. A picture of it is still preserved today. . . . [This] beast spent the days with the men but ate no food. It gave to the men the knowledge of letters and sciences and crafts of all types. It also taught them how to found cities, establish temples, introduce laws and measure land. It also revealed to them seeds and the gathering of fruits, and in general it gave men everything which is connected with the civilized life. From the time of that beast nothing further has been discovered [pp. 13–14].

Berossus's fish-man Oannes is thought to be the sage Adapa,[65] whose connection with Enki is taken up in the next chapter.

First-millennium seal impressions do indeed preserve pictures of the fish-man (CBS 7294, and B.M. 119918). In one case the fish-man floats in a framework of molded lines. He holds in both hands a vase. Three streams issue from the vase, arch over his shoulders, and flow into vases below him. Two fish swim on either side of the fish-man's head. In the second case, a stamp seal on a chalcedony cone, two fish-men float in the scene, both facing to the right.[66] There is a crescent in the sky. Streams issue from vases above and fill a vase held by one of the fish-men. The outer stream supplies the second fish-man with water for his vase.

Mesopotamian ideas moved north into Cappadocia and west into Syria, where they encountered Egyptian influence. Although the god with streams seems not to have been quite as important in regions that had more abundant rainfall than in southern Mesopotamia, there are many seal impressions of the god with streams in "Syro-Cappadocian" art. The earliest of these date from the Ur III period. One of these looks like "the work of a local artist who did not understand the significance of the figures he engraved" (CBS 7326).[67] The field is crowded with familiar and some nonfamiliar figures associated with the god with streams.

Enki is there, of course, seated on a stool. He wears a flat cap and a single pair of horns. The goat-fish lies below his feet and serves as the dais, which curves up in front of Enki and resembles the prow of a boat. One can make out a crescent and a recumbent goat in the scene. Enki looks out to receive a number of other figures. Among them is Isimud. According to Van Buren, this is the only extant example of Isimud holding the flowing vase (p. 124). Next to him is a god from the Syro-Cappadocian pantheon. The god wears a little pigtail and a cap with large horns. Around him is a star and another vase. Behind him is a supplicating goddess, and following her a worshiper:

> The boon of abundant waters, with the consequence of fertility of crops and of livestock, was so essential to the life of the people that it is easy to understand why Ea, the giver of these blessings, was honoured over such a wide area and for such a lengthy period of time. In all his aspects he worked for the welfare of mankind, bestowing upon them material benefits, or protecting them by his spells from the powers of evil.[68]

The persistence of Enki is the topic of the next chapter. The literature in which Enki is named and in which he plays a role parallels the spread of the "god with streams" in Ancient Near Eastern art. From the third millennium through the

first, from southern Mesopotamia north and west as far away as Syria and the cities of the Hittites, the art and literature of the great magician spread widely. In one sense Enki was tied very closely to an ecological niche and the economy of the marshes in southernmost Iraq. When Mesopotamian civilization moved inexorably north into a different ecological condition, Enki's role in some ways diminished, and Eridu became a sacred city, a pilgrimage stop, instead of the political and economic center it had been before. The fertile valleys of northern Iraq, the heartland of the Assyrians, had sufficient rainfall for crops and pasturage. The yield even today is greater there than in the alluvial plains of the south.[69]

What did not diminish in the movement of Mesopotamian civilization was the reliance on magic. Indeed, magic seems to have become more and more important through the second and first millennia. That meant the role of the esoteric Enki would remain long after his cult city had lost its political importance.

CHAPTER 8

The Persistence of the Enki Tradition

> Cronus appeared to Xisouthros in a dream and revealed that on the fifteenth day of the month Daisios mankind would be destroyed by a flood. Therefore, he ordered Xisouthros to bury the beginnings and the middles and the ends of all writings in Sippar, the City of the Sun. Then, he should build a boat and embark on it with his kin and his closest friends. Food and drink should be placed in it. He was to load into it also the winged and four-footed creatures and to make everything ready to sail. If asked where he was sailing, he should reply, "To the gods to pray for good things for men." Heeding him, he built a boat five stades in length and two stades in breadth. He collected everything he had been ordered, and he embarked his wife and his children and his closest friends: [and straightway the things from the god came upon him].[1]

The story is familiar, though the characters and many of the details are not. The god is Cronus, not the biblical Yahweh/Elohim, and the human who rescues a remnant of humanity is not Noah but one Xisouthros. The account speaks of a City of the Sun, Sippar, a city in ancient Mesopotamia. This account of the flood had been preserved by Eusebius of Ceasarea in the fourth century A.D., as it had been earlier by Josephus and Cornelius Alexander Polyhistor in the first century A.D. and by Abydenus in the second century A.D.[2] This flood story is not, however, Jewish or Christian; it is a version, "in extremely poor Greek,"[3] composed about 281 B.C. by a priest of the god Bel (or Marduk), the chief god of the city of Babylon. The priest's name was, as we have mentioned earlier, Berossus.

Notice the curious bit of speech preserved in the otherwise straightforward third-person narrative. "If asked where he was sailing, he should reply, 'To the gods to pray for good things for men.'" The motif, not found in the biblical account of the flood (Genesis 6:13–7:5), is a familiar one in Mesopotamian stories of the flood. The sage, who is called Xisouthros here (after his Sumerian name, Ziusudra), is given a revelation that the flood is to come, but he is apparently concerned what he should say to his fellow citizens who, after all, will perish in the devastation. Translators of the Greek text have found the reply ambiguous.[4] Without even considering the grammatical ambiguity of the remark,[5] we can see the grim irony in Cronus's advice to the sage. Humankind, of course, is to be saved by building a boat that will ride out the flood. Berossus's telling of the story does not give a reason

for sending the flood in the first place. The inhabitants of the town are not wicked sinners. The reader does not see the flood as a just act. So the horror of the flood is increased, not diminished, by the little deception practiced by the sage upon his fellow citizens.

In typical Greek fashion, the god's name, Cronus, is a Greek substitution for the original name, rather like a "Cronus/Saturn type" god on the model of Hesiod's "trickster" Cronus of the well-known *Theogony*.[6] The god Cronus of this account is the Greek equivalent of Enki, or Ea, as he is known in non-Sumerian texts from the Ancient Near East. Implications of the Enki/Cronus substitution are taken up in the next chapter.

For our purpose here it is enough to take note of the ambiguity. The bit of ambiguity is the only representation of the god's speech in Berossus's flood story. Note also that the speech is presented in indirect address. However brief and indirect, this small instance of reporting the god's speech preserves, well into the Christian era, a very ancient literary motif. In the Mesopotamian stories of the flood, which reach back at least as far as the third millennium B.C., one finds a great concentration on the speeches of the gods. We have seen in earlier chapters how much Sumerian storytelling technique depended upon the speeches of the characters to carry the story forward. Indeed, speeches are the most conspicuous feature of the narratives. Berossus's late account of the flood almost exactly reverses the traditional dependence upon the representation of direct speech. The reversal is probably not intentional. Berossus may be summarizing an account; or someone else maybe paraphrasing Berossus. The account does, however, preserve something of the deceptive speech practiced by the god so prominent in the flood stories of Mesopotamia, Enki.

Like the cylinder seal tradition of representing a "god with streams" from the third millennium B.C. until late first-millennium times, a literary tradition kept Enki alive until the scribal schools teaching cuneiform writing closed in the Christian era. The magical texts presented in the previous chapter and the stories in which Enki imparts esoteric advice already have given some indication of the persistence of the Enki tradition. This chapter follows Enki's roles in other Akkadian literary works and concludes with a sampling of the god's appearance as a character in the small surviving corpus of Hittite narratives.

Enki/Ea and the Flood

Enki is the god of the powerful word, cunning and creative. That power is not reduced in second- and first-millennium Akkadian and Hittite works. Enki is, however, no longer—with one exception—*the* major figure in the narratives in which he appears. He acts with others, and is often given a relatively minor part in the stories. In one case Ea acknowledges his son, Marduk, as his superior. It is not unusual to see Ea's role reduced to a single appearance in one episode of a story. Ea was still considered one of the three gods at the top of a hierarchy in the Mesopotamian tradition of polytheism. As the center of Mesopotamian civilization itself pushed relentlessly north, and as the culture spread into Turkey, Syria, and to some extent Egypt, the southern Mesopotamian city-states declined in political and eco-

nomic power. In the next chapters we will speculate on reasons for Enki's somewhat diminished role in later literature. The decline of the city-states must have had something to do with it. The features of Enki most tied to the ecological niche of Sumer—the marshes with their distinctive flora and fauna, their canals and buildings—are either taken for granted in later writings or, more likely, forgotten when Eridu became an old, though still holy, city.

Still, that one appearance of Enki in a story will nearly always be crucial to the story. When all other tactics fail, the gods call upon the crafty god to get them out of scrapes or to resolve dilemmas. He is the god of last resort, and an unfailing source of advice. In the later stories Ea rarely acts in the ways we know from the Sumerian stories. Gone are the solemn processions through the waterways of the land. Gone are the sexual exploits. Fighting, which is rare even in the Sumerian stories, is absent. Ea rarely moves. The old father, he is sought in his cult center, for his wisdom.

The change in role for Enki/Ea is most evident in the increased emphasis on his utterances. What he is expected to do is speak, not to rush about in the field of action. Even in this emphasis on the speaking Enki, however, there are changes from the Sumerian stories in which he was the main speaker and actor. The speeches of Ea in Akkadian literature are shorter, on average, than in Sumerian literature—and his Hittite speeches briefer still. Everything is pared down, tightened, spare and terse. Ea's part in the story is usually clear and always important; but the speech itself may be dark with cunning and irony.

Enki/Ea's part in the flood provides a conspicuous example.

Two main versions of the flood story in Akkadian have survived. In one, *Atra-ḫasīs,* the flood is a central episode;[7] in the other, *Gilgamesh,* the flood is less central, but still an important "secret of the gods"[8] and crucial to the development of the hero Gilgamesh. In *Atra-ḫasīs,* the gods complain of the labor they have been forced to do in building up the cities, the dwelling places of the high gods. Ea proposes a solution: let the mother goddess create a new being to do the work of the gods. The new creature is humankind. Once humankind is formed, though, the humans multiply, and their "noise" creates another problem for the gods. The angry god Enlil attempts to destroy humankind, first by the plague and then by famine. Ea thwarts Enlil's plan each time. The third attempt will send the flood, and it will take a special cunning on Ea's part to rescue humankind from the world flood.

When Ea proposes to create a new being, "humankind," the mother goddess (Mami or Nintu) is quick to point out that it is not possible for her to make things. The skill to do so lies with Ea. Because Ea can "cleanse everything," he can give her the clay with which to form the new creature. Ea establishes cleansing rituals on different days of the month, to purify the gods; and one of the gods is to be slaughtered so that the flesh and blood of the divine is mixed with the clay.[9]

God and Humankind Mixed

Enki opened his mouth
and addressed the great gods: [205]

"On the seventh and the fifteenth of the month
for cleansing I am instituting ablutions.

"One god—let him be slaughtered
so the gods will be purified, immersing.

"Into his flesh and his blood [210]
Nintu will mix clay
so god and human are mixed—
lumped together in clay!
We will hear the kettle-drum for the rest of time!

"In the flesh of that god is a spirit: [215]
signs of it will proclaim it in the living
so there will be no forgetting that this spirit exists!"

Once the new creature is formed, the cultic drum *(uppu)* will be heard for the rest of time. Does the peculiar statement that the gods will hear the drum somehow symbolize the role of humankind in the cosmos? Certainly the drumming, a part of a great many cultic acts, might well stand for the relationship between humankind and the gods. The role humans play in the universe is to perform for the gods, to please them. Yet the placement of the line about drumming suggests that the murky saying is about the strange composition of humankind: the mortal clay combined with the flesh and blood of the gods. Like the *uppu,* Nintu's creature will resonate with spirit. The "spirit" *(eṭemmu)* in the god's flesh will be made known or "proclaimed" in the living one as its "sign" *(ittu)*. The puzzling mixture of mortal and immortal in humankind is further complicated by the way the creature is formed—through the sacrifice of one of the gods.

When Enlil is later upset by the "noise" *(rigmu)* the new creature makes, Ea will make use of a human being, the sage Atrahasis, to save life. Against plague and famine Ea finds a way to rescue this odd creation of his. But the flood will offer an even more serious threat—and Ea has already gained the wrath of Enlil for thwarting the angry god's designs. Ea is bound with an oath not to communicate directly with humankind.

He does so anyway, but indirectly. He speaks to Atrahasis through a "reed wall," addressing the wall instead of the sage:

Advice to the Reed Wall

Enki opened his mouth [15]
and addressed his slave:
'"What am I to seek?' you say.
The message I speak to you:
make sure you pay attention!
Wall, listen to me! [20]
Reed wall, attend to every one of my words.

"Destroy a house—build a boat.
Property? Hate it.
Save life.
The boat that you build—
(Let its breadth) equal (its length).

"Roof it over like the *apsû*—
so the sun will not see inside it—
let it be roofed over above and below.
Make the tackle strong.
The pitch—let it be tough to give it strength.

"I will rain down upon you
an affluence of birds, a basket of fish!"[10]

Ea's advice is difficult to follow, for it seems at first to command, not just the building of a boat, but a way of life. There are four commands tersely stated in four half-lines: destroy this, build that; a "house" is opposed to a "boat." The second line of advice reverses the syntax. "Hate property" stands in tension with "hold onto life." Destroying and hating are on one side; building and conserving on the other: in the brief, densely packed saying, Ea articulates the basis of an ethical system.

Those who know the biblical account of the flood will be interested by the detail of this much earlier version. The boat that is to be built has one intriguing feature that links it to Ea. It will be like the underwater dwelling of Ea (*apsû*—that is, the Abzu), and dark like it, so the sun will not appear inside it. The last lines of Ea's advice to the reed wall do not have a clear counterpart in the biblical account. The final lines are savagely ironic. All good things coming from water above and below issue from Ea. Only the context informs us that the rain Ea will send and the "abundance" of birds and fishes refer to the devastating flood.

Notice how close the parallels are in the version that appears in *Gilgamesh.* First the address to the reed wall, with its gnomic advice to destroy and build, abandon and seek, hate property and hold onto life:

Words to the Reed Wall

Ea—he of the pellucid eye—swore an oath with them.

Their words he repeats to the wall of reeds:
"Reed-wall, reed-wall! Wall, wall!
Reed-wall, listen! Wall, pay attention!
Man of Shuruppak, son of Ubaratutu,
Tear down a house. Build a boat.
Abandon riches. Seek life.
Property? Hate it.
Save life.

Load the seed of every living thing into the boat.
The boat that you build—
let her measure be measured;
let her breadth and length be equal.
Roof it over like the *apsû*."[11]

The advice (again combining instructions on boat-making with ethical directives that exploit the same imagery of boat-building) is given to Atrahasis, called Utnapishtim in *Gilgamesh* and identified here as the "man" of the city of Shuruppak and the son of Ubaratutu. The ethical advice is somewhat expanded. But the speech has the same form as the version in *Atra-ḫasīs*. Those last two lines in Ea's speech in *Atra-ḫasīs* are, however, clarified in the *Gilgamesh* version.[12] The ironic lines are clever, for they are to convince the residents of the city to help build the boat—without their knowing the terrible events to follow. Ea's advice just skirts the lie:

Showers of Wheat

Ea opened his mouth, saying,
saying to me, his servant,

"You, you say this to them:
Enlil hates me—me!
I cannot live in your city [40]
or turn my face to the earth which is Enlil's.
I will go down to the *apsû*, to live with Ea, my lord.
He will make fortune rain down on you—
an affluence of birds, the rarest fish.
He will give you your fill of harvest riches.
At dawn, bread;
at night, he will pour down on you—showers of wheat."[13]

In *Gilgamesh*, the flood is sent without a reason given. There is no mention of the "noise" that irritates the god (and may stand for overpopulation, in the very persuasive interpretation offered by Anne Draffkorn Kilmer),[14] as there is in *Atra-ḫasīs*. In the earlier text Ea saves the seed of humankind through his cunning—and then boasts of his role before the gods. The flood has destroyed every human except Atraḫasīs's family. The mother goddess lamented the loss of her offspring, and it is Ea who speaks in angry boast to the assembly of the gods. The contest between Ea and Enlil is resolved when Enlil makes a conciliatory gesture toward Ea.

Ironically, in the repopulation of humankind after the flood, Ea joins with the mother goddess to produce a group of religious celibates and a demon, the Extinguisher, who snatches infants—who are incapable for reproducing. (The passage recalls the creation of misfits in the Sumerian "Enki and Ninmaḫ: The Crea-

tion of Humankind" discussed in chapter 2.) The story that began with a rationale for humankind's existence—to relieve the gods of their labors—and centered on the attempts to destroy the creature by plague, famine, and flood, ends with a scheme for keeping the population low, a scheme designed by the crafty Ea.

In the *Gilgamesh* version, Ea and Enlil engage in the same contest of will and wit, and they are reconciled at the end. The sage who survived the flood is blessed by Enlil. (The blessing of the survivor is taken up in the next chapter.) But the two versions differ in a few respects. No reason is given for the god's decision to bring on the flood. Moreover, the irrationality of Enlil's angry command to destroy humankind with the flood is highlighted in Ea's last speech in the narrative:

The Meaning of the Flood

Ea opened his mouth to speak, saying to warrior Enlil:

"You, the wise one of the gods, warrior,
how is it—how could you—without talking it through,
send the flood?

"Punish the one who commits the crime; punish the evildoer
alone!
Give him play so he is not cut free;
pull him in, so he is not lost.

"Instead of your bringing on the flood: let lions
rise up and cut the people low.
Instead of your bringing on the flood: let the wolf
rise up and cut the people low.
Instead of your bringing on the flood: let famine
be set up to throw down the land.
Instead of your bringing on the flood: let plague
rise up and strike down the people.

"I, *I* did not unconceal the secret of the great gods.
The overwise one: a dream was revealed to him;
he heard the secret of the gods."[15]

Within Ea's address to Enlil irrationality is set next to another ethical norm, stated in its most condensed form: "How is it—how could you—without talking it through, send the flood?" The rhetorical question is followed by the command to "punish the one who commits the crime; punish the evildoer alone!"[16] In one line Ea establishes a rule that rids humankind forever of the burden of collective responsibility. (It would seem to be the counterpart of the biblical promise never to destroy all of humanity by means of a flood.)

In another way, though, Ea lays down a terrible truth, similar to what one finds in *Atra-ḫasīs,* yet more grim than what he lays down there. Better the lion, the wolf, famine—even the plague-god Erra—than a flood that can destroy humankind completely. Ea seems to offer a kind of ecological balance. In each case,

"instead of" the flood, a predator, a death-bringing disaster, will keep the numbers down. Ea, who sets down the principles of the ethical life and of justice in the poem, raises the principle that sets life and death in a kind of balancing act. He brings into being the natural disasters that make of human life a terror. The "people" and nature, now imaged by predators and marked with lack, set upon by the divine Erra, are now cut apart.

The flood is no doubt one of the best-known biblical stories, and parallels from the ancient world abound. Nowhere is Mesopotamian literature closer to the Bible than in the details of the flood—especially the details of the *Gilgamesh* version.[17] In the biblical account, though, the roles of three gods are fused into the one, Yahweh/Elohim. In a sense, then, Yahweh must take the part of Enlil, the mother goddess, and Ea. Of the three, Ea has the most active role in the old story of the flood. It is he who designs humankind, protects the new creature, and saves it from the flood. Berossus, as we have seen earlier, also knew that Ea's speech is powerful, ambiguous, and important to the story. Although the versions of the flood differ, in the Mesopotamian tradition it is the beneficent Ea who declares the uncanniness of humankind: a mixture of god's flesh and clay, destined only to do the work of the gods, set in a natural world that is hostile and killing.

Enki the Contender

A major theme of Sumerian Enki myths, we have seen above, is the contest. Whatever theological and socio-political concerns may be masked by contests between the gods, the contests provide a framework within which a variety of stories can develop. Ea's dispute with Enlil in the flood is basic to the story. The latter's rash and angry, unthinking acts—a kind of definition of the powerful Enlil—are in sharp contrast to the cool, cunning intellection and magic of Ea.

More often the contest is between Ea and one or the other goddess, and those contests are more subtle and complex. "Ea and Ṣaltu," otherwise known as the Agušaya Hymn,[18] is an Old Babylonian poem very much in the vein of the Sumerian poems we have seen earlier. Benjamin R. Foster thinks that "of all the figures in Mesopotamian tradition, Ea best exemplifies a unity of knowledge of the ways of things and how they can be manipulated."[19] He finds in the poem a clever and amusing confrontation between the god and the great goddess Ishtar. As in "Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech" (chapter 4), the poem opens with a tribute to the goddess—Ishtar is the Akkadian equivalent of Inanna—and ends with a conciliatory speech of Ea. Between, the contest is played out with the creation of an odd character, Ṣaltu.

Ishtar's militancy irritates Ea, and he resolves before the gods to create, with the dirt of his nails, a powerful figure who reflects and mocks the battle-crazed Ishtar. The instructions he gives to Ṣaltu are designed to provoke Ṣaltu's anger and jealousy (A, vi, 17–49). Irnina is another name for Ishtar:

> "Keep quiet, listen!
> Pay heed to what I say.
> Hear my orders!
> What I tell you, do!

"There is a certain goddess
more valiant than all others,
whose greatness is surpassing.
Strange and cunning are her deeds.

"Her name is Irnina.

"She is clad[?] in mail,
the supreme lady,
lofty one, daughter of Ningal.

"I have created you
to humiliate her.
Valor and might
in my wisdom did I
give your form in abundance.

"Now be off,
go off to her private chamber.
You should be girded with awful splendor.
Accost her: 'You there!'
She will bend down to you.
She will speak to you
and ask, 'See here, woman,
explain your behavior!'
But you, though she be furious,
show no respect to her.
Whatever she utters,
answer her never a word.

"What advantage shall she have of you?
You are the creature of my power.

"Speak out proudly what is on your tongue,
and as much [again] before her!"

Ea then taunts her that she will surely fail before the great Ishtar. At that Ṣaltu flies into a rage and goes after Ishtar. Only at the very end of the poem do we learn the reason behind Ea's actions: "he had in fact created a gross travesty of Ishtar herself, fierce and clamoring for a fight. The sight so revolted the goddess that she gave up her incessant clamor for battle, as such behavior was not a true sign of might."[20] In that Ea succeeds, and Ishtar's feelings are soothed. He establishes a festival in her honor. Once a year the people will dance wildly and make an uproar reminiscent of Ishtar in her boistrous aspect. Agušaya is just that warlike aspect of the goddess who combined both love and war.

Ishtar speaks, then Ea (B, vii, 1–22):

"You have made her enormity,
Ṣaltu clamor
has set against me.
Let her return to her hole."

Ea spoke and answered as follows:
to Agušaya, hero of the gods he says:
"As soon as you say it,
then it's done and certain.
You make me joyful
and cause delight with your having done with it.
The reason it was done
and Ṣaltu was created is
that besides ourselves[?]
people of future days might know.

"Let it be yearly
that a whirling dance be done
in the . . . of the year.
Look about at all the people!
Let them dance in the street.
Hear their clamor!
See for yourself the intelligent things they do.
Let their rationale[?] be yours."

Where the contest between Ea and Ishtar is conspicuously at the center of "Ea and Ṣaltu," other conflicts are less obvious, because they are part of a larger, complex story or because the texts have not survived completely intact. The poem known as *Enuma Elish,* sometimes called "the Babylonian Creation Epic," contains an example of the former.

"The Babylonian Creation Epic" has attracted much attention because the story contains so many mythic and maybe archetypal patterns. It tells the story, first, of the emergence of the gods and, later, the orderly formation of a cosmos by the young god who is proclaimed king of the gods and ruler over the universe: Marduk. Before there was pasture land—or even a reed marsh—when even heaven and earth had not been named, there was only a primeval couple, Apsû and Tiamat, and a third figure, called Mummu. Within Apsû and Tiamat the gods are created. The creation story is often considered a nature allegory, for Apsû and Tiamat appear to represent primordial waters from which everything emerges. Two pairs of gods, male and female, come into being: Laḫmu and Laḫamu, and Anshar and Kishar. They are followed by a line of powerful males, each at least the equal of his father, in whose image he is formed: Anu, Ea (called by his Sumerian name Nudimmud), and Marduk.

The earlier stage, of unplanned generation, is dominated by the eldest of gods, Tiamat and Apsû. Tiamat is the primeval mother, and Apsû her male consort. At one level of the story they represent the surging waters from which all life emerges: Tiamat the sea waters and Apsû (the Abzu of Sumerian mythology) the sweet underground waters. Apsû finds the noise of the younger gods intolerable, for he can find no rest with all their clamor. Tiamat tries to soothe Apsû, for she does not want to destroy what they themselves have brought forth. But Apsû insists on acting against the young ones. He and Mummu develop a plan of action, but Ea, "the one of supreme understanding," discovers the plot and defeats Apsû and Mummu.

The major focus of *Enuma Elish* is, however, on the city-god of Babylon, Marduk. After the defeat of Apsû, Tiamat becomes an even greater threat to the young gods. Only Marduk can defeat the great mother Tiamat. Out of her body Marduk forms the ordered world. In the process of finding a hero among the gods courageous enough to defeat Tiamat, Marduk insists on being raised to the position of king of the gods. It is in his kingly rule that he forms the universe. The poem ends with a solemn proclamation of the "fifty names," epithets that secure his rule as king.

Ea is a prominent character in the story, but because he is subordinate to his son, Marduk, his part in the story has not received the wide attention the Marduk/Tiamat conflict has attracted. Ea is, though, a heroic figure in the poem, one of a group of young gods who overthrow the old order. Ea's heroism is clear in his overthrowing of the old father, Apsû.[21] As has been seen in other narratives, "noise"—this time the noise of the young gods—irritates Apsû and leads him to act. A. Leo Oppenheim interprets the key lines (I.61–65) as a magical contest in which Ea cleverly turns the magical soporific that Apsû was to use against him against Apsû himself. Ea kills Apsû, robs the old father of his insignia of kingship, and takes away Apsû's *melammu,* the awe-inspiring radiance of the ruler of the universe. Upon his father's body Ea builds his sanctuary, the Apsû of Eridu.

The whole episode of Ea and Apsû foreshadows the longer episode of Marduk and Tiamat. The story develops incrementally rather than as a series of loosely related conflicts.

The great Marduk is born within the Apsû, the offspring of Ea and his consort Damkina. He is awe-inspiring and receives a "double equality" with the gods. Gigantic, brilliant, and active, he "caused waves" and disturbed Tiamat. Stung by the accusation that she did not help her mate, Apsû, Tiamat is enraged and calls the gods to assembly. To fight the young gods she creates a group of monster-weapons and exalts one of the gods, Kingu, as her consort and commander of the army. Marduk will eventually defeat Tiamat, with advice from Ea, but it first falls Ea's lot to challenge the mother. In that challenge he is unsuccessful. His magic is not powerful enough to defeat the great goddess.

As Oppenheim has pointed out,[22] the Ea story is basically a doublet of the Marduk story, a kind of overture to the larger event. The episode ends with a grand festival. In the outdoor sanctuary "the new world-era is inaugurated by a solemn cohabitation which is to yield the sun-god and the future ruler of the world" (p. 214). One feature that ties together Ea's encounter with Apsû and Marduk's battle with Tiamat is the use of magic as a weapon. Ea, once he saw through Apsû's plan, "made and established against it a magical circle for all" (I.61). With great craft he composed an incantation and recited it over the waters so that Apsû, who could

not sleep, ironically has sleep "poured out" on him. Ea then kills the old father. For his part Marduk prepares for battling Tiamat by painting his face a life-bearing red and carrying an aromatic plant with him. Seven wind-demons accompanying Marduk open up the interior of Tiamat, and Marduk is able to slay the mother with an arrow.

One of the most stirring moments in the poem comes when Ea tells the god Anshar about Tiamat's might and her plan to defeat the young gods. It is a rare instance of Ea telling a story. He tells of the power of Tiamat to form creatures and to elevate her son/lover to supreme authority over his peers (II.9–48):[23]

The Exaltation of Kingu

When he went before his father and begetter, Anshar,
all that Tiamat had plotted he repeated to him: [10]

"My father, Tiamat—the one who bore us—detests us.
She has organized the Assembly and is furious with rage.
All the gods have swarmed to her—
even those you sired march at her side.
They throng and rise up beside Tiamat. [15]
Enraged, plotting without rest night and day,
they are bent on combat, growling, furious.
A council they have formed to ready for the fighting.
Mother Ḫubur—the one who fashions all things—
has added weapons without rival,
has spawned monster serpents, [20]
sharp of tooth, unsparing of fang.
With venom she has filled their bodies in place of blood.
Roaring dragons she has clothed with terror,
with awful sheen she crowned them, making them like gods:
whoever sees them perishes in shock; [25]
rearing up their bodies—none will twist back *their* front.

"She raised up the horned serpent,
the dragon, and
the water-snake;

the demon-lion,
the mad dog, and
the scorpion-man;

the fierce storm,
the fish-man, and
the bison,

"shouldering weapons merciless, without fear in battle. [30]

"Weighty are her edicts—they are past understanding.
All told she has produced eleven like them.

"From among her divine offspring—those who formed the Assembly—
she has elevated Kingu, promoting him chief among them.
The leading of the ranks and
command of the Assembly, [35]
the raising of weapons for the clash,
advancement of the conflict,
in combat the commander-in-chief—
she entrusted these to his hands
as she seated him in the Council:
'I have cast the spell for you,
exalting you in the Assembly of the Gods.
To counsel all of the gods I have filled you with power [40]
You are supreme! You are my only lover!
Your words prevail over all the Anukki!'

"She has given him the Tablets of Destinies,
fastened them to his breast:

'"When you say it, your command cannot be changed!
Your utterance shall endure!'
"As soon as Kingu was elevated,
possessed of the rank of Anu, [45]
for the gods, her sons, they decreed the fate:

'"Your word makes the fire subside.
Your venom, as it collects, humbles the powerful!"'

Ea's speech is a carefully composed poem. It falls into three major sections. The first (II.11–19) tells of the primordial mother as she sets up an assembly of the gods. The second (II.19–32) describes her "matchless weapons," the monsters she gives birth to, eleven in all. The third (II.33–48) narrates the elevation of Kingu. It includes her magical speech to the assembly, a spell that is itself broken into three sections.

The beginning is worth noticing as an example of careful "ring composition," or chiasmus. Chiasm, sometimes described as an inverted relationship between the syntactic elements of parallel phrases, was popular among English eighteenth century poets, as in Goldsmith's "to stop too fearful, and too faint to go." More recently, studies of oral traditions and ancient texts, especially the Bible, have noted the propensity for shaping a narrative around a central line or turning point. Like Ciceronian "periodic" sentences, the stories show a chiastic pattern of elaborate balances of themes and phrases on both sides of a central line. This text provides a fairly clear-cut example of such a form of chiasmus.

11–14 set up an assembly; prepare to fight
15 throng and march with Tiamat
16–19 set up an assembly; prepare to fight

The Akkadian poet strives after variation wherever possible within the very orderly arrangement. Schematically, the passage looks like this (with some indication of the wealth of subtle variation in the lines):

11 A Tiamat, the one who bore us
12 B she has set up the Assembly
13 C the gods have rallied to her
14 D those brought forth march at her side
15 E they throng and march beside her
16 D′ they plot
17 C′ they are set for combat
18 B′ they have set up a council
19 A′ Mother Ḫubur, the one who fashions all.

Such an impressive display of the mother's power, put in the mouth of Ea, certainly indicates the awe in which she was held. Ea is unable to defeat her.

The Assyrian version of "The Myth of Anzu" (or Zû) is somewhat closer to the usual Ea of Akkadian and Hittite myths, a successful advisor, not himself the heroic figure. The "Myth of Anzu" narrates what may have formed the prelude to the Sumerian "Ninurta's Pride and Punishment" seen above (chapter 6). In the following selection, Ea gives advice to Ninurta through an intermediary, Adad, who has come seeking Ea's help in a desperate situation.

The situation is this. The evil Anzu-bird has stolen the divine *me* from Enlil,[24] and taken over Enlil's kingship of the universe. The result is a return to chaos. To restore order, the gods look to one in their midst to fight Anzu. Two gods are approached, but they cannot face Anzu. It appears that Ea has a promising solution in the god Ninurta (or Ningirsu, in the Old Babylonian version).

The contest is not direct, as it was in "The Babylonian Creation Epic," between Ea and Tiamat. Rather it is indirect, in a way that can be shown only through a comparison of advice given by two gods to Ninurta. At first the mother goddess advises Ninurta, but her advice fails him. Only then do they turn to Ea. His advice opens in the same way as the mother goddess's (Mami, or DINGIR.MAḪ) had, but then he offers what turns out to be a successful tactic to defeat the Anzu-bird (II.101–23):

A Plan to Defeat the Anzu-Bird

When Ea—he of the pellucid eye—heard the sound of his son,
he called to Adad and gave him instructions:
"Repeat to him, to your lord, my instructions;
Whatever I say lay it out for him.

"In combat do not tire; prove your strength. [105]
Subdue him. By the onslaught of the south wind
his pinions will be overthrown!
Take the *tillu*-weapon behind your reed-arrows.
Cut off his pinions. Scatter them left and right.
Seeing his wings will rob him of speech:
'Wing to wing!' he will cry out. Do not let him
intimidate you. [110]
Draw your bow and drive your arrows straight into the breast
like lightning!
Pinions and wings will dance like bloody things!

"Slit his throat. Ensnare Anzu.
The winds will whirl his wings to a secret place—
toward the Ekur, to your father Enlil! [115]
Flood and confusion into the midst of the mountains!
Cut the throat of evil Anzu.

"Kingship will enter the Ekur!
The *me* returns to the father, who fathered you!
Shrines appear—they are built! [120]
Set up your cult in the four quarters.
Your cult sites will enter the Ekur!"

Splendid will your potent name be in the presence of the gods!

Within the conflict that sends Ninurta against the evil Anzu-bird, then, is a contest of magic against magic, between Mami and Ea.

The speech given by Mami (II.1–27), like Ea's speech here, breaks into two parts. The second part of both speeches is identical; the first part differentiates the two. Mami's advice emphasizes the shining splendor of Ninurta versus the opaqueness of the evil Anzu, and she suggests that he cloud his face like a fog so that Anzu will not recognize him—then to disarm the evil one with Ninurta's radiance.

Mami's advice fails. Ninurta directs an arrow at Anzu, but the magic of Anzu's words turns the arrow away. Ea's advice is a cunning trap that recognizes Anzu's magic. When Anzu sees his *kappa*—his wings—scattered right and left, he will be robbed of his speech. When he does speak, he cries out in an ironic parody of the magical words he had used to defeat Ninurta earlier. Instead of "wing [= feathers of the arrow] return to the birds [from which they originally came]," he cries out *kappa ana kappa,* "wing to wing!" in astonishment at the loss of his own *kappa!* Immediately Ninurta is to let fly the arrows "like lightning."

The first part of Ea's advice ends with the horrid but strangely beautiful line, "Pinions and wings will dance like bloody things!"

The division of Ea's speech into two sections (battle—victory) reflects a turn

in the poem as a whole, and the second part of Ea's speech itself breaks into two divisions reflective of the deep movement of the epic as a whole, a movement from chaos to order. In the first subsection (113–17), Anzu's throat is to be cut; his wings are to be taken away to "a secret place." "Flood and confusion" are mentioned, appropriate to the chaos Anzu has caused in the universe. The "flood and confusion" are sent into the very midst of the mountains. In the second subsection (118–23), chaos and punishment give way to order. Kingship, one of the divine *me,* and the divine decrees themselves *(parṣu)* are restored to their rightful place. Sanctuaries and cult sites are brought into existence, built, located. The cult sites will appear in the four quarters of the world and will "enter" the Ekur, the temple of Enlil. The command of Ea ends, appropriately, with the setting-up of the hero's "mighty name" before the gods. The universe is renewed; state and temple returned; and the hero is exalted.

Father and Son

So well established was the form of the Marduk/Ea incantation (chapter 7, above) that the great *Enuma Elish* itself may well have been patterned after it.[25] In a sense, that is appropriate and indicative at the same time of the somewhat reduced—or at least changed—status of Ea by a certain period in Akkadian literature. In the many Marduk/Ea incantations, the power is Ea's, transferred to his son to enact. Asarluḫi is not the "hero" of that strange combination of magic and story; the center is the powerful word, and that word is the crafty god. With the increasing importance of Babylon from the Old Babylonian period on—and the dwindling of Eridu from a major city-state to a pilgrim site—it was perhaps inevitable that the city should strengthen the identification of the son of the high god Enki, Asarluḫi, with the city-god of Babylon, Marduk. When Marduk was raised to the stature of heroic king of the gods in the *Enuma Elish,* it was the son who came to overshadow the father in importance—at least for the city of Babylon.[26]

One of the structural patterns in the *Enuma Elish* involves just that transfer of power from Ea to Marduk. The mythological opening of the poem, "When above heaven had not been named," which recounts the formation of a kind of early, chaotic system of elements dominated by Tiamat and Apsû, is not much different from the introductory theme of the Marduk/Ea incantation. Indeed, the early episodes, especially the one mentioned earlier, when Ea turns to his father to tell him of the dangers of Tiamat's brood, are much like an expanded narrative based on the naming of the demons and the terrifying threat they pose.

The poem is increasingly dominated by the heroic Marduk, for it is Marduk who demands kingship of the gods—a new political order—for taking on the task of defeating Tiamat and her monster brood. After Ea's defeat of old Apsû, his presence recedes. But in what is a working-out of the Marduk-Ea formula, Ea passes on power and advice to his son. Ea speaks only three times from this point on in *Enuma Elish,* and his utterances are very brief and terse. Still, the three speeches are worth considering, because they mark three important steps in the exaltation of Marduk.

In the first, Ea and his consort, Damkina, proclaim together the new status of Marduk after the son had defeated Tiamat:

The Parents Declare the Son King

Ea and Damkina . . .
opened their mouths to speak to the great gods,
the Igigi:
"Formerly Marduk was the son we loved.
Now he is your king—proclaim his name!" [110]

A second time they spoke, saying as one:
"'King of the Gods Above and of the World Below'
is his name: swear by him!"

When they had given Marduk kingship,
the incantation for benefits and obedience they pronounced
to him:
"From now on you are the provider of our sanctuaries. [115]
Whatever you command, we will carry out."[27]

Ea and Damkina pronounce three powerful formulas. The first proclaims Marduk king. The second pronounces a lofty Sumerian name, "king of the gods of the above and the below." The third pronouncement establishes Marduk as the provider of sanctuaries and binds all the gods to loyalty. The incantation (*inim-inim-ma-ak* or *kainimakku*) calls down "benefits" or "good *(damqu)* fortune" and "success" or "obedience" *(tešmu)*. The interpretation of the latter term comes from the two parts of the incantation itself: provision and obedience of the gods.

The speech comes at an important point in the epic as a whole. The first enthronement of Marduk came when he demanded kingship as the price of his heroic act. Now that Marduk has defeated Tiamat and out of her body has organized a universe, Ea speaks to establish Marduk as king in a fuller sense than before. In the first enthronement the gods give Marduk the insignia of rank, arm him, and send him into battle. The gods obey Marduk in order to obtain security, a temporary situation to be released once the threat to the gods is finished. "Safety and obedience" is the formula under which the gods establish Marduk as their leader. This time the situation has changed completely. Tiamat is dead. The threat to the gods is no more. The new formula is "benefits and obedience."[28] The establishment of Marduk as king of the gods is now to gain the benefits of divine rule: a new, well-ordered cosmos administered by Marduk. The king will respond by building a major sign of kingly rule: Babylon. (Recall that after his victory over Apsû, Ea had built his Eridu sanctuary.) And he will, with the help of Ea, create humankind to assist the gods. Humankind will henceforth provide the gods with benefits and will work while the gods rest.

As we had seen earlier with the flood story, the plan for the relief of the gods came from Ea:

Ea's Advice to Marduk

Ea answered him, speaking to him a word,
giving him a plan to relieve the gods:

"Hand over just one of their brothers:
let that one alone die
so that people may be fashioned!
Make sure the great gods are here in assembly: [15]
the guilty is to be handed over
so they can stand firm!"[29]

The advice Ea gives is extremely terse. One alone will be handed over (to be slain). Only the guilty shall perish. The plan *(ṭêmu)* is a paradigm for justice everywhere, established here.

The plan, moreover, is designated a plan "concerning relief for the gods." The final lines envision the great gods in assembly, enduring. Recall that Tiamat had raised one of her sons, Kingu, as her lover and commander of her troops. Now he has been bound, and the Tablet of Destinies that had been fastened to his chest has been stripped from him. In a curious departure from tradition, it is Marduk who proposes that he—not Ea—establish humankind to bring relief to the gods. In this speech, Ea is modifying the plan. It is Ea who suggests that only one—the guilty Kingu—be slain; and from Kingu will be formed the new creature, humankind.

Ea imposes upon Kingu his guilt, and the gods let Kingu's blood drain onto the Earth. It is really Ea, then, who fashions humankind out of the blood of Kingu and who imposes upon humankind the service of the gods. Marduk follows this by settling the gods in their fates. The sequence of events is complicated only in the splitting off of functions that were once Ea's alone. Because Marduk is the first to say he will establish humankind when Ea actually judges the guilty Kingu and fashions the new creature, the text adds a telling note: Ea created humankind, but at the "clever idea" of Marduk.

Otherwise this long sequence follows the Marduk/Ea pattern of a ritual section. What is added is the narrative working out of Ea's advice.[30] Marduk is without question the hero of the epic. His only near rival—in the sense of an equal—is the father, Ea. Marduk is able to do what Ea could not accomplish—defeat Tiamat—and Ea is thus relegated to the position of a contriver, but the poem is unique among Akkadian works in presenting a fighting Ea, who defeats Apsû and establishes his sanctuary on Apsû's body. (The battle, though, is mainly one of magic.) The complete exaltation of the son comes only very late in the epic, when Ea speaks for the last time.

The action of the poem gives way at the end to a solemn hymn, the fifty names of Marduk. Before the list of fifty, Marduk is actually called the name given to Enki's son in the incantations, Asarluḫi. The hymn—a catalogue of fifty sacred names—may seem to us a peculiar way to end such a rousing adventure poem; but it fits into the pattern of the concluding theme in the Marduk/Ea incantation. Marduk is called One, Son of the Sun, King of the Cosmos, Deliverer, Life, and also King Death, *Ḫegal* (Abundance), *Mummu* the creative word, the Storm, Lord of the World. When the hymn of the fifty names comes to an end, Ea brings the epic to a close:

Ea Releases Himself

When the Igigi exhausted their store of names
and Ea heard the names, his spirit sang out jubilantly
thus: "The one whose names his fathers have glorified—
he is the same as I am! Ea is his name!
He is the only one to manage my decrees,
the whole collection,
every one of them!"
He alone carries out the total of my oracles!"[31]

The statement is brief, but filled with marvelous touches. The poet uses three words for "all" or "totality." The first is *nagbu,* a term especially relevant to Ea. The *nagbu* is ordinarily "groundwater" or "depth." As in English, where to reach the profound or get to the bottom of something that is "deep" is to achieve the "ground" of something, to bring it to a close, so the Igigi-gods reach the depth of their solemn listing of Marduk's epithets.

Of the three terms for "all," one is particularly close to Ea; a second one is often used in Akkadian literature; and the third is a special poetic word. Besides *nagbu* the poet employs the usual *kalû* in line 141, and *gimru* in the line following that. Wolfram von Soden has noted the last term, *gimru,* as an example of the special poetic diction (hymnic-epic) used in Akkadian poetry.[32]

There is, in addition, a delightful wordplay that is difficult to capture in translation. Within a few lines packed with solemn punning and special language, the most delightful wordplay is a play on the name Ea. The pronunciation of the divine name has been, as might be expected in dealing with such ancient texts in dead languages, a matter of some controversy. A. Murtonen, for example, in *A Philological and Literary Treatise on the Old Testament Divine Names,* represents one extreme, because he is anxious to sever any possible connection between the forms of the divine name, Yahweh, with Ea. His objection is based more on etymology than on pronunciation.[33]

J. J. M. Roberts has gathered evidence of Ea's name going back to Presargonic Akkadian.[34] Written E_2-*a* and *'a*$_3$-*a,* transliterated *'Ay(y)a* by Roberts, the name appears to have internal *-y(y)-*. If the first phoneme is derived from **ḥa,* and if the name is Semitic, a root **ḥ-x-x* is suggested. A possible etymology is *ḥyy,* "to live." Roberts suggests also that the term could be related to the adjective *ḥayy(um),* "alive, living," meaning spring-fed or running water. That in turn would agree with the later identification of Ea and ^{d}*na-ag-bu*$_{IDIM}$.[35] This is, of course, the same *nagbu,* "source" or "spring" or "groundwater" the poet uses here in line 137.

Although we can expect pronunciation to vary over time and place from Old Akkadian to neo-Babylonian times, there seems little doubt that the poet is punning on a pronunciation of Ea in three conspicuous places in this brief poem. All involve the first-person pronoun and the pronominal ending, *ia̯ti* and *-ia̯*. "He is like me," which is a phrase with a range from "similar to" to "identical with," states it rather baldly: *šu-ú ki-ma ia̯-a-ti-ma* (line 140). Immediately following in the same line is the name spelled out: ^{d}*é-a lu-ú šum-šu,* "Ea is his name"! The line even

manages to develop chiasm, with the punning words in the center, "his" at the beginning and end.

The last two lines continue the punning: *par-ṣi-ḫa* (that is, my *me,* divine decrees), and *te-ri-e-ti-ḫa* ("my oracles"). This is not to suggest that the poet has gotten away from the meaning of the passage to delight in a merely decorative, if ingenious, manipulation of language. In the most powerful way, using the precative form of the verbs and wordplay, the poet identifies Ea and Marduk. Ea empties himself in the other. The poem is heavy with the theology of Ea: "groundwater," names and naming, hearing and singing, and of course the *me.* The living center of all is the magical word, the very definition of Ea.

By transferring the *me*—and himself—to Marduk, Ea resolves any rivalry that may have developed in the poem between father and son, and he completes the formation of the godhead that began with the anarchic pair, Apsû and Tiamat. The fifty titles of Marduk specify what "king of the gods" means. Ea's final word is something like a third and final enthronement of Marduk. Henceforth Marduk will reign supreme over a cosmos he has, with the help of Ea, constructed. And humankind's place is secure, though human origin is in the guilty blood of the rebel god and human fate is to work for the relief of the gods.

In the emptying of Ea is fully constituted the son, and the power in the son is the word.

Ea in Hittite Literature

Quite unlike Sumerian and Akkadian inscriptions, where up to twenty thousand clay tablets have been excavated from single sites, and where the span of production is in the thousands of years, Hittite inscriptions are relatively few and limited in time. The New Kingdom, which produced literature with Ea as a character, spans only the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. Mesopotamian influence on the texts is quite clear from the style as well as the reference to Mesopotamian gods. As one might expect, the Ea material, if the length of speeches is a rough guide, tends to be more limited in the Hittite texts than in Sumerian and Akkadian texts. (And the Akkadian speeches tend, on the average, to be shorter than the Sumerian Enki speeches.) Many of the twelve Ea speeches in Hittite are very fragmented, owing to the condition of the tablets on which the compositions were written. Still, some are well preserved and remarkably clear. They occur in compositions that have intrigued scholars interested in possible connections between Hittite literature and Greek mythology. (The next chapter takes up the examples most often discussed, especially the Kumarbi myth and Hesiod's *Theogony*).[36] Quite apart from the intriguing possibility of a literary connection between Ancient Near Eastern and mainstream Western mythological works, these brief glimpses of Ea provide evidence of his importance far beyond Mesopotamia.

Ea appears at least six times in the Kumarbi cycle.[37] The Kumarbi stories are by no means uncomplicated. In the part called "Kingship in Heaven," Kumarbi, "father of the gods," is the main character. Kumarbi is the son of Anu (already familiar to us as Sumerian An and Akkadian Anu) and the grandson of a god

named Alalu. The story opens with three generations of gods (without mention of a mother goddess). Anu served his father Alalau for "nine years" and then fought the father, driving Alalu into the "dark earth." Anu, in turn, is overthrown by Kumarbi, who had served him for "nine years." Kumarbi bites the father's "knees" (that is, his genitals) and swallows them. Kumarbi rejoices and laughs, but Anu turns back to his son and scornfully warns Kumarbi that the son has been impregnated with the "storm-god" (probably to be read as the Hurrian god Teshub). Anu withdraws into the heavens and hides himself.

Ea appears first in this story (ii.55–70) advising Kumarbi in the manner in which his son can be born through a "good place." The two other places in Kingship in Heaven" where Ea appears are badly damaged (iii.67′–72′ and iv.6–16) and difficult to interpret. The storm-god reminds Anu that Kumarbi has given birth to him, though Kumarbi is a male. The storm-god asks Anu to kill Kumarbi. Anu seems to dislike the suggestion; he proposes instead that Ea be made king.

The storm-god will have none of it. He curses Ea. Ea responds angrily to the curse. Then, after a gap in the text, childbirth becomes the main interest of the story. It appears that the goddess KI (the earth) is giving birth, and Ea helps her in childbirth. What happens after this is not known. Albrecht Goetze suggested that eventually the storm-god defeated Kumarbi and became king in heaven, a reasonable surmise, for the storm-god Teshub was the supreme god of both the Hurrians and the Hittites.[38]

In the so-called KAL-text of the Kumarbi cycle—so called because the central character is named LAMA or KAL, but the actual reading of the name is not known—Ea is an important character. But again the text is badly broken in places, and Ea's role is not completely clear. The story is one of KAL becoming king—set up, apparently, as king by Ea and Kumarbi—and then bringing the land into rebellion. Ea advises other gods on how to deal with KAL, and in the end punishment is meted out to the rebel. The rebel acknowledges the storm-god finally as "lord," and that presumably brings the narrative to a peaceful end.

Ea's Lament

Ea began to speak to Kumarbi: "Come!
Let us go back! This KAL king in heaven
we made! And just as he himself is rebellious,
so he made the countries rebellious.
No one gives bread or drink offerings to the gods any more!"

The winds bring news to Ea that KAL is decreeing the fates of the gods, giving them no bread, and determining the way they come and go. Ironically this king he and Kumarbi had set up is himself a rebel and has fired rebellion throughout the land. The gods are now deprived of drink and the "thick bread" that is their custom.

Just after Ea's angry response, he goes to his place, called in the Hittite texts Apzuwa. From there he sends a message to KAL (iii.19–29), which is rather broken,

and another message to Ea's "brother," Nara Napshara. It is likely that Ea gives the key advice that allows the storm-god to punish KAL.[39] Note that he sends the message (iii.33–46) through his faithful vizier, recalling the Sumerian narratives. The Hittite texts call him Izzummi:

To Izzummi, Deposing KAL

Ea began to speak to Izzummi, his envoy:

"Descend into the dark earth
and the word that I speak to you, go and to Nara [35]
Napshara, my brother, say to him: 'Take my speech
and heed my words. KAL has made me furious,
so I depose him from the kingship in heaven!
That KAL whom we made king in heaven:
just as he is—rebellious—so the lands [40]
he made rebellious. And to the gods bread or drink offerings
no one gives any longer. Now, Nara, my brother,
listen closely and rouse all the animals of the earth!

[?]the mountain Nashalma[?]
[?]and to his head[?]
[?]'"

The first sequence ends with Ea's emphatic claim that he has deposed the rebellious KAL. The second sequence appears to end with Ea's order to have the animals of the earth *(taknaš ḫuitar ḫuman)* rise up to put Ea's plan in action. Note the formula in the expression about bread and drink offerings. Exact repetition, so much in evidence in Sumerian literature, is rather unusual in Hittite.[40]

Apparently Ea's advice works. KAL is captured and punished. Once again, Ea has a key role in a Hittite story, but does not thereby become the hero of the work. He is a king-maker and a king-deposer; one who devises strategies; a problem-solver for the gods; and one quite concerned that the gods get their due in food and drink offerings. He dwells in the Apzuwa and has his envoy, Izzummi, with him. His actions are words; he does not himself move into action. He is concerned about the gods in assembly, but he leaves the execution of plans to others.

In part of the Kumarbi cycle known as "The Song of Ullikummi," one of Ea's speeches has been lost, but four have survived. "The Song of Ullikummi" opens with the poet singing of Kumarbi, "in whose mind there are wise thoughts, and who thinks them out in his mind." The "wise thought" that forms the basis of the narrative is, ironically, a thought of "misfortune" involving an "evil being." Kumarbi decides upon a plan to generate a creature to destroy the order of the gods, especially the rule of the storm-god. He therefore mounts a "great rock" and impregnates her. The child of the union is the stone, Ullikummi, the *kunkunuzzi*.

The story follows Kumarbi's successful attempt to hide the stone so it will not be destroyed before it has had time to grow. Then the gods, finally recognizing the awesome creature, which is growing in the sea upon the shoulder of the god Ubelluri, try various slights to defeat the stone. Ishtar (Shaushga) tries to seduce the stone, and fails. "Seventy gods" fight on Teshub's side, but cannot defeat the gigantic stone. The only recourse comes when the gods approach Ea. Ea speaks to Enlil, apparently to no avail. He then goes on to the god on whose shoulder the stone is growing. Ubelluri seems as ignorant and helpless as the others, but he provides a clue that Ea will develop as a way to defeat the stone. With Ea's help in weakening the monster, Teshub fights the stone again, this time with success:

The Dull Ubelluri

And Ea
began to wish Ubelluri life, in turn:
"Live, Ubelluri, on the dark earth—upon whom heaven and earth
are built!"

Again Ea began to speak to Ubelluri: "Do you not know, [30′]
Ubelluri? Has no one brought you a word?
Do you not know him, the swift god, the one Kumarbi
against the gods created. And that Kumarbi . . .
against the storm-god plots death and against him
created a rebel, the *kunkunuzzi,* the one who in the water [35′]
grew—do you not know him? And: a pillar in the way
he is raised up. And heaven, the gods' holy places,
Ḫebat herself he covered! Is it because you are far away
from the dark earth, Ubelluri,
that you do not know this swift god?"[41]

The rebel is a "swift god" *(nuntariya-)* and likened to a pillar. So tall is the monster that he blocks off heaven and the gods' holy places, over-shadowing even Ḫebat, the wife of the storm-god Teshub. Yet Ubelluri knows nothing of it. He makes a lugubrious reply in which he emphasizes what he does not know, and what he never knows.

Ubelluri tells Ea that he knew nothing of the event when heaven and earth were built upon him. When heaven and earth were cut apart with a "cutter," he missed that, too. The only thing he knows, vaguely, is a pain in his right shoulder. It is Ea who turns Ubelluri's shoulder and discovers the rebel *kunkunuzzi* standing on Ubelluri's shoulder, "like a blade."

Ea not only learns the location of the stone, but he discovers as well in the dull Ubelluri's statement the key that will enable the gods to defeat the stone monster. The solution is to use a tool of some sort to cut through the "feet" of the monster. He reveals his plan to the ancient "former" gods:

Former Gods and Former Words

Again Ea began to speak to the former gods: "To my words
listen, former gods, who the former words
know! Again open them, the ancient, the fatherly,
the grandfatherly [50′]
seal-houses! And the seal of the former fathers have them bring
and they will seal them again with it! And the former carver
have them bring out, with which they carved away
heaven from earth!
And have them carve through the feet of Ullikummi,
the *kunkunuzzi*-stone
that Kumarbi raised as a rebel against the gods!"[42] [55′]

Whether or not Ea's speech is itself supposed to have magical efficacy, or whether the tool used is a magical weapon, Ea's words are beautifully crafted in an intricate interlace pattern, a reflection of the god's craftiness.[43]

Ea speaks to the "former" or "ancient" gods *(karuili-)* and recalls for them the event that in primordial times separated heaven and earth. In the storehouses of former times—actually "seal-houses" (*siyannas parna,* like the Akkadian *bīt kunukki,* the storehouse that has been sealed)[44]—can be found the *ardala,* the tool with which heaven and earth had been separated. The precise nature of this copper or bronze cutting tool is not known. With all the wordplay in the passage, only partly glimpsed in translation (sealing, blades, old, fatherly, and the like), one might expect that the instrument, called a "cutter" before, would be a carving tool, the tool used to carve a cylinder seal.[45] Although Ea does not create a new being, the *ardala*-tool is sunk so deeply in the ancient days that bringing it out again is virtually a re-creation of it. Ea emphasizes that the former gods pay close attention to his words. The former gods are the ones who know the "former words." As in so many other speeches of Ea, this prepares the reader for cunning plays on words, and the "sealing" words provide just such play.

Ea's advice comes after a whole series of failures to deal with the monster. Even the storm-god had tried to defeat him in battle and had failed in the attempt. Only with Ea's advice is the monster-son of Kumarbi defeated. The primordial separating of heaven and earth, in a kind of return, allows for the cutting away of Ullikummi from his foundation. Ea brings the threat of the gods back to the time of origins, where it is overcome.

As is usually the case, though, Ea does not carry out of the action against Ullikummi (though he indicates that he has struck the *kunkunuzzi* stone). He orders the former gods to act; and it will be the storm-god who actually defeats Ullikummi in battle, much as Ninurta was able to defeat Anzu. In another sense, though, Ea is engaged in a contest. His cunning is a direct challenge to the one who has mastermined the scheme in the first place, Kumarbi. Kumarbi is the one who "thinks out wise thoughts in his head and strings them together like beads." His creature, the stone monster, hurls an insult at the storm-god when they prepare for

the final battle: string your wise thoughts like pearls! In the larger context of Ea versus Kumarbi, it is the cunning of Ea that wins the contest.

Just before that final battle, Ea speaks for the last time in "The Song of Ullikummi." He urges one of the gods, Tashmishu, to battle:

Compassion and Revenge

Again Ea began to speak to Tashmishu: "Get it done,
my son! Don't stand there in front of me! My mind in me is turned vicious, [10′]
seeing the dead on the dark earth with my own eyes! They are dust.
And here the . . . are standing around.

Again Ea began to speak to Tashmishu: "First I struck him,
Ullikummi, the *kunkunuzzi* stone. Now go, and fight him
The *kunkunuzzi* stone will stand no longer like a blade!"[46]

Tashmishu, the sun god, brother of Teshub,[47] has been "standing," and Ea urges him to move into action. Ea's "striking" Ullikummi would seem to refer to a crippling use of the *ardala*-cutter. Tashmishu is immediately heartened by Ea's rousing speech, and the sun god shouts to the other gods, who "bellow like cattle" against the stone monster. The storm-god is roused as well, as he leaps in his chariot, eager for battle. Ea's speech is not a magical utterance—although the final line may have something of the forceful speech in the Marduk/Ea incantations—but it is powerful, and the results are immediately apparent. The battle scene is lost on the broken tablet, but it is clear that this time the gods will succeed against Kumarbi and his creature.[48]

Ea also appears in a narrative known as "Ḫedammu," a fragmented work with connections with the Kumarbi cycle.[49] The story involves another terrifying creature sired by Kumarbi, this one a dragon with an enormous appetite. As in "The Song of Ullikummi," where the goddess Ishtar had attempted a seduction of the great stone, in "Ḫedammu" Ishtar uses her charms against the dragon—this time with apparent success.

In the second of two speeches that have been preserved, Ea, called "king of wisdom," asks why Kumarbi has plotted evil against humans, suggesting that the danger Ḫedammu represents is the destruction of humankind. "Do the humans not set up heaps of grain" and offer them to Kumarbi?, Ea asks. The end of the speech is badly broken, but it hints that Kumarbi has put aside "wisdom" and the result will be "blood, and a flood of tears from humankind."

The narrative is too fragmented to give us a real sense of Ea's role in the story. Ishtar tames the dragon that Kumarbi intends to use in his destructive scheme, but what part, if any, Ea plays in the later action of the story is not known. Still, his first speech in section 6 of *Ḫedammu* is a ringing close to this sketch of Enki/Ea's role in Akkadian and Hittite literature. In it one can see the concern for humankind

and Ea's objection to a plan that would destroy it. In the speech to the gods in assembly, furthermore, we see the link between compassion for humankind and the role of humans in the god's economy:

The Uses of Humankind

Ea, king of wisdom, spoke among the gods . . . ,
he began to speak: "Why annihilate the humans?
Do they not give the gods offerings and burn cedar wood for you?
If the humans were destroyed for her, the gods would
    no longer rest from work,
and no one would contribute bread and drink to you any longer.
It will turn out that the storm-god,
        mighty king of Kummiya, the plow
will take up himself! And it will turn out that
    Ishtar and Ḫebat
will turn the mill themselves!"[50]

What a splendid image to make the point: the three most important gods in the Hittite pantheon forced to take up the plow and turn the mill! Teshub, called "mighty king of Kummiya," his cult center, his wife Ḫebat, and Ishtar herself—the reminder of the depth to which Mesopotamia had penetrated Hittite mythology—all will suffer if that odd creature, the afterthought of a cosmos designed for the gods, were to be destroyed.

CHAPTER 9

Traces of the Fugitive God

"You are Greek. I am a Hittite." So postmodern poet Charles Olson once greeted translator Charles Doria.[1] Olson was staking out a position that has become surprisingly popular among a diverse group of postmodern writers.[2] He was convinced that the Western tradition, which had invested so heavily in classical culture, has now to be opened up—to older and very different influences:

> I am persuaded that at this point of the 20th century it might be possible for man to cease to be estranged, as Heraclitus said he was in 500 B.C., from that which he is most familiar. . . . For all this I know increased my impression that man lost something just about 500 B.C. and only got it back just about 1905 A.D.[3]

Olson was most enamored of Sumerian mythology, but he also read, transposed, and referred frequently to Akkadian and Hittite literature. In a lecture entitled "Causal Mythology" Olson read a poem he called "Astride the Cabot Fault" from his *Maximus* cycle of poems. Someone in the audience asked him to explain why a poem about the ocean before Olson's home in Gloucester, Massachusetts, contained the lines:

> the Wall
> to arise from the River, the Diorite Stone
> to be lopped off the Left Shoulder.[4]

Olson was happy to point out that the lines alluded to the Hittite "Song of Ullikummi." In that work, Olson thought, Ullikummi, the Diorite Stone, had "growth principle of his own, and it went against creation in the sense that nobody could stop him and nobody knew how far he might grow." Because the Diorite Stone, with its own principle of growth, was offensive to the gods and dangerous, it had to be destroyed. It was destroyed, as we have seen, with the help of Enki.[5]

Olson's attempt to explain his own poem may not have been all that successful, since Ullikummi as a principle of earth's growth is in the poem for a variety of historical and anthropological reasons, it seems. Still, Olson's works are a good

reminder that the most ancient and most remote mythological works still retain the power to challenge modern and postmodern writers.

Ideas do not necessarily die when the civilization that nurtured them expires. Eridu declined, and Sumerian, like Latin in the West many centuries later, was maintained only by an educated, literate elite. The great empires of Akkad, Assyria, and even Babylon were brought down—Assyria late in the seventh century B.C., Babylon less than a century later. Persians, Macedonians, Seleucids, Arsacids, Sassanians, Ummayyad and Abbasid caliphs, and later dynasties exercised overlordship in Mesopotamia. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were deeply rooted in the Near East, and as often as not challenged their predecessors. Enki survived, if at all, in new guises, under different names.

Hellenistic centers such as Edessa, Dura Europos, and especially Alexandria contained a great mix of cultures and religions. The period after Alexander the Great was marked by a religious syncretism of Eastern and Western myths and cults. Such syncretism makes it difficult to trace motifs in anything like their pure form. The Gnostic documents discovered in the twentieth century at Nag Hammadi in Egypt, for example, knew the divine name in the Hebrew Bible as, variously, Yave, Yao (IAO), and Yaldabaoth. They also knew of Zeus and Zoe, and left a bit of Plato's *Republic* among the mainly Jewish and Christian documents they collected. Even in the Hellenistic period, orthodox and heterodox distinctions were coming to be drawn, and for many centuries thereafter heterodox positions were kept up by small sects, splinter groups, and underground, esoteric traditions. The rediscovery in recent years of a strong esoteric tradition of magic is one example of the process.[6]

If Enki and his city-state had all but disappeared, literary traditions and religous syncretism kept something of them alive. The two traditions that formed the basis of Western civilization, Greek and biblical, appear to know stories of Enki, in much disguised form. For various reasons, orthodox and official streams of those traditions ignored or denouced outside influences. Because—with rare exception—Sumerian names do not appear, much of the tracing that follows here is necessarily speculative. In one sense we are very much the inheritors of civilization in its early, Sumerian, forms; but in another sense we will always have a difficult time recognizing such early debts.

Sumerian Literature and the Bible

Sumerian literature contained a number of literary forms and themes found much later in the Bible. Beside the twenty some myths (if we take "myth" at this point in its restricted sense to mean stories in which the gods play the most important roles) that have survived, Sumerian literature has left us a number of epic tales, many hymns and laments, historiographic works, and "wisdom" documents like essays, disputations, precepts, and proverbs.[7] Like later biblical writings, Sumerian poetry has a fondness for repetition and parallelism, metaphor and simile, chorus and refrain. And there are many parallels to Sumerian literature in biblical themes.

Some of the more conspicuous themes involve creation of the universe, creation of humankind, techniques of creations (in two ways, by word and by "mak-

ing" or "fashioning"), paradise, the "Cain-Abel" motif, the "Tower of Babel" motif, the earth and its organization, a personal god, divine retribution and natural catastrophe, the plague, the "Job" motif, death and the nether world, and concerns with law, ethics, and morality.[8] The most conspicuous of all, the story that has the closest connection with biblical literature, is the story of the flood. There are a few twists to the flood story that will be taken up later. Before that, it might be useful to point out some ways the tradition we know first from Sumerian literature made an impact on the single most important collection of writings in the Western world.

The biblical book of Lamentations, with its heartbreaking laments over the destruction of Jerusalem, has its Sumerian analogues in the Sumerian City Laments that bewail the destruction of the cities of Sumer, especially its capital, Ur, and its holy city, Nippur. Psychologically speaking, it is not without significance that the lamentation genre was a high favorite with the Hebrews and Sumerians (and their cultural heirs, the Babylonians), but not with any of the other peoples of the ancient world.

There are a number of striking similarities between the Hebrew Book of Psalms and Sumerian literary works: resemblances relating to religious thought and feeling as manifested in divine adoration and worship, in fear of God and wonder at God's great deeds, in devout piety and fervent faith. Like the biblical psalmists, the poets of Sumer sang of God's infinite power and glory, of God's fatherly solicitude for humankind and the universe, of God's love of justice and hatred of evil, of the righteous city and holy temple—God's sacred abode on earth; they acclaimed and exalted the idealized king of Sumer, believed to be divinely chosen and blessed; they lamented bitterly the suffering of their people at the hands of a cruel enemy, and pronounced good tidings of hope and deliverance; they composed prayers and petitions depicting the pious Sumerian's unwavering devotion to God and deep longing for the divine presence.

In recent years a long, well-preserved hymn to Enlil, "the Father of All the Gods," "the King of Heaven and Earth," and "the King of All the Lands," has been pieced together from more than fifty tablets and fragments. Its contents reveal quite a number of religious aspirations and sentiments comparable to those in the Book of Psalms. Enlil is an all-commanding, all-searching, deeply revered god who has set up his dwelling in the temple called "Bond of Heaven and Earth," in his holy city Nippur, the guardian of the noblest and most spiritual of human values. To his temple, also known as "Mountain House," lords and princes bring sacrifices and prayers, and all the foreign lands bear heavy tribute. He is a god without whom civilized life would be inconceivable: there would be no cities and no byres, no kings and no high priests, no priesthood and no temporal officials, no irrigation and no overflow, no fish and no birds, no rain and no vegetation, no procreation by human being or beast. He is a god whose deeds are veiled in profound mystery and whose unalterable, beneficent word engenders abundance and prosperity for humankind.

Psalm 104, one of the most imaginative and inspiring in the Book of Psalms, acclaims Yahweh's majesty and splendor as evidenced in the organization of nature and of the universe for the benefit of human beings and all living creatures. Some of the cosmic ideas and religious sentiments reflected in this psalm are paralleled in the myth "Enki and Inanna: The Organization of the Earth and Its Cultural

Processes": the power of the divine word; the splendor of Enki's shrine, the "Noble Deep," over which he journeys to decree the fate of all lands and peoples, with the sea-creatures paying homage to him as overflow prevails in the universe; the filling of the Tigris and Euphrates with fresh, life-giving waters; the supplying of the marshes and canebrake with fish and all sorts of reeds; the compressing of the "waters of heaven" into floating clouds; the turning of hillocks into cultivated fields; the covering of the lofty steppe with vegetation green and luxuriant.

In the Book of Psalms God is often depicted as an angry, thundering, raging, fire-hurling attacker of Israel's enemies. Yahweh makes heaven and earth tremble, splinters cedars with his thundering voice, vanquishes sea-monsters, and holds in bound the raging sea. Virtually all this imagery and portrayal of deity is utilized by the Sumerian poets and mythographers. Enlil is a raging storm that makes heaven tremble and earth quake; his word destroys canebrake, splinters *mes*-trees, drowns harvest. Ninurta, the south wind, scatters wide the enemy land like flour, mows it down like barley, destroys mountains, makes the hostile land bow low its head "like a lone-growing reed," rips out the lock and tears out the bolt of "the door of heaven." He is depicted as struggling with the primeval sea—he kills its monsters and raises up up a lofty mountain to hold back the waters so that they can no longer rise to flood and devastate the earth. A hymn to the storm-god Ishkur (the Semitic Adad) portrays him as "riding the storm," covering the land with his majestic splendor like a garment, harnessing the roaring winds, sending ahead lightning as his herald, raining hailstones large and small on the rebellious land that he destroys "right and left." Martu, the eponymous deity of the nomadic Western Semites, is portrayed by one poet as the god who sets up his holy dais on the "pure mountain," who rides the seven winds, and rains fire on the enemy that dared to attack the king he had chosen, the faithful shepherd of this people. He is a god who wipes out evil and violence, makes justice "stand firm," decrees the just verdict.

Justice, the judgment of humankind, is a pervading theme of Sumerian hymnography, as it is of the Book of Psalms. Virtually all the more important Sumerian deities are extolled in the hymns as lovers of the good and the just, of truth and righteousness, and as haters of evil, injustice, and oppression. The Sumerian god of justice par excellence was the sun-god Utu (the Semitic Shamash), who "turns darkness to light," and is the companion of the lonely traveler. He lets not the strong oppress the weak. He cares for the orphan and the destitute, and provides for the widow. The annual judgment of humankind, the "decreeing of the fates," to use the Sumerian idiom, was in the hands of the goddess Nanshe, who is portrayed as Sumer's social conscience. According to a hymn dedicated to this goddess, the judgment of humankind took place every New Year, in her presence and that of numerous witnesses, while alongside her sat Nidaba, the goddess of writing and accounting, who with a gold stylus, inscribed on a precious tablet on her knees what took place.

Throughout the Book of Psalms, the import and significance of the temple in the life of the Israelites is manifested again and again, in spite of the doubts and strictures of some of the prophets. The temple is conceived as the earthly abode of Yahweh, where he listens to the prayers of worshipers, and the psalmists sing lovingly and longingly of its sacred ceremonies. In Sumer, too, the temple with its rites and rituals played a preeminent role in the life of the people, for according to Sume-

rian dogma, humankind was created for no other purpose than to serve the gods and provide them with food and shelter. The building and rebuilding of a temple was accompanied by diverse rites and numerous rituals, as is evidenced by the Gudea Cylinders now admirably displayed in the Louvre for all to see, inscribed with a long and remarkable narrative hymn, literary classic of the ancient world. One of the most graphic descriptions of an ancient temple is found in the idyllic, hymnlike myth "Enki and Eridu: The Journey of the Water-God to Nippur," in which the poet glorifies Enki's temple, the Éengurra, "Sea House," and chants lovingly of its ornamentation with gold, silver, and lapis lazuli; of the mythological paintings covering its floor, ceiling, door, and threshold; of the music that emanated from its orchestra of string and percussion instruments; of its enchanting fruit-bearing gardens where birds brooded and fish frolicked. There were at least forty major temples in Sumer and Akkad, and Åke Sjöberg has edited a long composition, pieced together from dozens of tablets and fragments, brief hymns to each of them, a kind of book of temple-psalms.

In the Book of Psalms there are numerous royal hymns that eulogize and glorify the king, the "shepherd of Israel," to whom the Lord had said: "You are my son and I am your father." He is depicted by the psalmists as one endowed with princely gifts from birth and blessed from the womb; he has been given a scepter as the symbol of his power; he wears a gold crown on his head, and is covered with majesty and glory. Just and righteous, he crushes the oppressor and gives succor to the poor and needy. He destroys and annihilates Israel's enemies, and brings peace and prosperity to his people. He is blessed with long life, an enduring reign, a long-abiding notoriety and name.

All these qualities, virtues, and achievements, and a good many more, are attributed by the Sumerian psalmists to the king of Sumer, "the faithful shepherd of the land," whom they eulogize and exalt in hyperbolic diction and extravagant imagery. The king of Sumer, in the eyes of the hymnographers, was the ideal man, physically powerful and distinguished-looking, intellectually without peer, spiritually a paragon of piety and probity. Of divine birth and blessed from the womb, he is full of majesty and charism, brave and courageous, "a warrior from the womb," "a mighty man from the day he was born," who, like a thundering torrent, destroyed Sumer's enemies; a farmer who filled the granaries; a shepherd who enriched the stalls and sheepfolds; he was the father of his people, who felt secure in his sweet shade. Priest and poet prayed that his reign be long, and that his sweet name endure unto distant days.

On a more sombre note, the Book of Psalms is replete with congregational lamentations bemoaning the plight of the Jewish people, and with penitential psalms in which an individual grieves over his suffering and agony, with petitions to God for succor and salvation. Both of these melancholy literary genres had their counterpart in Sumerian psalmody. Congregational lamentations originated in Sumer as early as the third millennium B.C., and became part of the temple liturgy in the first centuries of the second millennium, after Sumer together with its capital Ur and its religious center Nippur had been ravaged and humiliated by the enemy. In the centuries that followed, the lamentation genre with its *mater dolorosa* motif—it was the poets and bards of Sumer who created the image of the "weeping goddess, sorrowful, tender, and compassionate" as early as 2000 B.C.—evolved into

a liturgical stereotype current throughout the temples of Sumer and Babylonia right down to the beginning of the Christian era, and it is not unlikely that the Jewish psalmists had become familiar with it to some extent.

As for the psalms consisting in large part of petitions and prayers uttered by an individual bemoaning his tragic fate, these too have their Sumerian counterparts, usually in the form of letters addressed to a deity or a king. For example, the Yale cuneiformist William Hallo edited a Sumerian letter addressed by a suffering scribe to Enki, in which he complains bitterly that though he has not been negligent in his devotion to the god, he has been afflicted body and soul; his life is ebbing away and he is slipping into the grave; his friends and acquaintances shun and mock him, so much so that he cries out, "My god, I rely on you: what a thing it is to be human!" (See chapter 6, above.) Or take the prayerful petition by a Nippur scribe to an unnamed king in which, after comparing himself to a sheep searching in vain for food, to an ox that cannot bear its yoke, to a cow whose calf has been torn from her side, to a bird whose nest has been robbed, to an unmoored boat drifting with the wind, he continues to lament that grief consumes him in the streets of Nippur. His city and house have turned inimical to him. He wanders about like a destitute slave dressed in rags. His companions, friends, and dear ones treat him with contempt. He is a withered tree that bears no fruit, a newly planted tree that has no shoots. And so he concludes, may the king whose light shines on the land like the moon, who renders just verdicts like the sun-god Utu, who hearkens to prayers, look after him and return him to his former equanimity.

Psalm 51, the Miserere, is universally acknowledged to be one of the most profound expressions of the religious thought of the Old Testament. It includes a supplication for mercy, for cleansing from sin and transgression; a confession of sinfulness from birth and a prayer for forgiveness, for moral renewal, and for a return of the joy of salvation; a vow to acclaim God's greatness and sing God's praises; a belief in the divine rejection of sacrifices and burnt offerings in favor of a contrite heart and broken spirit. That virtually all these religious sentiments are paralleled in one or another of the Sumero-Akkadian penitential petitions and prayer was demonstrated in 1962 by Edward R. Dalglish, a conservative biblical scholar, in his detailed, comprehensive study, *Psalm Fifty-One in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Patternism.* The only significant credo not paralleled in Sumerian theological thought is the preference of the broken heart over sacrifices. Neither Sumerian nor Babylonian nor Assyrian ever attained the lofty persuasion that a pure heart and clean hands are spiritually more meaningful than elaborate rituals and multifarious sacrifices.

The finest example of a Sumerian penitential psalm as yet uncovered is a poem Kramer published in 1955 under the title, "Man and His God: A Sumerian Variation of the Job Motif." Following a brief exhortation that it was humankind's dutiful obligation to revere, exalt, and glorify God, the poet introduces an unnamed God-fearing individual who, smitten with misfortune and sickness, sets up a sorrowful lament and supplication to God. The sufferer's petition, which constitutes the major part of the composition, then follows. Beginning with a detailed depiction of the hostile treatment accorded him not only by the wicked and deceitful, but also by his former trusted friends and companions, it continues with a prayerful, exclamatory, rhetorical request that his mother, sister, and wife cease not to

lament before his God, and that the expert singer bemoan his bitter fate. It concludes with a confession of guilt followed by a heart-rending plea for deliverance, for, so he claims, "never has a sinless child been born to his mother, a guiltless child has not existed from of old." Finally comes the "happy ending." The sufferer's God hears his bitter weeping, and after his heart had been soothed by the man's prolonged wailing and lamenting, he was convinced of the sincerity of his supplication, brought an end to his anguish, delivered him from cruel fate, turned his suffering to joy, and provided him with gracious guardian angels.

An impressive example of Sumerian analogues is Solomon's Song of Songs, also known as Canticles, a book that is like no other in the Old Testament. It is not concerned with the history of the Hebrew people, and contains no revealing prophecies or inspiring preachment. In fact, it seems to be nothing more than a loosely organized collection of sensuous love songs devoid of any religous, theological, moral, or didactic motivation. No wonder that there was considerable and heated debate among the early rabbis about the propriety of including it in the biblical canon, although once included, it came to be looked upon as one of the most inspiring books in the Old Testament, for it was interpreted allegorically by both Jewish and Christian scholars. According to the former, the passionate lovers were Yahweh and the Jewish people; according to the latter, they were usually Christ and the church.

Modern scholarship, however, cannot accept this whimsical and fanciful allegorical interpretation, attractive and inspiring as it may be. At least some of the rhapsodic love songs in the book are no doubt cultic in origin, and were sung in the course of the *hieros gamos* or sacred marriage between a Hebrew king and a votary of Astarte, the Canaanite goddess of love and procreation, whom even so wise a ruler as Solomon worshiped and adored (1 Kings 11:5). But as more than one scholar has surmised, this Canaanite rite itself is of Mesopotamian origin, and goes back to the Tammuz-Ishtar cult, which is in turn the Babylonian counterpart of the Sumerian Dumuzi-Inanna cult. This was only theory until quite recently when there became available to the scholarly world a large group of Sumerian love poems that show a number of unmistakable parallels to Canticles in both style and content.

Norea

The flood story is known in some form to virtually every Jewish, Christian, and Muslim child. Less known is the fact that the flood story in Genesis is the closest link yet found between the Mesopotamian literary tradition and the Bible. Inasmuch as the Qur'ān is rooted in the biblical tradition, we should add the flood stories in that sacred work to the increasingly lengthy chain of what literary critics call "intertextuality." "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" gives us mythological motifs that persist even today, though the story itself had been lost for millennia, as we have seen. The flood story, on the other hand, demonstrates a textual continuity through very different times and religions. The continuity is there even though, as often as not, one text in the chain of literary influence is hostile to other versions.[9]

The only flood story to have survived in Sumerian is very fragmented. It may not even be the oldest of the Mesopotamian flood stories.[10] But it may contain the earliest reference to "Noah's wife," a motif that has had a remarkable history. In the Sumerian flood story, one of the last lines appears to refer to the wife of "King Ziusudra," the Noah-figure. The very last intelligible line in the poem tells us that Ziusudra and his wife "settled in an overseas country, in the orient, in Dilmun." There they enjoy a life "like a god" *(ti dingir-gin).*[11]

Stories in Akkadian from the second and first millennia B.C. mention the wife, though mainly in passing.[12] The *Atra-ḫasīs* stories focus on the Noah-figure, the "overwise one," which is what the word *atra-ḫasīs* means. *Gilgamesh*—at least in the version we have from the middle of the second millennium—introduces a flood story from the *Atra-ḫasīs* tradition (Tablet XI. i–iv), as we have seen in the previous chapter. The *Gilgamesh* version of the flood makes clear what the Sumerian version had seemed to suggest: the Noah-figure does indeed have a wife. After the boat had ridden out the storm and found dry land, the great god Enlil, who had brought about the flood in the first place, is finally reconciled with the couple. Utnapishtim, as the Noah-figure is called in *Gilgamesh,* had worked in league with Enki to subvert Enlil's plan to destroy all human life. Through the cunning of Enki and the "overwise one," human life had been saved. Enlil is at first furious that his plan had been thwarted.

At the end of the Gilgamesh story, however, persuaded by Enki, Enlil's anger is soothed, and he is generous to the sage and Utnapishtim's wife: "He touched our foreheads and, standing between us, he blessed us."[13] Enlil then proclaims that Utnapishtim and his wife are "transformed, being like us gods" *(kî ilāni našima).* He has the couple sent away "to live at the source of all rivers" (XI.194–96). Possibly the "source of all rivers" is the paradise land, Dilmun. In any case, it would appear to be a place important to the water-god Enki.

What the flood story is doing in the heroic tale of Gilgamesh is not a question to be settled easily.[14] Utnapishtim's consort, called both his "woman" *(sinništu)* and his "spouse" *(marḫītu),* appears in the story as a significant partner in the saving of humankind from the flood. The woman is then given an expanded role in the Gilgamesh story.[15]

Just after Gilgamesh has told the story of the flood, he is challenged to remain awake for a week—a kind of immortality test. Gilgamesh promptly falls asleep. Utnapishtim's wife marks the passage of Gilgamesh's weeklong sleep by baking bread each day and scoring the days on the wall next to the sleeping hero. Gilgamesh protests that he has been awake all along, but he is forced to admit his failure when he is confronted with the evidence: bread in seven stages of freshness and decay.

Gilgamesh follows with yet another role for the "woman" of Utnapishtim. When Gilgamesh fails the sleeping test, revealing that he is only human, Utnapishtim is ready to send him away to his city. The hero actually sets off in his boat when Utnapishtim's wife reminds her husband that he has given their guest no gift for his return.

Utnapishtim calls the hero back to shore and offers him "a secret thing"—like the flood story itself, a secret of the gods. At the sage's suggestion Gilgamesh dives for a special life-giving plant deep in the abyss, a plant named "The-Old-

Man-Will-Be-Made-Young." Gilgamesh does not eat the plant immediately himself. He says he will eat it only after the elders of his city have partaken of its power. This is the one moment in the story of Gilgamesh when the hero seems to have found a solution to the problem of death. Gilgamesh acts at his most kingly in remembering the needs of others, the elders, before his own needs.

Suddenly the plant is snatched away from Gilgamesh by a snake, who throws off its skin as it carries off the plant. Gilgamesh is understandably upset at the loss of the "gift" Utnapishtim and his wife have given him.

Berossus, who, we have seen before, summarized a good bit of Mesopotamian thought for Greek-speaking persons at the time of Alexander the Great, provides a few details that the other versions do not give. As will become increasingly clear as we look at different versions of the story, the persons mentioned along with the sage—Berossus, recall, names him Xisouthros, after the Sumerian Ziusudra—offer us an important key to the interpretation of any version. As Berossus tells it, the sage embarked with "his wife and his children and his closest friends."[16]

When the sage finds dry land, however, a somewhat different list is given: Xisouthros disembarks with "his wife and his daughter and the pilot." Once out of the boat, they sacrifice to the gods—and suddenly disappear. Those remaining aboard leave the boat and search for the missing persons. They could not be found, Berossus explains, because:

> Xisouthros was no longer visible to them, but a voice from the sky ordered them to be reverent. Because of his piety, he had gone to live with the gods; and his wife and the pilot were to share the same honor [p. 20].

"Piety" here does not mean simply a humble submission to the will of the gods. The same voice tells the survivors they are to dig up writings in the city of Sippar and "distribute them to humankind." Typical of Berossus is the emphasis on the knowledge that this last of the Mesopotamian sages imparts to the people.

In the Mesopotamian tradition of the flood, then, the wife plays a role—sometimes important, sometimes not—but she is always of lesser importance than her husband. That she shares something of her husband's Enkian cunning is suggested by the exalted fate she is given. Surprisingly, there is almost nothing of Noah's sons in this tradition. The reference to a wife and a daughter who go off to live "like" the gods or "with" them is in sharp contrast to the biblical account of the flood.

The Book of Genesis mentions Noah's wife (6:12), along with Noah's sons and the sons' wives (7:7, 13; 8:15, 18). But the wife has no role in the story. When God "remembers Noah" at the turning point in the narrative (8:1), he remembers only "Noah and all the beasts and cattle that were with him in the ark."[17] The command of God to "be fertile and increase and fill the earth," and the covenant concluded between God and Noah (9:1, 8), are addressed to Noah and his sons alone. And Noah and the sons are important in the division of the "whole world" (9:18–19). The wife, in other words, disappears entirely from the biblical account of the flood.

In the Hebrew Bible Noah and his wife are not sent away to a life like that of the gods, nor is the wife's advice at all an issue. The New Testament calls attention

to Noah in Luke's genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:26). Noah is also seen as an example of faith and obedience because he prepared the ark at the command of God (Hebrews 11:7). His wife is not mentioned.

The situation in the Qur'ān is even less promising. There are more than thirty references to Noah in the Qur'ān.[18] One sura is devoted entirely to Noah (Sura XXI). The fullest account is in the sura known as "Hood." Ironically, Noah's wife is mentioned only once, in a list of women who include Lot's wife, the pharaoh's wife, and Mary. Noah's wife is singled out for only one reason: like Lot's wife, she is an example of women who betrayed a righteous servant.[19]

When she appears in the popular literature of the Middle Ages, though, Noah's wife is already a well-defined comic character. The late medieval (fifteenth-century A.D.) Corpus Christi play of Noah, written by the "Wakefield Master," provides a good example of the type. When Noah is commanded to build the ark, he hurries home to find out what his wife will say. He is already worried that he and his wife will fight, for she is "full tethee" (peevish) and combative.[20] Indeed, he is just "a simple knafe" (man), pious and obedient, but he knows his wife's violent temper well enough.

No sooner does he begin to tell her the news but she complains to the women in the audience about her husband. The play, which had begun in very reverent tones, quickly turns to farce. Husband and wife beat each other several times in the short play.

While poor Noah works at the agonizing task of building an ark, his wife remains unconvinced of the danger. Noah complains:

> A! my bak, I traw, will brast! This is a sory note!
> Hit is wonder that I last, sich an old dote,
> All dold,
> To begin sich a wark.
> My bonys ar so stark,
> No wonder if thay wark,
> For I am full old.[21]
>
> [Ah! my back will break, I trust! This is sorry news!
> It's a wonder I hang on, such an old dotard,
> So stupid,
> To take on such a job.
> My bones are so stiff,
> It's a wonder they work at all,
> For I am old indeed.]

Noah is able to persuade the rest of his family to enter the ark, but his wife holds out until the very last, spending her time instead with the gossips of the town. She rushes into the ark only when there is no way she can escape the rising waters. But even then she refuses to bend to Noah's reasonable requests:

Lord, I were at ese, and hertely full hoylle,
Might I onys have a measse of wedows coyll,
Forthy saull, without lese, shuld I dele penny doyll.
So wold mo, no frese, that I see on this sole
Of wifys that ar here,
For the life that they leyd,
Wold thare husbandys were dede.
For, as ever ete I brede,
So wold I oure sire were.[22]

[Lord, I'd be at ease, and cheerful in my heart,
If I might for once enjoy a widow's lot.
For your soul I'd gladly pay for the masses.
So would others, no doubt, right here in this audience,
The wives that are here,
For the life they lead,
They'd just as soon their husbands were dead.
For, as certain as I eat bread,
I wish our sire was!]

They fight aboard the ark, and the wife goes so far as to send a raven out of the ark "without any reason." David Bevington points out that the portrayal of Noah and his wife is more than mere farce. According to the medieval tendency to see different levels of meaning in a single event, the "ark represents the true Church, and those like the wife who refuse to come aboard are recalcitrant sinners."[23] The raven is foolish, whereas the dove Noah sends out is gentle and obedient. By the end of the play Noah is in charge, as, presumably, the Wakefield Master believed he should be. The struggle for mastery in marriage is finally resolved. The traditional hierarchical relationship between reason (Noah) and passion (Noah's wife) is restored.

Until recently, when a large collection of Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi in Egypt were recovered, this image of a nagging, recalcitrant, violently passionate wife was the only one to have persisted through the centuries. The Nag Hammadi texts have since given such a powerful counterimage of Noah's wife that it is likely the negative image was in large measure an orthodox reaction to what must have been perceived as a dangerously heterodox exaltation of a woman—and women in general—in history.

Of the sixty-one tractates making up *The Nag Hammadi Library,* only a few concern the flood. It is not as important a theme as, say, creation or the story of Adam and Eve, for the flood does not tell the story of the origin of evil. In the Gnostic vision of history, though, the flood brings to an end one era and introduces another, more enlightened age. How the enlightened ones, the ones who possess gnosis (which has been available since the beginning, according to the Gnostics),

maintain their way in a world otherwise so corrupt is a major concern in the texts. Many persons—perhaps the majority—will continute to see reality in literal, historical, and merely physical ways. A somewhat more enlightened group will grasp ethical meaning in the same events. Only those who are truly enlightened, though, will understand the world in a "spiritual" way. One way the spiritual path is prepared is through rethinking the biblical account of the flood.[24]

"The Apocalypse of Adam" (ca. first or second century A.D.) tells the story of Noah in a way far different from Genesis. It even identifies Noah with the Greek hero Deucalion.[25] Adam is responsible for the loss of the "eternal knowledge" he shared with Eve. But Adam predicts the flood, when angels will minister to the ones who have preserved "the life of knowledge." The wife of Noah is mentioned, but her part in saving the Gnostics is not clear. It is not, according to "The Apocalypse of Adam," comparable to the part played by Noah.

Similarly, in "The Apocalypse of John," Noah is informed by "the greatness of the light of the foreknowledge" that the flood is planned. Noah and "also many other people from the immovable race" hid themselves "in a luminous cloud" when the destruction was accomplished.[26] The work disregards the Genesis account on which it is based. Indeed, it explicitly challenges Moses when the new interpretation clashes with tradition. It is a work that celebrates the feminine aspects of the highest divine principle—in "Barbelo," Sophia, and Eve. The story reinterprets the sacred names of the tradition so that "Yave" and "Eloim" become the righteous and the unrighteous sons of "Yaldabaoth." Yaldabaoth, for his part, is a creator, but the creator of the world we know, in Gnostic thought, is an evil being, ignorant, the chief of destructive powers, the "archons." For all its challenge to earlier orthodoxy, and for all its restoration of the feminine principle in the divine, "The Apocalypse of John" nevertheless does not provide a role for Noah's wife in the flood story.[27]

When his wife does appear in *The Nag Hammadi Library,* however, she is even more important than Noah. The major text is "The Hypostasis of the Archons." This is a reinterpretation of Genesis 1–6. It is mainly a Jewish work, but there are some Christian elements in the interpretation. It may date from the third century, A.D.[28] The wife's name in the work is Norea.

It is relatively easy to pick out the enemies in "The Hypostasis of the Archons." They are the rulers, the archons, and they are led by a chief, the blind Samael, also known in the work as Sakla ("fool") and Yaldabaoth. Chief of the forces of light in this dualistic vision is the Father; but the active principle is imaged as feminine, called variously the Spirit, Incorruptibility, Pistis Sophia, the Female Spiritual Principle, the Female Instructing Principle, and Zoe. Evil enters the world when the chief of the archons in his arrogance proclaims, "It is I who am God; there is none [apart from me]." Later in the story the Great Angel Eleleth explains that the rulers themselves came into being when Sophia, otherwise a positive figure, "wanted to create something, alone without her consort; and her product was a celestial thing" (p. 156). Celestial, but corrupt. The "Shadow" that came into being was material, and it was that same Shadow who arrogantly proclaimed himself God.

Against the power of the blind god and the archons stand the "spirit-endowed Woman" (Eve), and Norea. After Eve gives birth to Seth, to replace Abel, she gives

birth to her daughter, Norea. Norea is to be "an assistance [for] many generations of mankind." With Norea humankind begins to multiply "and improve" (p. 156). It is at this point in history that the rulers decide together, for no obvious reason, to send a deluge to destroy all flesh.

The ruler of the forces, for some reason, discovers what the rulers have decided and tries to subvert it, much in the way Enki tries to subvert the will of the gods in the Mesopotamian tradition. The ruler of the forces tells Noah to build an ark and hide in it—"you and your children and the beasts and the birds of heaven from small to large" (p. 156). Norea (or Orea, as the name is spelled at this point in the text) comes on the scene, wanting to board the ark. "He" (Noah? The ruler of the forces?) would not let her in. Norea "blew upon the ark and caused it to be consumed by fire."

The next time Noah built an ark he let the woman enter it.

Norea was not only assertive, she was also resourceful. The highpoint of the story comes just after the flood. The rulers approach her, intending to corrupt the woman. Their leader tells Norea, "Your mother Eve came to us." Norea does not waver:

> Norea turned to them and said to them, "It is you who are the Rulers of Darkness; you are accursed. And you did not know my mother; instead it was your female counterpart that you knew. For I am not your descendant; rather it is from the World Above that I am come" [pp. 156–57].

When the rulers attempt to take her by force, Norea cries out to the Holy One. The Great Angel Eleleth descends to her, and the tractate ends with Eleleth's explanation of what had happened previously in the story. Norea is indeed "the virgin whom the Forces did not defile."[29]

Not the least of the ironies introduced when the Gnostics reinterpreted Genesis involves Enki. The thoroughgoing monotheism of the Yahwist tradition in Israel meant that goddesses like Ninḫursag or Inanna and also male-imaged deities could no longer be used to tell a story. In the flood story, for example, all the roles played by different gods in the Mesopotamian literary tradition—Enlil's, Enki' the mother goddess, Ishtar's in particular—had to be performed by Yahweh Elohim. The Gnostic myths have no difficulty with a plurality of roles on both sides of the dualism that runs through the universe. In retelling the flood story, the ruler of the forces, Yaldabaoth, assimilates both the deep irrationality of Enlil and the loving concern of Enki to produce a strange version of the flood. In "The Hypostasis of the Archons" the very object of the flood appears to be nothing less than the only pure element in the material world, Norea.

Sumerian and Greek Literature

It is becoming ever more apparent that, like biblical literature, Greek literature shows many traces of Sumero-Akkadian influence. Quite a number of striking similarities between Greek mythological motifs and those current in the Mesopotamian world are now recognized by classicists and orientalists alike: the creation of

the universe, the birth of the gods, the culture hero, the slaying of the dragon, theomachy, flood stories, plagues as divine punishment, and the dismal dreary nether world with its ominous river and ferryman.

As for the Greek epic poems such as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* it was half a century ago that the eminent English scholar Munro Chadwick pointed out in his monumental three-volume work, *The Growth of Literature,* that it was likely that Mesopotamia was the cradle of the written epic. At the time he wrote that, only the Akkadian *Gilgamesh* was known to literary historians. Since then some nine Sumerian epic tales have been recovered and deciphered in large part, and these concern not only the hero Gilgamesh, but two of his forerunners, Enmerkar and Lugalbanda. In fact it is now generally agreed that those early Mesopotamians, the Sumerians, not unlike the early Greeks, the Mycenaeans, experienced a heroic age, one of whose characteristic features is the heroic epic.

On the other hand, there is little likelihood that the Greeks had developed anything like the vast and highly sophisticated hymnic literature of the Sumerians, for the temple and its liturgy played a much lesser role in Greek life. So, too, the lamentation genre that was a great favorite with the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Hebrews has no counterpart in Greek literature. The Greek dirge, or elegy, on the other hand, has its forerunner in two recently translated Sumerian compositions inscribed in a well-preserved tablet now in the Pushkin Museum, in which a Sumerian poet bemoans in hyperbolic language the death of his beloved father and of his wife, the "fair lady," the "gracious matron," the "fecund mother."

In the area of "wisdom" literature, there have now been uncovered quite a number of Sumerian parallels to the Aesopic fables. A truly remarkable example of literary parallelism is the Sumerian "Farmer's Almanac," consisting of a farmer's advice to his son reminiscent of Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Virgil's *Georgics.* And Miguel Civil is now piecing together and deciphering about a dozen Sumerian essays, dialogues, debates, and disputations that may well turn out to be early stylistic precursors of the Greek mime and dialogue genres that culminated in such literary masterpieces as Plato's dialogues.

The Saturnine Way

In his survey of Akkadian epithets of the gods, Knut Tallqvist gives many citations for the title *šàr apsī,* king of the Abzu (Apsû). Only one god is called *šàr apsī,* Ea.[30] E. Douglas Van Buren was intrigued by the possibility that the epithet of Ea gave rise to the popular Hellenistic god Sarapis. The story of the invention or discovery of Sarapis is reasonably well attested in antiquity, but the origins of the god remain obscure. Tacitus was told by Egyptian priests that Ptolemy I received a dream of "a young man from heaven" who told Ptolemy to send for the statue of Sarapis. At Sinope the statue was found, worshiped as Jupiter Dis along with Proserpina. Priests of Apollo at Delphi advised the Egyptians to take the statue of Sarapis to Alexandria, but to leave his consort behind. The statue arrived in Alexandria and a shrine was built for it, where the Egyptians assimilated Sarapis to Osiris.[31] The god caused a good bit of etymological and historical speculation in the ancient

world, but the explanations of Sarapis are not very convincing. Van Buren's suggestion that Sarapis is Ea is based on knowledge that Sinope had been an Assyrian seaboard colony.[32]

The prospect of Roman (Tacitus), Greek (Plutarch), and later Christian (Clement, Origen) thinkers speculating on the origins of a Sumero-Akkadian god imported into Egypt in order, probably, "to unite Greeks and Egyptians in a common worship,"[33] is stunning witness to the religious syncretism of the Hellenistic age. Sarapis was widely popular as one of the great savior gods, a miracle-worker and healer. Zeus Sarapis was a benefactor of humanity, especially those like sailors who made their way by water.[34]

Whether or not firm evidence for a historical connection between Sarapis and Ea will ever surface, such syncretism is a mark of the age introduced by Alexander's conquests. Wherever possible the Greeks identified local gods with their own gods. If a local god or goddess were of such a type,[35] there seemed little difficulty in assimilating one to the other. Recall that the priest of Marduk, Berossus, called Enki Cronus. He equated his god Bel (Marduk) with Zeus. The goddess Tiamat he called Omorka, no doublt a hellenizing of her epithet *umma Ḫubur* (Mother Ḫuber); he explained that her "Chaldaean" name *Thalath* could be translated by the Greek *Thalassa* (sea).[36] In the case of Marduk/Zeus, the powerful gods could be readily assimilated to each other because they shared major functions. With Tiamat, though, there was no obvious parallel in Greek religion, and Berossus explained the translation.

One way the myths of Enki could spread into areas far removed from ancient Sumer was glimpsed in the previous section. The flood story was so compelling and useful that its Mesopotamian form gave rise to many variations. The narrative design was simple and flexible:

reason for the flood
debate in heaven
one dissenting god
advice to the Noah-figure
Noah and the community
construction of the boat
Noah and his family
animals in the boat
the flood
God's remembrance
receding of the flood
release of birds
sacrifice to the gods
reconciliation
blessing
the one survivor
the new era

Versions of the story emphasize one part, ignore another. The reason for bringing on the flood may be stated or unstated, "reasonable" or not. The "shape" of the narrative may indicate unexpected emphases. For many years, following the so-called Documentary Hypothesis, biblical scholars distinguished two versions of the story within the account in Genesis, a Yahwist and a Priestly account.[37] More recently, the shape of the narrative has drawn scholarly attention. The moment at which God remembers Noah, for example, is the divide between a rising action (paralleling the rising flood waters) and a countermovement in the narrative (as the flood waters recede).[38] The shape of the narrative has even been used to argue against the Documentary Hypothesis. If the account is a tightly organized esthetic whole, the division of the text into Yahwist and Priestly accounts seems forced.[39]

It would be useful to trace motifs other than that of Noah's wife through the tradition. Inasmuch as the Noah-figure has some connection with his community in nearly every account—whether he must speak to the people ambiguously, as he does in *Gilgamesh* (because he must keep the flood secret), or challenge them for their lack of faith, as happens in the Qur'ān—the way in which the motif is handled provides evidence for the philosophical or theological slant of the storyteller. In some versions the sons of the Noah-figure are more important than in others—and more important than Noah's wife, as we have seen. The quranic references to the flood, for example, emphasize the son who, through lack of faith, refuses to enter the boat and is lost. Noah, whose faith is unswerving, questions the justice of his son's death, but submits when the truth is made known to him. A twentieth-century poem by the late Amal Dunqul (1940–1983), on the other hand, is deeply provocative because it sees the flood from the point of view of the very son who is lost. In "A Special Interview with Noah's Son," the rebellious son is contemptuous of those in authority in his land. The "cowards" fly to the ark while Noah's son stands with the youth of the city:

> Stacking stones to save scenes of childhood
> and civilization
> To save the motherland.

When the ship's master calls out for him to save himself, the son is full of defiance:

> Glory to us who make a stand
> (God has erased our names)
> We defy death
> And take to a mountain that does not die
> (they call it the people)
> We will not run
> We will stay home.

In presenting the flood from such an unusual, ironic point of view, Amal Dunqul draws on not only a close knowledge of the Qur'ān, but an extremely old

tradition of flood narratives that allows virtually all the narrative elements to be transformed and, as often as not, subverted.[40]

Yet another avenue worth pursuing is the nature of the new era introduced by the flood. Mesopotamian thinkers tended to divide human history at the flood. Before the flood was the period of sages, with the Noah-figure bringing the line to an end. Afterward kings ruled the city-states of Mesopotamia. The biblical flood saw the introduction of a new moral principle, concerning the shedding of blood, and a new covenant between Yahweh and humankind. And although the details are somewhat difficult to follow, the Nag Hammadi stories appear to see in the flood the end of mere physical, historical ("hylic") existence and the inauguration of the "psychic" or ethical stage of human history.[41]

A second way myths of Enki could spread was through syncretism of the Sarapis type. Some function was thought to be shared by types of gods; or a bit of mythic material might move from one culture to another. The mythological texts are not all that important in any case. Certain features of the Greek Cronus illustrate the process. Although there was certainly an "Asiatic" background, somewhere, to Hesiod's depiction of Cronus in *Theogony,* it is highly unlikely he knew the Sumerian "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth," so it is not a matter of a textual tradition the way the flood story was. But two features of Enki may have passed to Cronus, and from there in some surprising ways into Western thought.

Francisco Goya's terrifying depiction of "Saturn Devouring One of His Children" (ca. 1818)[42] is one extreme in the intricate history of Cronus, who was assimilated to the Roman fertility god Saturn.[43] In that dark vision a brutally powerful, mad-eyed god is discovered ripping with his teeth the flesh of a slim, adult, human-like figure. It is surely one of the most upsetting visions of profound terror in Western art. On the other hand, Cronus/Saturn was thought in antiquity to be the most exalted figure in the pantheon, symbolizing a level of inspired thought, intelligence, and contemplation beyond reason itself. The Neoplatonists exalted Cronus as intellect beyond the reach of even Zeus, who symbolized soul.[44] Surprisingly, the two aspects of Cronus mythology that most often attracted attention gave rise to both traditions: Cronus castrating his father and devouring his children. Goya saw the savagery in the account given by Hesiod in this *Theogony,* whereas the Neoplatonists provided metaphysical interpretations of even such appalling accounts of the god.

An eleventh-century A.D. work attributed to one "Balinus" called *The Secret of the Creation and the Knowledge of the Principles of Things* tells much the same Gnostic story we noticed in "The Hypostasis of the Archons" of *The Nag Hammadi Library.* In it an evil god watches creation taking place with the help of a heavenly virgin. The evil god sets out to destroy both the macrocosm and the microcosm just formed by the Virgin. (The new creation is called Adamanous and Haivanous—that is, Adam and Eve.) The jealous god is called Saturn.[45] In the Gnostic texts the figure is called Yaldabaoth, as we have seen.

Cronus/Saturn combined so many curiously related traits that his ambiguous character became increasingly marked. Saturn was the Roman god of crops, and most of the Cronus lore was transmitted as Saturnine characteristics once the Roman god was identified with Cronus. Cronus, "the cunning trickster," was "of

crooked counsel" according to Homer and Hesiod.[46] He was, inter alia, god of agriculture, ruler of the Golden Age, lord of the Islands of the Blessed, and the inventor of agriculture and city construction. Along with those positive features, though, he was depicted as a gloomy, dethroned, and solitary figure, "dwelling at the uttermost end of land and sea," "exiled beneath the earth and the flood of the seas," a ruler of the gods below.[47] When Cronus/Saturn entered into the scheme of ancient astrology (much of which was supposedly passed to the Greeks from the Babylonian Berossus), the baleful aspects of the planet's influence were thought to dominate. Saturn's power, especially over those prone to melancholia, was greater than Zeus/Jupiter's, for Saturn's was the wider orbit in the old cosmology. Chaucer knew him as "the pale Saturnus the colde/That knew so manye of aventures olde," whose great age was synonymous with "wysdom." In "The Knight's Tale," in the fourteenth century, Chaucer sums up the astrological/mythological tradition of Saturn:

"My deere doghter Venus," quod Saturne,
"My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
Hath moore power than woot any man.
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
Myn is the stranglyng and hangyng by the throte,
The murmure and the cherles rebellyng,
The groynynge, and the pryvee empoysonyng;
I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun,
Whil I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
Myn is the ruyne of the hye halles,
The fallynge of the toures and of the walles
Upon the mynour or the carpenter.
I slow Sampsoun, shakynge the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
My lookynge is the fader of pestilence"
[lines 2453–69].[48]

["My dear daughter Venus," Saturn said,
"My course, that has such a long way to turn,
Has more power than anyone knows.
Mine is the drowning in the sea so dark;
Mine is prison in the dark chamber;
Mine is strangling and hanging by the neck,
Murmur and rebellion of the workers,
The groaning and secret poisoning;
I gain vengeance and full restitution
While I dwell in the Sign of the Lion.

Mine is the ruination of mighty halls,
The collapsing of the towers and the walls
Upon the miner or the carpenter.
I killed Samson, who was shaking a pillar;
And mine are the cold maladies,
The dark treasons, and the old devices;
A glance from me is the father of pestilence.]

How the terrible father became the Orphic and Neoplatonic symbol of exalted superrational intelligence is also partly related to Saturn's planetary influence. In Orphic thought Cronus/Saturn was the architect of the world, the father of all, who transmitted the basic principles of the universe to his son, Zeus, while Cronus was in Tartarus. The identification of Cronus with Chronos (time) was made by the Orphics.[49] In the Neoplatonic writer Macrobius, Cronus as intellect *(nous, mens)* became fused with the doctrine of the journey of the soul. Cronus could influence the soul on its descent into materiality—filling it will dullness, sadness, and fraudulence—and in a very different way on the soul's ascent, where it became increasingly contemplative.[50]

Less than a century after Chaucer depicted the stern father Saturn, Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino saw Saturn's influence in a much more positive light, picking up suggestions of the ancients. He identified the torments of the highly gifted melancholic, suffering under Saturn, with Plato's superrational "divine frenzy":

> Within the soul *(anima)* let us assume there are *imaginatio, ratio,* and *mens. Imaginatio,* whether by the nature or movement of the *spiritus,* or by choice, or both, can be so attuned to Mars or the Sun that it can become in very truth a vessel for solar and Martial influences. In the same way, whether through *imaginatio* and the *spiritus,* or through *deliberatio,* or both, *ratio* by way of a certain imitation can come so to resemble Jupiter that, being more dignified and more akin, it receives more of Jupiter and his gifts than do *imaginatio* or the *spiritus* (as, for the same reason, *imaginatio* and the *spiritus* receive a greater share of celestial gifts than any lower things or materials). Finally, the contemplatic *mens,* which withdraws itself not only from what we generally perceive but also from what we generally imagine or express in our human customs and which in desire, ambition, and life tends towards the ideas, exposes itself in a certain measure to Saturn. To this faculty alone is Saturn propitious. For just as the sun is hostile to nocturnal animals but friendly to those which are active in daylight, so is Saturn an enemy of those men who overtly lead a commonplace life, or who, though they flee the company of vulgar people, yet do not lay aside their vulgar thoughts. For he resigned common life to Jupiter, but retained the sequestered and divine life for himself. Men whose minds are truly withdrawn from the world are, to some extent, his kin and in him they find a friend. For Saturn himself is (to speak in Platonic terms) a Jupiter to those souls who inhabit the subline spheres, in the same way as Jupiter is a *iuvans pater* to those who lead an ordinary life. He is most inimical of all, however, to those whose contemplative life is a mere pretence and no reality. Saturn will not acknowledge them as his, neither will Jupiter, tamer of Saturn, support them, because they violate the ordinary customs and morals of men. . . . Jupiter arms us against Saturn's influence, which is generally foreign to, and somehow unsuitable

> for, mankind: firstly, by his natural properties; then, undoubtedly, by his nourishment and medicines, and also, it is believed, by number-talismans; and finally, by the customs, the occupations, the studies, and all things in general which of their nature belong to him. But those who escape the baleful influence of Saturn and enjoy his benevolent influence, are not only those who flee to Jupiter but also those who give themselves over with heart and soul to divine contemplation, which gains distinction from the example of Saturn himself. Instead of earthly life, from which he is himself cut off, Saturn confers heavenly and eternal life on you.[51]

English literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was heavily influenced by this development of mythic images. Elizabethan poet George Chapman, for example, drew on this complex of ideas about Saturn and melancholy to reinterpret the darkest of Saturn's acts, the castration of Jupiter. In "Hymnus in Cynthiam" Chapman praised the moon goddess Cynthia (or Artemis/Diana), which he identified with the Neoplatonic world soul. He merges the story of Saturn with the myth of Cynthia's chastity:

> And as the heavens Geniall parts were cut away
> By Saturnes hands, with adamantine Harpey,
> Onely to shew, that since it was composed
> Of universal matter: it enclosd
> No powre to procreate another heaven:
> So since that adamantine powre is given
> To thy chast hands, to cut of all desire
> Of fleshy sports, and quence to Cupids fire:
> Let it approve: no change shall take thee hence.[52]

In short, Western mythology, art, and philosophy found in Cronus/Saturn the "sad tranquility of death," a destructive but peace-giving ruler of the world below, and an awe-inspiring and beneficent god of the earth. Virtually all the characteristics of Enki find their way into the complex that was Cronus/Saturn.[53]

Beyond the complex of attributes and epithets of Cronus, an obvious connection between Cronus and Enki was their fathering of the king of the gods. In mythological works that had major influences on the "stream of tradition," *Enuma Elish,* as we have seen, highlighted the connection between father and son, Ea and Marduk. Hesiod's *Theogony* also stressed the fatherhood of the great god Zeus.[54] The exaltation of Marduk may have been a relatively late event in Babylonian history, but the popularity of the Marduk/Ea rituals shows the importance of father and son in a magical rite that goes back to Archaic Sumerian literature—with Marduk entering the pantheon precisely as the son of Enki.[55]

According to Hesiod, father Sky hated the children produced in his union with Earth, and hid them away so they would not see the light of day. Sky "took pleasure in doing this evil thing." Earth fashioned a sickle of steel, but of her children only the cunning trickster Cronus had the courage to carry out her violent plan. When Sky drew near Earth to make love to her:

> From his ambush his son reached out with his left hand and with his right took the huge sickle with its long jagged teeth and quickly sheared the organs from his own father and threw them away, backward over his shoulders.[56]

The "great trickster" is no better than his father when it comes to his own children, though. Later in *Theogony,* Cronus swallows the children of his consort Rhea as they emerge from her holy womb:

> His purpose was to prevent his kingship of the gods from passing to another one of the august descendants of Sky; he had been told by Earth and starry Sky that he was destined to be overcome by his own son.[57]

Of course he was indeed overcome by his son, Zeus, "the lord of wisdom" and "father of gods and men." Mother Earth had a strategem for saving the youngest child. She substituted a huge stone, which Cronus promptly swallowed. Later Earth's cunning causes Cronus to vomit the children he had swallowed, and the stone along with the children.

For his part, Zeus acts is a manner similar to his father and grandfather. At yet another cunning suggestion Mother Earth advises the gods to declare Zeus king and lord over the gods. He in turn distributed "rights and privileges" among the gods. In order not to give up his kingship, however, Zeus accepts the suggestion of Earth and Sky to swallow his daughter Athena just as she was supposed to be born to Metis, or "Wisdom." Still later he produces Athena out of his own head—and causes resentment and jealousy in his consort Hera for doing so.

The generations of gods that produced the regime of Zeus in Hesiod's *Theogony* in many ways resemble the main action of *Enuma Elish.* Of possible connections between Mesopotamian literature and Greek literature, *Theogony* and *Enuma Elish* are the most promising.[58] Except for the rare points of contact between the two civilizations like Berossus's *Babyloniaca* or like the Neoplatonist Iamblichus, who claimed to be revealing the secrets of the "Chaldeans" (from the southern part of Mesopotamia) and the Assyrians,[59] the influence of one upon the other is difficult to prove. The Indo-European literature of the Hittites provides one very possible intermediary between the Babylonian tale of the exaltation of Marduk and Hesiod's *Theogony.*

Hittite literature contains, as we have seen earlier, a story about a Hurrian god, Kumarbi, that includes Ea. The part of the Kumarbi story that most interests scholars is, however, the first part. In it, kingship of the gods passes from one Alalu to the well-known Sumero-Akkadian god Anu, from Anu to his son Kumarbi, and from Kumarbi to his son Teshub.[60] The pattern is similar to *Theogony,* with the exception of the first generation, where Alalu has no parallel in Hesiod:

Anu, the sky-god	Ouranos, Sky
Kumarbi	Cronus
Teshub, the storm-god	Zeus

G. S. Kirk has considered the parallels with great care and subtlety.[61] In *Myth, Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures,* Kirk explores modern theories of myth and a comparative approach to ancient myths especially to identify just what is peculiar to Greek myth. He tabulates the closest parallels between Kumarbi and Greek versions of the story in the following way:

	Sky keeps his children in Earth by persistent mating.
Anu is castrated by Kumarbi as he flees up to the sky.	Sky is castrated by Cronus from within Earth.
Kumarbi swallows Anu's phallus, is made pregnant by it; has embryos in his belly.	Cronus swallows his children as they are born from Earth; has children in his belly.
Spits out some of them, which are brought to birth (probably) by earth.	Blood from Sky's wound impregnates Earth with Erinyes, Giants, Melian nymphs; phallus falls in sea, engenders Aphrodite.
Teshub discusses with Anu how to be born from Kumarbi.	
(Kumarbi wants to eat his son?)	Cronus is persuaded by Rhea to swallow stone instead of infant Zeus.
Teshub is born from "good place."	Kumarbi vomits up children through his mouth.
(Something about a stone in the text?)	Stone comes up first, is worshiped at Delphi.
Teshub rules, Kumarbi is displaced, but foments new rebellion using Ullikummi, product of his seed and a rock.	Zeus rules, Cronus is displaced to Tartarus with Titans, but Earth bears Typhoeus, source of a new rebellion—product of Cronus's seed according to one version (or of Tartarus's, according to Hesiod).[62]

The details of Kirk's subtle and persuasive analysis are not as important as is his conclusion. In spite of such parallels as the table above indicates, there are many differences in emphasis between the Hittite and Greek accounts. The Greek myth "seems to convey an underlying message, that excesses and unnatural acts in the realm of sex and childbirth give rise to counterbalancing and deterrent excesses in the other direction" (Kirk, *Myth,* p. 218). The Hittite version lacks the balancing themes of the Greek; and it emphasizes the phallus in a way the Greek does not. "The plain conclusion is that neither borrowed from the other, but each is a distinct form or portion of a complex set of mythical themes" (ibid., p. 219).

If we were to consider the generation of gods in *Enuma Elish* along with the Greek and Hittite stories, the variation and different emphases would be just as great. The great mother is not Earth but Tiamat, who represents, as we have seen,

the cosmic waters. The line of powerful male gods, Anu, Ea, and Marduk, each son in the "image" of the father, is much like Anu-Kumarbi-Teshub or Sky-Cronus-Zeus. But in *Enuma Elish* the significant conflict is between the oldest gods and the young gods, between the line of Anu-Ea-Marduk and the primordial pair, Tiamat and Apsû. Anu (in two versions) is like Sky, virtually disappearing from the action. The attempt to keep the young generation from being born and the bizarre births are absent from *Enuma Elish.* But the way of dispensing with the enemy is no less violent. Apsû is killed by Ea and set as a foundation of Ea's temple-city at Eridu; Tiamat is split in two by Marduk and made to form the foundation of the cosmos.

Ea appears in the Kumarbi stories, as we have seen. His role is not all that clear, however, because key portions of the text have been lost. He appears to aid in the birth of Teshub. He may have been named king of the gods. He seems to have set up a figure, KAL, as king, and when KAL proved rebellious, Ea and Kumarbi determine to act against the rebel—probably with some success.[63]

It is in the part of the Kumarbi cycle in which Kumarbi plots against the gods that Ea's part is rather more clear. Kumarbi fashioned the strange creature, the stone Ullikummi, that grew mighty on the shoulder of the god Ubelluri. Once Ea knows the problem, he discovers the solution: the tool, like Hesiod's sickle that separated Earth and Sky, is there to separate the stone from its source of power. Once that is done, Teshub is able, it seems reasonable to conclude, to win a victory in battle over Ullikummi.[64]

The Hittite link is complicated not only because much of the text is broken, but because so many roles in the story seem to be doublets, such as has been suggested before in the case of *Enuma Elish.* If Ea were not himself a character in the story, one would be tempted to expect the following pattern:

Ea in *Enuma Elish* = Kumarbi = Cronus in *Theogony.*

That Ea intervenes at one point to challenge Kumarbi, at another point to assist him; and that Ea may himself have been a king of the gods just after Kumarbi—suggest doubling. The fragments of the story give a glimpse of a figure acting, mainly behind the scenes, giving advice, manipulating the gods in the manner of Ea in *Enuma Elish.* In all three works the direction of the narrative is clear: preliminary stages preparing for the god under whose regime we in our historical era live—Marduk, Teshub, or Zeus. The most significant of the fathers is not the first but the father of the king of the gods—that is, Ea, Kumarbi, Cronus. It is an interesting surmise—and nothing more than surmise—that the three works may share a similar interest in the "cunning trickster" who had to give way to the son, and that the pattern was first seen in Enki.

Even if the surmise proved to be true—if, for example, more Hittite texts were to surface—we are still dealing, as we were in the tradition of the flood, with a textual tradition. Kirk's investigation of Kumarbi and Cronus actually uncovered a much more striking parallel between Mesopotamian myth and Greek myth than *Enuma Elish* and *Theogony* would suggest. The parallel Kirk noted has very little to do with textual traditions and very much to do with underlying, structural patterns in myth. And the parallel once again involves Enki.

When Kirk discovered what he thinks is the "underlying message" of *Theogony,* it struck him that the message was quite similar to the first of the myths we have presented in this book, the Sumerian "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth." In both myths sexual excesses and unnatural acts lead to counterbalancing excesses in another direction. The Sumerian myth and Hesiod's story have almost nothing on the surface in common, and it would be quite a leap—one that Kirk nowhere suggests—to suggest that Hesiod knew the Sumerian poem. The method by which Kirk arrives at an underlying message beneath two superficially different stories widely separated in time and place is worth considering.[65]

Kirk offers a kind of "structural interpretation" of the Sumerian story—that is, "one that places emphasis on relations rather than on their particular subjects." Of great importance to that rather complex and often bewildering story of Enki, his consort Ninḫursag and his sexual exploits with his daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughter, is the association of sexual activity with irrigation. The sexual activity is fairly obvious in the story. That impregnating a series of young goddesses has something to do with stages in the irrigation of Dilmun is quite possible, though not all that obvious. The water Enki spreads flows into rivers and canal systems, and deeper into uncultivated areas toward the desert. Behind the scene is the earth-goddess Ninḫursag, as cunning in her way as Hesiod's Earth:

> Ninḫursag's plot had been to draw Enki's irrigation further and further towards the desert, to extend her own region of fertility. This worked well with the intermediate regions where vines and cucumbers grow; but the planting of Enki's seed at the very edge of the desert was foiled by Enki himself, by his impetuosity in eating the plants so as to be able to decree their fates. This impetuosity is punished by earth, and Enki becomes sick. As a consequence of trying to force irrigation beyond its natural place, and of Enki's over-violent reaction, water perhaps fails, and there is a drought that has to be corrected by action of the great gods. Enki has carried thoughtlessness and unnatural sexual activity too far; in swallowing the eight plants he was swallowing (although perhaps he did not know it) his own offspring, just as Kronos swallowed his children and, a closer parallel, just as in the Hurrian congener of the Kronos myth Kumarbi goes to excess by swallowing the male member of his father, the sky-god Anu.[66]

Enki is not the only one in the story guilty of "irregular uses of sex" and "unnatural" acts (especially devouring what are in effect his own offspring). Ninḫursag, by removing the seed from Uttu's womb and placing it in hers, is also guilty of irregular sexual practice. At its "mythical level," the story concerns a strict interrelationship between natural fertility, which in southern Mesopotamia in particular meant a great anxiety over annual flooding and maintaining irrigation channels, and human sexual activity.[67]

To test his interpretation of "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth," Kirk traces similar pattern of "reversals of natural marital relations and childbirth" through three other Sumerian myths, including "Enki and Ninmaḫ: The Creation of Humankind." In all three of the myths he contrasts the methods of Kramer and Thorkild Jacobsen—takes a different position from both of the earlier commentators. Again and again he finds that sexual irregularity is associated with irrigation. About the two myths of Enki and the great goddess, Kirk thinks:

> The core of the two myths is as follows: a succession of carnal encounters between a high god and a goddess (or series of goddesses), who is really too young for this sort of thing, leads to the birth of several relatively minor deities and, directly or indirectly, to the removal of a major deity to the underworld, with damaging effects (so it can be inferred) on fertility above. Therefore it appears that the pursuit of fertility can be carried to excess; if it is so carried, it tends to result in infertility.[68]

By moving as he does from "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" through several other myths in which certain sexual irregularities are prominent motifs, and then a brief survey of another group of (underworld) myths, Kirk feels confident that he has uncovered their underlying narrative structure. Certain "basic preoccupations" provide for the structure of Sumerian myths. Instead of a group of concerns such as Kramer has listed, Kirk has a very different list. For Kramer, Sumerian and Akkadian myths are "primarily about the creation and organization of the universe, the birth of the gods, their loves and hates, their spites and intrigues, their blessings, their creative and destructive acts."[69] Rather, Kirk feels, the "basic preoccupations are fertility, human and agricultural, and the complex relations between them; the plotting of men's ultimate destiny in the underworld, and the evaluation of death in relation to life and fertility; and the creation and ordering of men, their functions and place in the world."[70]

In his survey of a number of Akkadian myths, Kirk, following W. G. Lambert, sees a significant change from the preoccupations of Sumerian mythology. Where the Sumerians emphasized irrigation and fertility, and saw the gods closely in terms of nature, Akkadian mythographers reflected a concern with the social order, administration, justice, the nature of kingship, and the organization of the world under a supreme god and a single city. Significantly, the Enki, god of fresh water, becomes the Ea, god of wisdom, according to Kirk.

Although there may not have been such a dramatic change from Sumerian to Akkadian mythology as Kirk thinks, he has read the pieces with great care. One of his observations about Sumerian myths may turn out to very productive. Kirk noted that Sumerian myths achieve a curious unity by setting two subjects side by side. He speculates that originally dependent themes are often combined to form a new unity, as in the concern for irrigation and sexual relations. He has not by any means exhausted the modern methods of interpreting myth.[71] But he has found a flexible and productive method for looking very closely at the texts and then discovering certain underlying patterns.

When he turns to what is, after all, his strength, Greek myth, Kirk is finally able to draw up a list of the "commonest themes in Greek (mainly heroic) myths"—a list of some twenty-four items—and a second catalogue of "special, unusual or bizarre themes" (eight items).[72] There is no reason to think that Sumerian and Greek myths are closely related historically. All of the "special, unusual, or bizarre themes" and a good many of the twenty-four items in the common list oculd be found, probably, in Sumerian myth. (Probably most could be found in the folklore of just about any culture.) What is noteworthy is the frequency with which Enki figures in Sumerian and Greek parallels.

Besides the most conspicuous parallel of all, the one that emerges when Kirk looks at "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth"—that is, the god's

devouring of his own offspring—Kirk notices two others that relate significantly to Enki. First is the notion of the Golden Age. The vision of life in Dilmun at the beginning of "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth," is the best known of myths touching upon that theme. "The *Namshub* of Enki," which opens with a time without snake, scorpion, hyena, lion, wild dog, wolf, fear, or terror, is another. The notion of the origin of old age and disease is another. (Again, it is "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" that Kirk cites, for it is, he feels, the consequence of Enki's and Ninḫursag's acts.)

The two themes bring us back, finally, to Cronus. The Golden Age is, after all, not the age of Zeus—that is, our age. Hesiod was ambivalent about the ages that led to the regime of the king of the gods. Although Zeus seemed to bring order and organization to the universe, his regime is the Iron Age: humans never rest from labor and suffering; destruction is everywhere about; the gods' gifts to humankind involve heavy troubles. The Golden Age was, for Hesiod, the age of Cronus or Saturn, when humans lived "like gods, without toil, and without sorrow." In the Golden Age, too, humans died, but they died swiftly, and there was neither disease nor old age, the two things Hesiod seemed mostly to resent.[73]

If there are underlying concerns to which different cultures give common expression, one would seem to be that ambiguous figure, ever receding deeper into the abyss but somehow available to consultation: the old Father, the "cunning trickster" Cronus, or Enki. Whatever wisdom he offers, it is not reason but another kind of knowledge: secrets of the gods, designs, gnosis.

One caution Kirk brought to a consideration of Sumerian myths is that the myths are not simply stories, but "quite elaborate and carefully composed narrative *poems*." That quality was enough to make Assyriologist A. Leo Oppenheim skeptical of their help in illuminating Mesopotamian religion.[74] It is to this dimension of Sumerian mythology that I want to turn in the last chapter.

CHAPTER 10

Myth and Literature: Locating Enki

In the Introduction a point was made that a century ago almost nothing was known about the Sumerians. Recovery of Sumerian literary works about Enki has been an exacting process. The same is true about the Akkadian and Hittite literature in which Ea is an important figure. In the last chapter, above, certain connections were suggested between the Enki poems and the two traditions that have been studied in greath depth for many centuries in the West, biblical and Greek. It is reasonable to expect that the literary tradition established in ancient Sumer had at least an indirect influence on the Bible and Greek literature, for the scribal schools of Mesopotamia persisted until the early Christian era. The Book of Psalms, the Song of Songs, and, on the other hand, Greek mythological motifs like the creation of the universe, the culture hero, flood stories, and the dreary nether world may well have been shaped, in ways unknown to the scribes and authors in first millennium B.C. Jerusalem and Athens, by Mesopotamian traditions. Because our understanding of religious and mythological literature has been formed in large part by the biblical and Greek traditions, it is well to consider any possible links, direct or indirect, between those great formative sources of Western thought and earlier Mesopotamian thought. That project has only just begun, and I have merely hinted at some directions in which investigations might be channeled.

In spite of resemblances to Western religious and mythological literature, the Enki/Ea literary works still remain, for us, remote and difficult to understand. We should like to know, of course, how such works came to be written in the first place, how they were received by their first audiences—indeed, who they were who actually read them. Modern literary study, still rooted deeply in Greco-Roman thought forms (and increasingly these days probing into the Bible "as literature"), normally takes as its first task the project to understand a literary work in its "original" situation. Recent decades of very intense literary theory, though they have challenged almost every received idea we had held about literature, have still not erased intense interest in literary history. To a great extent the earlier chapters of this book have suggested ways a literary history of a certain distinct tradition in Sumero-Akkadian literature might be constructed. There is, it hardly need be said, much more to be done in that project.

This chapter takes a different turn. It largely reverses direction and confronts our ability to undersand literary works that are, after all, extremely ancient and written in a culture we barely know at all. The chapter, then, is an experiment in hermeneutics. It is openly speculative, sketchy, suggestive, and playful.

On some level of understanding, the name Enki is meaningful: the *en,* a lord, king, or owner, of *ki,* which is "earth" or just perhaps "place." Occasionally in the stories about Enki, he casts about and goes abroad, sometimes in his *magur*-boat, the Ibex of the Abzu. For the most part, though, he remains stationary, in the Sea House, in the Abzu of Eridu. A great many depictions of the "god with streams"—probably representing Enki—on cylinder seal impressions[1] are presentation scenes, where some figures, like the Anzu bird and petitioners, are introduced to a seated god. Those who can, approach him: gods usually, their viziers, and on occasion humans. And they wait for him to speak.

The approach to Enki/Ea, for us, can come from many directions: history, including the history of religion, philology, myth, literature. This essay, an experiment in literary criticism, attempts a kind of "topological" approach to Enki as a figure in literature. Enki, as I have noted earlier, is a character in literary narratives that are so remotely ancient and alien to us that we need to ask: How can we even begin to understand such an alien presence? Literary theorists and critics in recent years have been struggling with just such problems of understanding texts—that is, with "hermeneutics" and hermeneutical questions.

The hermeneutical philosopher who has probably paid more attention than any others to Ancient Near Eastern myth is Paul Ricoeur. In *The Symbolism of Evil* he isolates four basic mythic types concerned with the representation of evil. One he calls "the drama of creation," in which "the origin of evil is coextensive with the origin of things."[2] A second type is the story of the "fall" of humankind. A third, which he illustrates with Greek tragedy, is "tragic," because fault is "indistinguishable from the very existence of the tragic hero." The last of the mythic types he calls the "myth of the exiled soul." It is the last type that is most often found in the Gnostic writings mentioned in the previous chapter.

To illustrate the first type, Ricoeur discusses a number of literary works we have been considering. Because in the "drama of creation," much is made of primordial chaos with which evil is coextensive, Ricoeur first discusses *Enuma Elish.* Evil is as old as the oldest of beings. In the same context Ricoeur considers the flood stories of Mesopotamia and *Gilgamesh.*[3] He mentions Enki only in connection with "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth." The discussion is brief. Enki eats the eight plants in order "to know their 'heart' and to name them in accordance with their true natures."[4] From this Ricoeur concludes that the story is *not* about the entrance of evil into the world—that might be expected if the work is considered a "paradise myth." Ricoeur thinks the myth is a "fragment of theogony." He sees in it the decline of the "might of the waters" as Enki becomes ill with the eight plants.

Ricoeur makes perfectly good sense within the context of hermeneutics of the symbol, from which he derives a basic typology of myths. Once the framework is established, the old stories can be looked at as briefly or in as great a length as it takes to use them as illustrations. Problems arise when the Enki stories are taken up as poems. As G. S. Kirk noticed—and A. Leo Oppenheim before him[5]—the

Mesopotamian myths are known through carefully composed poetic works. Interpreting the texts becomes a great deal more difficult than setting the work in a context. Much of the poem can be ignored if the point is, for example, to illustrate a typology of myths on the origin of evil. Even more can be ignored at times when the kind of "intertextuality" suggested in our discussion of the flood story is attempted. Some elements of the myth survive in any version. Many of the particulars do not survive.

The direction this essay will take, then, is this. One of the poems from an earlier chapter (chapter 6), "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves," will provide a text to test what the hermeneutical critics call our "preunderstanding" of literature—that is, what we bring to an understanding of any text. On the one hand, I want to raise the question of how the Western religious and literary traditions, for all their richness, create problems for our understanding of earlier texts. On the other hand, I want to raise questions about the formal structure of Sumerian poetry, including figures of speech, which, as Ricoeur makes clear, are always in need of interpretation.

Then a broadly linguistic examination will attempt to distinguish certain speech acts. These will be set back into a historical framework of Sumerian civilization: the emergence of anthropomorphism, the Sumerian pantheon, and myth. The place of the "author" in the literary tradition that favored anonymity will be considered. Finally, I will return to issues raised at the outset of this book: an understanding of wisdom and water.

"Good" literature is as much a matter of our preunderstanding as of any qualities thought to inhere in the words of the text. The gap that divides us from the strange Sumerian poetry of these chapters demands that we do violence to our traditional understandings and expectations. Only then can we hope to uncover the "truth" of the literary work.

Violence and the Sacred

The Enki of Sumerian literature—and the Ea of Akkadian and Hittite literature—is both very strange and very familiar to us. The reason for a rather roundabout approach to this literature is that what gets in the way of an understanding of Enki is what is familiar to us, not what is strange.

Two of the Enki stories involve violence that is difficult to interpret. The Sumerian "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" seems all the more sinister, with its motif of the god devouring his own children, in light of the much later story of Cronus in Hesiod's *Theogony*. The Hittite Kumarbi cycle provides us, as we have seen, with another example. Enki and the blade that originally separated heaven and earth appears to be mild enough as it is; if, however, the motif is related to the original castration of the sky-god in the same Kumarbi cycle and later in Hesiod, interpretation is made more problematic.

Consider a poem completely outside Ancient Near East and solidly in the canon of English literature—that is, comfortably within the Renaissance confluence of the two great streams of Western tradition, Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman. The subject is one close to the center of Judeo-Christian concepts of the

relationship between God and humankind. The criteria for writing (and reading) a well-formed poem, on the other hand, derive from the classical tradition. The author is John Donne. The Holy Sonnet is known by number, variously #10 and XIV:[6]

> Batter my heart, three-personed God; for You
> As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
> That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
> Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
>
> I, like an usurped town, to another due,
> Labor to admit You, but Oh, to no end!
> Reason, Your viceroy in me, me should defend,
> But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
>
> Yet dearly I love You, and would be loved fain,
> But am betrothed unto Your enemy:
> Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
> Take me to You, imprison me, for I,
>
> Except You enthrall me, never shall be free,
> Nor ever chaste, except You ravish me.

It is a powerful and attractive work, one that has attracted considerable interest in the twentieth century, especially with the way it allows two mutually suspicious approaches to literature to meet in harmony: literary history and the so-called (even after these many years) New Criticism. The first, literary history, attempts, in as objective, scientific a way as possible, to secure a literary work in its historical setting. The language of the poem, its conventional form, its textual history, facts about the author and his time, all of these are of interest to the literary historian. New Critics, for their part, consider the poem in its complex "unity," and pay close attention to those features of the poem that make it an esthetic object: the play of metaphor and other figurative language, irony, paradox, and the like. Theirs is a formalist approach that sometimes ignores and can be quite hostile to the historical setting. The New Critic may have only scorn for an attempt to secure an original meaning of the work, and will quickly object when biographical and intentional fallacies tie the work too closely to an author. The work is, for the New Critic, an autonomous object.[7]

Fortunately, Donne's poetry, written late in the sixteenth and early in the seventeenth centuries, has enough to satisfy both camps. Donne seems to speak in the poem, but he does not speak about the poem anywhere, and so we are faced with the prospect of understanding the poem "in its own terms." There are no significant textual variants to consider. The poems were published in 1635, after Donne's death. There are a few words that can perhaps be usefully glossed for the modern reader: "mend," still close to "amend"; "viceroy," a person appointed to rule a country as the deputy of the sovereign; and "fain," gladly or willingly. Of

those probably only "fain" is likely to cause any problem at all. It is now almost exclusively a "poetic" term, as in "I would fain be with you," but the eager willingness that the term now bears was counterbalanced centuries ago by its opposite: "fain" as obliged and constrained. "Yet dearly I love You, and would be loved fain," then, had a double meaning, a way of capturing in language the struggle of the soul in its desire to love God.

Two words in the couplet at the end of the poem are crucial to an understanding of the poem, and the double meaning in each is still available to us, but we are likely to miss the force the words carried in Donne's time:

> . . . for I,
> Except You enthrall me, never shall be free,
> Nor ever chaste, except You ravish me.

The words "enthrall" and "ravish" still can have for us the brute force of subjugation and rape, but that is not the way we normally use the words. They have become genteel, used politely, like "charming," to describe cosmetics in the market and a rather vague enjoyment of another's company. To feel the pain in that couplet—that is, to see how tightly held together are the violence and the ecstatic pleasure in the lines—the reader must reinvest the words, which have suffered such wear and tear over the years, with the force it had for Donne's age.

We do not need John Donne to tell us, in a gloss or letter, what he intended in choosing those words. But it is useful to know the way the faces of words are rubbed off over the years that separate us from the time of the author.

What comes through clearly in a reading of the poem is the force of its images. (It is largely the cumulative force of the images that alerts us to those last two lines—and sends us to dictionaries for confirmation.) Typical of Donne, who is noted for direct, challenging openings, the poem begins with an awful paradox: "Batter my heart" is a cry for pain and suffering, rather than its opposite. Knock, breathe, shine, o'erthrow, "bend/Your force," break, blow, burn, divorce, untie, "break that knot," imprison me, subjugate me, rape me—the words are effective precisely because they are unexpected.

Each of the quatrains, or four-line stanzas, develops a major image, and all of them are blended into a coherent whole. Critics are divided about the image that dominates the first four lines.[8] God is imaged as a tinker, and Donne images himself as a pewter vessel, according to one critic. Or God is courting and then breaking the will, according to another. Still another claims that the three persons of the Blessed Trinity ("three-personed God") have different roles to play in "knock, breathe, shine" of the second line. What the critics have found out is that the images operate in a very complex way, and that they work together to produce the paradoxes stated at the end of the poem. Unless subjugated, the soul will never be free; unless raped, the soul will never be chaste.

"Reason" is the exalted faculty that should guide him to God ("me should defend"), but is held captive by "Your enemy." With the mind darkened and the will weakened, the poet struggles to love God, but he cannot do it alone. He needs to be mended, made new; what holds him to the enemy must be smashed, destroyed. The mystical tradition had developed the powerful sexual imagery that

runs through the whole poem. In ecstasy the self is overthrown, the soul released into God; and the most expressive image for that is sexual union. Donne does that one better by turning it around. The soul that is bound in the prison house of the body now must be "imprisoned," and the virgin, to be pure, must be raped.

The images of God the jailer and God the rapist are, of course, shocking. No amount of reconsideration—the care with which God the craftsman acts for a purpose to make a vessel new and shining, for example—ever overcomes the scandal of those powerful, and deliberately inappropriate, images, what the century called Donne's "metaphysical conceits."

In a larger sense, though, the historical context exerts such a pressure on the poem that readers, unless they have lost touch entirely with mainstream Judeo-Christian tradition, have no great trouble reading it. And reading it, not by downplaying the violence of the images, but by heightening them. Take just two examples. The theology behind the poem is conventional. "Three-personed God" does not, as it might in another context, sound a theological challenge. Even during the Reformation, with all the passions roused by theological differences, a theology of the Trinity that might be wrested from the poem would not likely offend any but the most radical reformers. The Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) had settled that over a thousand years before.[9] The tripling of images, especially evident in the first quatrain—"knock, breathe, shine" and "break, blow, burn"—is clever and moving, but the technique reflects the broad consensus of Christian theology since the fifth century.[10]

The reader need not see a challenge to orthodox beliefs about God in those violent images. Indeed, on the one belief upon which the poem turns, readers would be doing the greatest violence on the text were they to suggest that God is even remotely associated with evil. God may be imaged as using force against the poet, but the poem rests in the absolute conviction that "three-personed God" cannot do evil. Similarly, there is no need to inquire too closely about the "enemy" that holds the poet's "reason" captive. The "enemy" cannot do good—in the sense that the Satan cannot intend good. He is as absolute an enemy to the good as God is the support of all good. The "heavenly bridegroom" may divorce, imprison, force, and rape the soul to goodness. But the reader would be perverse to see anything but Donne's ardent piety in the "conceit."

With the Enki poems, as we have seen earlier, the reader cannot be so sure. The literature was written so much earlier than the philosophical tradition that came to support orthodox Christian theology that all the comfortable, traditional ideas we take to the literature are called into question. In some stories, Enki appears to champion good against evil. In "Ninurta's Pride and Punishment" and the tradition of the Anzu-bird with which that story is connected (like the Akkadian Anzu myth), the theft of the *me* brings about chaos, and Ninurta's challenge to Enki seems likewise a disordering act of hubris. But in the absence of an explicit metaphysics that separates good and evil absolutely, the reader must be careful not to interpret the Mesopotamian poems from the position Western metaphysics has assigned us.

Similarly the demonic forces that are so much evident in the incantations—including the "evil god"—belong to a very different mind-set from Donne's "enemy." The demons bring chaos and suffering to humans, but they are not,

apparently, part of a grand salvation history that makes their activities meaningful from some world-historical perspective. Even the poems that seem to suggest a notion of sin, as in "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves" with its warning to humankind against coveting the *me,* or in the letter of "Sin-šamuḫ, The Scribe to Enki" in which the distressed writer searches for the source of his many problems, another mind-set is at work.

In a very condensed form, Donne touches upon an astonishing complex of interrelated stories and ideas the reader is expected to know: biblical creation stories, the fall, and paradoxes of sin and atonement. Even the form is familiar. Without being told the poem is a Holy Sonnet, readers—certainly in Donne's time, when many thousands of sonnets were written—know how to pick their way through the poem. The minor, technical questions about the form of the poem do not concern us here. The fourteen lines are divided in a conventional way. The first eight lines establish a problem to which the final six lines provides a solution. Within the first eight lines, additionally, two quatrains, or four-line stanzas, are carefully developed. The rhyme scheme, the regularity of the verse, the way the poet enjambs and stops lines and brings the quatrain to a full stop are evidence that Donne knew his craft well. A major image is developed within each quatrain, and the couplet at the end of the poem intensifies the conclusion. Recall the first quatrain:

> Batter my heart, three-personed God; for You
> As yet but knock, breathe, shine and seek to mend;
> That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
> Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.

Clearly, Donne is in complete control of the conventional form he has chosen to express his thought.

The same may or may not be true of the Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite poems that deal with Enki. The Marduk/Ea incantations, for example, are written in a highly conventional form. Certain blocks of lines may be repeated in different poems, as we have seen. But there is much that is not known about the ancient literary forms. The speeches of Enki tend to display an order and unity that show they were written with care. But are they written according to set forms? What of "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves" with its ten *kirugu*? Is the *kirugu* a form like the sonnet or even the quatrain?

The reader who comes to Donne's sonnet without sharing the cultural norms or without knowing the conventions of sonnet form will no doubt read the poem in a way far different from the early readers—the original audience—of the work. Much has been made in literary theory about the rightness or appropriateness of certain readings and misreadings of literary works. Certainly the examination of Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite literature as literature is just beginning. The writers did not, as far as we now know, write critical analyses that would tell us how they read the poems. There is a need to be cautious before so many unknowns. Much of the poetics will never be recovered. Misreadings are inevitable.

Still, there is no reason to be gloomy about the prospects. Indeed, the recov-

ery of these ancient texts could not have come at a better time. The advantage of living in a self-conscious and self-critical age is that it calls all assumptions about literature into question. Much of Western literary criticism before the twentieth century seems remarkably sketchy or naive in light of the intense examination of the features and presuppositions of literature in our own time. Where an earlier generation was content with listing dozens of rhetorical figures, for example, there are now collections of learned articles and books on the nature of the metaphor.

The "otherness" of this ancient literature, by virtue of its very remoteness in time and culture, is, ironically, what fits it perfectly to the hermeneutical questions raised by students of literature today.

Major themes in the Enki myths, as we have seen, are journeys of the gods, conflicts and disputations, distribution of powers, relationships with other gods (which often involve "charter myths"), and creation.[11] As a creator, Enki is seen fashioning forms from clay or involved in a sexual relationship; but in either case he is often paired with a mother goddess. Much of his activity is carried out through speech. In many cases he instructs others in the solving of problems, the formation of creatures, the revival of those seized by disease-demons, or in the case of Inanna/Ishtar, by death. In other cases his speech alone brings creatures into existence or states the problem in such a way that the solution follows. Occasionally the speeches are expressive, and the god is angry or derisive, as in "Ninurta's Pride and Punishment" or "Ea and Ṣaltu." Generally, though, it is the craftiness of Enki that pervades his speeches and the stories in which he is a character.

An odd feature missing from the stories is, perhaps ironically, "wisdom." For the god who praises himself as "cunning and wise in the lands" and is called the "king of wisdom," Enki's sayings are not well represented in the usual groups of wisdom literature like proverbs,[12] precepts and admonitions, and dialogues such as one finds in *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*.[13] It may be a matter of definition, of course. There is a growing body of scholarship on the meaning of "wisdom" in the Ancient Near East, much of it centered on the Bible. But there is little in the speech of Enki that directs humankind in the ordinary affairs of life, not even if his advice in the flood story is construed as a way to "salvation" (which is doubtful). The advice Enki gives is related to specific events like the flood and the threat of the Anzu-bird, or to specific maladies, as in the incantations. The instructions lead to cult and ritual, but the advice does not provide a guide to ordinary experience in the world.

The words of Enki certainly do not equate with "wisdom," if by that is meant a philosophical system, cosmology or metaphysics. In the myths they are often tied to specific stiuations in the story, as one might expect. When they speak of the human condition, the words tend to fix or recall the role of humans as servants whose work keeps the gods at their ease. But it is difficult to see in Enki's craftiness a worked-out plan of history, let alone a kind of primitive science.

The words are important, of course, often clever and always effective: words of great force. Such force is best seen in the incantations, and there, at the end, when Enki's speech is made up almost entirely of what is called the "precative" form of the Sumerian and Akkadian verb:

"The Dragon with his net of reed . . .
it will bind the mouth shut!"

"Then Namtar and the Asig,
who fix themselves in the body of the king,
the sheep will carry to its sheepfold,
the kid will bear them to its drinking-spot!"

"Make sure the great gods are here in assembly:
the guilty is to be handed over
so they can stand firm!"

"He alone carries out the total of my oracles!"

The precative is usually translated with "Let . . . !" or "May . . . !"—as the forms are in the verses below. In the verses just given, though, the precatives are translated with phrases like "will . . ." and "is to be . . ." in order to preserve the illocutionary force of the utterances.[14]

Not surprisingly, the myths end with a speech by Enki, not by the kind of narrative closure one finds, for example, in the modern novel. Enki's speech provides the close and resolves the conflicts:

"For the little ones you have caused to be born . . . ,
Let Abu be the king of plants,
Let Nintulla be the lord of Magan,
Let Ninsutu marry Ninazu,
Let Ninkasi be she who fulfills desires,
Let Nazi marry Nindara,
Let Azimua marry Ningišzida,
Let Ninti be the queen of months,
Let Enšag be the lord of the Dilmun."

To illustrate certain formal features of Sumerian literature and the problems facing the interpreter of such a remote literature, consider again "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves."

The most obvious feature of Sumerian literature is its formality, evident in the careful handling of the poetic line and in repetition of lines often with variation of only one element:

Raise up the arm! Where is it sung?
Song of Enki: where is it sung? [90]
Song of that master of the Abzu: where is it sung?
Song of the holy master: where is it sung?

Song of Damgalnunna: where is it sung?
Song of Asarluḫi: where is it sung?
Song of Nammu: where is it sung? [95]
Song of Arae: where is it sung?

The composition, "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves," consists of ten *kirugu,* or "songs,"[15] themselves a part of a longer *balag*-lamentation. (The word *balag* refers to a kind of song, probably a dirge, accompanied by a harp.[16] The *balag*-instrument may, however, also be a "drummable resonator.") The word for "song" in this passage, though, is *sìr,* as can be seen in the transliteration of the Sumerian lines. Each syllable divided by a hyphen or a space represents one cuneiform sign (which might be read in a number of ways, depending upon the context). The syllables tied together by hyphens spell out a Sumerian word:

89. *á-íl-la me-da àm-tuku-àm*
90. *sìr-^{d}am-an-ki-ga me-da àm-tuku-àm*
91. *sìr-ù-mu-un-abzu-ka me-da àm-tuku-àm*
92. *sìr-ù-mu-un-kà-ga[!] me-da àm-tuku-àm*
93. *sìr-^{d}dam-gal-nun-ka me-da àm-tuku-àm*
94. *sìr-^{d}asar-lú-ḫi me-da àm-tuku-àm*
95. *sìr-^{d}nammu-ka me-da àm-tuku-àm*
96. *sìr-^{d}ara-e me-da àm-tuku-àm*

In every line the phrase, "Where is it sung?" *(me-da àm-tuku-àm),* appears in exactly the same place in the line. "Song" *(sìr)* does as well, in all but the first line. The sequence of names and epithets provides the only variation, and the names are in the same sequence as in the previous passage (lines 82–88). Enki and his family are named: Enki, his consort the mother goddess Damgalnunna, son Asarluḫi (later assimilated to Marduk), daughter Nammu, and servant Arae.[17] Typical of Sumerian poetry, the triplet, lines 90–92, does not refer to three gods, but Enki alone, identified by three epithets: ^{d}*am-an-ki-ga, ù-mu-un-abzu-ka,* and *ù-mu-un-kù-ga.* What is noteworthy about the list is that the name of Enki and the two epithets, "*en* of the Abzu" and "holy *en,*" are all written in the Emesal dialect of Sumerian, a dialect usually associated with women and goddess cults.

The line in Sumerian poetry is a semantic and syntactic whole. Run-on lines are rare. Whether there is a metrical regularity is not known. Because of the prominence of individual lines, it is usually easy to detect patterns of parallelism, but somewhat more difficult to isolate larger rhetorical patterns. The text marks the division between *kirugu,* but it is not clear if the different *kirugu* represent different literary forms, like our Donne sonnet.[18] In a society that was largely nonliterate, even the literature is likely to reflect oral performance and perhaps oral composition. This could account for the tendency to formality and repetition often found in oral traditions.

Similes are usually very clearly marked:

Master, when you ride the floodwaves,
Enki, when you ride the floodwaves,
little waves attack for you
like oxen,
big waves array themselves for you
like a headdress. [105]

Sumerian poetry is very much a poetry of nouns and verbs. Adjectives are few and quite basic: little, big, honest, good, pure, and the like. Adverbs are even more rare. The qualifications we prefer to make with them are made by parallelism, incremental repetition, and figures like the similies here. Similies tend to be formulaic, with the same image occurring in different works.[19]

With metaphor the situation is quite a bit more complicated. Consider the fifty-second *kirugu:*

His word is a floodwave,
a floodwave that breeds fear. [135]
The word of Enki is a floodwave,
a floodwave.
The word of Damgalnunna is a floodwave,
a floodwave.
The word of the Master of the Abzu is a floodwave,
a flood-wave.

You are true with those who are true,
you are not true with those who are not true.
You are the venom of a viper set against humankind. [140]

His word is the venom of a lion that does not come out
for the sake of humans.
His word is a floodwave,
a floodwave that breeds fear.

The fifty-second *kirugu.*

The *kirugu* is entirely centered on the numinous word. Indeed, the Emesal word for "word" (*e-ne-èm,* rather than *inim*) is repeated in every line save two (139–40). The *kirugu* is a well-ordered *inclusio:* the first and last lines are identical, and the poem, although it is not exactly chiastic, has a clearly marked center: "You are true with those who are true, you are not true with those who are not true." (What keeps the chiasm from forming exactly is the triplet in 136–38, the identification of the word of Enki and Damgalnunna; the triplet is balanced by only one line, 141, on the other side of the center.) Of course, the center, which breaks the pattern, is apt because it gives the *kirugu* a clear ethical import. Truth is a matter of words, untruth as well; both truth and untruth are possible *only* with langauge.

The ambiguity possible with language is so striking in this poem, so pervasive, that the "word" gathers all metaphors to it, without giving us the possibility

of reducing the poem to a simple, rational paraphrase. We can note the connections: word is floodwave is venom, powerful, destructive to humankind. The floodwave recalls the terrible fear of the flood and Enki's deceptive role in that mythic event. Nature, imaged in flood and in the animals that can so easily destroy a human, is powerfully alien to humankind. At the same time it is full and productive. Note that the floodwave "breeds" fear—this in a poem that celebrates the (re)productive power of Enki and Damgalnunna. The great *en* and the great *dam* disappear into this rich and dangerous "word." In no other Enki poem is it stated so directly and with such dread: Enki's word is "given against man," and it does not come forth for the benefit of man.

The word is at once the least surprising and most baffling mark of the divine presence. The study of words is much older than the Western tradition. Very possibly because of the bilingual situation in the early Sumerian city-states—Sumerian and Akkadian used by, at least, those trained in the scribal schools—the ancient scholars compiled lists of words (gods, professions, and the like), bilingual dictionaries, grammatical paradigms, and pronunciation guides. The earliest of the bilingual dictionaries (Sumerian and Semitic Eblaite) date from the third millennium B.C.[20] So the word was the object of scholarly interest long before the Greeks began the study that influences our understanding of language even today.[21]

The extraordinary growth of interest in language in the last two centuries can be seen in any survey of linguistic science today.[22] Yet the very ordinariness of scientific observation of language in the modern world has tended to remove the word from the realm of the sacred. Like any other phenomenon of nature, the word is made into an object of scrutiny, catalogued, analyzed, and made available for any kind of manipulation. Ironically, the importance of the word in the Bible *(dābār, logos, rēma)*[23] has made us, if anything, comfortable with the notion of the word in religion. Rarely, though, is the primitive power of the word a matter of concern. We may "appreciate" a well-preached sermon as easily as an "effective" speech or sales presentation. We expect prayers to open sports events and commencement ceremonies. The pious manipulation of the word, like the scholar's use of it as a tool for "communication," has almost entirely secularized the word in the modern world. With the increase in radios, televisions, cassettes—and just the increased encounters with crowds of strangers—the word has become the most banal of human objects. That is so, even if the possession of language is considered the most conspicuously human of activities, an ability that cuts humans off from even their closely related animal species.

The child's discovery of language and acquisition of the rules by which sentences are formed are certainly crucial for the development of human self-understanding. Thinking, which "consists of producing ordered sequences of mental images," David Taylor believes,[24] allows the child to learn how to reason, solve problems, rehearse, systematize memory, and follow plans. Whatever is responsible for the emergence of thought, "it is generally believed that the acquisition of language plays a major role."[25] An illuminating study of the way young children make use of language to do things—before they arrive at the "two-word" stage, in which an explicit grammar begins to develop—has shown just how effective words are even before they are set into well-formed sentences. Far from being meaningless grunts and groans, even the one-word utterances of children function in a complex

way as speech acts. John Dore observed that children at the one-word stage effected nine "primitive speech acts"—namely, labeling, repeating, answering, requesting action, requesting an answer, calling, greeting, protesting, and practicing.[26]

The Western philosophical tradition has, however, reinforced the secularization of the word by reducing language almost entirely to "statements," logical assertions.[27] Ironically, the one speech act not observed in the children at the one-word stage is any type of proposition or statement.[28] Trying to counter the tendency to reduce language to logical assertion, Martin Heidegger liked to show that the statement is not even a fundamental form of interpretation, "but rests on the more primary operations of understanding and interpretation in preunderstanding," as Richard E. Palmer has written.[29] He continues:

> Heidegger gives an example. "The hammer is heavy." In the assertion itself, he says, an already shaped way of conceiving is at work, that of logic. Before any really apparent interpretation or analysis, the situation has been structured into logical terms to fit the structure of an assertion. The hammer has already been interpreted as a thing with properties, in this case heaviness. The sentence structure of the assertion, with its pattern of subject, copulative, and predicate adjective, has already placed the hammer over against one as an object, as something possessing properties.[30]

Before that, however, there are fundamental processes of interpreting the world even without logical assertions, even without words. One tests the hammer, for example, and puts it aside silently.

What these modern thinkers, linguists, and cognitive scientists are helping us to rediscover is the way in which the word emerges in its primordial power, before its dependence upon logical assertions. What Heidegger calls "preunderstanding" is not dependent even (or solely) on words. And when the word emerges in human speech, it is marvelously effective without yet making assertions about the world. Heidegger is concerned that we misunderstand the nature of language by defining it according to the conscious manipulation of statements and ideas (what Taylor called "thinking"). He is concerned that we reconsider language as fundamentally "speaking, where something is brought to light."[31] Language is not just the expression of an "inner reality" but a "sharing of world. As a disclosure not of the speaker but of the being of the world, it is neither a subjective nor an objective phenomenon but both together, for world is prior to and encompasses both."[32]

Thus it is with some irony that modern thinking is letting us step back into an appreciation of the power (effective and interpretive) of the word without recourse to awkward statements about magic. Of course ancient magic depended upon the notion of the powerful word. But it was this very superstitious "notion" that enabled the ancient word to be dismissed in this scientific age. We know that in languages of the Ancient Near East, the word was not just the expression of the speaker's thoughts, but was considered something concrete, something active, often personified in scripture, for example, as a fierce warrior.[33] (The understanding of Christ as Logos in the Gospel of John is incomprehensible outside such a context.) The range of meanings of the Akkadian word for "word," *amatu,* which translated the Sumerian *inim,* is instructive in this regard. What is at base the spoken word or utterance is also "news," "secret," plan, interpretation, text, command, order,

decision, a legal case, a matter of consideration, and even "thing."[34] The range of meanings is found even in ordinary English uses of "word."

Because the word, when reduced to the notion of an arbitrary sign in a combination of signs that constitutes a logical assertion, is not seen as palpably as it was in the past (or is in the ordinary language of persons today), it has not engaged the attention of historians of religion to the extent that, say, the storm or the stone or the mountaintop are studied as manifestations of the divine. An exception is G. Van der Leeuw, who noted that Brahman was originally the power of the word "as it reveals itself to the brahmins in the sacrificial utterances and their reciters."[35] He also devoted a chapter to "The Speaker" in a section of "The Sacred Man" (chapter 27).[36] He was concerned, mainly, with the prophet, whose power-word has healing properties. The examples he gives are nearly all biblical and Greek.[37]

Enki's word breaks through with a shock comparable to the *me-lám* (Akkadian, *melammu*), about which much has been written. The *me-lám,* as we have seen earlier, is an awe-inspiring sheen or radiance inherent in gods, demons, and at times of kings, objects (mace, kettledrum, palaces, temples) or intense forms of life.[38] Beauty, youth, joy, martial and sexual vigor appear by means of a luminous manifestation.[39] Elena Cassin considered the "divine splendor" as a key to the system of Mesopotamian thought, the "numinous" proper to gods and their appurtenances (like the *kābōd* or glory of Yahweh in the Bible).[40] Cassin makes an intriguing suggestion about the association of silence and obscurity in the chaotic world just at the stage before splendor breaks through in the movement that will establish the organized world, the cosmos.[41] But there is no clear link between the visible manifestation of the divine and the way Enki is manifest, through the word, in Cassin's treatment of *mé-lam.*

Similarly, Enki is imagined in such human ways in the Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite myths that it is not taken as at all extraordinary that he—or any of the gods—speaks. Representing the divine as if human is, of course, very widespread; so widespread that it seems almost inevitable that for religious humanity there be gods or God, with something like an intelligible personality.

Helga Piesl has pursued, at some length, what she considers the emergence of anthropomorphic from "preanthropomorphic" forms of the divine in Sumer. She considers the change related to a profound change in society. A crisis in the clan leads to the development of the collective and the rise of the individual, a movement reflected in the emergence of "logical" from "prelogical" thought.[42] The gods, according to her way of looking at it, are related to individualism. At the moment when individuals know themself as a person, they see also the numinous under the aspect of personality.[43] From the early symbols that marked the presence of the sacred, the idols in more or less human form became the way to hold the god fast, to bring in the god's presence.[44] Could it not be also true that the sound, the power-word, is just as much an attempt to hold the god fast as are visual images (pictures, models, temples, and statues)?

Myth is one way of drawing in the divine presence. Piesl considers the Sumerian myths as a justification of what is most essential to human nature by relating it to a primordial act of foundation.

The question raised is precisely that of the relationship between myth and poetry. The myths we have seen are representations of gods in action. What makes them most humanlike is the way they speak, although the gods are seen as perform-

ing tasks, assembling, fighting, feeling, and the like, not all of which take the form of speech. The myths are stories, with plots we can follow pretty well. But they are also well-crafted poems, writings that capture in fixed form the speeches of the gods. Where Enki speaks, the word is so important that it tends almost to obscure the anthropomorphic representation (and sometimes to mar the story, as in the incantations, where the narrative itself does not end).

The poem that makes up the fifty-second *kirugu* is of that sort. The representation of the word of Enki in the poem has little to do with anthropomorphic language. True, Enki is the god *am-an* of *ki* and *ù-mu-un* of the *abzu.* Both *am-an* (Emesal for *en*) and *ù-mu-un* (another Emesal word for *en*) are words that suggest a political role within at least a family of the gods. The *ki* and *abzu* are places within a Sumerian cosmography, over which the *en* rules. Enki's consort, Damgalnunna, is also mentioned. And Enki can be addressed, as he is in lines 139–40, by the poet as a "you":

ì-ge-en ì-ge-en nu-ge-en nu-ge-en [139]

You are true with those who are true,
you are not true with those who are not true.

What makes up the poem is not a story, but a sequence of epithets and images that do not so much allow a picture of Enki and Damgalnunna to emerge as they bring the dangerous *e-ne-èm* (Emesal for *inim* or "word") into presence. There is something of a warning about truth and untruth, to be sure, and a warning that the Enki's word did not come forth for the benefit of the hearer (humankind). But as much as the terrible *me-lám* is a visible manifestation of the divine, the *e-ne-èm* is the divinity we call Enki. The metaphors of floodwave, breeding, venom, and animals are numinous in this intense association with the *e-ne-èm* and the name of the god.

The irony inherent in the word itself may help us with that strangest of sections (lines 112–22), the one that begins with the *me* and ends with Enki's command. It ends the first *kirugu.* After humankind had multiplied, it appears, Enki brought the humans to his "house" and to his *me* that were in it, but then took away the "*me* of life" from the house. Enki then sought out the manifold *me* and fastened them to his breast. The sequence ends with his command: the humans (*mulu,* another Emesal form) are not to covet *(al nu-um-me)* the *me:*

He made them come out to them in the house,
the Master—to his *me.*
He made them come out to them,
Master of the Abzu—to his *me,*
he made them come out to them in the house. [115]

He took away the *me* of life from the house.
He hunted out,
he hunted out the *me,*
he fastened them about his chest.

Master he is of the plenteous *me:*
for his *me* the *mulu* must not long.
Enki of the plenteous *me:*
for his *me* the *mulu* must not long.
He must not long—the *mulu* must not long—for his *me.* [120]
His command: "The *mulu* must not long for them."
His order: "The *mulu* must not long for them."

The narrative that is collapsed in these few lines is so condensed that one might expect it was so well known to the Sumerian theologians and poets that barely a suggestion was needed to bring it to light. This was the case, we have seen, with the allusions in Donne's sonnet to creation, the fall, and salvation history. Of course it is mere speculation about the Sumerian situation at this point. The story of a change in the fate of humankind when, once introduced to the "house" and to the divine decrees, the "*me* of life" and then the other *me* are withdrawn—with a warning—is not otherwise known in Sumerian literature.[45]

Two literary features complicate the interpretaiton of the section. Within the section itself is what looks like a pun on the *Akkadian* name of Enki—that is, Ea. Three times in the first four lines *é-a* (without the divine determinative, *dingir*) opens the line. Whatever "house" this is—Enki's Sea House? his temple at Eridu? a kind of primal place for humankind—is made difficult to determine because of the pun on Enki's name. (Note that the sighing of the poet at the very end of the tenth *kirugu* seems to pick up the pun again. The complex *é-a*—with a different sign for *e*—is followed in line 190 with *é-lugal,* "house of the king.") Punning is not merely wordplay, especially with divine names and numinous words. The linguistic device reveals a depth of meaning that is difficult for us to make intelligible.

The second difficulty is one that is, in a sense, always present in interpretation, but is especially a problem with these ancient texts. Are we justified in seeing a connection between one *kirugu* and another? Even within the first *kirugu* the story of the *me* given to humankind and then withdrawn is not very obviously connected to the sequences that preceded it. Are the ten *kirugu* linked together? With Donne's "holy sonnets" the question is still open, as we have seen, and in that case we have a much more explicit tradition of sonnet sequences to help us in interpretation. We are tempted to piece together a coherent narrative from a group of separate *kirugu.* Yet even the poetic style of the composition, one that continually resists straight-line storytelling, resists our efforts.

We are tempted, then, to see the section as a story about humankind and the *me,* and to see the story as part of a larger pattern of creation (Enki's riding the waves proliferating *ḫegal*), a challenge to divine authority, the double-edged "word of Enki" and a problem over truth and untruth, and a turn (in the fifth *kirugu*), when Enki seems more inclined to bless the *mulu* again. The sudden appearance of a king[46] in the tenth and final *kirugu* (lines 188–93) suggests that the lamentation ends on a note of hope—albeit cautious, a prayer—in which the king, as meditator between the gods and the people, is the focus of divine attention.

If this large schema holds in the composition, and it begins to look suspiciously like Donne's penitential sonnet—creation, crisis, expectation—it is not that the Sumerians were showing signs of a proto-Christianity. Then as now the pattern

of foundation-problem-resolution may have been so deeply ingrained that it is really an archetypal pattern, what Maud Bodkin called the rebirth archetype.[47] If this is so—and it is only, again, speculation—the overarching pattern of "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves" is not one that depends on specific theological doctrines. Rather, it may take us to what Bodkin considered a basic function of poetry. All poetry, she says:

> Laying hold of the individual through the sensuous resources of language, communicates in some measure the experience of an emotional but supra-personal life; and that poetry in which we re-live, as such a supra-personal experience though in terms of our own emotional resources, the tidal ebb toward death followed by life renewal, affords us a means of increased awareness, and of fuller expression and control, of our own lives in their secret and momentous obedience to universal rhythms.[48]

Bodkin's conclusion is based mainly on a study of Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." One can find the same pattern in Donne's sonnet, where it rests comfortably in the widely held tenets of Christian theology. One could as easily find it in the pattern of the Marduk/Ea incantations.

This admittedly sketchy and speculative attempt to come to grips with one Sumerian poem, "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves," is not intended as a final word on the poem. It is only an opening. To the simple question, what literary value is there in the Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite literature we have survyed in this volume, there is no simple answer. Certainly the literary works do not look like the literature with which we in the modern world are most comfortable—the novel, for example, or lyric poetry. Even when the poetry is to be accompanied by the lyre, or by the *balag*-harp (or drum), as is the case with the *balag*-lamentation, the poetry seems to lack the marks of an individual author, such as we see in a Donne sonnet, for example. So we are forced to contend with our own preunderstanding of literature.[49]

We tend to be uncomfortable with anonymous literature, in spite of what the New Critics said about the biographical fallacy and the intentional fallacy. Very few authors are known: Enḫeduanna, thought to have written the collection of "temple hymns" from which our "Hymn to Enki's Temple, the *É-engur-ra* of Eridu" is taken; Sin-leqi-unninni, the exorcist, is said to have written a version of *Gilgamesh;* and Ku-Aya (or Nūr [ZALÁG]-Aya), author of a version of *Atraḫasīs.* Except for Enḫeduanna,[50] the poetess and high priestess, little is known even about them. By and large, it is the poem that counts, not the name of the author. Significantly, as mentioned in the Introduction, the earliest document yet discovered about authorship in any civilization, a catalogue of texts and authors from the early first millennium B.C., lists four classes of authors, apparently arranged in a hierarchical order: (1) gods, especially Enki, who has the first place; (2) legendary and very ancient humans, like the "seven sages" (Adapa is mentioned); (3) men without indication of family origin; and (4) men described as "son" of an ancestral figure.[51] Whatever this may say about authorship, it is clear that the conception is very different from our own. The stream of tradition carries along literary works, largely through scribal schools. It was a time when persons literally made their own books. Authorship is more a matter of the authority by which a text says what it says than the expression of an author's "intention."

Philology is obviously the first concern of the interpreter. With only the beginning, now, of a published Sumerian dictionary, the greatest of care has to be taken in establishing the meaning of the words of the text. Hence the amount of commentary in these chapters devoted to the weighing of various possibilities. Then whatever can be gleaned from our still fragmentary knowledge of text types, genres, and poetics will be brought to bear on a specific text. It is tempting to borrow genres from the Hebrew Bible (hymns, psalms) and from Greek literature (the epic, for example), although they must be used with caution. For the most part we are delighted if a good portion of the text yields a basic, "literal" meaning.

The very anonymity of the texts takes us back, not to individual authors, but to communities and institutions. The more we learn from archeology, historical records, archives, comparative religion, cultural anthropology, and theories of social development, the more we can begin to see the literary milieu of the ancient writers. Representation of the gods, the role of priesthood and temple in the economy, connections between myth, magic and ritual, the role of the writer[52] in society are factors in the production of literary works. To take one example that may influence our reading of "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves," we have noticed the wordplay with *en* (in its Emesal variants), the *en* of the name Enki.

Recall as well that by the early third millennium (in the Early Dynastic II period) a fully developed class society emerged in Sumer, with a few princely families at the top and a labor force, including slaves, still based on kin-related communities. At the outset of the urban revolution, priests appear, giving a primarily religious focus to social life. Anthropomorphism and a representational art emerge. The temple is a redistributive center for the economy. Temples, increasing in size and complexity, become the centers of specialized administrative skills (like writing, needed for keeping accounts). At the head is the *en,* a political and priestly figure. Somewhat later, however, the *en* had become only a religious figure. The *lugal* and the *ensi* alternate as the titles of the chief political authority; then the *ensi* declines. With the eclipse of the *en* and the increase of the *lugal,* which comes to be the ordinary word for "king," there is also an increasing concern for serious military activities and the importance of a war leader. This change is reflected in the development of an "epic" literature surrounding the great kings like Enmerkar and Gilgamesh—and later in the concern with divine kingship such as can be seen in *Enuma Elish,* where Marduk's enthronement becomes the paradigm of the earthly king.[53]

In the list of *me* in "Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech," the politico-religious titles are arranged. Are they arranged in a hierarchical order, reflecting a new or an old social order? In the poem considered above, does the end of the last *kirugu,* where the *lugal* comes into view, suggest that the great *en* and *lugal* are equals? Is one the higher title? The existence of different titles in the same work presents a problem for translation. Are they both equally served by the English word "king?" (This is especially confusing when *en* and *nun,* "king" and "prince," are used at the same time for the same person.) Are they to be separated in order to understand the dynamics of the poem?

R. H. Codrington, observing life in the Norfolk Islands between 1863 and 1887, was the first to discuss *mana:*

> That invisible power, which is believed by the natives to cause all such effects as transcend their conception of the regular course of nature, and to reside in spiritual beings, whether in the spiritual part of living men or in the ghosts of the dead, being imparted by them to their names and to various objects of all sorts, is that generally known as *mana*. . . . By means of this men are able to control or direct the forces of nature, to make rain or sunshine, wind or calm, to cause sickness or remove it, to know what is far off in time and space, to bring good luck and prosperity, or to blast and curse. No man, however, has this power of his own; all that he does is done by the aid of personal beings, ghosts or spirits; he cannot be said, as a spirit can, to be *mana* himself, using the term to express a quality; he can be said to have *mana,* it may be said to be with him, the word being used as a substantive.[54]

The notion was taken up in anthropological circles, and it was instrumental in Rudolf Otto's concept of the numinous.[55] That *mana* attaches to sounds can be seen in the power of names. This may only be an extension of those forceful, illocutionary acts the philosopher J. L. Austin called "performatives"—that is, statements in which the saying of the words constitutes the performing of an action.[56] Or it may be an extension of those "primitive speech acts" we perform even at the "one-word" stage of linguistic development, before we make plain assertions about the world.

In any event, evoking Enki as name/word/*me*/floodwave/venom/command/*en* in "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves" takes us very close to the essence of Enki as the *mana* attaching to the word. To the modern reader of modern literature this may appear somewhat strange, although many poets have attempted to show that the word still has that dimension and depth. A change in reading habits has something to do with the common modern assumption about words. In spite of efforts by linguists to emphasize the spoken, as opposed to the written, word, the spread of literacy keeps us considering the word as a visual image on a page primarily. John Donne's poetry, it is often alleged, is the first in English that appears to have been written in the study for an equally quiet scanning by the reader alone. It was neither composed orally nor intended as an oral performance.[57]

The Sumerian literature presented here is at one remove from the oral tradition at least: written in fixed forms, by hand on clay tablets. A piece like "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves," though, reminds us that in oral performance the word is *mana.* The impact is in sound, however, not in visual images. (Perhaps this accounts for the tendency in Sumerian to relate intellectual activity with hearing, rather than sight, the preferred association in the West since the Greeks.) What sort of impact, though? What the large number of Enki sayings, incantations, and hymns collected here appear to demand of the audience is not so much a detached assessment of the truth of the statements, though the clever speeches demand that. Rather the *mana* of the word demands participation. Enki the "character" in a "narrative" gives way to the demand of the word. The "reader" in the act of performing the text yields to the demand of the word. The way the poem dissolves at the end, without characters or story, into a sequence of exclamatory phrases (lines 190–93) is an ecstatic affirmation, not an assertion:

> Eh! Ah! the king's house! Eh! Ah! The king's house! [190]

River Tigris,
master of the Abzu! The king's house!
Fisher[?] of the sea! The king's house!
Fowler of the mountain's base! The king's house!
Eh! Ah! The king's house!

In what way is a piece of writing like "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves" a poem? Because it gets the words right and says the right thing.

We do not need to know the name of the poet or the scribe who may have recopied the poem centuries after its first inscription. The words are apt. The writing in regular blocks—the line—draws attention to its formal structure. The *kirugu* appear to be unified wholes (although we may have difficulty showing this on formal grounds alone). And the group of ten *kirugu* may well have an overall unity: a beginning, middle, and an end. It may tell a story. It may, in performance, demand that the mood shift this way and that, moving us from detachment to increased participation.

The assistance we get in interpreting such an alien poem comes largely from three sources, and each of these must, in the end, be overcome if we are to let the poem speak to us. First are the assumptions about literature that we take to our reading because we are "modern" readers with expectations formed by modern novels, poems, plays, and films (but not so much by sermons, obscenities, jokes, street talk, or even rock music). Second is Judeo-Christian tradition that preserves a sacred literature, with its stories, hymns, and wisdom—a literature that is placed in a different category, usually, by those who read it and those who do not bother. The advantages are two: (1) the Bible is still held to be a sacred work; and (2) the language, literary forms, and socio-historical context are closer to Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite literature than to us. We need, though, to overcome the hold the biblical works—really, the theology that grew out of the biblical world, with its hostility to polytheism, to pagan myths, and to the great civilizations that threatened that world—have upon us.

And we must make use of ideas about literature, writing, truth, and philosophy that developed out of the metaphysical tradition—that is, the tradition of Greek philosophy. The tradition makes the kind of scientific analysis of texts possible, and it stands behind nearly every kind of interpretation, every critical approach, taken in the modern world.[58] Still, it was this tradition that Martin Heidegger attempted to subvert. Had he known about Sumerian myths, he might well have considered them before, say the pre-Socratic philosophers that so much occupied his thought.

In his essay, "What Are Poets For?," Heidegger made his famous remark about language as the "house of Being." It is the "house of Being" because it is not, as so many modern philosophers have come to conclude, just the language of science, logic. His way of thinking has a rather strange resemblance to the language of Sumerian poetry:

> Language is the precinct *(templum),* that is, the house of Being. The nature of langauge does not exhaust itself in signifying, nor is it merely something that has the character

> of sign or cipher. It is because language is the house of Being, that we reach what is by constantly going through this house. When we go to the well, when we go through the woods, we are always already going through the word "well," through the word "woods," even if we do not speak the words and do not think of anything relating to language. Thinking our way from the temple of Being, we have an intimation of what they dare who are sometimes more daring that the Being of beings. They dare the precinct of Being. They dare language.[59]

Not surprisingly, it is the poet who even now does not succumb to the metaphysical tradition, the one who "dares" language. Sumerian poetry, because it is concerned with truth, but is not dominated by the philosophical system that has dominated the West, offers a fresh way of considering langauge, myth, poetry. Of poets—and he was thinking mainly of Rilke when he wrote this—Heidegger claimed "they bring to mortals the trace of the fugitive gods."[60]

His way of looking at poetry did not guarantee that he would have interpreted "Enki and His Word: A Chant to the Rider of the Waves" properly, correctly. Indeed, it may not be possible to raise a literary critical approach on the basis of his thinking. But he wrote that his work on the "Ode to Man" from Sophocles' *Antigone* was just such a "topological" approach as has been attempted here:

> Our interpretation falls into *three phases,* in each of which we shall consider the whole poem from a different point of view.
>
> In the first phase, we shall set forth the intrinsic meaning of the poem, that which sustains the edifice of words and rises about it.
>
> In the second phase, we pass through the whole sequence of strophes and antistrophes and delimit the area that is opened up by the poem.
>
> In the third phase, we attempt to take our stand in the center of the poem, with a view to judging who man is according to this poetic discourse.[61]

Heidegger recognizes that the hermeneutic he advances "must use violence." The exegete "must seek the essential where nothing more is to be found by the scientific interpretation that brands as unscientific everything that transcends its limits."[62]

Only when the poetry of Enki ceases to become merely a catalogue of its analyzable features can we hear more and more of the poetic line. Whether it takes the form of "myths" proper—narratives of founding, for the most part—or they celebrate the word in its essence and its impact on humankind, the Enki poems conceal and disclose, as well as any, the situation of humankind, its naming of the world, and its uncanniness.

Wisdom and Not

What is the peculiar "wisdom" of Enki? Knut Tallqvist found nearly thirty different epithets in Akkadian related to this aspect of Enki/Ea.[63] Of a great many, the epithets include, in Sumerian:

alim-nun-na, Knowing One
geshtúg, Ear (Understanding)
nin-igi-kù, en of the Pure Eye

A few of those in Akkadian are:

apkal ilāni, Sage of the Gods
apkal nēmeqi, Wise Sage
mūdū, Knower
bēl pirishti, Master of Secrets
bēl uzni, Master of the Ear

The Sumerian term used most often for "wisdom" is *nam-kù-zu* (Akkadian, *nēmequ*),[64] which ranges in meaning from knowledge, experience, skills, and traditions that form the basis of a craft or occupation, to the knowledge that gives a foundation for civilization as a whole. The word refers to skill generally, and cunning. On the basis of the myths considered in this work, we might draw up a slightly different list: knowledge that includes gnosis, secrets of the gods, the *me* (and *parṣu,* the Akkadian equivalent of the *me*), *nam-tar* ("fate," in Akkadian, *shimtu*), images, and craft (in the many senses mentioned earlier).

Certainly Enki is the god most often praised as the "*en* of wisdom," but other gods are endowed with *nēmequ.* His son Marduk is the most conspicuous of the other gods so named, and Marduk's son Nabu is also prominent for his wisdom. Ninazu, Adad, Ashshur, and goddesses like Ishtar and Nisaba possess *nēmequ.* So does Utu or Shamash, the sun-god.

That the Mesopotamian sun-god shares some of the epithets (*nēmequ, mūdū, pitū uzni,* the one who opens the ear) with Enki is not really surprising. The sun-god never achieved the eminence the sun did in other cultures, for example, in Egypt. But among the many gods in the Mesopotamian pantheon Utu is, like Enki, distinguished by a certain *kind* of intelligence. Although Utu and Enki share some epithets, the contrast in intellectual styles between the two gods provides us with a way to understand what is peculiar to Enki.

Both of them are *en*s, fathers, and creators. Both have important relationships with human beings. Where Enki's epithets reflect the roles we have seen him play in the myths—water-god, advisor to other gods, one who interacts with gods and goddesses in his family, a god close to his cult city and temple, determiner of fates, master of magic and of crafts, protector of life—Utu's epithets disclose a very different range of activities and a different way of knowing. Utu's primary character is the sun, and so it is not surprising that light and the brightness of the heavens are emphasized. Utu is light, light-bringer, banisher of darkness, the one who opens the gate of heaven, lord of the day. He is also the judge, determiner of right, and the one who combats evil.[65] Utu's character as a warrior, great and powerful, is related to the combating of evil. The epithets can be seen in several of the Marduk/Ea rituals (chapter 7, above).

This complex of judge, battler against evil, and source of light defines a way

of knowing with which we in the West have felt comfortable at least since the time of the Greeks. The god Apollo, who did not originally have the character of a sun-god, took on virtually all the characteristics of the Mesopotamian sun-god and became the very symbol of Greek rationality. The concept of the *logos* came to be tied closely to "seeing" the truth, which is "brought to light." The old Ptolemaic cosmology connected the planets, including the sun, with the major gods. When Western thought had thoroughly assimilated the old cosmology, the planetary gods were considered to influence behavior and thought on earth. The "light" of reason was sometimes identified with the sun (as opposed to lunar thought), and sometimes with Jupiter (as opposed to Saturnine thought, as was suggested in the previous chapter). The planets assisted the soul in its "ascent" to truth through the heavenly spheres.

Wolfram von Soden has traced the metaphor, light = truth, in Mesopotamian religious literature.[66] However significant that metaphor may have been in Mesopotamia—and we have seen that even Enki was occasionally associated with the great light—there is little question that light has been *the* great symbol of truth in Western thought. Conversely, darkness continues to symbolize ignorance and evil for us.

We are somewhat less prepared to value "other" ways of knowing. Enki's "wisdom" is not so much a matter of seeing and deciding as it is of "hearing" and figuring out solutions. The Mesopotamian identification of understanding with the ear is regularly seen in myths. What is sometimes translated "reason" or "reasoning" almost always appears as "talking through" a problem. In one of the versions of the flood story, the Noah-figure is said to be listening to the waters, preparing for a message from his god. The advice Enki gives is related to specific events like the flood and the threat of the Anzu-bird, or to specific maladies, such as we have seen in the incantations. Enki's instructions lead to the cult and to rituals, but the advice does not easily generalize to, say, a guide for conduct in the ordinary affairs of life.

Just as Enki is hidden away in his Sea House, where light does not penetrate, the wisdom that emerges from the waters, carried to humans by the fish-men sages, for example, is "dark." The secrets of the gods that Enki knows (and may be the only god to know), are not what the sun-god stands for. In *Gilgamesh,* for example, the sun-god Shamash listens to the complaints of the dying hero, Enkidu, and then corrects Enkidu. Shamash's response to Enkidu (VII.iii.33–48) is an excellent case of logical argument. There is nothing ambiguous, tricky, or "dark" about advice the sun-god imparts to the mortal—in sharp contrast to Ea's advice in the same work, when the flood story is retold to Gilgamesh.[67]

In Western thought the value attached to "inspiration" in religion and "imagination" or perhaps "intuition" in the arts is as close as we normally draw to the recognition of another valid way of knowing.

In an important issue of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* devoted to "Oriental wisdom," a number of specialists sought to clarify the nature of "wisdom" is early societies, Egyptian, Hebrew, classical Arabic, pre-Mongol Inner Asian, and Indian among them. Giorgio Buccellati considered the case of Mesopotamia.[68] In his view, "wisdom" in Mesopotamia is not a literary form but a cultural tradition, which he describes in the following way:

> [Wisdom] should be viewed as an intellectual phenomenon in itself. It is the second degree reflective function as it begins to emerge in human culture; in Mesopotamia, it takes shape in a variety of realizations and institutions, from onomastics to literature, from religion to the school. It provides the mental categories for a conscious, abstract confrontation with reality, from commonsense correlations to higher level theory. It did not lead to a deductive systematization of the reasoning process—a major innovation which was left for classical Greece; but it went beyond empirical observation and primary classification [p. 44].

Buccellati finds two points particularly important in Mesopotamian wisdom: the "attempt to gain some distance from one's own inner self, and to cast the particular in a universal mold which can be described rationally and critically" (p. 44). What is most striking about Buccellati's analysis of Mesopotamian wisdom is that it virtually excludes Enki.

In fact, Buccellati is careful to distinguish "wisdom" from an "other" Mesopotamian way of knowing. In six different fields of religious and epistemological analysis, wisdom is contrasted with the "other," the "not" wisdom. In terms of religion, the concept of the absolute as a closed system (fate) contrasts with an "other," open system, where things are determined by the gods. The wisdom tradition values critical evaluation rather than revelation, experience rather than success. Typically, Buccellati finds, the communication of knowledge in the wisdom tradition is through lyric introspection rather than through narratives. Prominent in one tradition are lyric dialogues, precepts, and admonitions, proverbs and disputations; in the "other," rituals. Many of the literary genres found in Mesopotamia embody both wisdom and the "not," such as myths, epics, and fables. But in the communication of knowledge, the disposition of the subject, and the nature of the object, wisdom is quite different from the other tradition. Where one seeks principles, especially universal principles, the "other" considers events, particulars.

Buccellati does not exclude the Mesopotamian pantheon—especially Marduk and Enki—from a "folk tradition" of wisdom.[69] Nevertheless, when we consider the myths, hymns, letters, prayers, rituals, and precepts mentioned in this volume, the conclusion seems clear enough. The great god of "wisdom" has little to do with the wisdom tradition, as Buccellati sees it. On the contrary, the very features that characterize the "other" tradition are the ones we see in the Enki texts. They are the features reflected in the epithets given Enki as well. Where the story is important—as it is even in the Marduk/Ea magical rites—we understand Enki's craftiness through a complex of particulars. That emphasis on the particular always keeps the Enki literature from turning into systematic philosophy, theoretical statements, and also the self-expression Buccellati finds so important in the wisdom tradition.

As far as the pantheon is concerned, Utu may stand for what Buccellati calls the wisdom tradition, Enki for the "not."

Chalice and Blade

Riane Eisler's symbols of a vast cultural transformation in the Middle East and Old Europe, the chalice and the blade, are, as noted in the Introduction, signs of a

shift from a "partnership" to a "dominator" society. Mesopotamia is no longer considered the origin of agriculture. But it was an area where, over many centuries, agriculture flourished. The distinctive form of the Sumerian city-state appears to be tied to the control of water. Flooding of the Tigris and the Euphrates was necessary for cultivation. Keeping the canals flowing but not overwhelmed by unpredictable flood waters, and directing water channels required some measure of state control. A good part of the economy—flocks, herds, fish, and agricultural products—were redistributed through the temple. As we have seen, the Sumerian myths of Enki reflect his importance in those domains.

Enki is the god of *both* chalice and blade. Enki is seldom a warrior, it is true; but he knows how to fight, using magic and the tools of war—most notably the cutter that separated heaven and earth.

He is most obviously the bearer of the chalice—the "flowing vase" that appears so often in the art of the Ancient Near East. Cylinder seals in particular portray the waters of life, of purification, of renwal. Myths and magical rites also reflect the central importance of water. Even when the landscape of Enki myths is not specifically Dilmun or the southern marshes of Sumer, the association of Enki with life-giving water is always present.

The chalice is never, in historical periods, a symbol of the feminine. Goddesses frequently hold the "flowing vase" and feature in scenes with the "god with streams." Still, the areas of life Eisler finds throughout neolithic Europe and the Near East under the sign of the great goddess are, in historical Sumer sometimes markedly feminine, sometimes markedly masculine. The good things of civilization that the "gynocentric" religion and art of the neolithic celebrated are, to a great extent, found among the *me* belonging to Enki. If agriculture extends back as far as 9000–8000 B.C., and if women were the domesticators of plants and animals, by historical times the gods of Sumer were at least as important in those domains as goddesses were.

The crafts that fall into the possession of Enki (and are wrested from him by Inanna, according to "Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech") were, if Eisler is correct, originally the work of women.[70] Food-growing, leather-working, wood-working, metal-smithing—not to mention prayer, judgeship, priestly functions, sacred dance, art, literature, trade, administration, education, and eventually writing—were all inventions of "pre-dominator" culture. Eisler suggests that crafts such as pottery, basket-making, weaving, leather-working, jewelry-making, painting, clay-modeling, and stone-carving became possible when agriculture and settled communities made it possible to develop them (p. 10).

Pre-dominator art had little interest in armed might and cruelty. It did not depict noble warriors and chieftains or the captives and slaves that show up so frequently in Bronze Age and Iron Age art. Nor were the symbols of warfare important: spears, swords, thunderbolts, and the like. Rather one finds the goddess and symbols from nature: the horned bull, hedgehogs, does, eggs, fish, birds, serpents, butterflies. The "geometric patterns of wavy forms called meanders" (which symbolized flowing waters) appear as early as 5000 B.C. (p. 18). The natural imagery we have seen here associated with Enki was, in earlier times, marked by the feminine. Especially water. "The association of the feminine principle with the primal waters is also a ubiquitous theme," she notes (p. 21).

The close identificaiton of water and sperm, water and paternity in the Enki myths is certainly a change from the neolithic imagination. If the chalice is not exclusively a feminine symbol in Mesopotamia, the blade is, on the other hand, not exclusively masculine. The warlike goddess Inanna/Ishtar is a prime example. (Eisler explains the warrior goddess of antiquity—Ishtar, Anat, Athena, and others—as part of the process that deprived women of their importance in the emerging warrior or dominator societies.) As we have noted in a number of places, the religious, artistic, and social importance of the blade increases in second-millennium and first-millennium Mesopotamia, and the blade is increasingly represented in Mesopotamian myth. Very likely this shift of emphasis reflects the changing status of women (and also the changing status of the palace in relation to the temple).

One can always object that a general theory, like Eisler's, that sweeps across millennia from the paleolithic to the twentieth century A.D. will invariably distort the picture of a specific, limited period of history. Her symbolism is useful, however, for the understanding of the Enki tradition. The chalice and the blade do not make Enki less complex a figure or easily grasped—a problem we raised earlier when we wondered why historians of religion had not made more of him.

The rivalry between Enki and the great goddess is a major theme in Enki myths. That rivalry would appear to be clear evidence of just the sort of cultural transformation Eisler outlines: the challenge to the paleolithic and neolithic goddess and the emergence of a dominator culture. But the stories tell of Enki and the goddesses working together—for example, to form creatures, a clear recognition that both male and female were important to the process of production and reproduction. And the Sumerian stories typically end with reconciliation. Where one might expect to see the male triumphant—what Eisler calls the triumph of the "androcratic"—we find instead a reconciliation of powers. This, one could argue, is a reflection of a social order marked by partnership and equality, what Eisler elsewhere calls "gylanic" (pp. 105–6).

Enki remains, perhaps, what most readers of Sumerian and Akkadian literature find in the god, a power favorable to humankind. The complexity of Enki is glimpsed in a figure that combines the chalice and the blade. In the poem we have considered in this chapter, recall that the Enkian word—and the word of Damgalnunna—is a "floodwave, a floodwave that breeds fear."

Notes

Abbreviations

AASF	*Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*
AASOR	*The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
Agricultura Mesopotamica	Armas Salonen, *Agricultura mesopotamica (= AASF149)*
AHw	W.von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
ArOr	*Archiv Orientální*
AS	*Assyriological Studies* (Chicago)
Atraḫasis	W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atraḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*
ANET	J. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BiOr	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BM	Tablets in the collection of the British Museum
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*
CBS	Tablets in the collection of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania
CT	*Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*
Das Lugalbandaepos	C. Wilcke, *Das Lugalbandaepos*
"Eridu"	M. W. Green, "Eridu in Sumerian Literature." Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975
Hartmann Musik	H. Hartmann, *Die Musik der sumerischen Kultur*
HAV	*Hilprecht Anniversary Volume*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
KAB	*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazkoi*
Kraus Festschrift	*Zikir Šumim: Assyriological Studies Presented to F. R. Kraus*

Or.	*Orientalia*
PAPS	*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*
PBS	*Publications of the Babylonian Section, University Museum, the University of Pennsylvania*
RA	*Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*
Rép. géogr.	*Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes*
SBH	G. A. Reisner, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln grieschischer Zeit*
SLTN	S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Literary Texts from Nippur (= AASOR 23)*
SM	S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*
SS	*BASOR* Special Supplement
The Sumerians	S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians*
TH	A. W. Sjöberg and E. Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*
TRS	H. de Genouillac, *Textes religieux sumériens du Louvre*
UET	*Ur Excavations, Texts*
Yearbook	*British Museum Yearbook*
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*

Introduction

1. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: New American Library, 1958), pp. 188–89.

2. Biblical passages are from *The Jerusalem Bible,* Alexander Jones, ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 840–41, 883–84.

3. For the history of Eridu, from prehistoric periods through its flourishing and then decline in historical periods from the third millenium through the first millennium B.C., see Margaret Whitney Green, "Eridu in Sumerian Literature" (Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975), pp. 14–72.

4. Erica Reiner, *A Linguistic Analysis of Akkadian* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p. 20.

5. Hans G. Güterbock and Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., "Preface," *The Hittite Dictionary* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1980), 3, xiii; see also Johannes Friedrich, *Hethitisches Elementarbuch* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1960), and Edgar H. Sturtevant, *A Comparative Grammar of the Hittite Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), pp. 1–9. For an overview, see Philip Baldi, *Indo-European* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), pp. 151–163.

6. For an overview of Hittite literature, see Hans G. Güterbock, "Heithitische Literature," in Wolfgang Röllig et al., *Altorientalische Literaturen* (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1978), pp. 211–16, 232–40. On the influence of Mesopotamia on Hittite literature, see also Gary Beckman, "Mesopotamians and Mesopotamian Learning at Hattuša," *JCS* 35, 97–114. For Enki/Ea in Hittite religion, see O. R. Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 15–17.

7. The periodization is from William W. Hallo, "Toward a History of Sumerian Literature," in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen,* Stephen Lieberman ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975), pp. 181–203.

8. W. G. Lambert, "Introductory Essay: the Development of Thought and Literature in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 13.

9. The periods of Akkadian are, then: Old Babylonian (1900–1600 B.C.), Middle

Babylonian (1600–1300), Middle Assyrian (1300–1000), Neo-Assyrian (1000–650), and neo-late Babylonian (650 B.C.–A.D. 100).

10. The notes to chapters 1 through 10 include a few features that should be mentioned here. The abbreviations (in the list of Abbreviations) follow, in the main, the "Provisional List of Bibliographical Abbreviations" in *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary,* 11/1. The notes are meants to be helpful, not exhaustive. Although they may assist the cuneiformist who would like to know the exact reading of certain signs in the text, the notes are intended for the reader who would like to take the next step and pursue the rich resources available to the specialist but now, sadly, almost unknown outside the discipline of Assyriology.

A few unconventional features have been added to make access to the texts and apparatus a bit easier for the general reader than has been the case in the past. One is the addition of volume and page numbers to citations in *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary,* the *CAD.* Of all the resources used routinely by specialists in Assyriology, the projected twenty-one volume dictionary (eighteen parts of which have appeared so far), based on the principles of the *Oxford English Dictionary,* is the one that may be used most profitably by the nonspecialist. The entries are extensive and easy to follow. Sumerian equivalents for Akkadian terms are given; variants in the cuneiform writing of the words are provided; the range of meaning is presented clearly; and explanations, usually found at the end of an entry, are clear and often very enlightening. Until the Sumerian dictionary project is completed—only one volume has appeared so far—the *CAD* and its German counterpart, Wolfram von Soden's *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch (AHw),* will continue to be the main source of detailed information about the word stock of Akkadian *and* Sumerian. Conventionally, the *CAD* is cited by the word that is under investigation—e.g., *CAD sub ṣēru.* We have added volume and page references (as in this case, 16, 138–47), although specialists will not need the information. Even though the *CAD* follows the Roman alphabet in its listings—in contrast to earlier dictionaries that followed the sequence of Semitic roots—the nonspecialist is likely to be lost without volume and page references. The general reader is not likely to know that /s/, /ṣ/, and /š/ are separate phonemes of Akkadian; and even knowing that, the nonspecialist may not know the sequence of separate volumes for the three phonemes the *CAD* has elected to use. Furthermore, within a volume, the reader may become confused between, say *ṣēru* and words with identical spellings but different meanings (*ṣēru* A and B), or spellings like it but with doubled consonants *(ṣerru)* or lengthened vowels *(ṣērû).* Adding the volume and page references will, we hope, encourage the use of this very valuable resource.

In the translations from cuneiform sources in the following chapters, the integrity of the line is preserved in this way. A single line of text may have its segments separated, and the segments may run to two or more lines in the translation.

If no more than a single blank space separates one part of the line in the translation from another, the sequence is a single line in the original.

Lines separated by two or more blank spaces in the translation are never parts of a single line in the original. For example:

> At his post, how his face darkens,
> how it pales!

is a single line in the original cuneiform text.

> His heart turns over great things
> His heart is hostile

is also a single line in the original.

the craft of the carpenter,
the craft of the copper-worker,
the craft of the scribe,
the craft of the smith,
the craft of the leather-worker,
the craft of the fuller,
the craft of the builder,
the craft of the reed-worker.

is also a single line in the original.

However, the following sequence translates four lines in the cuneiform original:

House, Sumer,
have your many stalls built,
have your cows multiply, [1]
have your many sheepfolds set up,
have your sheep be many, [2]
have your *giguna* reach to the sky, [3]
have your lasting shrine lift hand to heaven! [4]

The purpose of the convention is to protect the integrity of the line while marking the patterns of the sequences clearly.

Other minor unconventional features are these. Scholarly translations of Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite texts are usually accompanied by a detailed transliteration of the original languages (such as can be found here in the notes to chapter 7). Both transliteration and translation will have every line numbered in the left margin. In this volume, only a few line numbers are given, and those only to help readers find their way back through the scholarly editions. We feel that there is no need to number each line, and that the convention of numbering each line prevents the reader from seeing the larger rhetorical patterns of the text. Another feature is the occasional use of ampersand (&) for "and." Our practice here follows certain modern poets. It is used in passages where the sequence of phrases beginning with "and" is important to notice (and where the device, quite common in Semitic languages—e.g., in the Hebrew Bible—has been allowed to lose its effectivenesss in English translations).

11. W. G. Lambert, "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," *JCS* 16 (1962) 72.

12. Robert McC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society: Early Mesopotamia and Prehispanic Mexico* (Chicago: Aldine, 1966), pp. 108–38.

13. Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), pp. xvii, 64–66. She emphasizes that the key words for agriculture used by the Sumerians—farmer, plow, furrow—were not Sumerian in origin, and that terms signifying craftsmen—weaver, leathermaker, basketmaker, smith, mason, and potter—were also taken over from the goddess-worshiping peoples in the area when the Sumerians came to dominate. Enki's possession of the *me*, especially of the crafts, could be seen as a way of establishing male dominance over activities that were either dominated by the feminine or were indifferent to male/female marking. The main examples of reworking myth Eisler gives are biblical, but she claims the process was the same in Sumer, pp. 85–89.

14. The discipline concerned with examining the social implications of language is socio-linguistics. Recently, the history of the English language has been reconsidered using socio-linguistic methods—e.g., Dick Leith, *A Social History of English* (London: Routledge

and Kegan Paul, 1983). The English words for royalty and for "lord" and "lady" are particularly interesting in this regard.

15. At Eridu XVI. See Charles Burney, *The Ancient Near East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 53.

16. E. Douglas Van Buren, "Fish-Offerings in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Iraq* 10–11 (1948) 103.

17. Ibid., p. 120.

Chapter 1

1. The text of "Enki and Ninḫursag" is based primarily on a fairly well-preserved six-column tablet excavated at Nippur and now in the Univeristy Museum; it was copied and published by Stephen Langdon under the title *Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood and the Fall of Man* in *PBS* X:1 (1915). Since then a fragment of unknown provenance has been published by Henri de Genouillac in *TRS* 62, but the nature of its contents was first recognized by Edward Chiera (see *JAOS* liv, 417); a careful, helpful collation of the fragment has recently been made available to Kramer by J. Durand. An edition of the text, consisting of a transliteration, translation, and commentary, was published by the writer in 1945 in *SS* I; a translation was published by Kramer in 1950 in *ANET,* pp. 37–41. In 1963 Gadd and Kramer published a duplicating fragment of the myth excavated at Ur that helped fill in several of the gaps in the text and introduced a number of significant variants (see *UET* VI, pt. 1, no. 1, and the relevant comment in the Introduction of that volume). The present translation and interpretation of the myth differs therefore to some extent from Kramer's earlier ones. In 1984 P. Attinger, one of Kramer's students at the University of Geneva in the 1970s, published a new edition of the poem: "Enki et Ninḫursaĝa," *ZA* 74 (1984) 1–52. This work contains a number of interesting suggestions relating to the translation and interpretation of several of the passages, but it will take considerable time and study before these can be analyzed, assessed, and evaluated.

2. The elliptical dots in this line and the next indicate the omission of the Sumerian *e-ne ba-àm-me-en-zé-en,* which at least on the surface seems to consist of the third-person pronoun *e-ne* and the second-person plural imperative of the verb *ba* "to present," but as of today no satisfactory translation and contextual interpretation of the phrase has been suggested.

3. It is rather strange and inexplicable that Ninsikilla (rather than Damgalnunna) is here designated as the wife of Enki, especially because later in the text (line 31) Enki is designated as her father.

4. For the *dar*-bird, see *CAD sub ittidû,* 7,304.

5. If the "widow" in this line is to be taken as a resident of Dilmun, it must be concluded that death was known there. It may be, however, that the poet was depicting a harassing action by birds with which he was familiar in his own day and place, and therefore could not occur in paradisaic Dilmun, not realizing that there were no widows there.

6. The implications of this line and the following two are not clear.

7. The ellipsis in this line stands for the rendering of the Sumerian *mi-NE,* an unintelligible complex crucial for the interpretation of the line.

8. The relevant passage is quite fragmentary but, with reasonable certainty, it can be restored from what follows.

9. The ellipsis stands for two unintelligible lines.

10. "Cisterns" is a reasonable surmise for the Sumerian *GÌR-ma-an.*

11. The Ur fragment mentioned in note 1 has a much fuller version of Enki's blessing;

its contents indicate that the author knew Dilmun to be a land dotted with "good dwellings," to which virtually all the known countries of the ancient world brought their goods and wares by boat (for a translation of the relevant passage, see Kramer's "Dilmun: Quest for Paradise" in *Antiquity* 37, 111–15).

12. The rendering of the first half of this line, a Sumerian literary cliché, is not quite certain.

13. The translation of this passage is full of uncertainties (see the commentary in *SS* I). The reasons for the modified renderings here presented will be obvious to the Sumerologist, except for the line "Causes his phallus to tear away the noble upper cloth from the lap," which is based on a revised transliteration of the line that reads: *giš-a-ni bar-túg-maḫ dùg-ta ba-ra-an-zi-zi.* As for the implications of Enki's swearing that no one is walking in the marshland, it may indicate that he wanted to reassure Ninḫursag that there is no one observing their sexual intercourse, and thus embarrass her in some way.

14. "Directed" for the Sumerian *mi-ni-in-dug*[?] is no more than a guess based on the context; this line may imply that Enki, in a sense, betrayed his wife Damgalnunna by pouring the semen destined for her into the womb of Ninḫursag.

15. The rendering "like fine oil, like fine oil, like precious oil" is based on a modified transliteration of the line that reads: *ì-li-gim ì-li-gim ì-ḫe-nun-na-gim.* For *ì-li,* see *AHw sub ulu(m);* for *ì-ḫe-nun-na,* see *TH,* p. 90.

16. The reason for the transliteration of the name of this goddess as *Nin-mú* rather than *Nin-sar* is stated in note 47 of *SS* I; the evidence, however, is not conclusive and it may turn out than *nin-sar* is the correct reading.

17. The rendering "came out" is based on the assumption that the verb is *mi-ni-ib-è* (the *-è* is not quite certain).

18. The rendering "out of the marshland reaches out" for *ambar-ra im-da-lá-e-dè* is based on Durand's collation of a corresponding line in the De Genouillac fragment that reads: ^{d}*en-ki-ke$_4$ ambar-ta im-ta-gid-dè im-da-lá-e-dè* for it seems reasonable to surmise that *im-ta-lá-e-dè* is parallel in meaning to *im-ta-gid-dè*—"extends himself," "stretches himself," etc. Admittedly, however, it is not clear just what the author had in mind by depicting Enki as "reaching out from the marshland."

19. The rendering "on dry land" is based on the corrected reading of the second complex of the line as *pár-rim$_4$-ma.* See Claus Wilke, *Das Lugalbandaepos* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1969), pp. 202ff.

20. The rendering "voluptuous woman" for *munus-NI-DIM$_4$* is a reasonable surmise on the assumption that *NI-DIM$_4$* has a meaning parallel to *sag$_5$.* Note especially that according to Louvre fragment *TRS* 62, the deity to whom Ninkurra gives birth is not Uttu but Ninimma (formerly read Ninsig); for details, see note 55 of *SS* I. As a result of Durand's collation of *TRS* 62, a number of corrected readings are now possible, thus: the first half of line 2 can now be read as *lú-tur-NI-DIM$_4$-e;* the second half of this line is still fragmentary, but assuming that the first sign *ŠI* is to be read *ši* and not *igi,* it might be restored as *ši-im-ma-an-tu-ud,* "gave birth to"; the first verbal form in line 4 can now be read as *im-ta-gid-dè* (see note 18, above); line 10 can now be read as *lugal-mu i-im-dirig ga-ri i-im-dirig ga-ri* (note therefore that the word for "wind" according to this text is *im,* not *tu$_{15}$*); in line 12 the second half reads *pár-rim$_4$-ma(!) ù-bí-gub;* in line 13, the second half reads *ur-ra-ná-a* (there is no *ÍB*-sign as assumed in *SS* 1, note 55); in line 15, the first complex is, as expected, ^{d}*en-ki-ke$_4$* (not ^{d}*en-ki-ra*).

21. "Make demands" for the compound verb *al—dé* (see *al—dug$_4$* and *al—di* in *CAD sub erēšu,* 4, 281–85) is a guess only.

22. The rendering "strikes" is based on Durand's collation of the verb, which reads *mu-un-sìg-ge. KAB,* to judge from the context, should refer to a part of the body; its usual meaning, "left," does not seem to fit here. The statement in the note 62 of *SS* I—"for *KAB*

as part of the body see *CT* 15, pl. 14, line 15"—is incorrect; in that line it certainly means "left"—i.e., "left eye," for the preceding line begins with *i-bí-zi-da,* "right eye." "Claps (her) hands for *šu—sìg*" is a reasonable guess based on the context.

23. The rendering "strokes" is based on Durand's collation of the verb, which reads *mu-un-tag-tag-*[*ge*]*;* the rendering "massages" for *šu mu-un-tag-tag-ge* is preferable to "touches" (so my earlier translations).

24. The translation of this crucial line is based primarily on Durand's collation, which reads: ^{d}*uttu-munus-šag$_5$-ga á-ḫaš-mu im-me á-bar-mu á-šà-ba-mu im-me* and assumes that *á-ḫáš* and *á-bar,* like *á-šà-ba,* are genitive complexes. It should be noted, however, that Uttu's exclaiming *á-bar-mu* and *á-šá-mu* is reminiscent to some extent of Ereškigal's exclaiming *a-šà-mu* and a *a-bar-mu* in "Inanna's Descent" (see especially lines 236 and 238 of the myth on p. 303 of *PAPS* 124). If it could be assumed that the *á* of our text is a variant writing of *a,* the rendering of the line would read: "Uttu, the fair lady, says 'Oh, my loins,' says 'Oh, my outside! Oh, my inside,'" which would indicate that Enki's semen had made Uttu ill in some way. In any case, although the translation and implications of this line are uncertain, it is reasonable to assume that Uttu's outcry led to Ninḫursag's wiping off(?) of the semen from Uttu's loins, as depicted in lines following.

25. "Wiped off" is no more than a guess; the verb may perhaps be restored to read *ba-an-t*[*ag-tag-ge*].

26. For the healing plant *amḫaru,* see *CAD sub amḫara,* I/2, 45–46.

27. The rendering "I have not (yet) decreed" is based on the assumption that the verb reads *li-bí-in-tar,* although the traces do not favor reading *-in-tar.*

28. The relevant line (225) reads: "In my city I will plant *giš-gan* for you, verily your name will be uttered (there). Margaret Whitney Green (in "Eridu," a valuable comprehensive contribution), suggests, pp. 186–92, that *giš-gan* is the *kiškanû* tree.

29. The relevant passage is fragmentary and it is not clear how the fox succeeded in bringing Ninḫursag back to the gods.

30. The relevant lines are fragmentary and the reasons for Ninḫursag's change of heart cannot be surmised at present.

31. So according to the literal meaning of the line.

32. For the translation and interpretation of these two passages, (see the commentary to lines 250ff. in *SS* I, and the introduction to *UET* VI, part 1, no. 1.

Chapter 2

1. A sketch of the contents of the myth based on two tablets, one in the University Museum and the other in the Louvre, appeared in my *Sumerian Mythology,* pp. 68–72. In 1969 Carlos Benito published his dissertation in the Oriental Department of the University of Pennsylvania. It included a valuable edition of the composition (pp. 20–76) based on four additional tablets and fragments, three of which were bilinguals. The translation and interpretation of the myth here presented are based primarily on Benito's edition, but in a number of instances differ significantly from those of Benito. The reasons for these differences will be indicated in the notes.

2. Thorkild Jacobsen was the first to propose the meaning of "a very old man" for *umul,* suggesting that the complex written u_4*-mu-UL* should be rendered by "my date is remote" (*Before Philosophy* [Baltimore: Penguin, 1949], p. 177). In 1976 Anne D. Kilmer argued that, on the contrary, *umul* is a "new-born baby" rather than "a very old man," and that u_4*-mu-UL* should be rendered by "my day [of death] is far [off]," in "Speculations on Umul, The First Baby," *Kramer Anniversary Volume,* ed. Barry L. Eichler (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976), pp. 265–71. However, neither of these renderings of u_4-

mu-UL is of much help in clarifying the denouement of the myth, which seems to concern the destruction of Ninḫursag's city and temple while Enki stood by without coming to her aid. Note, too, that u_4-*mu-UL* may be read u_4-*mu-du*$_7$, which might perhaps be rendered "the storm attacked" or "my storm the attacker," a phrase depicting a creature that brings about destruction or is its consequence. But this rendering, too, hardly explains the numerous ambiguities and obscurities of relevant passages, and for the present it seems wiser to retain the reading *umul* and leave it untranslated.

3. The rendering of the second half of the line is based on the fairly reasonable conjecture that the two verbal forms in this line and the next are to be restored to read approximately *ba-an-da-bad-du-a-ba* and *ba-an-da-sur-ra-a-ba* (see, e.g., note 37 on p. 113 of *Sumerian Mythology*).

4. The ellipsis stands for two illegible signs.

5. Note the meaning "enjoined" for the verb *kešd*—i.e., the gods were forced to procure their bread or starve; the ellipsis takes the place of three illegible or untelligible signs.

6. The rendering "the great gods" in this line (and in lines 12, 17, and 48 of the myth as numbered in Benito's edition) for *dingir-šár-šár,* which ordinarily would be rendered by "all the gods," is a bit troublesome, but as Benito points out, seems reasonable because of its juxtaposition to *dingir-tur-tur.*

7. The reading and rendering of the first half of the line are not quite certain; *ḫarali* is an obscure word of uncertain meaning.

8. The ke_4 of ^{d}*en-ki-ke*$_4$ seems unjustified for the verb is transitive.

9. The second sign in this line is *AMBAR* (not *KU*); see, e.g., line 73 of *SS* I.

10. The sign following *ki-ná* is probably *-ni* (not *-bi*).

11. The rendering of this line disregards the first sign, which is illegible, as well as the nuance of *-an-ši* in the two verbal forms.

12. The rendering of this line is based on a reasonably assured restoration of the line that reads [*ù-ku-zu* (or perhaps *ù-ku-ku-zu*)*nu-um*]*-zi-zi;* see line 14 of the myth.

13. The restoration of the sign following *šu-dím-dím-ma* is *MU* (not *ZU*); the gods are the handiwork of Nammu, not Enki; the ellipsis at the end of the line takes the place of a word that probably denotes a part of the body, the beating of which is reasonable to assume is an expression connoting despair.

14. "Perceptively" attempts to render *i-bí-ma-al-la-zu-ta.*

15. "Servants" for the hapax legomenon *kin-sì* is a reasonable surmise; so, too, is "substitute."

16. The *-ke*$_4$ of ^{d}*en-ki-ke*$_4$ seems unjustified; the verb is intransitive; see note 8, above.

17. The rendering "a fattened holy kid" assumes that the fourth sign is to be read gur_4 (*kabru,* not *nigin*) and that it modifies the preceding *maš-kù;* the ellipsis at the end of the line stands for an action on the part of Enki that is difficult to surmise—the relevant Sumerian is illegible in part.

18. Note that *geštug* and *gizzal* mean literally "wisdom" and "understanding." "He who counsels the inquiring one" renders *èn-tar-kúš-ù* (the reading *kúš-ù* is reasonably certain; see the photograph of the tablet in *Sumerian Mythology,* opposite p. 70); the crucial *sigensigdu,* known only from this myth, is obscure.

19. If the rendering of this line is correct, the subject element should have followed *mud-me-dím* rather than ^{d}*en-ki;* the verbal form might have been expected to end in *-ri-ga* rather than *-ri-ge.*

20. If correctly translated, this line would imply that although the man, whose name his mother had "fixed," was not yet actually fashioned, Enki could reassure her that he already exists and that the corvée has already been enjoined upon him. For *mu-gar-ra,* said in connection with one's coming into human existence, see line 3 of the passage cited in *SM,* p. 13. The last complex reading *kèš-da-àm*[?] is not to be rendered as an imperative, for it

was not Nammu who enjoined the corvée upon the person, but Ninmaḫ (see line 47 of the myth).

21. Concerning the deities mentioned in this line and the one preceding, note the following: Ninimma (formerly Ninsig) is the goddess born of Enki and Ninkurra according to the Louvre version of "Enki and Ninḫursag" (see note 20 in chapter 2, above). Šuzianna is the *dam-bàn-da* of Enlil whose temple is glorified in no. 6 of the hymns published in *TH.* Little is known of Ninmada and Ninbara. Ninmug is the goddess of metal work, according to lines 405–10 of "Enki and the World Order." Nothing is known about Musargaba (the reading of the name is uncertain) and Ningunna. Note, too, that the name Ninbara seems to be repeated on the tablet and Benito may be quite justified in assuming that the repetition is due to a scribal error, but it is not impossible that something is involved in this seeming repetition, of which we have no knowledge at present.

22. "Looked with favor" attempts to render *mi-ni-in-lá* on the assumption that *lá* = *kullumu* (see *CAD sub kullumu,* 8, 519–25); "their . . . work" assumes a reading *kin-lugud-lugud-da-*[*bi*] for the second complex in the line, but the meaning of the repeated *lugud* is difficult to surmise (perhaps it has a meaning such as "intricate").

23. The word division of the second half of the line is probably *šubun-na àm-ma-ni-in-gar.*

24. The translation and interpretation of this crucial line involving the *sigensigdu* are quite uncertain; they differ considerably from those of Benito, especially in treating Enki as the subject of *i-im-kŭ-e;* note, too, the following: the *gú* of the initial complex *gú-sig*$_7$*-en-sig*$_7$*-du*$_{10}$*-nun-ne-ke*$_4$ (*-nun-ne-ke*$_4$ is presumably for *nun-e-ne-ke*$_4$) may have a meaning other than "leader." In the connected literary texts as distinct from the lexical texts, *gú* as far as I know is not used as the word for "leader." *Nam-tar* may not refer to the demon Namtar (it is difficult to see why Namtar should be the leader of the *sigensigdu*). *Gi-sag,* literally perhaps "first reeds," may, as Benito points out, have several meanings. Kilmer, pp. 265–70, suggests a reading of *si*$_{12}$*-en-si*$_{12}$*-ra*$_2$, which she equates with Akkadian *šas-suru,* "mother-wombs" (or personified "mother matrices") who play a similar role in the Akkadian *Atra-ḫasīs.*

25. The *-e* following *an* is grammatically unjustified.

26. Note that in this line (as well as in line 17 of the myth) *dingir-šár-šár-ra-ke*$_4$*-e-ne* is a gentive complex difficult to justify, if the rendering "all the great gods" is correct (see note 6, above).

27. This line seems to contain a relative sentence of adjectival character that should logically precede the "who can equal your deeds" of the preceding line. Note, however, that the rendering of the line—the copy badly needs collation—is difficult; preceding "of all the lands" one might expect the Sumerian equivalent of a word such as "provider," but to judge from the present copy of the line this does not seem possible.

28. The transliteration of the Sumerian counterpart of "be it good" (*šag*$_5$*-ga*) is accidentally omitted in the Benito edition of the myth.

29. "I will counter" renders the Sumerian *ga-àm-ši-íb-lá;* Enki claims that he can counterbalance and thus neutralize anything Ninmaḫ makes, be it good or bad.

30. For the rendering "reaching" for *sá-sá-dè,* see *CAD sub kašādu,* 8, 271–84; "rigid" for *šú-šú* is a surmise only.

31. Presumably a man whose hands were so deformed that he could not reach and take things, would be ideal for a post in the king's treasury, for example.

32. "A man who could see though blind" probably describes the blind minstrel, no doubt a well-known figure in Sumerian society, who though unable to respond to outer light, was thought to be endowed with an inner light; "blind" is a reasonable surmise for *giš-nu*$_{11}$*-gi*$_4$*-gi*$_4$ (literally perhaps "who turns back the light").

33. "Musicians" assumes that the first sign in the line is to be restored as *NAR* (not *EN*).

34. The ellipsis stands for the obscure *gìr-a-mi,* which probably describes a deformity of the feet.

35. The meaning of this line, which must have depicted Enki's finding some useful post for this deformed individual, is not clear; the ellipsis stands for several broken signs that are difficult to restore. Note, too, that it is probably for the lines concerned with the man whose feet are paralyzed that text C (*CT* 42, no. 28) has a variant involving Ninmaḫ's fashioning of a fool *(lú-lil),* whom Enki appoints to be a servant of the king—presumably a court jester. (Benito assumes that the "fool" passage is a variant of the passage involving the fashioning of the man with the crippled hands; see note 59 in his edition of the myth).

36. The ellipsis stands for the second half of the line, which is unintelligible.

37. Note that the renderings "him," "her," and "his" throughout the passage concerned with Ninmaḫ's creation of the human misfits (lines 58 to 78 of the myth) should actually be "its," for judging by the complex *nam-bi* in lines 61, 64, and 74 (see also *su-bi* and *su-ba* in lines 71, 75, and 76), the poet treats the clay beings fashioned by Ninmaḫ as inanimate even though he describes them as *lú,* "man," and *munus,* "woman"; "its" however makes awkward reading in the English translation, and was modified accordingly to "him," "his," and "her."

38. The translation of and interpretation of this line and the preceding (lines 77–78 in the Benito edition) are quite uncertain; a literal translation of the two lines reads: "Of him whom Enlil had called by name over the great earth, to stand before the king, he (Enki) decreed as his fate," but note the following: Enlil being the subject of a transitive verb, the first complex should read ^{d}*en-líl-le.* "Over the great earth," attempts to render the rather strange-looking complex *ki-gal-la-e* (none of the four signs is quite clear on the tablet and the reading may therefore turn out to be erroneous). The variant in C has an inexplicable ^{d}*?-e* for the ^{d}*en-líl-ki-gal-la-e.*

39. The rendering of the line is quite doubtful; it assumes the following: ^{d}*en-ki-ke*$_4$ of text A is preferable to ^{d}*nin-maḫ-e* of text C; the rendering "threw the brazier to the ground" is reasonably assured, but this seemingly violent act on the part of Enki is difficult to explain and motivate in the context (note that no brazier had been mentioned earlier as an implement used in the human creating process). "Acted most deceitfully" is a reasonable rendering of *lul-aš lul mu-un-gar* (so C; the variant in A that reads *lul-aš i-ni-gi* might be expected to have a similar meaning).

40. "[Now] pray that I will make [some] for you" renders the preferable variant in C for the first two complexes of the line that reads: *mà-e ga-na-ga-mu-ra-ab-dím.*

41. The rendering of this line is quite uncertain and its meaning is altogether obscure; perhaps it depicts Enki's fashioning of the prototype of a baby; the ellipsis stands for three unintelligible and partly illegible signs.

42. "Give birth" is for the Sumerian *ù-tu,* which, however, in this case might perhaps be better rendered as "conceive."

43. The ellipsis stands for three broken signs whose restoration is difficult to surmise.

44. "Brought forth" renders the variant [*ba-ra*]-*an-è* in C; the ellipsis stands for quite a number of illegible and unintelligible signs.

45. Between this line and the line following (lines 87–88 in the Benito edition), C has a poorly preserved line, not noted among the variants. It begins with ^{d}*nin-*[*maḫ*] and ends with *si-ig.*

46. The ellipsis stands for a sign resembling *ESÍR.*

47. "It could not walk[?] to the field," a statement that seems to be rather anticlimactic when describing the moribund *umul,* attempts to render *a-gàr nu-DU* (note that there is no *-šè* following *a-gàr*).

48. The ellipsis stands for virtually the entire line 98 of the myth; its reading and rendering are altogether uncertain.

49. The restoration of this line is reasonably assured from the context.

50. This line presents two grammatical difficulties that make its rendering uncertain: (1) because *tuš,* "to dwell," is an intransitive verb, "you did not dwell" would be expected to read in Sumerian *nu-mu-tuš-en,* not *nu-mu-e-tuš;* (2) there is no locative suffix following *an* and *ki* (note that the verb is written *nu-mu-e-KU,* which can of course be read *nu-mu-e-díb* and rendered "you did not seize," a translation that would eliminate both grammatical difficulties, but is hardly possible in the context). The rendering "you did not come forth" assumes that the verb is not *nu-è-en* (as in text A) but *nu-è* (as in text C).

51. In this line note that the text has the expected form *nu-tuš-en* for "you did not dwell," but still omits the expected locative postposition after *ki;* "the house built for me" renders the complex *é-mu-dù-a* as if it read *é-dù-a-mà.*

52. In this line note that the text has the expected form *nu-ti-en* (not *nu-e-ti*) for "you did not live," but still omits the expected locative postposition after *ki.* "You betray me" for *ní-mu lul ba-si-ge-en* is a surmise only. "In the city built for me," renders the complex *uru-mu-dù-a* as if it read *uru-dù-a-mà.*

53. In this line (line 126 of the myth), the sign following *uru-mu* is *gil* (not *i-ḫi*); the city to which she refers is no doubt Keš; for a comprehensive overview of the history of Keš and its temple, see Gene Gragg in *TH,* pp. 157–64; for a remarkable composition revolving about Keš noted in this overview, see Kramer, "Keš and its Fate" in the *Gratz College Anniversary Volume* pp. 167–73.

54. This line seems to imply that Nippur had a hand in the destruction of Keš, but to date there is no textual evidence to corroborate this.

55. "I have not freed" is a reasonable surmise for *šu la-ba-ra-è,* literally, "I have not brought out the hand." Note, however, that it is a compound verb, *šu—è* which is equated with the Akkadian *karābu* "to pay homage"; see my comment on line 19 of BM 98396, a Ninḫursag *iršemma* edited by Kramer for the Orlinsky Festschrift.

56. "Creature" is a conjectured rendering for *?-tu-díb-ba,* but note that the traces of the questioned sign do not favor *Ù*—that is, it is not *ù-tu-díb-ba.*

57. The ellipsis at the beginning of the lines probably takes the place of the name of a deity, perhaps ^{d}*i-šum,* though it seems hardly likely that the god Išum, the Sumerian Hendursagga, would have to approve the handiwork of such great gods as Ninmaḫ and Enki.

58. The reading and rendering of the first half of the line are quite uncertain; "its mouth" assumes that Sumerian reads *ka-bi* (not dug$_4$-*ga*).

59. The *enkum* and *ninkum* are mentioned repeatedly in connection with Enki, but their nature and function are unknown; see Gertrud Farber-Flügge, *Der Mythos "Inanna und Enki",* pp. 11–12.

60. The restoration of this line is a reasonable surmise in the context.

61. All the signs following *šìr* are broken away wholling or in part; the restoration "do you utter" is a reasonable surmise.

62. The initial complex of this line (lines 139 of the myth) reads *dingir-giš* (not *é-tuku-a-bi*), which may of course be rendered by "the god" (not "gods") who hears them," in which case the "he" of "may he build my house" may refer to this god, rather than to the *umul;* note that the verb reads *ḫé-ak*-[*e*] (not *ḫé-ak*).

Chapter 3

1. Kramer first sketched the contents of this myth *Sumerian Mythology,* pages 59–62; that sketch was based on eight tablets and fragments then identified as belonging to the composition. In 1959 Inez Bernhardt and he published an edition of the myth made possible by the identification of several additional pieces and especially by a large fragment of a six-

column tablet in the Friedrich-Schiller University, Jena, that actually joined a similar large fragment in the University Museum—the tablet formed by joining these two pieces contained almost the entire composition, and made possible the correct placing of all other fragments then known as belonging to it. Since then fourteen additional pieces have been identified by Falkenstein, Sjöberg, and Civil, and a new and much more complete edition was prepared in 1969 by Carlos Benito as a dissertation in the Oriental Department of the University of Pennsylvania. The present translation and interpretation of the myth is based on the Benito edition of the reconstructed text.

2. Unfortunately the text inscribed with these blessings is almost entirely destroyed.

3. "Bull" and "wild bull" are epithets of An.

4. For the *mes* tree, see *CAD sub mēsu,* 10/2, 33–34, but note that the statement "it has no fruit" is unjustified. See also Sol Cohen, "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta," dissertation, Oriental Department of the University of Pennsylvania, 1973, pp. 109–10.

5. *ušumgal,* "dragon," is a well-known epithet of Enki and other gods.

6. This line and the one preceding refer to the *mes*-tree, not to Eridu.

7. *Ḫegal* is a unique Sumerian concept that will be left untranslated; it includes such ideas as abundance, prosperity, plenitude, cornucopia, etc. Uraš, sometimes rendered "earth," is the name of An's wife.

8. "Mat" is a frequently used epithet for a temple; see *TH,* p. 63.

9. *Kur,* a word that may mean "mountain," "land," "nether world," or may refer to the cosmic entity below the earth, will be left untranslated.

10. The rendering of this line is quite uncertain. *Ḫursag,* left untranslated, may mean "mountain" (and is thus a synonym for *kur*), "mountain range," etc.; it often refers to the mountains just east of Sumer.

11. The meaning of *gi-ḫal-ḫal-la* is unknown, and the implications of this line, which seems to say that Enki examined closely all the places mentioned in the preceding lines, is obscure.

12. The relevant passage has been carefully collated by Claus Wilcke in *Abhandlungen der Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften,* Band 65, Heft 4, pp. 9–10, but the meaning of much of it still remains rather uncertain.

13. The restorations in this line and the lines following are reasonably assured.

14. The *ilulamma* is an onomatopoetic word designating a type of song, including that chanted by a shepherd as he rocks the churn.

15. The month "entering its house" is a metaphorical expression for the month's beginning at its proper time; see Gudea Cylinder B, iii, 5–7: "The year has gone, the months have come to an end, a new year has come, the [new] month has entered its house."

16. The corresponding Sumerian restoration is *mul.*

17. This ellipsis represents the omission of two lines.

18. That is, returned them to their sheaths, scabbards, or wherever weapons are kept when not in use.

19. The rendering of this passage follows that of Falkenstein in *ZA* 56, p. 56, but the rendering "pregnant" for *zi-mà* is a surmise on our part, based on the context.

20. Note the rendering "germinating" in this line instead of "pregnant," for *zi-mà.*

21. This ellipsis represents three missing lines, the first of which, to judge from the context, may have read something like, "They are turned into verdant pastures."

22. It is the boastful self-praise on the part of Enki in this passage and the one following that led me to conclude that Enki, or rather the priests and poets of Eridu, felt a compelling need to jusitfy and validate Enki's power and authority; see Kramer, "Enki and His Inferiority Complex," *Or. 39: 103–10.*

23. In this passage, the rendering "great brother" is for the Sumerian pa_4; the

rendering "leading son," below, line 80, is for the Sumerian *dumu-sag* (usually rendered "firstborn son") for it is presumably Enlil who was An's firstborn son. Admittedly, however, there is considerable uncertainty about the genealogical relationship of these three deities; see Åke Sjöberg's discussion in *Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient,* pp. 212–18; see also chapter 4 of "Eridu" (and see note 28 of chapter 1, above).

24. "Arts and crafts" renders *nam-galam.*

25. The Sumerian might also be rendered "I am the great day that comes forth over the great earth."

26. "The place where the sun rises" is the Sumerian Olympus, somewhere to the east.

27. Nintu and Ninḫursag are two names of the mother-goddess; note that Enki's boast that he was cherished by her and that his name was pronounced by her, indicate that he felt himself inferior to her.

28. For the rendering "eternal" for *sag-bi-šè-è-a,* see *PAPS,* vol. 124, p. 309.

29. For "carp-flood," see A. J. Ferrara in *Studia Pohl, Series Major* 2, p. 151. The fish mentioned in lines 97–98 are both species of carp.

30. "At my word" seems redundant.

31. The ellipsis stands for the obscure *sag* of *sag-a.*

32. The rendering of *sug-mus* is uncertain. See *TH,* p. 76.

33. For the *suḫur-maš,* "goat-fish," see Armas Salonen, *Die Fischerei im Alten Mesopotamian,* p. 225, but note that to judge from our text, it is a real fish, a species of carp, and not necessarily a mythological one. For the "honey-plant," see A. A. Al-Fouadi, "Enki's Journey to Nippur," dissertation, Department of Oriental Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1966, p. 141.

34. For this line, see line 79 of "Enki's Journey to Eridu," where the rendering "adorned herself to him" is to be corrected accordingly. The *gud*-fish is also a species of carp.

35. This ellipsis stands for six fragmentary lines that probably depict various solemn cult procedures of the personnel of Enki's temple such as the *abgal* (see *CAD sub apkallu,* I/2, 171–73) and the *enkum.*

36. For the *magur*-boat, see *CAD sub makurru,* 10/1, 141–42.

37. "Crown" is difficult to relate to the line as a whole, but the Sumerian word is the well-known *men.*

38. This line seems to depict metaphorically the smooth sailing of Enki's boat over the marsh waters.

39. "Oarsmen" for the Sumerian *KA-ra-e-ne* is a surmise only.

40. Nothing is known about this deity.

41. "Steers" renders the Sumerian *á—ág,* "instruct," "commission," etc.

42. This ellipsis stands for six fragmentary lines that may depict Enki's determination to survey the various features of the Sumerian landscape.

43. The location of Dilmun, Magan, and Meluḫḫa has been frequently discussed by scholars; see *Rép. géogr.* I, pp. 113, 121, 157–58. On several occasions Kramer had identified Magan and Meluḫḫa with Egypt and Ethiopia, and Dilmun with the region of the "Indus Valley Civilization" (see, e.g. *Antiquity* 37, pp. 111–15). In recent years, however, there have come to light some epigraphic discoveries in the island of Falaika that seem to make his earlier identification of Dilmun untenable.

44. "Let . . . be loaded with wood" for *giš ḫé-en-dù* is no more than a surmise; the line is reminiscent to some extent of the oft repeated *kur-ta gú giš mu-gál* in the Ur-Nanše inscriptions (see *Rép. géogr.,* p. 158), which may perhaps be rendered "The ships of Dilmun loaded up with wood (for him) from (their) *kur"* (note, therefore, that the rendering in *The Sumerians,* p. 308 *sub* 6 should be modified accordingly); see also the statement, *ma-gan*^{ki} *me-luḫ-ḫa*^{ki}, *gu-bi*^{ki} *kur-dilmun*^{ki} *gú giš mu-na-gál-la-àm,* in Gudea Stat D, iv, 10.

45. For references to the *magilum*-boat as well as to the *magilum*-trophy, see Jerrold Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (Rome: Pontificial Institute, 1978), p. 148.

46. As this line and numerous other such lines in composition indicate, Enki clearly recognized his subordination to Enlil.

47. Note that instead of "I presented cattle as a gift," one might have expected "I will present cattle as a gift."

48. For the expression "riding the *me*" and "setting foot on the *me*," see Gertrud Farber-Flügge, *Studia Pohl 10,* pp. 144–45.

49. "Foremost" is a reasonable surmise for *sag-DU-a.*

50. Note that there is no disturbing *aš-me* in this line; the word division of the second half of the line is *ki-kal-kal-la-aš me-maḫ šu-ti-a* (not *ki-kal-kal-la aš-me-maḫ šu-ti-a*); see "Eridu," p. 176.

51. For "linen-wearers," a designation of certain priests and persons admitted to the sanctuary, see *CAD sub gadalallu,* 5, 8.

52. For "stations" (Sumerian *ki-gub*), see *CAD sub manzazu,* 10/1, 233–34.

53. "Moor" is a surmise for *im-mi-ib-dub-e-ne.*

54. The ellipsis stands for a fragmentary passage of lines 177–88 of the myth; for the translation of some of the better preserved lines in this passage, see the four notes following.

55. Note that line 159 of the myth is probably to be restored to read: ^{d}*en-ki-ke*$_4$ ^{giš}*má-gur*$_8$*-ra-na gìr nam-mi-in-gub,* "Enki set foot in his *magur*-boat."

56. The relevant passage (lines 166–70) reads:

The standard that reaches[?] out from the Abzu,
that has been made into a canopy,
whose shade stretches over the entire earth,
refreshing [its] people,
the *usag,* the mast planted in the snake-marsh[?],
rising over all the lands,
the lord, the great *ensi* of the Abzu
directs in the Ibex of the Abzu.

This passage seems to depict, in images that are not very clear, the magic powers of the standard and the mast of Enki's boat that were under the charge of the unnamed "great *ensi*" of the Abzu. Note that the rendering "reach out" for *si-ga* is a surmise, and the meansing of *usag* is altogether unknown.

57. The relevant passage (lines 171–74) reads:

The *mes*-tree, embellished at[?] the Abzu,
at Eridu, the holy place,
the most precious place,
where the noble *me* have been received,
the noble *nubanda* of the *kur,*
the son of Enlil,
held the holy punting pole in [his] hand.

Note that the translation assumes that the "punting pole" of the last line corresponds to the "*mes*-tree" of the first line (that is, it assumes that the punting pole was made of *mes*-wood);

note, too, that "at[?] the Abzu" attempts to render *abzu-ta,* and that the deity holding the punting pole is unnamed and at present unidentifiable.

58. The relevant lines 185–85 read: "Nimgirsig, the *ensi* of the *magur*-boat, held the holy scepter in [his] hand."

59. The depiction of Sumer as *kur-gal* (note that Enlil, too, is designated at times as *kur-gal*) is rather strange; for *mada,* "land," see *CAD sub mātu,* 10/1, 414–21, but note that the implication of the expression "the land of heaven and earth" is rather ambiguous.

60. "Life-giving" is a surmise for *zi(d),* an adjective of many nuances; "give birth" renders the active participle *ù-tu;* note that the full meaning and implication of this line are quite obscure.

61. The ellipsis stands for *DÙG-dug$_4$-ge,* a complex whose meaning is unknown.

62. For *giguna,* a sacred building erected on terraces and a poetic designation in Akkadian for the temple tower, see *CAD sub gigunû,* 5, 67–70. "Rare trees" is a surmise for *giš-aš-giš-aš.*

63. "Water-washed" renders *a-tu$_5$-tu$_5$,* literally perhaps "bathing in water."

64. The implication of the expression "knees wide open" *(dùg-bad-DU).* that is, "walking with long strides," in the context of the line as a whole, is not too clear; a different rendering of the first half of the line has been suggested by Sol Cohen (*Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta,* pp. 248–49), thus: "Dais of abundance straddling the mountain," but this hardly clarifies the meaning intended by the poet.

65. For *ḫašur*-grove, that is, a grove of cedars, see *CAD sub ḫašurru,* 6, 147.

66. The second half of the line that reads "May they be *mes*-groves of the *kur*" seems intended to accentuate the large size of the trees, though it is not clear just how it does so; note that mutatis mutandis, the same is true of several of the lines following.

67. "Their" refers to the "large trees" that furnished the wood for the thrones.

68. For the *dar*-bird, see *CAD sub ittidû,* 7, 304, and line 12 of the passage beginning "The city is holy" in chapter 1, above.

69. The *ḫaia*-bird is the peacock.

70. This line and the one following may perhaps mean to say that Meluḫḫa's silver should be as valuable as gold, and that its copper should be as valuable as the tin used to produce bronze.

71. The restorations at the end of these lines are reasonable surmises.

72. The rendering of this line is quite literal; its meaning is obscure.

73. It is difficult to make a reasonable conjecture about the content and contextual relationship of these two lines, the second of which may perhaps be rendered "He made . . . moan like a dove."

74. The restoration of "lagoons" (Sumerian *ambar* or *sug*) is a surmise only.

75. "From that spot" presumably refers to the region inhabited by the Martu.

76. For *gunu*-grain, see Armas Salonen, *Agricultura Mesopotamica,* pp. 213–15.

77. Note that this line and the lines that follow refer to Enbilulu, not to Enki, as assumed by previous translators, and this in spite of the fact that the description "him who had a scepter in his right hand" might superficially seem to be related in some way to Enki's treading the ground "on the right side."

78. The rendering assumes that the first half of the line is to be read *ka-giri$_x$-zal-ta.*

79. For the *suḫur-ḫi* and *suḫur*-fish, see Armas Salonen, *Die Fischerei,* pp. 197 and 216–21.

80. This ellipsis stands for two missing lines and one fragmentary line.

81. The ellipsis stands for the name of some creature, presumably neither bird nor fish, that cannot escape this deity's trap.

82. The ellipsis at the beginning of the line stands for several broken signs; the ellipsis at the end stands for an inexplicable *EZEN^{ki}-a.*

83. The ellipsis stands for the illegible name of a deity.

84. Actually there is no "in" (the Sumerian reads *a-ab-ba,* not *a-ab-ba-ka*); perhaps therefore it is the sea itself that is the shrine intended in this and the following lines.

85. The meaning of this and the next line is quite obscure.

86. For the difficult concept *melam,* see *CAD sub melammu,* 10/2, 9–12. The word has a range of meanings from "radiance" and "supernatural, awe-inspiring sheen" (attached to divinities and kings), to the "glow of good health." *innin* is an epithet with the probable meaning of something like "mistress." See *TH,* pp. 94–95.

87. For the u_5-bird, see Armas Salonen, *Vögel und Vögelfang,* pp. 277–78. For its connection with the goddess Nanše, see line 20 of "Nanše and the Birds" (Miguel Civil manuscript) that depicts the u_5-bird as standing at Nanše's feet; see also note 123, below.

88. "Sets sail" translates u_5-*a,* which might also be rendered "rides" in a sexual sense (see *AHw sub rakābu*); note, too, that in the line following she is described as a goddess "who brings about copulation."

89. "Sea-foam" is no more than a surmise for *zi-pa-ág;* note that there are similarities between the portrayal of Nanše in this passage and that found in the hymn to her Sirara temple (see *TH,* p. 33).

90. "Breath of life" assumes that the break following *zi* is to be restored as *nam-ti-la.*

91. "Into fields where emmer grows" assumes that the second complex is to be restored to read *gán-zì-mú-a-šè.*

92. "Abundance" renders the Sumerian *ḫi/ḫe* on the assumption that it corresponds to the *ḫi/ḫe* of *ḫi/ḫe-nun* and to *ḫé* of *ḫé-gál.*

93. The ellipsis stands for the unintelligible complex following gu_4 and preceding *ba-an-sum.*

94. "Tool expert" renders *á-šu-du*$_7$, perhaps literally "the arm that works to perfection;" note however the variant *á-šu-du*$_7$ for *ašte* in line 93 of "The Curse of Agade" (see *ZA* 83, p. 55) where this rendering does not seem to fit. The "tool-expert" seems to refer to Enkimdu, the "farmer of Enlil," mentioned in the next line.

95. The ellipsis stands for the unintelligible *sa-zì.*

96. Little is known about the barley grains *še-eštub* and *še-innuḫa;* see *CAD sub arsuppu,* I/2, 307–8.

97. *Innin* is an epithet with the probable meaning of something like "mistress"; see *TH,* pp. 94–95.

98. To judge from this description, the house may have been intended to be some official building; admittedly, however, the expression "erected a house at the side of the assembly" seems rather strange and enigmatic.

99. "Holy crown," "lapis lazuli crown," and "lapis lazuli diadem" are poetic images for the verdant vegetation of the steppe.

100. "Provided . . . lavishly" renders *šu-gal—du*$_7$-*du*$_7$.

101. This line and the next refer to Inanna, not to Dumuzi.

102. *ušum-gal-an-na* (also *ama-ušum-gal-an-na*) is a well-known epithet of Dumuzi, literally the "great dragon of heaven."

103. For *ki-ùr-ra,* see *CAD sub duruššu,* 3, 198–99. The word refers to a base or foundation. See *TH,* p. 54, and the Nippur map in Kramer's *History Begins at Sumer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Publishing, 1981), p. 378.

104. Note that the *kur-erin* and *kur-ḫašur* are said to belong to Utu in line 95 of the Utu incantation published by G. Castellino in *Oriens Antiquus* 8, pp. 1–57; see also the obscure depiction of Utu (cited by Claus Wilcke on p. 82 of *Das Lugalbandaepos*) that reads gu_4 *ḫa-šu-úr-ra nam-e-a-ak-e.* Note, too, that Utu is in charge of the *kur*^{giš}-*erin-kud* (identical with the *kur-lú-ti-la*) in "Gilgameš and the Land of the Living" (see *JCS* 1, 1–46).

105. For "the place where the sun rises," see note 26 above; it may probably be

identified with the *kur-erin* and *kur-ḫašur,* which may in turn be the *kur-lú-ti-la* (see the preceding note).

106. For the *mug*-cloth, see *CAD sub mukku,* 10/2, 187–88, a poor quality of wool.

107. The meaning of *te,* a word related in some way to the weaving process, is unknown.

108. "Dignity" renders *téš;* see *CAD sub baštu,* 2, 142–44.

109. "Decorum" renders *me-te,* "that which is proper or fitting."

110. "Complaint" for *DI-ga* is a surmise only.

111. "Function" renders *marza.*

112. The sign for sig_4 "brick" is broken in part.

113. For the *imman*-stone, see *CAD sub immanakku,* 7, 127–28; this stone as well as leeks must have been utilized in some way by the midwife during childbirth.

114. For the *silagarra,* a vessel in which the place the afterbirth, see Jacobsen, *Or.* 42, 290–91.

115. For "consecrated" as the rendering of *na-ri-ga*—literally, "that which has been instructed"—see Jacobsen's comment in the pages cites in the preceding note; virtually nothing is known about the *ala*-vessel.

116. For the *šuba*-jewel worn by Ninisinna, see *TH,* no. 28, and Sjöberg's comment on p. 112. The *šuba* is connected with Inanna and Dumuzi. Ninisinna had a significant role in the Dumuzi cult during the Isin period.

117. "Near" is uncertain; the suffix it renders is *-e.*

118. "Heart's desires" renders *gù-an-né-si-a;* see *TH,* pp. 92–93.

119. For Ninmug, a goddess sometimes mentioned alongside Ninḫursag, see note 12 of Kramer's "Lisin, The Weeping Goddess," in *Zikir Šumim: Assyriological Studies Presented to F. R. Kraus* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), pp. 133–44.

120. The meaning of *an-ta-sur-ra* is uncertain; see *CAD sub antasurrû,* I/2, 146.

121. For the goddess Nidaba, see the hymn to the goddess edited by D. D. Reisman in his dissertation in the Oriental Department of the University of Pennsylvania (1969), pp. 103–46.

122. The implications of this passage and its relationship to the lines preceding and following are not clear.

123. For this complex that seems to be composed of *nin,* "queen," and *en,* "lord," see *TH,* pp. 108–8. *Nin-uru*$_{16}$ (EN)*-na* is a standard epithet of Nanše.

124. For the u_5-bird and its connection with Nanše, see noted 87, above.

125. This reading follows that of Wilcke on p. 10, *sub* Z. 418, of his *Kollationen,* but assumes that there is nothing missing between the complex for "good fish" and that for "tasty birds."

126. Note that Nanše is the only one of the five goddesses to whom Enki had allotted functions. None of the other four had received their powers from Enki, and it seems rather unreasonable that Inanna should complain to Enki as if he alone were to blame (see the following note).

127. It is not clear to whom the "we" of this line and the next refers; perhaps Enki includes here the powers and functions given to Inanna by An and Enlil (see the late bilingual edited by B. Hruška in *Archiv Orientální* 37, 473–521.

128. This line and the next probably refer to the Sumerian king, but their real meaning and implication are obscure.

129. "Oracular omens" attempts to render the Sumerian *i(nim)-gar-ra;* see *CAD sub igirrû,* 7, 41.

130. The rendering "raven" for *arâ-bu* assumes that it is a Sumerian loan word from the Akkadian *arabû* (usually rendered "waterfowl"), and that this *arabu* was confused at times with *arebu* (often equated with Sumerian *uga*), "raven." This very tentative

assumption is based on the fact that it is probably the raven (not some waterfowl) that is the bearer of unlucky portents; for a detailed treatment of *arabû* and *arebu,* (see Salonen, *Vögel und Vögelfang,* pp. 123–30; *TH,* p. 144; and *CAD sub arabû,* I/2, 209, and *āribu,* I/2, 265–67. Note, too, that Enlil changes himself into a raven *(uga)* in the Enlil-Namzitarra tale edited by Civil in *AfO* 25, 65–71, and that he is designated as an *arâ-bu* in the hymnal prayer for the restoration of Nippur, edited by Stephen Langdon in *PBS* X 4, no. 5.

131. The "there" in this line and the next refers to the "midst of battle and combats"; the acts depicted in these lines are contextually enigmatic: they seem to have no connection with battles and combats, at least not on the surface.

132. The rendering of this line is based on Wilcke's collation (*Kollationen,* p. 10, *sub* Z. 439); see also line 189 of "The Curse of Agade," that reads *sag*[*!?*] *ba-dub sag numun-e-eš ba-ab-gar;* see Jerrold S. Cooper's *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983), p. 179, for a somewhat variant reading.

133. "You have conceived the inconceivable" for *níg-nu-sì-ki ḫé-mu-e-sì* is a surmise only.

134. The removing of the cloth from the *šem,* a drum, of lamentation presumably readied it for the *iršemma* laments chanted by the *gala* (see Mark Cohen, *Sumerian Laments: The iršemma* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Annual Supplements no. 2, 1981) and Kramer's "BM 29616: The Fashioning of the *gala,*" *Acta Sumerologica* 3 (1981) 1–11.

135. "Turning back the *tigi* and the *adab* into their houses" is an indirect way of saying that these joyous hymnal compositions would no longer be chanted, as a result of Inanna's destructive deeds.

136. For a much longer list of Inanna's powers and deeds, mostly of a rather cruel, baneful, calamitous nature, see especially the hymn *in-nin-šà-gur-ra* edited by Sjöberg in *ZA* 65, 161–253, and the late bilingual cited in note 127, according to which An, Enlil, and Enki each bestowed their special blessings on Inanna; unfortunately the tablet inscribed with Enki's blessings, which might have helped to restore some of the broken text in our myth, has not been recovered.

137. For "fastening of ropes" in connection with wells, see lines 5–7 and 21–23 of "Gilgameš and Agga," edited in *AJA* 53, 1–18, where the expression seems to imply submission to an enemy.

138. For this line and the next, see spaces 5–6 of Gudea Cylinder A, where Enlil's compassionate act refers to the bringing of the waters of the Tigris to Lagaš (see Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969], p. 26 and note 8).

139. The Sumerian, according to Wilcke's collation (*Kollationen sub* Z. 447) reads *šà-gú-bi-gi$_4$-a nam-lú-lu$_6$-ke$_4$,* but the rendering of this line and the fragmentary line following is rather uncertain. Enki seems to ask Inanna to refrain from doing something that might interfere with Enlil's favorable action.

140. That, *ḫé/ḫu/ḫa,* followed by the infix *-ra-.*

141. That is, [*a-a-^{d}en-ki zà*]*-mí.*

Chapter 4

1. The contents of this myth were first sketched by Kramer in 1944 in *Sumerian Mythology,* pp. 64–68. Since then several new fragments have been published and identified, and in 1973 Gertrud Farber-Flügge published a valuable edition of the myth entitled *Der Mythos "Inanna und Enki" unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Liste der ME* (*Studia Pohl* 10). Our translation is based on her study, but differs in a number of places for reasons that will be apparent to the experienced cuneiformist. Because of the numerous breaks, Farber-Flügge has not numbered the lines of the myth consecutively; the references are to the pages of her edition that will help the reader find the passages referred to.

2. For a detailed study of this complex, elusive concept, see the study cited in the preceding note.

3. See especially the last three lines of the myth, which we have interpreted quite diferently from Dr. Farber-Flügge.

4. Note that Abzu and Eridu are juxtaposed in this and the following lines.

5. The "them" of this line probably refers to the attendants in the Abzu, though they are not explicitly mentioned in the text.

6. Probably this refers to the lion excavated in Eridu and now in the Iraq Museum; the phrase might be rendered, however, by "in the face of the lion," and this might refer to the shape of the beer-vessel.

7. The "table of An," the "Boat of An," and the epithet, "Sweet Name of An" for Isimud, all seem to indicate that An was adored in the Abzu, although it is not clear just how and why.

8. "The two of them together" is a very tentative rendering of the obscure *e-en-bi-ta.*

9. The *aga*-vessel may perhaps be a vessel in the shape of a crown.

10. The meaning and implication of this line are obscure.

11. This line and the line following are restored with reasonable certainty from lines 113–14 of "Enki's Journey to Nippur" (see A. A. Al-Fouadi's doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1969). The *tilimda* is a vessel in the crescentlike shape of a *magur*-boat; see ibid., pp. 157–158. The restoration of the two lines following is a tentative surmise base on the context.

12. For *en,* the highest priestly office in Sumer, see J. Renger, *ZA* 58, 115ff.; for the little known high priestly office *lagal,* see *CAD sub lagarru,* 9, 37; "godship" may refer to the power of bestowing divinity upon a mortal king, such as—e.g.—the "calling of Dumuzi to the shepherd of the land" (see line 23 of Ni 9602 edited by Kramer in *PAPS* 107, 605–6) or it may refer to the concept of divine kingship in general. In either case it is related to the following two *me* concerned with insignia of royalty.

13. All the five items in this cluster refer to royalty in one way or another.

14. The five items listed in this cluster all refer to priestly offices. For the little known *egizi,* see *CAD sub igiṣītu,* 7, 43, and *igû,* 7, 45; for the high priestess *nindingir,* see *CAD sub ēntu,* 4, 172–73; for *išib, lumaḫ,* and *gudu,* see J. Renger, *ZA* 59, 122ff.

15. This cluster of six items with "truth," an ethical concept, on the surface seems out of place here. The following two items are unintelligible. "Descent into the Nether World" and "ascent from the Nether World" evidently refer to Inanna's exploits as depicted in "Inanna's Descent," the myth in which the well-known cult figure, the *kurgarra* (see *CAD sub kurgarrû,* 8, 557–59) plays a role.

16. All six items listed in this cluster probably refer to the Inanna cult in one way or another: the dagger and sword were carried by the *kurgarra* and probably also by the *sagursag* (see *CAD sub assinnu,* I/2, 341–42), who also played a role in the Inanna cult. The next four items probably also refer in some way to Inanna and her cult but as of today only one of these, "the colorful garment," is known to be associated with Inanna (see line 11 of the *balag* edited by Kramer in *Acta Sumerologica* 3 [1981] 1–11).

17. To judge from the three sexually related items in this cluster, the other three may also have referred to some aspects of the Inanna cult, although on the surface this does not seem readily apparent.

18. The three types of speech itemized in this cluster may refer specifically to Inanna, especially because the cult-prostitute and holy tavern (see *CAD sub aštammu,* I/2, 473) are Inanna-related.

19. Except for "eldership," which on the surface seems unrelated to Inanna, all the other items in this cluster probably refer to the goddess and her cult. The *nigingar*-shrine is well known as an Inanna sanctuary (see Sjöberg, *TH,* pp. 92ff.); "the lover (or hierodule) of

An" is an epithet frequently applied to Inanna herself. Instrumental and vocal music played a large role in the Inanna cult.

20. All the items in this cluster may well refer to Inanna (see especially the Inanna hymn edited by Sjöberg in *ZA* 65, 161ff.), although on the surface they seem to depict human behavior in general.

21. The comment in the preceding note applies as well to the items listed in this cluster.

22. This cluster itemizes all the more important crafts of Sumer and, at least on the surface, does not seem especially related to Inanna and her cult. They are, however, intimately associated with the crafts-god Enki.

23. The nine items listed in this cluster are diverse in character, and may or may not relate to Inanna: the first two are cognitive traits, the last three are emotional characteristics; the remaining four are difficult to categorize, but "the holy purification rites" and "the heaping up of hot coals" are mentioned in connection with Inanna in line 136 of the hymn to the goddess edited by William K. Hallo and J. J. A. Van Dijk in *The Exaltation of Inanna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

24. The items in this cluster are difficult to categorize, but they may well relate to Inanna in one way or another.

25. All items in this cluster probably refer to Inanna, especially as she is characterized in lines 114ff. of the hymn edited by Sjöberg in *ZA* 65, 161ff.

26. Following this cluster there seems to be another (see bottom on p. 23 and top of p. 24 in the Farber-Flügge monograph), but the text is broken in large part and nothing can be said of its contents.

27. Just how the Boat of An, which is mentioned here for the first time, came to be in the Abzu is not stated in the text.

28. Several preserved lines of this passage seem to contain a folkloristic motif in which a frog plays an important role.

29. Little is known about the *enkum*s except that they were temple servants of some kind.

30. This is not actually stated in the text.

31. This is the first time Ninshubur is mentioned in the text and it is not clear how this deity came on the scene. For the nature and function of this beneficent deity who was conceived as both male and female, see the edition of the Binning Tablet edited by Christopher Walker and Kramer, "Binning 3, Cuneiform Tablets in the Collection of Lord Binning," *Iraq* 44 (1982) 71–86.

32. *Ragaba* (a Sumerian loan-word from the Akkadian *rakibu*) is an official messenger or herald.

33. This enigmatic formulaic line must have related in some way to Ninshubur's success in freeing the boat from the *enkum*s, but at the moment we can make no reasonable suggestion for the nature of this relationship.

34. The "giants of Eridu" are not known from any extant text. There is a possibility they refer to the *abgal*s or mythological sages. See *CAD sub apkallu,* I/2, 171–73, and the discussion of Adapa below, chapters 7 and 8.

35. The *laḫama*-monsters of the sea are known from a number of extant texts; for bibliographical references, see the Farber-Flügge monograph, p.12.

36. The word "guardians" is a tentative surmise based on the context.

37. The restorations in this passage and the next are fairly reasonable surmises based on the context.

38. For *tigi,* the name of a musical instrument as well as a hymnal category, see *Hartmann Musik,* pp. 207ff.

39. Enun (or Enunna = *é-nun-na,* "House of the Prince") may be a shrine dedicated to Enki in Erech (for an Enun in Eridu, see line 5 of CT 42, no. 13); note too that É.NUN.NA may be read *agrunnu* (see *CAD sub agarunnu,* I/1, 148).

40. The meaning of this rather crucial line remains obscure.

41. Perhaps the instructions were to observe what Inanna was doing at the White Quay.

42. Following these ninety-four items (see, however, note 26 above), the text adds sixteen new items, five of which may refer to sexual allure, five are musical instruments, five are illegible except for the ending *-an-na*—"of An"—and one, the last, refers to beer.

43. It seems to contain several benedictions related to the adoration of Inanna, including one that involves "the gashing of the vulva in her name," presumably by some of her cult devotees.

44. The restorations in these lines are fairly reasonable surmises based on the context.

Chapter 5

1. Kramer first sketched the contents of this myth in 1944 in *Sumerian Mythology,* pp. 62–63, a sketch based on the text reconstructed from eighteen tablets and fragments. In 1969 his former student, A. A. Al-Fouadi, published a carefully prepared comprehensive edition of the myth, "Enki's Journey to Nippur: The Journeys of the Gods," as a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Åke Sjöberg, Kramer's successor as curator of the tablet collection of the University Museum. This edition was based on a text reconstructed from close to fifty tablets and fragments, many of which had not been known in 1944. The translation and interpretation of the text here presented is based on the Al-Fouadi edition of the myth, but differs from those of Al-Fouadi to some extent. Note, as above, that a very helpful and useful study relating to the myths involving Enki and Eridu appeared in 1975 as a doctoral dissertation in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago by Margaret Whitney Green, "Eridu in Sumerian Literature," abbreviated "Eridu" in this study.

2. If the rendering of this line is correct, *an* might have been expected to be followed by the subject element *-e.*

3. "Had broken through the earth" follows the generally accepted rendering of *ki—dar* (for bibliographical references, see Al-Fouadi, p. 110); it is not altogether impossible that it should be rendered "had covered," "had overlaid," etc.—that is, just as—e.g.—*ki—ág,* literally, "to measure the earth," developed a meaning "to love," or *gù—dé,* literally, "to pour out the voice," developed a meaning "to speak." There are any number of such examples of compound verbs developing a meaning that expresses the result of the combination of the two components rather than the literal signification of each. So *ki—dar* may have developed a meaning such as "cover" or "overlay." In any case it seems rather strange to assume that humans as well as animals were conceived by the Sumerians as having been created underground and then made to spring out of the earth. Note finally that the first complex is probably to be read *kalam-e* rather than *un-e.*

4. "Being luminous as the day" attempts to render u_4*-kár-kár-a-ka,* a complex that is difficult to analyze gramatically.

5. To judge from the context, *mùš-kù* should be some living creature, but if so, it is not known from any extant text.

6. "Bank" may refer to the edge of the *engur* or of the Abzu; for a detailed discussion, see "Eridu," pp. 180ff.

7. The *im* of *im-ša*$_4$ seems unjustified, for one would expect here a participle, not a finite verb.

8. The implication of "during the night" is not clear; "sings it sweetly" renders *du*$_{10}$-*bi mu-un-gá-gá.*

9. The literal rendering, "pours forth the voice" for *gù im-ma-dé-e* in this line, is justified by the parallel *gù im-ma-sum-mu,* "gives voice," in the line following.

10. The rendering 'is planted in the Abzu" for *abzu-a si-ga* is not quite certain, for the usual meaning of *si-ga* is "fills."

11. "Out of the Abzu" renders *abzu-ta;* if *-ta* is not an error for *-a,* its implication here is not clear.

12. The rendering "noble beast" for *ur-maḫ* is intended to distinguish it from the synomymous *pirig* "lion." The depictions of the various parts of the temple in this line and the lines following are metaphorical in character, but it may turn out that some of them refer to actual ornamentation and decoration.

13. For the uncertain *mùš-kú,* see note 5, above.

14. It is not clear just what is intended by the statement that the mat is an "adornment for the roof-beam." Possibly the mat is what shows on the ceiling between the roof-beams; or, if the structure is envisaged as a *mudhif,* still built in the area today, the mat could represent the large covering over the roof-beams.

15. For the lions at the gate of Eridu, see "Eridu," pp. 216–17.

16. "Decorous" renders *me-te-gál,* literally, "that which is proper, fitting."

17. "Has set his foot towards you" is the literal rendering of *gìr im-ma-ri-in-gub* (so, not *-du*).

18. "Honored" renders *mì—du*$_{11}$; "sacred incantations" is a rather uncertain rendering of *tu*$_6$-*tu*$_6$-*za-gìn-na.*

19. On the assumption that *lalḫar* is but a variant pronunciation of *lalgar,* its rendering may be "prototype," "model," and it may be identical with the "brick of fate" that was probably deposited in the Abzu; see Kramer's comment in *Iraq,* 36, 93–94.

20. "Lustily" renders *ní-bi-šè,* "in accordance with its nature"; "harmoniously" renders *teš-bi-šè* (see Akkadian *CAD sub ištēniš,* 7, 279–81).

21. Instead of "from whose midst," one might have expected "in whose midst."

22. The rendering "arm of the heavenly *mùš-kù*" is rather uncertain; if correct it would provide additional proof that the *mùš-kù* was a living creature (see note 5, above).

23. "Wild ram" is the literal meaning of *šeg*$_9$-*bar,* a metaphorical epithet of the Abzu.

24. For the *abgal* and his characterization as one who lets his hair down on his back, see *CAD sub apkallu,* I/2, 171–73.

25. "On the edge" may refer to the edge of the *engur* or of the Abzu; see note 6, above.

26. "Strikes terror" renders *su—zi-zi,* literally, "raises the flesh."

27. "Din" renders *akkil;* see *CAD sub ikkillu,* 7, 57–59; it probably refers here to the hustle-bustle of temple activity.

28. "Plays it sweetly" renders *du*$_{10}$-*bi mu-un-gá-gá;* see note 8, above.

29. The identification of the musical instruments in this line and the next (62–63) is quite uncertain except for the lyre (Sumerian *zà-mí;* see note 20 of "The Lute in Ancient Mesopotamia," a joint article published by Dominique Collon and Anne Draffkorn Kilmer in the British Museum *Yearbook* for 1980); and the harp (Sumerian *balag,* see *CAD sub balaggu,* 2, 38–39). Note that following *zà-mí* in line 62, this reading of the rest of the line is based on the variant in text NN (see Al-Fouadi, p. 95), that may be divided up as follows: ^{giš}*al-gar balag*^{giš}al-gar-sur$_x$-*da* (the final *-da* is inexplicable); the *algar* and *algarsur(ra)* are probably stringed instruments as are also probably the *ḫarḫar,* the *sabītum* (an instrument native to Sabu), and *mirītum* (an instrument native to Mari); see especially Agnes Spyket, *Journal des Savants* (1972) 182–83; see also *CAD sub ḫarḫaru,* 6, 100; *mirītu,* 10/2, 108; and

sabītum, 15, 4. "That fill the house" in line 63 (Sumerian *é si-ga*) seems to refer to the music produced by all the musical instruments mentioned in the two lines.

30. "The lip-freeing harp" is a tentative rendering of *nundum-búr-re-balag-gá.*

31. "In accordance with its own feeling" renders *šà-ní-ba-ka.*

32. "Eagerly" renders *ní-ba,* "of itself."

33. The *tigi* mentioned in this line are probably *tigi*-hymns exalting the gods; for a list of the extant *tigi*-compositions, see Claus Wilcke, *AS* 20, 290–91. Seven *tigi* are also mentioned in line 81 of *Šulgi A;* see Jacob Klein, *Three Šulgi Hymns* (Bar Ilan University, 1981), pp. 167–217. Just what is intended by the number seven is not known; perhaps it refers to the *tigi*s composed in adoration of the occasionally mentioned "seven gods that decreed the fates" (see Adam Falkenstein, *AS* 16, 130) among which were no doubt the four leading deities of the pantheon: An, Enlil, Enki, and Ninḫursag. Kilmer has suggested that *tigi-7* means "heptonic music."

34. The restoration of the first complex as *inim-*[*ma-ni*] is a reasonable surmise; note that there is no finite verbal form in this line, and it is not altogether certain therefore that it goes together with the preceding line rather than with the line that follows.

35. The restoration "thus" assumes that the line began with [*ḫur-gim*] rather than *sukkal.*

36. "Mazelike" or "labyrinthine" is a reasonable surmise for *galam-kad*$_5$, a word usually rendered "artful"; see *TH,* p. 122 for bibliographical references.

37. The rendering of this line assumes that the Sumerian is to be read as follows: *zà-ga a-zal giš-gi-a ba-an-díb;* the line seems to describe some topographical feature of the Eridu environment.

38. For a detailed treatment of this line and the two following lines, see Al-Fouadi, pp. 136–42; see also notes 33–34, above, chapter 3.

39. "Upon the waves" renders *i-zi-éš.*

40. "Sea House" is based on the variant *é-engur-ra* in text FF; see Al-Fouadi, p. 99.

41. "Into the sea" is based on the variant *a-ab-ba-ka;* see Al-Fouadi, p. 99.

42. "In the high river" is based on the variant *íd-maḫ-a;* see Al-Fouadi, p. 99; "create terror" renders *su-zi—ri;* see note 26, above.

43. For ^{d}*MUŠ,* see *CAD sub nirāḫu,* 11/2, 259. The Addadian term means "little snake."

44. See line 2 of the composition.

45. "Readily" renders *ní-bi/ba,* "of itself"; see note 32, above.

46. The implication of this line and the one preceding is probably that the river reverberated to Enki with a sound that resembled the lowing of a calf for its mother.

47. For the musical instrument *ala,* see *CAD sub alû* C, I/1, 377–78; for the *ub,* see Anne Draffkorn Kilmer in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein,* pp. 132–33; see also line 23 of BM 29616, the text Kramer entitled "The Fashioning of the *gala,*" which appeared in *Acta Sumerologica* 3 (1981), 1–11.

48. The rendering of this passage is quite difficult and problematical, and the translation here presented differs to some extent from that of Al-Fouadi, but the experienced cuneiformist should have no difficulty in discerning the reasons for the divergences.

49. For the *kurkurru*-vessel, see *CAD sub kurkurru,* 8, 563–64.

50. "Seat of honor" renders *zà-gal,* the literal meaning of which is "great side, edge, border," etc., and it is not clear just how this developed into "seat of honor," a meaning that is quite certain (for bibliographical references, see Al-Fouadi, pp. 155–56).

51. For this line and the lines following, see chapter 5, notes 6–11.

52. The rendering "had been drunk" is based on a surmise that the verb reads *ba-nag* rather than *ba-du*$_{11}$.

53. "Dregs of the beer" is a conjectured rendering based on the assumption that the second complex in the line is *gìr-kaš-a* rather than *gìr-bi-a,* and that *gìr* may perhaps be a variant of *egir* (= *arkatum*) "that which is behind," "the leftover."

54. This line and the four lines following, none of which has a finite verbal form, further glorify Enki's house; note, therefore, that there is no actual blessing by Enlil, only an acknowledgment and affirmation of its greatness.

Chapter 6

1. For the larger work of which this is a part, see Samuel Noah Kramer, "BM 86535: A Large Extract of a Diversified Balag-Composition," *Miscellanea Babylonica* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1985), 115–35. The transliteration below is followed by a commentary on the *balag*-composition.

81. *á-íl-la á-íl-la*
82. *sìr-^{d}am-an-ki-ga á-íl-la*
83. *sìr-ù-mu-un-kù-ga á-íl-la*
84. *sìr-ù-a-mu-un-abzu-ka á-íl-la*
85. *sìr-^{d}dam-gal-nun-ka á-íl-la*
86. *sìr-^{d}asar-lú-ḫi á-íl-la*
87. *sìr-^{d}nammu-ka á-íl-la*
88. *sìr-^{d}ara-e á-íl-la*
89. *á-íl-la me-da-àm-tuku-àm*
90. *sìr-^{d}am-an-ki-ga me-da àm-tuku-àm*
91. *sìr-ù-mu-un-abzu-ka me-da àm-tuku-àm*
92. *sìr-u-ù-mu-un-kù-ga[!] me-da àm-tuku-àm*
93. *sìr-^{d}dam-gal-nun-ka me-da àm-tuku-àm*
94. *sìr-^{d}asar-lú-ḫi me-da àm-tuku-àm*
95. *sìr-^{d}nammu-ka me-da àm-tuku-àm*
96. *sìr-^{d}ara-e me-da àm-tuku-àm*
97. *àm-tuku-àm àm-tuku-àm*
98. *abzu á-nun-na àm-tuku-àm*
99. *uru-zé-eb^{ki}-zé-ba àm-tuku-àm*
100. *é-engur-ra-ka àm-tuku-àm*
101. *abzu-inim-si-sá-dúr-ra-ta àm-tuku-àm*
102. *u-mu-un a-gi$_6$-a u$_5$-a-zu-dè*
103. *^{d}am-an-ki a-gi$_6$-a u$_5$-a-zu-dè*
104. *a-gi$_6$-tur-tur-e gud-gim ša-mu-ra-du$_7$-du$_7$*
105. *a-gi$_6$-gal-gal-e e sag-men-gim ša-mu-ra-ni-ib-gál*
106. *íd-dè íd-dè ḫé-gál im-dirig-ge*
107. *íd-dè íd-nun-e ḫé-gál im-dirig-ge*
108. *maš-tab-ba-íd-buranun-na-ke$_4$ hé-gál im-dirig-ge*

109. *íd-dè gu[d-dir]ig ši-im-dirig-ga-àm*
110. *íd-dè e-zé-dirig ši-im-dirig-ga-àm*
111. *na-ám-lú-lu$_6$-dirig ši-im-dirig-ga-àm*
112. *é-a nam-ši-ni-in-né-eš ù-mu-un me-ni-eš*
113. *é-a nam-ši-ni-in-né-eš*
114. *ù-mu-un-abzu me-ni-eš*
115. *é-a nam-ši-ni-in-né-eš*
116. *me-ti é-ta šu nam-ma-ra-ab-ti*
117. *me mu-un-kin mu-un-kin gaba-na nam-mi-in-tab*
118. *ù-mu-un me-lu-lu me al* [*nu-um-me*]
119. *^{d}am-an-ki me-lu-lu* [*me al nu-um-me*]
120. *al nu-um me me-ni* [*mu-lu-e al nu-um-me*]
121. *dug$_4$-ga-na mu-lu-e al* [*nu-um-me*]
122. *daḫ-a-na mu-lú-e* [*al nu-um-me*]
ki-ru-gú-50-[*kam-ma*]

123. *abzu gaba-bi ri-a abzu* [*gaba-bi ri-a*]
124. *abzu á-nun-na ga*[*ba-bi ri-a*]
125. *urú-zé-eb^{ki}-ze-ba gaba-bi* [*ri-a*]
126. *é-engur-ra-ka gaba-bi* [*ri-a*]
127. *abzu-inim-si-sá-dúr-ra-ta gaba-bi ri-a*
128. *e u-mu-un-e sa al-šú-šú*
129. *^{d}am-an-ki-ke$_4$ sa al-šú-šú*
130. *i-lu-sag na-šú ku$_6$ na-an-da-DU*
131. *ù-mu-un-na-pàd-da ku$_6$ na-an-da-DU*
132. *na-ám-gil-le-èm ki-ta ku$_6$-šè im-ši-lá*
133. *ù-mu-un sa-gíd-da ku$_6$šè im-ši-lá*
134. *ù-mu-un-abzu sa-gíd-da ku$_6$-šè im-ši-lá*
ki-ru-gú-51-kam-ma

135. *e-ne-èm-má-ni a-gi$_6$ a-gi$_6$ ní mu-ma-ma-dam*
136. *e-ne-èm-^{d}am-an-ki-ga a-gi$_6$ a-gi$_6$*
137. *e-ne-èm-^{d}dam-gal-nun-na a-gi$_6$ a-gi$_6$*
138. *e-ne-èm-ù-mu-un-abzu-ka a-gi$_6$ a-gi$_6$*
139. *ì-ge-en ì-ge-en nu-ge-en nu-ge-en*
140. *uš$_{12}$-ša-tùr-ra lú-ra zé-èm-mèn*
141. *e-ne-èm-ma-ni uš$_{12}$-pirig-ga lú-ra nu-è-dè*
142. *e-ne-èm-má-ni a-gi$_6$ a-gi$_6$ ní mu-ma-ma-dam*
ki-ru-gú-52-kam-ma

143. *e-ne-èm-má-ni a-gi$_6$ a-gi$_6$ mu-ma-ra lu na-DU-DU- . . .*

144. *e-ne-èm-^{d}am-an-ki-ga a-gi$_{6}$ mu-ma-ra*
145. *e-ne-èm-^{d}dam-gal-nun-na-ka a-gi$_{6}$ mu-ma-ra*
146. *e-ne-èm-ù-mu-un-abzu-ka a-gi$_{6}$ mu-ma-ra*
147. *ní-zu su-mà ní-*[*zu su-mà*] *mu-lu ní-*[*zu-su-mà*]
148. *ù-*[*mu-un*] . . .
ki-ru-g[*ú-53-kam-ma*]

149. *u-mu-un é-*[*mu-lu-ka-šè*] *za-e i-bí-zu te-*[*ba-ab-ši-ma-al*]
150. *íd-idiglat ù-mu-un-abzu* [*é-mu-lu-ka-šè*]
151. *ú-KU-engur-ra é-mu-lu-*[*ka-šè*]
152. *mušen-dù-kur-ùr-ra é-mu-lu* [*ka-šè*]
153. ^{giš}*ig-mu-lu-šè$_{4}$* ^{giš}*šu-di-eš-mu-lu-šè*
154. $^{na}{}_{4}$*ur-mu-lu-šè* $^{na}{}_{4}$*šu-ŠÈ-mu-lu-šè*
155. *gi-ma-an-sim-mu-lu-šè šà-sur-mu-lu-šè*
156. ^{mu}*ká-na-é-mu-lu-ka-šè za-e i-bí-zu-šè te-ba-ab-ši-ma-al*
ki-ru-gú-54-kam-ma

157. *ù-mu-un igi-zu LI-ba-àm-ma mu-lu-da mu-un-da-bal-e*
158. *íd-idiglat ù-mu-un-abzu igi-zu LI-bi-àm-ma*
159. *mu-ku$_{6}$-mušen-zu en-na mu-pàd-da-šè*
160. *mu-é-dù-a-zu en-na mu-pàd-da-šè*
161. *mu-urú-dù-a-zu en-na mu-pàd-da-šè mu-lu-da mu-un-un-da-bal-e*
ki-ru-gú-55-kam-ma

162. *e el-lu gen-gen-na gen-gen-na el-lu gen-gen-na*
163. *e ga-ša-an-e še-mu-lu na-an-túm*
164. *^{d}dam-gal-nun-na-ke$_{4}$ še-mu-lu na-an-túm*
165. *ù-mu-un-é-a é-a na-am ga mu-un-di*
166. [*?*]*al-di àm-ma-an-da al-di*
167. *mu-lu šu-umme-da é-*[*?*]*ba-ab-si*
168. *mu-lu šu-umme-da en-ga me bí-zu*
169. *en-ga me bí-zu en-ga me bí-zu*
170. *ub-ba-ma-al-la en-ga me bí-zu*
171. *da-e-ma-al-la en-ga me bí-zu*
ki-ru-gú-56-kam-ma

172. *e el-lu ù-mu-un šen-BU-na al-lu-ru-da*
173. *íd-idiglat ù-mu-un-abzu šen-BU-na*
174. *ù-mu-un-mu é-àm-ma-al-la-šè*
175. *íd-idiglat ù-mu-un-abzu* [*erìm*]*-ma-mu-lu-šè*
176. *é-dam-ti-la du$_{5}$-mu-ti-la*

177. *abzu-inim-si-sá-dúr-ra-šè al-lu-ru-da*
ki-ru-gú-57-kam-ma

178. *ù-mu-un nu-um-te ù-mu-un nu-um-te*
179. *ù-mu-un má-gur$_8$-ra-na mu-un-u$_5$*
180. *ù-mu-un-na e-ne-èm-ma-ni ma-ma-dam*
181. *íd-idiglat ù-mu-un-abzu ù-mu-un nu-um-te*
182. *ú-KU-engur-ra ù-mu-un nu-um-te*
183. *mušen-dù-kur-ùr-ra ù-mu-un nu-um-te*
184. *má-gur$_8$-gibil-na-gim asila mu-un-DU*
185. *^{giš}gigir-gibil-na-gim ul mu-un-gùr-ru-a*
186. *ù-mu-un má-gur$_8$-ra-na mu-un-u$_5$*
187. *ù-mu-un-na e-ne-èm-ma-ni ma-ma-dam*
ki-ru-gú-58-kam-ma

188. *[?-Ág ù-mu-un-da ?-ÁG] ù-mu-un-da*
189. *?-ÁG ù-mu-un-da[?]mu-un-da-ab-bé*
190. *e-a é-lugal e-a é-lugal*
191. *íd-idiglat ù-mu-un-abzu é-lugal*
192. *ú-KU-engur-ra é-lugal*
193. *mušen-dù-kur-ùr-ra é-lugal e-a é-lugal*
ki-ru-gú-59-kam-ma

First kirugu (lines 81–122). To judge from line 82, "The song of Enki—raise the arm," one may perhaps conclude that "Raise the Arm" (*á-íl-la,* which could also be rendered "the raised arm") is actually the title of the song of Enki (and the various deities of his family and entourage) that was sung in the Abzu (see lines 83–101); if so, the contents of that song are unknown. In line 98 (see also line 124), if the rendering "the power of the prince" is correct, one might have expected *-ka* following *á-nun-na;* perhaps therefore the rendering should read "the princely power." In line 101, the final *-ta* of the first complex is difficult to explain. (The same is true of the *-ta* of the first complex in line 127, but note that in line 177 it is omitted before *-šè.* In lines 102ff., *a-gi$_6$* is rendered "wave" or "floodwave," depending on the context. In line 105, the translation assumes that the inexplicable *e* following the first complex is a scribal error. In line 108, "the twin of the Euphrates" is ambiguous; it may be an epithet of the Tigris River, or some large canal comparable to the Euphrates.

The translation and interpretation of lines 112–15 are difficult and uncertain, primarily because of the verbal complex *nam-ši-ni-in-né-eš;* the rendering assumes that the *-né* preceding *-eš* represents a combination of the third-person subject element *n* with the verbal root *è;* that the subject is Enki; that the *-ši-* following *nam* takes up the postposition *-eš* of *me-ni-eš;* that the following *-ni-* takes up the postposition *-a* of *é-a;* and that the final *-eš* is an accusative third-person plural, referring to the *na-ám-lú-lu$_6$* of the preceding line—all of which is far from ensured. The rendering of lines 118–19 assumes that *-ni,* "his," is to be understood following *me* (see line 120), and that *mu-lu-e* is to be understood before *al nu-um-me* (see lines 121–22). In lines 121–22, the *-na* of the first complex seems to be an unjus-

tified variant for the expected *-ni;* note, too, that *mulu* is written *mu-lu* in line 121, but *mu-lú* in line 122. For the translation of lines 118–22, see *rev. iii,* lines 6–10, of the *balag* published in *CT* 42, 8. It may be restored to read:

me-lu-lu-mu [*al nu-um-me*]
^{d}*en-ki-me-en me-lu-*[*lu-mu*] *me* [*al nu-um-me*]
al nu-ume-me me mu-[*lu-e*] *al nu-*[*um-me*]
dug$_4$-ga-mu me mu-lu-e al nu(!)-[*um-me*]
daḫ-[*a*]*-mu me mu-lu-e al nu-*[*um-me*]

which may be rendered (omitting brackets):

My manifold *me*—he shall not covet the *me,*
I, Enki, my manifold *me*—he shall not covet the *me,*
He shall not covet them, the *mulu* shall not covet the *me,*
My command: the *mulu* shall not covet the *me.*
My injunction: the *mulu* shall not covet the *me.*

Second kirugu (lines 123–34). The rendering of *i-lu-sag* (line 30) is uncertain; for the more usual meaning of *i-lu,* see—e.g.—*CAD sub qubbû,* 13 291–92. For *na-ám-gil-le-èm,* see the difficult *nig-gilim* of the "flood" tablet that Civil (*Atrahasīs,* p. 160) equated with *nam-maštu,* "animals," and that Jacobsen (JBL 1000, p. 515) rendered by "small quadrupeds," but which might also be equated with *zērmandu,* "vermin." Perhaps, therefore, line 132 asserts that Enki reached out vermin to the fish as bait, and then reached out the "long net" for the catch.

Third kirugu (lines 135–42). Lines 139–40, to judge from the *-mèn* at the end of line 140, are introduced without warning, as it were, as an address to Enki in the midst of a narrative passage; for a similar stylistic device, see the fourth *kirugu.* (Note that these two lines are also found in *obv.* ii, lines 28–29, of the *balag* cited above. The first sign in line 29 is no doubt $UŠ_{12}$, rather than *KA.*) In line 141, the signs following $uš_{12}$ are a clear *PIRIG-GÁ* (not *GÌR-GÁ*) and the reading *meri$_x$-ma* in *CAD sub kīnu,* 8, 389–92, and *imtu,* 7, 139–41, seem unjustified except as accommodation to the Akkadian rendering *zuqaqipu,* which is admittedly more suitable for the meaning of the line. Note that if the *-mèn* at the end of line 140 should turn out to be a scribal error, lines 139–41 might be rendered:

He is true with those who are true,
he is not true with those who are not true.
It [his word] is the venom of a viper given against humankind,

His word is the venom of a lion that does not come forth
for [the benefit] of humankind.

The entire passage 135–42 would therefore be consistently narrative. The problem is further complicated, however, by the fact that lines 139–41 are duplicated in *SBH* 6, and *4R,* no. 2 (see *CAD sub kīnu* and *sub imtu,* where the Akkadian rendering of the line corresponding to our line 139, assumes that it is uttered by Enki himself, while the line corresponding to our line 140 has no *mèn* at the end, and is therefore a true parallel of the following line that corresponds to our line 141).

Fourth kirugu (lines 143–48). The restorations in line 147 are quite doubtful, as is also the assumption that it is the *mulu* who exclaims, "Your fear in my body."

Fifth kirugu (lines 150–156). In line 150 (also lines 158, 173, 175, 181, 191) Enki is identified with the Tigris River. In line 151 (also 182, 192) the rendering "fisher" for *u-KU* is no more than a guess based on the context. In line 152 (also lines 183 and 193), the implication of "the base of the mountain" in connection with the fowler, is not clear. In line 154, the rendering "stone-pounder" for $^{na}{}_4$*šu-ŠÈ* is a guess based on the context. For *gi-ma-an-sim* (line 155), see *CAD sub mekkû,* 10/2, 7–8. The meaning of *šašur* is unknown, but to judge from the context it might be some home appliance (perhaps a sprinkler). In line 156, the *-šè* following *i-bí-zu* is no doubt a scribal error.

Sixth kirugu (lines 157–61). The assumption that it is Enki's face that is conversing with the *mulu* about the god's birds and fish, house and city, seems rather bizarre and venturesome, but there is no other subject for the verb. Perhaps the obscure *LI-bi-àm-ma* (lines 157, 158) may one day provide some clarification.

Seventh kirugu (lines 162–71). Line 162 consists of nothing but exclamatory phrases addressed perhaps to Enki, who may be the deity designated in line 95 "Lord of the house." (Note that the word division of the second half of line 165 is doubtful, as is also its meaning.) In line 166, the reading of the first sign is uncertain, as is the meaning of *àm-ma-an-da al-di.* In line 167, the reading of the sign following *e* is uncertain; so, too, is the identity of the *ummeda* "nursemaid." The meaning of the complexes transliterated very tentatively as *en-ga me bí-zu* (lines 168, 169, 170, 171) is obscure. (The obscure *en-ga me bí-zu* may also be read as *en-ga me-lám-zu,* but this does not clarify the meaning of the complexes). In lines 170 and 171, "what is in the corner," "what is at the side," may refer to the *mulu*'s grain, which Damgalnunna brought into the house.

Eighth kirugu (lines 172–77). The meaning of *šen-BU-na* and *al-lu-ru-da* (lines 172 and 177) is unknown, but from the *-šè* at the end of lines 174, 175, and 177 (the *-šè* is probably to be understood at the end of line 176 also), one would expect a verb of motion somewhere in the *kirugu;* perhaps one day the obscure *al-lu-ru-da* will shed some light on the matter.

Ninth kirugu (lines 178–87). The real meaning of this *kirugu* is uncertain. It is not clear what it was that Enki sailing in his *magur*-boat did not approach, and whether the word he was establishing was favorable or unfavorable to human kind, although to judge from lines 184 and 185 he was in a happy mood while sailing in his *magur*-boat. The introduction of a chariot in line 185 seems rather strange, for Enki did not ride in a chariot; perhaps it is simply a literary cliché without content of significance; note, too, that the rendering assumes that *mu-un-gùr-ru-a* is a preterit (grammatically, *mu-un-gùr-àm*).

Tenth kirugu (lines 188–93). The translation and meaning of the lines are obviously uncertain. The remainder of the *kirugu* consists of nothing but exclamatory phrases of uncertain tenor involving a royal house not further identified.

2. For the text and an earlier version of this translation, see Samuel Noah Kramer, "Ninurta's Pride and Punishment," *Aula Orientalis* 2 (Barcelona, 1983) 231–237. To date only two duplicates of this text have been identified: a very small Nippur fragment published in *SLTN* 41 (see *RA* 60, p. 92), and a very small Ur fragment (to be published by Aaron Shaffer in *UET* 6, part 3), which is, however, of little help; it reads as follows: *Obv.* 1. . . . e. . . . 2. me-mu. . . . 3. giš-ḫur-mu. . . . 4. dub-nam-tar-ra-[mu]. . . . 5. ur-sag-^{d}nin-urta. . . . 6. me-^{d}en-ki-ga-šè. . . . 7. giš-ḫur-bi me-a. . . . *Rev.* 1. en-e. . . . 2. á-nam-[ùr-sag]. . . . 3. sag-kal ba[?]-ab. . . . 4. ug-gal. . . . 5. ug-tur. . . . [CBS 8319, CBS 15007, and CBS 15085 are all parts of a three-column tablet that contained the entire myth, which must have been about 300 lines long. The script is extremely small and the surface very badly preserved, but it seems, from the few readable lines that the Anzu bird, the *me*s, and the tablets of destiny play a central role throughout the composition. M. Civil.]

3. To judge from these lines, some deity (either Enlil or Enki) had commanded

Ninurta to attack Amar-Anzu. The reason for this command was no doubt Amar-Anzu's filching the *me* from the Abzu, an episode that must have been narrated in one of the tablets preceding the extant Ur tablet.

4. Line 8 might perhaps be expected to state that being deprived of the *me,* he will have no hope of becoming Enki's equal, but the reading and meaning of the preterit verbal form *mu-mu-un-BAD* are uncertain, and the sense of the line remains obscure. As for line 9, its implication may be that Enki, upon hearing Ninurta's lamenting complaint, realized the danger he was in because of Ninurta's ambitious designs, and was therefore put on his guard, as it were.

5. These lines seem to imply that Ninurta had been in the Abzu before; perhaps he had come there at Enki's request in order to retrieve the *me* that had been carried off by Amar-Anzu.

6. Just what it was that Ninurta planned is not stated in the text, but to judge from line 49 he actually planned to kill Enki.

7. The assumption that the last four lines of our text are the introductory part of a plea by Ninmenna—that is, Ninḫursag—to Enki that he save her son's life is a reasonable surmise based primarily on line 60, which we would render "Pitiless death—you, who has carried it off from you?" (note that the verbal form *mu-ra-ab-túm* may be rendered either as "who has brought it to you" or by the diametrically opposite "who has carried it off from you;" see, e.g., lines 88–89 of *Das Lugalbandaepos.*) As is known from "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" (chapter 1, above), Ninḫursag had indeed saved Enki's life by giving birth to the eight deities who healed Enki's eight ailing organs after he had eaten the eight plants generated by the goddess from his semen. This explains the goddess' designation of Enki in line 57 as *ú-kú-kú* "plant-eater"(admittedly, however, the *mu-uš* following *ú-kú-kú* is difficult). The expression "my plant-eater" seems rather strange; note, too, that *mu-uš* may be the Emesal for *giš,* "tree" or "penis," but neither of these meanings fits the context. As for lines 58–59, the rendering assumes that they contain a depiction of death personified at least in part (note the use of *lú,* but followed by *-bi* as the possessive). Emesal is a dialect of Sumerian used mainly in goddess cults and, hence, may have been considered a "woman's language," as the term suggests.

8. The text has been collated and translated by Bendt Alster (evidently with some help from Thorkild Jacobsen; see his comments to lines 28 and 59) in *JCS* 24, 120ff. Our translation and interpretation differ considerably; in most instances the reasons for the difference will be readily apparent to the cuneiformist; where this may not be so, an explanatory comment will be found in the notes.

9. "Its" in this line and the two following refers to the Abzu.

10. Alster's restoration of *dub-nam-tar-ra* is now confirmed by Obv. 4 of the Ur fragment mentioned in note 1. Note that *me, giš-ḫur,* and *dub-nam-tar-ra* seem to be treated as synonymous by the author.

11. Note that the first complex is to be restored to read [*inim-amar-an*]*zu-šè,* and that, because it is a genitive compound, one might have expected a *-da-* preceding *-šè;* "stunned" is the rendering for *lul-aš-si.*

12. Preceding *abzu-a, èš-e* should probably be restored.

13. If the rendering of this line is correct, ^{d}*en-ki* is an error for ^{d}*en-ki-ke*$_4$, and the *-da-* of the verbal form is not accounted for.

14. It is difficult to reconcile the statement in this line with that in line 17, unless "the bird" of line 17 is not identical with Amar-Anzu.

15. The *-ši-* of *ba-ši-ḫul* seems to recapitulate the *-ra* of the preceding complex.

16. Following *GÌR,* the copy has *SU,* and this is confirmed by my photograph of the tablet; there is little doubt, however, that this is a scribal error for *ZU.*

17. Although the general sense of the passage in lines 25–30 is quite clear—that is, the

ambitious Ninurta, dissatisfied with Enki's rather unexciting benediction, secretly devised hostile schemes against Enki—it includes numerous grammatical and lexical difficulties that make its translation rather problematic. Thus the meaning of the *-bi* of *šà-bi* in lines 25, 27, and 30; the *-bi* of *KA-da-bi* and *bar-bi* in line 28, and of *igi-bi* in line 29, is rather uncertain; our rendering asumes that in all these cases it is an error for *(a-ni),* an assumption that makes the rendering more than doubtful. (Alster, on the other hand, renders *šà-bi* as "secretly," which makes excellent sense, but is grammatically unjustifiable, for the adverbial *-bi,* as far as is known, must be attached to an adjective, not a substantive; as for his rendering of *KA-da-bi, bar-bi,* and *igi-bi,* they are no more than very dubious conjectures.) In line 26, read *a-gim igi* between *ki-gub-ba-ni* and *i-im-gi*$_6$*-gi*$_6$*-ge.* In line 28, the reading and meaning of the initial complex are quite uncertain; it might be expected to parallel in some way the *bar-bi* in the second half of the line. In line 30, the rendering "he told no one" for *lú-na-me nu-ub-dug*$_4$ seems reasonable; grammatically, however, one might have expected the Sumerian to read *lú-na-me-ra nu-mu-na-dug*$_4$.

18. Following *i-im-tuk*$_4$*-tuk*$_4$ is probably an erasure, to judge from the photograph.

19. "Threatened" is a conjecture for *gìr-ru-gú;* "house" seems to refer to the Abzu shrine.

20. "From the clay" renders *im-abzu-a,* literally perhaps "in the Abzu clay"; similarly in the following line *ká-abzu-a* means literally "in the Abzu gate."

21. The rendering and implication of this line are rather uncertain.

22. The rendering of this line, which seems to depict Ninurta's defensive counterattack, is rather uncertain.

23. The first complex should probably be restored to read ^{d}*en-ki-*[*ke*$_4$].

24. The ellipsis represents a complex that may have described the pit from which Ninurta could not ascend.

25. "Kept on gnawing" is a surmise for *ba-an-sur-sur.*

26. "To kill me" renders *sag-giš-ra-mu-uš;* literally, "for my being killed."

27. The meaning of this line is not clear, especially because of the ambiguous *ki-gub-ba.*

28. The nuance intended by the *-da-* of *-ba-da-an-pàd* is not clear.

29. The reading and meaning of the fragmentary second half of the line are uncertain; in any case it does not seem to include a verb of saying to introduce the following speech.

30. For this concluding passage, see note 7, above.

31. The translation is based on a transliteration of the text provided by Miguel Civil. The rstorations are reasonable surmises.

32. This hymn was edited by A. Falkenstein with his customary skill and competence in *CA* 49 (1930) 112–17; see Kramer's comment in *BiOr* 11 (1954) 174 *sub* 22. Kramer collated the text in *Iraq* 36 (1974) and made a number of corrections. These were unavailable to Falkenstein when he edited the hymn.

Lines 1–5. In line 1, read *dúr-ki-gar-ra* (not *umuš-ki-gar-ra*); in the second half of the line, take "heart" to be the subject of "knows." In line 2 treat *dagal* as a verbal form (not an adjective). In line 3, "expert" attempts to render *gal-an-zu,* which seems to mean literally "great does he know"; our translation of *inim-ma-si-ga* is based on the fact that *si-ga* is a passive participle. In line 4 the first complex is *sá-pà-dè* (not *di-pà-dè*). For the reading and rendering of this complex, see Åke Sjöberg, *TH,* pp. 62ff. In line 5 "all" renders the reduplicated *zi.*

Lines 6–12. In line 6, "all" renders the reduplicated verbal forms *i* and *gar.* In line 9, "all" renders the reduplicated *a-gàr;* "pour down heavy rain," renders the reduplicated *šèg.* The restored "cover" in line 10 is a guess only. For the reading and rendering of line 11, see Kramer's collation in *Iraq* 36.

Lines 13–20. In line 13 the meaning of the adjective complex *sag-kù-gal* is difficult to

surmise. In line 14, the rendering disregards the strange-looking first sign. (Perhaps it is an erasure, although this is not apparent on the tablet; see Kramer's collation of the sign in *Iraq* 36, especially note 29. In line 16, "all" renders the reduplicated *tar.* In line 17, the rendering "supreme" for $uru_{ru}dib$ is uncertain. (See Sjöberg, *TH,* pp. 62ff.) In line 18, transliterate the first complex as *dingir-di-bar-a* and take it to refer to Enlil, not Enki; "with" at the beginning of the line renders the *-da-* of the verb *im-da-kúš* in the line following. The meaning and implication of the rather ambiguous *kur* in this line are uncertain. (For the ambiguous *kur,* see Kramer's review of J. Van Dijk's *lugal-ud-me-lám-bi-nir-gál* in *JAOS* 105 [1985] 135–39). The meaning of the rubric *sa-gid-da* is uncertain; to judge from its initial *sa,* "string," it may have something to do with the manipulation of the strings of the lyre that presumably accompanied the chanting of this hymn.

Line 21. "Glory" is a reasonable surmise for the rather obscure *nir;* it is confirmed to some extent by the following "may he have no rival," which seems to be an elaboration of the "glory" that will accrue to Ur-Ninurta as a result of Enki's blessing. (The *-ma-* in Falkenstein's transliteration of the third complex is to be disregarded; as Kramer's collation in *Iraq* 36 notes, the sign is an erasure.) The rendering "antiphon" for the rubric *gišgal* that follows this line is reasonably ensured, but the linguistic analysis of its individual components is uncertain.

Lines 22–30. The implication of "you have walked first in heaven and earth," which is the literal rendering of *an-ki-a zà bí-dib,* is rather uncertain. For the reading and rendering of line 23, see Kramer's collation in *Iraq* 36. The ellipsis at the end of line 24 represents one or two missing signs. In line 25, the fourth sign from the end does not look like *GUB;* the rendering "you have brought acclaim" for the second half of the line is, however, reasonably ensured. In line 26 (and also in lines 27 and 28) the verbal forms are second-person preterits (not third-person as assumed by Falkenstein), and the subject is Enki. The implication of the rather crucial line 29 is uncertain; it seems to say that Enki with his superior *me* and awesome *melam* actually struck fear in the Ekur, and presumably also in his superiors An and Enlil who were worshiped there. (Note that the Ekur, Enlis's temple in Nippur, is here designated as the temple of both An and Enlil, for in the days when this hymn was composed An had already become a rather obsolescent deity whose powers had been turned over to Enlil, so much so that *an-enlil* was sometimes used as a compound name of Enlil. Note, however, that the author of this hymn treats the two deities as distinct individuals; see lines 6–12 and 13–20.) For reasons that will be readily apparent to the cuneiformist, Kramer renders lines 29 and 30 somewhat differently than does Falkenstein.

Lines 31–40. Note the unexpected intrusion of the rubric *sagarra* between lines 31 and 32, which like the rubric *sagidda* may refer to the manipulation of a stringed instrument. A freer rendering of lines 31–34 would read: "O Father Enki, when you take your seat on your fate-decreeing dais, may the king Ur-Ninurta, who has been endowed with glory by Enlil, he for whom you will have opened the house of wisdom where you have gathered[?] expertise supremely, become the leader of the Black Heads." A freer rendering of lines 35–36 would read: "Make the lion of kingship (i.e., Ur-Ninurta) shine forth divine terror upon whatever he has touched as long as humankind lives." Lines 37–40 seem to imply that Enlil was superior to Enki: the king must present to Enlil the heavy tribute of the regions between the lower and upper sea that Enki granted him in order to receive his (Enlil's) blessing. In line 38, "all" renders the reduplication of the verbal root.

Lines 41–43. "Occult utterance" renders du_{11}*-ge dib-ba* in line 41 (see G. Castellino, *Two Šulgi Hymns* [1972], pp. 114ff. The reasons for Kramer's rendering of line 43 (it differs from Falkenstein's) will be readily apparent to the cuneiformist. In the rubric "it is a *tigi* of Enki," the meaning of the word *tigi* is still moot; Kramer is inclined to render it by "lyric"—i.e., a song accompanied by the lyre.

33. The text was edited by Åke Sjöberg in *AZ* 63, 40–48. This translation differs only in minor details from that of Sjöberg.

In line 1, for the meaning of *galam,* see *CAD sub naklu,* 10/1, 187–88 (see also lines 12 and 20). In line 2, "makes the Anunna stand by" attempts to render su_8-su_8-*ub,* but even if correct the implication of the phrase remains obscure. In line 3, the verbal form following *zi-gal* is only partially preserved, and it is difficult to surmise the nature of Enki's action relating to the "living beings." In line 4, "godship" istead of "god" seems rather strange; the second half of the line is unintelligible. "Right," in line 5, renders literally the Sumerian *zi* (see also lines 8, 9, 13, 20); the particular nuance of the word varies in accordance with the word it qualifies. In line 6, "enduring" is no more than a guess for the rendering of the obscure *bar-UD.ME.* In line 8, the ellipsis is for the obscure *sag-gú-gál-la.* In line 9, "pronounces their noble name" may refer to the kings who hold the scepters and wear the crowns. In line 10, "alongside heaven and earth" may be a way of saying "as long as heaven and earth endure." In line 11, the ellipsis is for the fragmentary second part of the line. The rendering of line 12 is quite literal and may therefore seem a bit strange. In line 13, the ellipsis is for the obscure *a-ra—x-sig*$_7$-*sig*$_7$; "mysterious" renders *dug*$_4$-*ge-e-dib;* see the comment to line 41 of "Hymn to Enki with a Prayer for Ur-Ninurta." In line 14, "blossoms" is no more than a guess for the obscure *ta-ta-ub*$_4$. In line 15, "who wearies not" makes the reasonable assumption that the complex following *inim-ma* is to be restored to read *nu-kúš-ú* for relevant examples, see note 209 on p. 65 of *SKIZ.* In line 16 the ellipsis is for the obscure signs following *igi.* The rendering of lines 7–18 is quite literal (Sjöberg's rather free translation seems grammatically unjustified); "them" may perhaps refer to the "eternal princes" of line 11. In line 19, the first *me* of the third complex is probably an erasure. In line 20, the rendering assumes that the sign *ME* following *sag-KEŠDA* in the last complex is a scribal error. In line 21, "control" renders u_x-*ru;* see line 1 where it is rendered "controller." For numerous examples of this word and the ambiguities involved, see Sjöberg, *TH,* pp. 62ff. In line 22, "it" is assumed to refer to "control" in the preceding line; the ellipsis is for the illegible sign preceding *gim* in the third complex. In line 23, the ellipsis is for the *TÚG* of *TÚG-bi;* note that *TÚG* may be read *umuš,* "reason," but this meaning hardly fits the context. "Return" is a surmise. In line 24, the rendering "of the settled people" assumes that the *-bi* of *un-gar-ar-ra-bi* is a scribal error. In line 25, "of those who do not wander about" renders *nu-di-di-a* on the assumption that this complex parallels the *un-gar-gar-ra* of the preceding line. In line 26, "you have spoken to them like their father and mother" seems a bit strange.

34. This hymn to the *é-engur-ra,* "The House of the Sea," has been edited by Åke Sjöberg in *TH,* pp. 17–18; the translation here presented differs to some extent from that edition, and the more significant differences will be noted in this commentary. The hymn, which contains numerous obscure and enigmatic lines, may be divided into two sections: (1) a portrayal of the *é-engur-ra* as a banquet hall noted for purity, as an assembly hall of the gods where "no daylight (ever) comes"; (2) the selection of the *é-engur-ra* by Enki as the place to erect his Eridu house and to seat himself on its dais, for it was a house of unrivaled purity whose large oven provided bread for the divine meals, and was crowned by a ziggurat that reached to the sky.

In line 1, the implication of "fashioned together with Heaven and Earth" is rather unclear. In line 2, the poet introduces the theme of the temple as a banquet hall (see lines 4, 5, 8, 17, and 19)—note that the bakers of Eridu are mentioned in the Adapa myth (chapter 8, below). "Prince" (Sumerian *nun,* lines 3, 12, 20) is a frequently used epithet of Enki. The second sign in line 4 is *UNU* "banquet hall" (not *DU*$_6$); this follows a suggestion by Kramer's former student Jin Sup Kim and by Sol Cohen of Dropsie College. The rendering of line 5 is based largely on its parallelism with line 4. In line 7, *tigi*-songs are a well-known category of Sumerian hymns, probably accompanied by the lyre; the implication of "are of the *me*" is

not too clear; perhaps it means to say that they were performed in accordance with rules governed by the *me.* In line 8, the rendering "banquet-bowls"—i.e., *ezen-tùn* (rather than *bàd-GÍN*) = *isinnu makaltu*—is based on a suggestion byJin Sup Kim. In line 9, "gathering place" is a reasonable surmise for *nigin-gál.* In line 10, the rendering assumes that the first *kin* is for *ukkin,* "assembly," and that the second *kin* is an error for *EN* (that is, uru_x, "lofty"), as is indicated by the variant in A_1. The implication of "no daylight ever comes" is quite uncertain; perhaps it is to the oppressive heat of day that the u_4 refers to.

The translation of line 11 is difficult; the rendering assumes that *zà-kešda* has a meaning parallel to *sag-kešda,* "guardianship," "responsibility," and that $šita_x$ is a substantive meaning "purity." Lines 12–14 are rather strangely arranged in the text: the verb belonging to line 12 actually begins line 13, whereas the rest of line 13 consists of the beginning of line 14. "Face" in line 12/13 renders the ambiguous *mùš* (see also line 23). The meaning of 13/14 is quite uncertain and enigmatic, primarily because of the obscure *ad* and *mùš-BU.* Lines 14–19 provide the background and rationale for Enki's choice of the *é-engur-ra* as his abode, which is attested in the concluding lines of the hymn (lines 22–23). The meaning and implication of line 16 are uncertain; it seems rather out of place in the context. In line 17 "bears" is the literal translation of *ili;* it seems to connote the idea of "providing." Line 18, which concerns the ziggurat, is rather out of place between lines 17 and 19, both of which relate to the oven that seems to have played a major role in Enki's temple. In line 23, a rendering such as "abode," "dwelling," for *é,* "house," might be more precise and apropos, for the complex *é-engur-ra* itself contains the word *é,* "house."

35. For the edition of this brief composition, which is comparable to one of the biblical penitential psalms, see W. W. Hallo, *JAOS* 88, 82–88. Our translation is based on Hallo's valuable pioneer effort but, as the notes indicate, it differs to some extent from Hallo's rendering. Note, too, that this line enumeration follows that of Hallo's transliteration rather than that of his translation.

36. "Nature" renders the rather complex and ambiguous *nam* of *nam-ma-ni.*

37. "Turned me into a human being" attempts to render *nam-lú-ulù-uš mu-e-ni-*[ku_4-*re-en*] (the restoration of the verb is a reasonable surmise); the ancient scribes were to some extent the counterpart of the modern humanists.

38. "Feared" is a reasonable guess for the missing verb.

39. This statement seems to imply the rather unexpected presumption that stealing from the sacred offerings during festivities was not uncommon.

40. Namtar is the demon of death; "place of deceit" may refer to the Nether World, but if so, the implication of "deceit" is rather uncertain.

41. The meaning of the second half of this line is rather obscure.

42. It is difficult to surmise a reasonable restoration for this word, which is only partially preserved; the same is true for the word following "my" in line 22.

43. "At night" is a reasonable restoration.

44. This rendering assumes that the transliteration of the line should read: *dub-sar-me-en nì mu-zu-zu-a na-gá-aḫ-šè ba-*ku_4*-re-en.*

45. "Mockery" is the rendering for *su-lum-mar;* see Kramer, *JANES* 5, 251, comment on lines 55–59.

46. "Towpath" assumes that the correct reading of the second complex is *gú-má-gid* (the reading combines the variants of A and C); for *gú-má-gid,* "towpath," see Jerrold Cooper, *The Curse of Agade,* lines 264, 266, 273, and 275.

47. "It" refers to the "offering" of line 40.

48. It is difficult to surmise a reasonable restoration of the partially preserved complex preceding the verbal form.

49. "Compassion" is a reasonable guess for *šu-nigin.*

50. The second half of the line, which presumably parallels the meaning of the first half, is unintelligible.

Chapter 7

1. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (Philadelpia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), pp. 60–64.

2. A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University Press, 1964), pp. 180, 295–96.

3. Hans Dieter Betz, ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago: University Press, 1986), I. 335.

4. Ibid., I, 334.

5. Georg Luck, *Arcana Mundi, Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 3.

6. Ibid., p.4.

7. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 21.

8. Ibid., pp. 110–16.

9. Ibid., p. 21.

10. W. G. Lambert, "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," *JCS* 16 (1962) 69.

11. Adam Falkenstein, *Die Haupttypen der Sumerischen Beschwörung: Literarisch Untersucht* (Leipzig: August Pries, 1931), p. 267.

12. The translation follows Erich Ebeling, *Tod und Leben* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1931), I, 170–71, no. 36.

13. That so many of Enki's speeches end in a string of precatives (*hé-* forms of the verb; Akkadian *lu*) in the myths and in the magical texts suggests that the usual explanation of the verb form should be qualified to cover these cases. Bendt Alster, for example, considers the precative in a group of imperatives and characterizes it as a "wish," or "weak command," in *Studies in Sumerian Proverbs* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1975). Indeed the precative can be used in all sorts of nonmagical and nonincantatory contexts. One might consider the range of "oaths" and "swear words" in modern English. As often as not, they have little force and less "meaning" in the usual sense. Terms like "zounds" and "ods bodkins" are mildly ridiculous, yet they betray an earlier use when the oath was thought to have greater force, when the reference to "God's wounds" and "God's body" was clear and the references had almost magical power. The progressive weakening of prayer language, curses, and oaths has followed a historical decline in what was orthodox belief. What has been almost completely lost in our modern use of such language is precisely what the Marduk/Ea magic seeks to preserve. Whatever the usual force of the precative in ordinary Sumerian and Akkadian discourse might have been—a mere wish, as often as not—the context in the myths and magical texts suggests a far more powerful, efficacious utterance bringing Enki's speeches to an end.

14. For a discussion of the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary speech acts, see Malcolm Coulthard, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (Burnt Hill, Harlow, Essex: Longmans, 1977), pp. 11–29. The distinction has proved to be very productive in linguistics, especially in the study of discourse analysis.

15. The translation follows Falkenstein, *Haupttypen,* pp. 89–93. The line count follows Henry Frederick Lutz, *Selected Sumerian and Babylonian Texts* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1919), pp. 35–40.

16. Stephen Langdon, "Babylonian Cult Symbols," *Sumerian Liturgies and Psalms* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1919), p. 36.

17. See Elena Cassin, *Le splendeur divine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968); and *CAD sub melammu,* 10/2, 9.

18. See *AHw sub utukku,* 1445; *CAD sub gallû,* 5, 18.

19. See J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry," *Assyriological Studies* (Chicago) 16 (1965) 289–98.

20. Ibid., p. 294.

21. The translation follows Eric Reiner, *Šurpu, A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations* (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), pp. 30–31. See also Maier, "Translating Archaic Liteature," *Babel* 29 (1983) 76–82.

22. Reiner, *Šurpu,* pp. 55–56.

23. Wilson, "Introduction," p. 295.

24. On the "effective simile," see Delbert R. Hillers, "The Effective Simile in Biblical Literature," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 181–86.

25. Reiner, *Šurpu,* p. 57.

26. The translation is based on Reiner, ibid., pp. 36–38.

27. For the wilderness *(edin/ṣēru)* in this light, see Hayim Tawil, "'Azazel the Prince of the Steepe': A Comparative Study," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 (1980) 43–59.

28. *CAD sub ašāgu,* I/2, 408, 410–11.

29. See Knut Leonard Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (Hildesheim: Georg Olm Verlag, 1974), pp. 456–58.

30. Kinnier Wilson, "Introduction," pp. 293–94.

31. Ibid., p. 293. The translation is based on Adam Falkenstein, "Sumerische Beschwörungen aus Boğazköy," *ZA* 45 (1939) 8–41.

32. The translation is based on J. van Dijk, "VAT 8382: Eine zweisprachige Königsritual," *Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967), 233–68.

33. On these habits of syntactic and semantic parallelism typical of Sumerian poetry, see also Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978), pp. 15–18; and Adele Berlin, *Enmerkar and Enšuḫkešdanna* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1979), pp. 13–22.

34. *CAD sub asakku,* I/2, 326.

35. Part of the text was translated by A. Kilmer in "A Note on the Babylonian Mythological Explanation of the Lunar Eclipse," pp. 372–74 of Guitty Azarpay, "The Eclipse Dragon on an Arabic Frontispieceminiature," *JAOS* 98 (1978) 363–74. Elsewhere the translation is based on R. Campbell Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia* (New York: AMS, 1976 [1903]), I, 88–109, and suggestions by Wolfgang Heimpel.

36. See *The Devils,* lines 205–9.

37. The translation follows F. Thureau-Dangin, "Tablettes Ḫurrites provenant de Mari," *RA* 36 (1939) 3; see also E. A. Speiser, *ANET,* pp. 100–101.

38. The translation follows the transliteration of S. A. Picchioni, *Il Poemetto di Adapa* (Budapest: Készült az ELTE Sokszorositóüzembében, 1981), pp. 116–18. The line breaks differ from the earlier edition by J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich'sche, 1915), I, 965–66, no. 356. For a translation, see E. A. Speiser, *ANET,* p. 101.

39. On Dumuzu and Gishzida, see Tallqvist, pp. 285, 406, 469–71.

40. See Samuel Noah Kramer, "Mythology of Sumer and Akkad," *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 126.

41. *ANET,* p. 102.

42. *ANET,* p. 101; *CAD sub adapu,* I/1, 102.

43. Lambert, "A Catalogue," 64, 73–74; Stanley Mayer Burstein, *The "Babyloniaca" of Berossus* (Malibu: Undena, 1978), pp. 13–14. The identification has been challenged, however. Adapa may not be Uanna, but rather Utuabzu or Utuabba; see Rykle Borger, "Die Beschwörungsserie *Bīt Mēseri* und die Himmelfahrt Henochs," *JNES* 33 (1974) 186, 192.

44. Lambert, "Catalogue," pp. 73–74.

45. *Gilgamesh,* pp. 253–57.

46. *Gilgamesh,* p. 263. The translation follows the transliterations of R. Campbell Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgamesh; Text, Transliteration, and Notes* (Oxford, 1930); and Aaron Shaffer, "Sumerian Sources of Tablet XII of the Epic of Gilgameš," dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1963. See also E. A. Speiser, *ANET,* p. 98.

47. The translation follows the text of Theo Bauer, *Akkadische Lesestücke* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1953), I, 52.

48. *CAD sub assinnu,* I/2, 341.

49. See Kramer, "BM 29616: The Fashioning of the *gala,*" *Acta Sumerologica* 3 (1981) 1–11.

50. The translation follows the transliteration of O. R. Gurney, "The Sultantepe Tablets (Continued)," *Anatolian Studies* 10 (1960) 112–14. See also *ANET,* p. 509. For the earlier version, see Knudtzon, I, 968–75, no. 357, and E. A. Speiser, *ANET,* p. 103.

51. A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University Press, 1964), pp. 173–83, 183–98.

52. S. H. Hooke, *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), presents examples in an "excursus on Tammuz," pp. 29–40.

53. Beatrice Teissier, *Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopoli Collection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. xxvii.

54. Pierre Amiet, "The Mythological Repertory in Cylinder Seals of the Agade Period (c. 2335–2155)," *Ancient Art in Seals,* Edith Porada, ed. (Princeton: Princeton Univesity Press, 1980), p. 35.

55. Ann Perkins, "Narration in Babylonian Art," *American Journal of Archaeology,* 61 (1957) 58–59.

56. E. Douglas Van Buren, *The Flowing Vase and the God with Streams* (Berlin: Hans Schoetz, 1933), p. 3.

57. The popularity of the "god with streams" can be seen as well in the area of modern Turkey. See Nimet Özgüç, *Seals and Seal Impressions of Level Ib from Karum Kanish* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1968), especially among the Old Babylonian and Old Syrian seals; and *The Anatolian Group of Cylinder Seal Impressions from Kültepe* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1965), especially among the representations of Ea, Usmu (Isimud), the nude hero, bull-man, fish-man, lion-headed fish, the goat-fish, and the bird-man, pp. 60–72.

58. Perkins uses analogies to illustrate the two methods. The use of successive episodes is much like the Stations of the Cross in Roman Catholic practice, whereas the use of a single figure to stand for the entire story is analagous to the crucifix, which recalls the whole passion story and its link to the redemption of humankind in Christ's sacrifice.

59. Van Buren, *Vase,* p. 41.

60. Amiet, "Repertory," p. 43–44.

61. Van Buren, *Vase,* p. 87.

62. Ibid., pp. 97, 106.

63. Stanley Mayer Burstein, *The "Babyloniaca" of Berossus* (Malibu: Undena, 1978), p. 14.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., p. 13, n.8.

66. *Vase,* pp. 115–16.

67. Ibid., p. 124.
68. Ibid., p. 143.
69. Oppenheim, *Mesopotamia,* p. 42.

Chapter 8

1. Stanley Mayer Burstein, *The "Babyloniaca" of Berossus* (Malibu: Undena, 1978), p. 20.
2. Ibid., p. 6.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
4. Josef Karst, tr. *Die Chronik, Eusebius Werk,* part 5 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911), p. 10, n.10; Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), part 3.C, p. 379. The pun and the explanation are preserved in Akkadian. See Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., "Enki's Command to Atrahasis," *Kramer Anniversary Volume,* Barry L. Eichler, ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976), pp. 241–47.
5. The remark could mean "to pray to the gods" or "to the gods, to say prayers."
6. See Norman O. Brown, tr. *Theogony* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), p. 53.
7. The translations follow W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs, The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969). The main text is a 1,245-line work in three tablets from the hand of a "junior scribe" named Ku-Aya. The eight-columned tablets were written in the Old Babylonian period in the city of Sippar. The greater number of manuscripts are from that period, but there are also manuscripts from the Middle Babylonian, Neo-Assyrian, and Neo-Late Babylonian periods.
8. In *Gilgamesh,* the flood takes up most of Tablet XI of the twelve tablets; see John Gardner and John Maier, *Gilgamesh* (New York: Knopf, 1984), pp. 226–52.
9. The translation (from the first tablet) follows Lambert and Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs,* pp. 57–59.
10. The translation (from the third tablet) follows Lambert and Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs,* p. 89.
11. The translation follows *Gilgamesh,* pp. 226–27.
12. See comments in *Gilgamesh,* pp. 228–30 and 291–300.
13. The translation follows *Gilgamesh,* p. 227.
14. Anne Draffkorn Kilmer, "The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and its Solution as Reflected in the Mythology," *Or.* 41 (1972) 160–77.
15. The translation follows *Gilgamesh,* p. 240.
16. See comments in *Gilgamesh,* pp. 240–44.
17. See W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," *The Bible in its Literary Milieu: Contemporary Essays,* John Maier and Vincent Tollers, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), pp. 285–98. For a reading of the biblical version of the flood, see chapter 4 of Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), pp. 83–107. See also comments in *Gilgamesh,* pp. 229ff.
18. The text was edited by Brigitte Groneberg, "Untersuchungen zum hymnisch-epischen Dialekt der altbabylonischen literarischen Texte," dissertation, Münster (Westfalische-Wilhelms-Universität), 1971. The passages that follow are (with very few modifications) from Benjamin R. Foster, "Ea and Ṣaltu," in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of J. J. Finkelstein,* Maria de Jong Ellis, ed. (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1977), pp. 79–84.
19. Foster, "Ea," p. 79.
20. Ibid., p. 84.
21. A. Leo Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology I," *Or.,* n.s. 16 (1947) 210ff. See

also Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 167–91, and N. K. Sandars, *Poems of Heaven and Hell from Ancient Mesopotamia* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971), which contains a long introduction and translation, pp. 11–112.

22. Oppenheim, "Mythology," p. 214.

23. The translation is based on the transliterations of Stephen Langdon, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923); P. Antonius Deimel, *Enuma Eliš* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1936); and the text prepared by W. G. Lambert and Simon B. Parker, *Enuma eliš* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966). See also translations by E. A. Speiser, *ANET,* p. 63, and Thorkild Jacobsen, *Treasures,* pp. 173–74. For a more detailed examination of the passage, see Maier, "Is Tiamat Really Mother Ḫubur?" *Literary Onomastics Studies* 9 (1982) 91–110.

24. For the Old Babylonian texts, see B. Hruška, *Der Mythenadler Anzu in Literatur und Vorstellung des Alten Mesopotamien* (Budapest: Készült az ELTE Sokszorositóützembében, 1975), pp. 158–60. Hruška's edition is based on the earlier work of Vincent Scheil, "Fragments de la Légende du Dieu Zû," *RA* 35 (1938) 16; Jean Nougayrol, "Ningirsu Vainquerer de Zû," *RA* 46 (1952) 90; and E. A. Speiser, *ANET,* p. 111. The translation of the Assyrian version follows Erich Ebeling, "Eine Neue Tafel des Akkadischen Zû-Mythos," *RA* 46 (1952) 36–38. See also A. K. Grayson's translation, *ANET,* Supplement, p. 516. See also Thomas Fish, "The Zû Bird," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 31 (1948) 162–71, and Maier, "Three Voices of Enki: Strategies in the Translation of Archaic Literature," *Comparative Criticism* 6 (1984) 101–17.

25. This is not to deny that *Enuma Elish* had a more immediate source in the work called *Lugal-e,* with which it shares many features. See J. Van Dijk, ed. *LUGAL UD ME-LÁM-bi NIR-ĞÁL* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), I, 9–19. It is possible that the Marduk/EA ritual tradition goes back at least to Archaic Sumerian; see, e.g., text #40 (VAT 12575) in Anton Deimel, *Die Inschriften von Fara,* vol. 2 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1923), pp. 37–40.

26. For the background to the rise of Marduk, city god of Babylon, see W. G. Lambert, "Studies in Marduk," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984) 1–9. Lambert believes that *Enuma Elish* is a later work than had been thought previously, "a product of the very campaign that resulted in the official promotion of Marduk in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I, perhaps composed during that very reign as a theological justification of the change" (p. 4)—that is, ca. 1124–1103 B.C.

27. From Tablet V (lines 107–16). For the transliterations upon which the translation of *Enuma Elish* is based, see note 27, above. For Tablet V, see B. Landsberger and J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "The Fifth Tablet of *Enuma Eliš,*" *JNES* 20 (1961) 154–79. Note that other texts assign the speech not to Ea and Damkina but to the older pair, Laḫmu and Laḫamu; those texts follow the Assyrian tradition (in which the city god Aššur is hero) that accepts a different genealogy of the hero; this is the Babylonian tradition in which Marduk claimed Ea and Damkina as parents.

28. The interpretation is Jacobsen's, *Treasures,* pp. 176–80, 183–86.

29. From Tablet VI (lines 11–16). For the transliterations upon which the translation is based, see note 27; also René Labat, *Le poème babylonien de la création* (Paris: Librarie d'amérique, 1935), and Wolfram von Soden, "Neue Bruchstücke zur sechsten und siebenten Tafel des Weltschöpfungsepos Enuma elis," *ZA* 47 (1942) 1–25; and Speiser's translation, *ANET,* p. 68.

30. Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology I," p. 230, observed not only the way Marduk's heroic venture against Tiamat is a "doublet" of Ea's act against Apsû (and Babylon is a double of Ea's temple at Eridu), but also a "hidden rivalry" between father and son in the epic. Oppenheim sees an opposition between the "conservative, law-abiding, and

cautious" attitude of Ea and the hasty recklessness of Marduk. The rivalry of the gods runs throughout the poem. Jacobsen, *Treasures,* pp. 186–90, sees parricide as a second structural line in the epic. Note that the early generations of the gods are pairs like Apsû and Tiamat, Laḫmu and Laḫamu, Anshar and Kishar. But then Anshar creates Anu in his own likeness, and Anu creates Ea in his likeness. Not until Ea and Damkina are brought in here is the female side in the geneology that ends with Marduk marked.

31. Tablet VII (lines 137–42).

32. Wolfram von Soden, "Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt des Akkadischen," *ZA* 41 (1933) 165.

33. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirallisuuden, 1952, p. 64. The short form of the divine name YHWH, Yah, would seem to be the form that influenced Yao, or IAÕ, the divine name found at Qumran, in the Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi, and importantly in late magical texts. See *The Nag Hammadi Library,* James M. Robinson, ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 492, and *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation,* Hans Dieter Betz, ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), p. 335.

34. J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), pp. 19–21 and p. 80, n.117.

35. *CT* 24, 14:48.

36. See, for example, Hans Gustav Güterbock, "Hittite Mythology," in Samuel Noah Kramer, ed. *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1951), pp. 160–72.

37. For an overview of the Hurrian influence on the Hittites, see Hans Gustav Güterbock, "Hittite Mythology," pp. 155–72, and more recently his "Hethitische Literatur" in Wolfgang Röllig et al., *Altorientalische Literaturen* (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1978), pp. 211–53. See also Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., "Hittite Mythological Texts: A Survey," in Hans Goedick and J. J. M. Roberts, eds., *Unity and Diversity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 136–45.

38. See Albrecht Goetze, *ANET,* p. 121, and Güterbock, "Mythology," p. 161.

39. The translation is based on Heinrich Otten, *Mythen vom Gotte Kumarbi; Neue Fragmente* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1950), p. 12, and P. Meriggi, "I Miti di Kumarpi, Il Kronos Currico," *Athenaeum,* n.s. 41 (1953) 142. See also Güterbock, "Mythology," p. 163.

40. J. C. Macqueen, *The Hittites and Their Contemporaries in Asia Minor* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1975), p. 145. Macqueen believes that Hittite literature does not show a literature that "freezes" oral poetry; rather, the style suggests "merely literary reminiscences of Mesopotamian technique" (p. 144).

41. The translation is based on Hans Gustav Güterbock, *The Song of Ullikummi; Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth* (New Haven: ASOR, 1952), pp. 44–47; see also Goetze, *ANET,* p. 125.

42. The translation is based on Güterbock, *Ullikummi,* pp. 46–47. See also Goetze, *ANET,* p. 125, and Maurice Vieyra, *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (Paris: Librarie Arthème Fayard et Editions Denoël, 1970), p. 554. See also Maier, "Three Voices of Enki: Strategies in the Translation of Archaic Literature," E. S. Shaffer, ed. *Comparative Criticism* 6 (1984) 112–13.

43. In addition to wordplay involving *ardala* and the verb in 54′, *ardu-,* "to saw," there is play on *šiya-,* "to seal," and *šiuni-* (or *siuni-*), "god," and play on the term for "former" or "ancient" *(karuili-).* The gods addressed are the "former gods" (*karuiliyas siunas* and *karuiliyas siunes* in 48′–49′ and just *siunas* in the final line. They are to open the "seal-houses" *(siuannas parna)* and to bring out the old "seal" *(siyatar).* Afterward they are to seal the storehouses again *(siyandu).* The weaving of the words tightens the passage and makes it delightful. Twice the gods are *karuiliyas* ("former" or "olden") as opposed to "ancient," *annalla-,* in 50′, as are the "fathers," *karuiliyas attas.* The gods are to recall the "former

words" and to use the "former cutting tool." And the return to the "olden" is emphasized in a phrase that describes in a most delightful way the "seal-house" as "old, fatherly, and grandfatherly," *annalla attalla ḫuḫatalla.*

44. *CAD sub bīt kunukki,* 8, 548; see also Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., *An English-Hittite Glossary* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1967), pp. 50, 78.

45. Like the Akkadian *sipparru,* the bronze cutting tool (*AHw,* 1048). See III.iii.42′, where the tool is a "cutter," *kuruzzi.*

46. The translation is based on Güterbock, *Ullikummi,* pp. 46–48; see also Goetze, *ANET,* p. 125.

47. Güterbock, "Mythology," pp. 167–71.

48. The break in the speech, something like a "dramatic pause," provides a good example of formulaic language in the Hittite "epic" poetry influenced by Mesopotamian narrative. Each section is introduced by identical language: "Ea began to speak to Tashmishu." I. McNeill has made much of these introductory formulae. On the basis of his study of the formulae in comparison with Homer's use of the formula, McNeill concludes that the basis of Hittite meter is stress (not quantity, as in Homer). See "The Metre of the Hittite Epic," *Anatolian Studies* 13 (1963) 237–42. J. C. Macqueen thinks the metrical structure in the Kumarbi cycle (two cola, with two stressed and a varying number of unstressed syllables in each cola) is "probably" derived from Mesopotamia (p. 145).

49. Jana Siegelová, *Appu-Märchen und Ḫedammu-Mythus* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1971), pp. 82–84.

50. The translation is based on Siegelová, #6 (lines 8–15), p. 46.

Chapter 9

1. Charles Doria, "Pound, Olson, and the Classical Tradition," *boundary 2,* 2 (1973/1974) 134.

2. Among post–World War II American writers who have incorporated Ancient Near Eastern mythology (often in opposition to now traditionally Western Greek and Roman mythology) in their own writings are Ed Sanders, John Gardner, Rhoda Lerman, Ishmael Reed, Thomas Pynchon, N. J. Loftis, Armand Schwerner, Denise Levertov, and A. R. Ammons. See Maier and Parvin Ghassemi, "Postmodernity and the Ancient Near East," *Alif, Journal of Comparative Poetics* 4 (1984) 77–98. Harris Lenowitz is a poet who translates Ancient Near Eastern myths—e.g., for Jerome Rothenberg's *Origins, Creation Texts from the Ancient Mediterranean* (1976) and for the journal *Alcheringa.* Armand Schwerner has written poems that have the typographical form of a scholarly edition of cuneiform poetry, complete with gaps in the text and learned notes. On Charles Olson's leadership in a project to use ancient non-Western mythology in postmodern poetry, see Maier, "Charles Olson and the Poetic Uses of Mesopotamian Scholarship," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 227–33, to which is appended "Musical Settings for Cuneiform Literature: A Discography" by J. M. Sasson, pp. 233–35.

3. Charles Olson, *The Special View of History,* Ann Charters, ed. (Berkeley: Oyez, 1970), p. 15.

4. Charles Olson, *Causal Mythology* (San Francisco: Four Seasons, 1969), pp. 3–4. The poem was reprinted in *The Maximus Poems,* vol. 3, Charles Boer and George F. Butterick, eds. (New York: Grossman, 1975), p. 37.

5. Olson, *Causal Mythology,* pp. 10–13.

6. See, in this regard, the publications of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes—e.g., the works of Frances Yates like *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University Press, 1964). Increasingly in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance the esoteric tradition was maintained by intellectuals, writers, and artists.

7. Kramer, "Sumerian Literature and the Bible," in *The Bible in its Literary Milieu,* John Maier and Vincent L. Tollers, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), pp. 273–75.

8. Kramer, ibid., pp. 277–81. For a rather different view of the extent of Mesopotamian literature on the Bible, see, in *The Bible in its Literary Milieu,* W. G. Lambert's "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," pp. 285–97.

9. This is not, of course, to deny that oral traditions carry along stories at least as efficiently as literary traditions. When two versions of the "same" story appear, the scholar has a tendency to see oral tradition as the link between them. In the case of ancient and nonliving cultures, it is very difficult to recover oral traditions, though biblical scholars, especially form critics, have attempted to do just that by relating a literary "form" to its original *Sitz im Leben*—i.e., its situation in the living community. However successful the attempt may be, it is very different from the survey sketched here. Classical scholars have also worked extensively on the question of oral tradition. See, for example, work of scholars in very different areas of literature represented in the journal *Oral Tradition.* The flood provides a series of very different literary texts that stand in some relationship to one another. Exactly the number and kind of intermediary steps—often to be found in an oral tradition—is not yet an issue here.

10. The Sumerian flood story was edited by Miguel Civil in W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 138–45; notes, pp. 167–72. Civil believes that the single text we have is probably from the holy city of Nippur, but not earlier than the end of the first dynasty of Isin—i.e., after 1794 B.C. The flood was not, according to Civil, of great concern to the Sumerians, but became popular in the Isin dynasty. The Sumerian version may not, then, be earlier than the Akkadian literature that developed a major interest in the flood.

11. Civil, ibid., pp. 172, 144–45.

12. See, e.g., in different versions of *Atra-ḫasīs,* pp. 93, 129, 133, the wife mentioned as part of the Noah-figure's family.

13. XI.189–92. John Gardner and John Maier, tr. *Gilgamesh, Translated from the Sin-leqi-unninni Version* (New York: Knopf, 1984), p. 240.

14. For a discussion of the problem, see Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), pp. 238–40. In a careful analysis Tigay shows the subtle differences between the Old Babylonian *Gilgamesh,* which does not appear to contain the flood story, and the Middle Babylonian version, which contains it; and the differences between the Gilgamesh version of the flood and the Atra-ḫasīs tradition.

15. Gardner and Maier, *Gilgamesh,* pp. 239–40.

16. Stanley Mayer Burstein, *The "Babyloniaca" of Berossus* (Malibu: Undena, 1978), p. 20.

17. The translation is E. A. Speiser's, in *Genesis* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), p. 49. Speiser has noted the similarities and contrasts between the Mesopotamian accounts and the biblical flood story.

18. Especially important are the suras translated by A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, 1955): "The Battlements," "Hood," "The Forbidding," and "Noah."

19. Arberry, ibid., p. 288.

20. David Bevington, *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 296.

21. Ibid., p. 298.

22. Ibid., p. 302.

23. Ibid., p. 290.

24. The texts are available in translation in *The Nag Hammadi Library,* James M. Robinson, gen. ed. (New York: Harper, 1977). One, "Melchizedek," mentions Noah in a list

of men from Adam to Melchizedek (p. 401), but does not narrate the flood. Another, "The Thought of Norea," is important in understanding the importance of Norea, daughter of Eve, who is sometimes considered the wife of Noah (pp. 404–5). (Sometimes she is the wife-sister of Seth, the son of Eve who replaces Abel; sometimes she is the wife of Shem.) Birgir A. Pearson thinks Norea is a Gnostic version of Na'amath, a woman of Jewish legends (p. 404).

25. *Nag Hammadi Library,* pp. 258–59. The "vigor of our eternal knowledge" is destroyed in humans when Adam admits to having a "sweet desire" for Eve, and Adam knew he had come under "the authority of death" (p. 257). Jean Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions International, 1986), p. 43, points out that just as Deucalion is identified with Noah in the Gnostic texts, his wife Pyrrha is identified with Noah's wife. Norea as Seth's wife is identified with the Mandaean Nuraitha, p. 155.

26. *Nag Hammadi Library,* p. 114.

27. Similarly, "The Concept of Our Great Power," *Nag Hammadi Library,* pp. 285–86, portrays the God of the Hebrew Bible as "the father of the flesh," who avenges himself by means of the flood. The father of the flesh found Noah pious and preached piety for 120 years, but no one listened. The flood saves "Noah and his sons," but brings an end to the eon of the flesh. The "psychic eon" then begins. But no role is assigned to Noah's wife.

28. *Nag Hammadi Library,* pp. 152–60. See also the discussion in Doresse, *Secret Books,* pp. 159–60. Doresse considers the work an abridgement of a certain "Book of Norea" mentioned by Iranaeus and Epiphanius. Doresse notes the influence of the story in Manicheism and among the Mandaeans, p. 164.

29. Doresse, ibid., p. 156. For the significance of the feminine in the deity and the related exaltation of women in the biblical tradition—especially Eve and Norea—see Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage, 1979), esp. chap. 3, "God the Father/God the Mother."

30. Knut Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1974), pp. 232–33.

31. Robert M. Grant, *Gods and the One God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), pp. 35–36.

32. E. Douglas Van Buren, *The Flowing Vase and the God with Streams* (Berlin: Hans Schoetz, 1933), pp. 142–43.

33. Grant, *Gods,* p. 35.

34. Ibid., p. 71.

35. The process predated Alexander, but the great expansion of Greek influence in the Hellenistic period and the emergence of Alexandria as a multicultural intellectual center greatly accelerated the process. For an earlier example, note Aeschylus's treatment of the Persian gods in *The Persians.* Although the Persians are perceived culturally as the Other by Aeschylus, the Greek playwright does not make the gods of Persia in any way exotic. They function the way Greek gods would; and Aeschylus gives them the names of Greek gods. The spread of goddesses like Inanna, Ishtar, the Syrian Goddess, Anath, and Isis through vast regions and very different cultures must have been accomplished because they shared many basic features.

36. Burstein, *"Babyloniaca,"* pp. 14–15, 20. Berossus did not attempt to hellenize (other than adopting Greek spellings) humans or semidivine beings, like the Noah-figure he calls Xisouthros (Sumerian, Ziusudra). The spelling of Ea's name in Berossus is Aos, p. 30.

37. An excellent example is in Norman Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 29–42.

38. B. W. Anderson, "From Analysis to Synthesis: The Interpretation of Genesis 1–11," *JBL* 97 (1978) 23–29.

39. This is the argument advanced by Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before*

Abraham Was (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985). For some comparisons between the *Gilgamesh* version and the biblical account of the flood, see Gardner and Maier, *Gilgamesh,* pp. 228–38.

40. Amal Dunqul's poem, translated from the Arabic as "A Special Interview with Noah's Son," was presented by Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud at a meeting of the International Comparative Literature Association at the University of Sussex, August 1985. The key quranic suras are "Noah," "The Battlements," "The Forbidding," and especially "Hood."

41. In some forms of Gnosticism the coming of the Messiah ended the "psychic" era and inaugurated the final stage, the "pneumatic" or spiritual era. Valentinian Gnosticism considered that the universe itself was divided into three ontological levels: hylic, psychic, and pneumatic. See Elaine H. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), p. 52. The threefold division was also a hermeneutical principle. Some would interpret a work on one level, the more advanced on another. Gnosis is achieved by those who have found the pneumatic level of existence.

42. Marcel Brion, *Art of the Romantic Era* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 184.

43. Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1964), pp. 158–59.

44. Klibansky et al., *Saturn,* p. 153.

45. Doresse, *Secret Books,* pp. 318–20.

46. Klibansky, p. 134. "Cunning trickster" is Norman O. Brown's, in Hesiod, *Theogony* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), p. 58.

47. Klibansky, et al., *Saturn,* p. 134.

48. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* F. N. Robinson, ed., 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 41.

49. Klibansky, et al., *Saturn,* p. 155.

50. Ibid., pp. 155–59.

51. *De vita triplici,* II,15, cited in Klibansky et al., *Saturn,* pp. 271–73. Ficino was apparently the first to make explicit the connection between Aristotle's observation that gifted persons are often melancholic (under the influence of Saturn) and the Neoplatonic exaltation of "divine frenzy," a kind of madness higher than reason. See Klibansky, et al., ibid., p. 259.

52. *The Poems of George Chapman,* Phyllis B. Bartlett, ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), lines 20–29.

53. There is a tradition that links Cronus/Saturn with the Mesopotamian god Ninurta, whose characteristics are much involved with Enki. Jacobsen (*Treasures,* pp. 127–34), while seeing Ninurta mainly as "warlike prowess," isolates his features as the thunderbird, the warrior king, the rain god, and the power in the flood. For other attributes of Ninurta, gleaned from epithets given him, see Tallqvist, *Götterepitheta,* pp. 421–27.

54. In Hesiod the creative energy of Zeus is exhibited in procreation. Even more obviously, though, the aim of *Theogony* was to "trace the history of the divine government of the universe from the first patriarch Sky (Uranus) through his son Cronus, the head of the Titans, to its culmination in the reign of Zeus the son of Cronus and head of the Olympian gods" (Brown, *Theogony,* pp. 7–8.

55. The development of a Father/Son theology in Christianity needs no comment here. What is more important about theological and philosophical concepts of the father in antiquity is the way in which the older way can be understood as the "original" or "essential" way. One appeals to the father when matters now are simply too corrupt or complex. The Neoplatonic hierarchy of intellectual powers, with intellect "above" and more "original" and primordial than reason, is one form the distinction takes. Valentinian Gnosticism made much of "the logos emerging from the 'depth,' from the 'abyss,' or . . . from the Father" (Pagels, *Johannine Gospel,* pp. 114, 119).

56. Brown, *Theogony,* p. 58.

57. Ibid., p. 66.

58. Louis L. Orlin, *Ancient Near Eastern Literature, A Bibliography of One Thousand Items on the Cuneiform Literatures of the Ancient World* (Ann Arbor: Campus Publishers, 1969), provides a bibliography, pp. 107–8. Brown considers the parallels, *Theogony,* pp. 37–45.

59. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians,* Thomas Taylor, tr. (London: Bertram Dobell, 1895), pp. 20–21.

60. Hans Güterbock discusses the Hittite parallels with *Theogony* in "Hittite Mythology," *Mythologies of the Ancient World,* Samuel Noah Kramer, ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 160–72.

61. G. S. Kirk, *Myth, Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Berkeley: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 213–20.

62. Kirk, ibid., p. 217. The names are somewhat modified in this tabulation. Kirk refers to Teshub only as the storm-god, and he identifies Sky as Ouranos, Earth as Gaia, and Cronus as Kronos.

63. Güterbock, "Hittite Mythology," p. 161.

64. The analysis follows Güterbock, "Hittite Mythology," pp. 161–71.

65. Kirk, *Myth,* p. 218. "Enki and Ninḫursag: A Sumerian Paradise Myth" is taken up especially, pp. 91–117. Kirk sees his analysis as differing from both Thorkild Jacobsen's method in seeing Sumerian myths as allegories of nature, and Kramer's method, which is to attend very closely to the manifest conflicts and relationships among the anthropomorphic gods in the stories.

66. Kirk, *Myth,* p. 95.

67. Kirk, ibid., p. 98. Kirk takes the position that Mesopotamian civilization developed in the fourth millennium B.C. around a large-scale canal system built at that time.

68. Ibid., pp. 102–3. The other Sumerian myths Kirk considers are "Enlil and Ninlil" and "Inanna and Shukalletuda," ibid., pp. 99–105.

69. Kramer, *Mythologies,* p. 95.

70. Kirk, *Myth,* p. 116.

71. Margaret Whitney Green, for example, has suggested that the "rite of pasage," a concept borrowed from anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, is a significant pattern underlying Sumerian myths. In her review of Gertrud Farber-Flügge's *Der Mythos "Inanna und Enki" unter besonderer Berüchsichtigung der Liste der me,* in *JAOS* 96 (1976) 283–86, Green linked the recurring themes of fertility and sexuality in Sumerian journey myths like "Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech" "with major events of the individual life cycle pertaining to maturation, marriage, and reproduction." Thus she interprets the myth as a puberty initiation rite.

72. Kirk, *Myth,* p. 198; Brown, *Theogony,* pp. 43–45.

73. For Dilmun as the place of the Golden Age, see Michael Rice, *Search for the Paradise Land* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 261 and chapters 5 and 6 generally. Rice thinks of Enki as the Trickster, after Jung, p. 274.

74. Kirk, *Myth,* p. 115; Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia,* p. 177.

Chapter 10

1. For the presentation scenes involving "the god with streams," see chapter 7, above, and E. Douglas Van Buren, *The Flowing Vase and the God with Streams* (Berlin: Hans Schoetz, 1933), pp. 9ff.

2. Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon, 1967), p. 72. For the philosophical background of hermeneutics and the connection between modern

hermeneutics and biblical hermeneutics, see Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), and Lynn M. Poland, *Literary Criticism and Biblical Hermeneutics: A Critique of Formalist Approaches* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985).

3. Ricoeur, *Symbolism,* pp. 175–90.

4. Ibid., p. 184.

5. A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964), p. 177. The stories of the gods "form something like a fantastic screen, enticing as they are in their immediate appeal, seductive in their far-reaching likeness to stories told all over the ancient Near East and around the Mediterranean, but still a screen which one must penetrate to reach the hard core of evidence that bears directly on the forms of religious experience of Mesopotamian man."

6. The numbering of the sonnet has a minor bearing on the matter. As A. L. Clements points out, one numbering scheme (Roman numerals) represents an old, rather arbitrary arrangement of the poems; the other an attempt to place the poems in a larger sequence of poems: *John Donne's Poetry,* A. L. Clements, ed. (New York: Norton, 1966), p. 82. The sonnet appears on p. 86. Here the divisions of the sonnet have been marked.

7. For an overview of New Criticism and literary history, see Harold P. Simonson, *Strategies in Criticism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1971), chapters 2 and 7. For the place of formalist literary theories in the larger context of hermeneutics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Poland, *Literary Criticism,* esp. chapters 1–3.

8. For a sampling of critical debate on the sonnet, see Clements, *Donne's Poetry,* pp. 246–59.

9. For an attempt to "overcome" the Greek metaphysical tradition using the insights of philosophers Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, see Joseph S. O'Leary, *Questioning Back, The Overcoming of Metaphysics in the Christian Tradition* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985). On the Nicene Creed, see pp. 212–21.

10. Consider Elaine Pagels's remark that "contemporary Christianity, diverse and complex as we find it, actually may show more unanimity than the Christian churches of the first and second centuries. For nearly all Christians since that time, Catholics, Protestants, or Orthodox, have shared three basic premises" (*The Gnostic Gospels* [New York: Vintage, 1981], p. xxiii).

11. Green, "*Eridu,*" pp. 125–35.

12. Consider the absence in Edmund I. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs, Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1959), and in Bendt Alster, *The Instructions of Suruppak* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1974). The absence is particularly evident in view of the connection thought to exist between the sages, like Suruppak, and Enki, who according to Sumerian thought instructed them in the Abzu and sent them to teach the arts of civilization to humans.

13. W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960). The god may be mentioned here and there, as in the Sumerian proverb collections, and even praised for his "wisdom," but the many works of "wisdom" do not contain a saying attributed to Enki.

14. Green, "*Eridu,*" p. 283.

15. *CAD sub balaggu,* 2, 39.

16. Green, "*Eridu,*" pp. 85–102.

17. On the precative form, see above, chapter 7, note 13; for a discussion of the "illocutionary" utterance in speech act theory, see chapter 7, note 14.

18. For a study of the poetic structure and technique of Sumerian poetry, see Adele Berlin, *Enmerkar and Enšuḫkešdanna; A Sumerian Narrative Poem* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1979), chap. 2, which covers the line, stanza, paragraph, and patterns of parallelism, repetition, ring-composition, chiasm, and imagery. See also Jerrold S. Cooper,

The Return of Ninurta to Nippur (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978), chap. 2; and note his suggestion of an "oral aesthetic," p. 8, n.3.

19. For typical images used in Sumerian, especially evident in proverbs, see Bendt Alster, *Studies in Sumerian Proverbs* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1975), pp. 31–32; for Akkadian poetry, Giorgio Buccellati has attempted a formal typology in "Towards a Formal Typology of Akkadian Similes," in *Kramer Anniversary Volume,* Barry L. Eichler, ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976), pp. 59–71.

20. The sign lists, syllabaries, and dictionaries found at Ebla, the oldest on record, date to the late third millennium B.C., according to Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), pp. 234–37.

21. For an overview of Greco-Roman contributions to linguistics and the impact on the West, see Lyda E. LaPalombara, *An Introduction to Grammar: Traditional, Structural and Transformational* (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1976), pp. 3–22.

22. For example, the massive bibliography prepared annually for the *MLA International Bibliography.*

23. See A. Van den Born, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), *sub Word* and *Word of God,* 2598–602.

24. David Taylor, *Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 151.

25. Ibid., p. 152.

26. John Dore, "Holophrases, Speech Acts, and Language Universals," *Journal of Child Language* 2 (1975) 21–39. For a discussion, see Malcolm Coulthard, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1977), pp. 156–57.

27. Palmer, *Hermeneutics,* p. 137.

28. Coulthard, *Introduction,* p. 157.

29. Palmer, *Hermeneutics,* p. 137.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 139.

32. Palmer, *Hermeneutics,* p. 139.

33. Van den Born, *Encyclopedia of the Bible,* 2598.

34. *CAD sub amatu,* I/2, 29–43.

35. G. Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963 [1933]), I, 36.

36. Van der Leeuw, *Religion,* pp. 222–26.

37. Even Mircea Eliade, who otherwise makes considerable use of Mesopotamian materials, seldom considers the sacred word and rarely discusses Enki, as we pointed out in the Introduction; see, e.g., *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959 [1957], p. 84; and "Les Religions Mesopotamiennes," *Histoire des Croyances et des Idées Religieuses* (Paris: Payot, 1976), chap. 3.

38. *CAD sub melammu,* X/2, 9–12.

39. Elena Cassin, *La splendeur divine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), p. 121.

40. Ibid., p. 133.

41. Ibid., p. 52.

42. Helga Piesl, *Vom Präanthropomorphism zum Anthropomorphism* (Innsbruck: Innsbrucker Gesellschaft zur Pflege des Geisteswissenschaften, 1969), pp. 38–39. The debt to Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* (1917) is evident in Van der Leeuw, Cassin, and Piesl.

43. Piesl, *Präanthropomorphism,* p. 43.

44. Piesl does write briefly about the spoken word in re myth. For a view that relates the emergence of representational art, anthropomorphism, and the developed Sumerian pantheon to social stratification, see Robert McC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society; Early Mesopotamia and Prehispanic Mexico* (Chicago: Aldine, 1966), p. 124.

45. In the Akkadian Erra Epic, a passage describes the banishment of the sages to the

apsû; with the sages went one of the divine *me,* the art of divine statue-making. See Luigi Cagni, *The Poem of Erra* (Malibu: Undena, 1977), for the text and a discussion of the poem.

46. See McC. Adams, *Evolution,* pp. 137–38.

47. The notion of archetypes, so central to Jungian depth psychology, has been taken over, in modified form, by the "archetypal" literary criticism of Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963 [1934]), vi, and section II, which deals with the rebirth archetype. See also Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 131–242.

48. Bodkin, *Patterns,* p. 89.

49. See Maier, "The 'Truth' of a Most Ancient Work: Interpreting a Poem Addressed to a Holy Place," *Centrum* 2 (1982) 27–44.

50. On Enḫeduanna, see the introduction to William W. Hallo and J. J. A. van Dijk, eds. *The Exaltation of Inanna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

51. W. G. Lambert, "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," *JCS* 16 (1962) 72.

52. For the profession of writing, see A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University Press, 1964), pp. 228–87.

53. McC. Adams, *Evolution,* pp. 108–38.

54. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (New York: Dover, 1972 [1891]), p. 191.

55. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958 [1917]), pp. 120–22.

56. See Coulthard, *Introduction,* p. 11.

57. On the impact of literacy, see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Methuen, 1982), esp. chapters 3 and 4.

58. Consider, for example, the four lines of inquiry in the critical tradition, in M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York: Norton, 1958), chap. 1, which distinguishes mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective theories.

59. Martin Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?" in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 132.

60. Heidegger, "Poets," p. 141.

61. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 48.

62. Ibid., p. 162; see Palmer, *Hermeneutics,* pp. 156–57.

63. Knut Leonard Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974), p. 289.

64. *CAD sub nēmequ* 11/2, 160–63.

65. Tallqvist, *Götterepitheta,* pp. 452–60.

66. Wolfram von Soden, "Licht und Finsternis in der sumerischen und babylonisch-assyrischen Religion," *Studium Generale* 13 (1960) 647–53.

67. For the distinction between two ways of knowing in *Gilgamesh,* see Gardner and Maier, *Gilgamesh* (New York: Knopf, 1984), pp. 26–34 and 172–76.

68. Giorgio Buccellati, "Wisdom and the Not: The Case of Mesopotamia," *JAOS* 101 (1981) 35–48.

69. Buccellati points out, e.g., the importance of the sages, the way Ea holds out against the will of the other gods, and the way the gods seem to be linked at times to universal laws of reality appointed by fate (ibid., p. 42).

70. Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), pp. 66–67.

Glossary

Sum. = Sumerian; Akk. = Akkadian; Hitt. = Hittite
(*Note:* š is transcribed as sh)

abgal (Sum.), *apkallu* (Akk.), a sage.
Abu, Sum. god.
abūbu (Akk.), flood.
Abubu (Akk.), the personified Flood.
Abydenus, second century B.C. scholar.
Abzu (Sum.), Apsû (Akk.), Apzuwa (Hitt.), sea, abyss; home of Enki.
ád (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
adab (Sum.), a kind of musical instrument.
Adad, Akk. god.
Adapa (Akk.), one of the antediluvian sages.
adapu (Akk.), wise.
ag (Sum.), a part of the body.
ÁG (Sum.), [meaning and reading uncertain].
aga (Sum.), a kind of vessel.
Agade or Akkad, city in northern Babylonia founded by Sargon the Great.
Agushaya, the warlike aspect of Ishtar.
aḫḫazu. See dù-dù.
AHw, Akkadisches Handwörterbuch.
akala sha mūti (Akk.), bread of death.
ala (Sum.), a kind of vessel.
ala (Sum.), a kind of musical instrument.
a-lá-ḫul (Sum.), a kind of evil demon.
Alalu, according to the Hittite Kumarbi cycle, the father of Anu.
alam (Sum.), image.
al-di àm-ma-an-da al-di (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
algar (Sum.), a kind of musical instrument.
algarsurra (Sum.), a kind of musical instrument.
alim-nun-na (Sum.), epithet of Enki.
al-lu-ru-da (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
al nu-um-me (Sum.), do not covet.
alû (Akk.), a kind of demon.
ama ^{d}*Inanna* (Sum.), mother.
am-an (Sum.), Emesel for *en.*
am-an-ki-ga (Sum.), epithet of Enki.
Amar-anzu. *See* Anzu.
Amarna, Egyptian city.
amas (Sum.), sheepfold.
amatu (Akk.), word.
amḫaru (Sum.), a kind of plant.
amīlūta la banīta (Akk.), worthless human.
An (Sum.), Anu (Akk.), "the Above" or heaven; heaven-god.
Anshar, ancestor of Enki in *Enuma Elish.*
Anu. *See* An.
Anukki. *See* Anunna.
Anunna (Sum.), Annunaki or Anukki (Akk.), a group of gods in the nether world.
anzam (Sum.), a kind of large bowl.
Anzu or Amar-Anzu, mythological bird that steals the divine *me;* known earlier as Imdugud.
apkal ilāni (Akk.), epithet of Enki.
apkal nēmeqi (Akk.) epithet of Enki.
Apsû. *See* Abzu.

Apzuwa. *See* Abzu.
Arae, Sum. god.
Aratta, a land to the east of Sumer.
ardala (Hitt.), a kind of cutting tool.
armannu (Akk.), a kind of tree.
Aruru, Sum. mother goddess.
asakku (Akk.), *asig* (Sum.), a kind of demon.
Asarluḫi, Sum. god, son of Enki, later assimilated to Marduk.
Asarre, Sum. god.
Ashnan, Sum. grain-goddess.
Ashur, Akk. god.
Asig (Sum.), Asakku (Akk.), a demon and the disease it causes.
assinnu (Akk.), *gala* (Sum.), a kind of priest.
Assurbanipal, the last great king of Assyria, reigned 668–627 B.C.
Assyria, northern Mesopotamian kingdom.
Atrahasis (Akk.), "overly wise," an epithet of the Noah-figure, Utnapishtim.
Atsushunamir (Akk.), a creature formed by Enki.
Azimua, Sum. god fashioned by Ninḫursag to heal Enki's ailing arm.

Babylon, city in northern Sumer that became the capital of Babylonia.
"Babylonian Creation Epic." *See Enuma Elish*
balag (Sum.), *balaggu* (Akk.), a kind of musical instrument.
bamâtu. See zag.
Bel. *See* Marduk
bēl pirishti (Akk.), epithet of Enki.
bēl uzni (Akk.), epithet of Enki.
Berossus, a Babylonian priest of Marduk.
bīt kunukki (Akk.), storehouse.
B.M., a British Museum collection. B.M. numbers 89115, 103317, 103232, and 119918 indicate cylinder seal impressions.

Cassite or Kassite, a dynasty of rulers with foreign names that ruled Babylon for half a millennium down to 1157 B.C.
C.B.S., a University of Pennsylvania University Museum collection. C.B.S. numbers 1273, 7294, and 7326 indicate cylinder seal impressions.
Cornelius Alexander Polyhistor, Greco-Roman scholar of the first century A.D.
Council of Chalcedon, church council held at the city across the Bosphorus from Byzantium (A.D. 451).
Cronus or Kronos, in Greek mythology, the father of Zeus.

dābār (Hebrew), word.
Daisios, a month name (= May), according to Berossus the date of the flood.
dam (Sum.), title of authority.
Damgalnunna (Sum.), Damkina (Akk.), mother goddess, consort of Enki.
damqu (Akk.), good luck or fortune.
Damu, Sum. god.
dar (Sum.), a kind of bird.
Dilmun, according to the Sumerians, a kind of Paradise.
Dima, Sum. name of a demon.
dimītu (Akk.), a kind of disease and the demon that causes it.
Dimme, Sum. name of a demon.
dingir (Sum.), god.
dingir-ḫul (Sum.), "evil god."
DINGIR.MAḪ, Sum. "Great Goddess."
dù-dù (Sum.), *aḫḫazu* (Akk.), a kind of demon.
Dumuzi (Sum.), Tammuz (Akk.), shepherd-king of Erech (Uruk); the first ruler to wed the goddess Inanna in a Sacred Marriage ceremony.
dushia (Sum.), a kind of precious stone.

é-? (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
é-a and *e-a* (Sum.), from the house.
é-a lu-ú shum-shu (Akk.), Ea is his name.
Eanna (Sum.), "House of An," Inanna's temple at Erech (Uruk).
Eblaite, language of Ebla, city-state in northern Syria.
edin (Sum.), steppe, plain.
Edubba (Sum.), "Tablet House," a Sumerian school or academy.
É-engur-ra (Sum.), Enki's "Sea House."
egizi (Sum.), a title of authority.
Ekur (Sum.), "Mountain House," Enlil's temple in Nippur.
ellu (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
Elohim, one of the sacred names of God in the Hebrew Bible.

é-lugal (Sum.), house of the king.
Emesal, a Sum. dialect used in goddess cults.
en (Sum.), a title of authority.
Enbilulu, Sum. god.
e-ne-èm (Sum.), Emesal for *inim.*
en-é-nu-ru (Sum.), master of incantations.
en-ga me bí-zu (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
Enkidu, companion to the hero Gilgamesh.
Enkimdu (Sum.), called the "Farmer," the rival of Dumuzi for the hand of Inanna.
enkum (Sum.), guardian deities.
Enlil, the leading deity of the Sum. pantheon.
Enshag, Sum. god, tutelary deity of Dilmun.
ensi (Sum.), a title of authority.
Enuma Elish, "When Above," the first words of the "Babylonian Creation Epic."
é-NUN (Sum.), a part of a temple.
Enun or Enunna (Sum.), a shrine to Enki in Erech (Uruk).
Erech or Uruk, one of Sumer's leading cities; modern Warka.
Erech-Kullab, a district of Erech.
Ereshkigal (Sum.), Ereschigal (in a Greek text), "Queen of the Great Below," goddess of the nether world.
Eridu, city in southern Sumer, home of Enki.
Erra or Irra, Akk. god of pestilence and war.
eshtub (Sum.), a kind of fish.
eṭemmu (Akk.), a kind of spirit, ghost.
Euphrates, one of the rivers that defined "Mesopotamia."
Eusebius of Caesarea, fourth century A.D. scholar.

gal (Sum.), great.
gala (Sum.), a kind of singer.
galla (Sum.), *gallû* (Akk.), a kind of evil demon.
geshtûg (Sum.), epithet of Enki.
Gibil, Sum. god of fire.
giguna (Sum.), a part of the temple.
gimru (Akk.), all, totality.
gipar (Sum.), a part of the temple.
gishgigal (Sum.), antiphon.
gish-ḫur (Sum.), pattern.
gi-shush-shush-a-ba (Sum.), net of reeds.
Gishzida, Sum. god.
gizi (Sum.), a kind of reed.
gud (Sum.), a kind of fish.
gudu (Sum.), a title of authority.
gunu (Sum.), a kind of grain.

ḫaia (Sum.), a kind of bird.
ḫalḫal (Sum.), a kind of reed.
ḫarali (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
ḫarḫar (Sum.), a kind of musical instrument.
ḫashur (Sum.), a kind of tree.
Hattusha, the capital of the Hitt. Empire.
Ḫebat, Hitt. goddess.
Ḫedammu, Hitt. mythological figure.
ḫegal (Sum.), abundance.
Hesiod, eighth century B.C. Greek author.
Hittite, empire in Anatolia for some seven centuries.
ḫul (Sum.), evil.
Hurrian, language of the foreign peoples who influenced Assyria.
ḫursag (Sum.), highlands.

-*i̯a, i̯ati* (Akk.), first person pronominal suffix, pronoun.
Ibex of the Abzu, epithet of Enki's boat.
Igigi, like the Anunna a group of gods; gods of the upper world.
iku (Sum.), one of the constellations.
ìlulamma (Sum.), a shepherd-song.
imman (Sum.), a kind of stone.
Inanna (Sum.), Ishtar (Akk. and Hitt.), goddess of love and fertility; the tutelary deity of Erech (Uruk).
inim (Sum.), word.
inim-inim-ma (Sum.), *kainimakku* (Akk.), a kind of incantation.
innin, Sum. epithet, something like the feminine of "master."
innuḫa (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
innush (Sum.), a kind of plant.
ishib (Sum.), a title of authority.
Ishkur, Sum. rain-god.
Isimud (Sum.), Izzummi and Usmu (Hitt.), Enki's vizier.
ittu (Akk.), sign, mark.

Joseph, biblical patriarch in Genesis.

ka (Sum.), mouth.
kab (Sum.), a part of the body.

kābōd (Hebrew), glory.
KAL-text, Hitt. epic; the reading of KAL is uncertain.
kalû (Akk.), whole, entirety.
kalum (Akk.), a kind of priest.
kappa ana kappa (Akk.), wing to wing.
kappu (Akk.), wing.
karru (Akk.), mourning garb.
karru (Akk.), a kind of throne.
karuili- (Hitt.), former gods.
Kesh, Sum. city.
ki (Sum.), earth, place.
KI, Sum. "earth" in Hittite texts, designating the great goddess.
Ki-gal, Sum. "great earth," Great Below.
kî ilāni nashima (Akk.), transformed, being like us gods.
Kingu, son and consort of Tiamat in *Enuma Elish.*
kirugu (Sum.), section of a composition.
Kishar, ancestor of Enki.
kiùrra (Sum.), foundation or base.
Kiùrra, part of the Ekur temple in Nippur.
Kulla, Sum. god.
Kullab, twin city of Erech (Uruk).
Kumarbi, hero of a Hittite epic cycle.
Kummiya, Hitt. place name.
kunkunuzzi, Hitt. mythological figure.
kur (Sum.), land, mountain, nether world.
The Kur, personification of the cosmic realm below the earth and the nether world.
kurgarra (Sum.), *kurgarrû* (Akk.), a kind of priest.
kurkurra (Sum.), a kind of vessel.

lagal (Sum.), a title of authority.
laḫama (Sum.), a creature of the ocean depths.
Laḫamu, ancestor of Enki.
Laḫmu, ancestor of Enki.
lalḫar (Sum.), prototype.
LAMA, the central character of the Hitt. KAL-text; the reading is uncertain.
The Land, Sum. designation of Sumer.
LI-bi-àm-ma (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
logos (Greek), word.
lú (Sum.), person.
lugal (Sum.), a title of authority.
lumaḫ (Sum.), a title of authority.

mada (Sum.), land.
magan (Sum.), a kind of boat.
Magan, a country whose location is still uncertain; perhaps Egypt.
magilum (Sum.), a kind of boat.
magur (Sum.), a kind of boat.
malû (Akk.), unkempt hair.
Mami, Akk. mother goddess.
Marduk, leading deity of the Babylonian pantheon; tutelary deity of Babylon.
Marduk/Ea Ritual, a genre of Sum. and Akk. incantations.
Marḫashi, city-state in western Iran.
marḫītu (Akk.), spouse.
Martu, desert land between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea.
másh (Sum.), kid.
mashtakal (Akk.), *úinnush* (Sum.), a kind of plant.
me (Sum.), divine decrees.
me-da àm-tuku-àm (Sum.), where is it sung?
melam (Sum.), *melammu* (Akk.), terrifying glance, radiance.
Meluḫḫa, a country whose location is still uncertain; perhaps Ethiopia.
mê mūti (Akk.), waters of death.
mens (Latin), mind.
mes (Sum.), a kind of tree.
miritum (Sum.), a kind of musical instrument.
Mother Ḫubur, epithet of Tiamat in *Enuma Elish.*
mudu (Akk.), epithet of Enki.
mug (Sum.), a kind of cloth.
mu-lu (Sum.), Emesal for "human."
munus (Sum.), woman.
Musargabe, Sum. god name.
MUSH (Sum.), a kind of god [reading uncertain].
Mushdamma, Sum. deity in charge of building and construction.
mushgir (Sum.), a kind of stone.
mùsh-kù (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].

na-ám ga mu-un-di (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
na-ám-lú-lu (Sum.), humankind.
nagbu (Akk.), underground water.
nam-erím (Sum.), oath.

nam-kù-zu (Sum.), wisdom.
Nammu, Sum. goddess in charge of the primeval sea; mother of Enki.
nam-shub (Sum.), a kind of incantation.
nam-tar (Sum.), fate.
Namtar, "Fate" or "Death;" a Sum. demon of the nether world.
Nannar-Sin, Sum.-Akk. god of the moon.
Nanshe or Nazi, Sum. goddess of Lagash in charge of moral conduct.
Nara Napshara, Hitt. designation of a brother of Enki.
Nashalma, Hitt. designation of a mountain.
Nebuchadnezzar I, king of Babylon (ca. 1124–1103 B.C.).
nēmequ (Akk.), wisdom.
Nergal, god in charge of the nether world.
Nidaba, Sum. god name.
nigingar (Sum.), a kind of shrine.
Nigulla, the name of a gate.
Nimgirsig, Sum. boatman god.
nin (Sum.), a title of authority.
Ninbaru, Sum. god name.
nindingir (Sum.), a title of authority.
Nindinugga, Sum. god name.
Ningal, Sum. goddess, consort of Nanna and mother of Inanna.
Ningirim, Sum. god name.
Ningirsig, Sum. god name.
Ningirsu, Sum. god; son of Enlil and tutelary deity of Lagash.
Ningishzida or Gishzida, Sum. god name.
Ningunna, Sum. god name.
Ninḫursag, "Queen of the Highland;" Sum. mother-goddess also known as Ninmaḫ, Ninmenna, and Nintu.
nin-igi-kù (Sum.), epithet of Enki.
Ninima, Sum. god name.
Ninisinna, Sum. "weeping goddess;" tutelary deity of Isin.
Ninkasi, Sum. goddess of strong drink.
Ninkilim, Sum. deity in charge of field mice and vermin.
ninkum (Sum.), guardian deities.
Ninkurra, Sum. goddess engendered by Enki.
Ninmada, Sum. god name.
Ninmena, Sum. god name.
Ninmu, Sum. goddess engendered by Enki.
Ninmug, Sum. goddess engendered by Enki.
Ninshubur, Inanna's vizier.
Ninsikil(l)a, Sum. god name.
Ninsutu, Sum. god name.
Ninti, Sum. goddess fashioned by Ninḫursag to heal Enki's ailing rib.
Nintulla, Sum. goddess fashioned by Ninḫursag to heal Enki's ailing jaw.
Ninurta, Sum. storm-god in charge of the South Wind.
Nippur, Sumer's holiest city, seat of its leading deity, Enlil.
Niraḫ, Sum. snake-god.
nous (Greek), mind.
Nudimmud, an aspect of Enki.
nun (Sum.), a title of authority.
nuntariva- (Hitt.), swift god.
Nusku, Enlil's vizier.

Oannes, beast and sage; identified with Adapa.
Omorka or Thalath or Thalassa, names of the primordial mother goddess, identified with Tiamat.

parṣu (Akk.), rite, authority.
pitū uzni (Akk.), epithet of Enki.
puḫu (Akk.), substitute.

ragaba (Sum.), messenger.
rēma (Greek), word.
rigmu (Akk.), noise.

sabitum (Sum.), a kind of musical instrument.
sagarra (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
sagidda (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
sag-kù-gál (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
sagursag (Sum.), a title of authority.
sáḫar (Sum.), a kind of jug.
Ṣaltu (Akk.), a creature fashioned by Enki.
Sennacherib, Babylonian king (704–681 B.C.).
ṣēru (Akk.), back.
shàr apsī (Akk.), King of the Abzu.
shashur (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
Shaushga, Hitt. goddess identified with Ishtar.
shèm (Sum.), a kind of drum.
shen-BU-na (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].

shimtu (Akk.), fate.
shuba (Sum.), a kind of jewel.
Shubur-Hamazi, lands to the north and northeast of Sumer.
shugurra (Sum.), turban headdress.
shulḫi (Sum.), a kind of reed.
Shurpu, "Burnings;" a collection of incantation texts.
Shuruppak, a city in south-central Sumer; home of the Mesopotamian Noah-figure.
shu-ú ki-ma ia-a-ti-ma (Akk.), he is like me.
Shuziana, Sum. god name.
sigensigdu (Sum.), a kind of creature.
silagarra (Sum.), a kind of vessel.
sinnishtu (Akk.), woman.
Sin-shamuḫ, the name of a scribe.
Sippar, a city in northern Sumer.
sìr (Sum.), song.
Sirara, Sum. god name.
siyannas parna (Hitt.), seal-houses.
Storm-god, Hitt. designation of type of god.
su (Sum.), tooth.
suḫur (Sum.), a kind of fish.
suḫurmash (Sum.), a kind of fish.
sukkal (Sum.), vizier.
Sumer, southern Mesopotamia.
Sumugan, Sum. god of herds.
Sweet Name of An, epithet of Isimud.

takkabu (Akk.), hole.
taknash ḫuitar ḫuman (Hitt.), animals of the earth.
Tashmishu, Hitt. sun-god.
te (Sum.), a word related to weaving.
ṭêmu (Akk.), plan, advice.
tērtu (Akk.), oracle.
teshmû (Akk.), success.
Teshub, Hitt. storm-god.
Theogony, Greek mythological work by Hesiod.
ti (Sum.), rib.
Tiamat, Akk. goddess; the primeval mother.
ti dingir-gin (Sum.), like a god.
tigi (Sum.), a kind of musical instrument.
Tigris, one of the two rivers that define "Mesopotamia."
tilimda (Sum.), a kind of vessel.
tillu (Akk.), a kind of weapon.

u (Sum.), a kind of bird.
ùb (Sum.), *uppu* (Akk.), a kind of musical instrument.
Ubaratutu, father of the Noah-figure.
Ubelluri, Hitt. mythological figure; the earth.
udu (Sum.), sheep.
udug (Sum.), *utukku* (Akk.), a kind of spirit.
Ullikummi, monster stone in the Hitt. epic cycle.
umma ḫubur (Akk.), Mother Hubur.
ummânu (Akk.), skilled worker.
ummeda (Sum.), nursemaid.
umul (Sum.), a type of creature.
ù-mu-un (Sum.), Emesel for *en.*
ù-mu-un-abzu (Sum.), epithet of Enki.
ù-mu-un-kù-ga (Sum.), epithet of Enki.
Ur, one of the most important cities of Sumer.
Urash, Sum. god name.
Uri, land north of Sumer.
Ur-Ninurta, the fifth ruler of the Isin dynasty.
usga (Sum.), a kind of boat.
ushumgal (Sum.), dragon.
utaulu (Sum.), [meaning uncertain].
Utnapishtim, Akk. Noah-figure.
Uttu, Sum. goddess of weaving.
Utu, Sum. sun-god.
utukku lemnūti (Akk.), evil spirits.

Xisouthros, Berossus' spelling of Ziusudra, the Noah-figure.

Yahweh, sacred name of God in the Hebrew Bible.

zag (Sum.), *bamâtu* (Akk.), open fields, country.
zi (Sum.), throat.
Ziusudra, Sum. Noah-figure.

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Sum. = Sumerian; Akk. = Akkadian; Hitt. = Hittite
(*Note:* š is transcribed as sh)

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