

The Enuma Elish – Babylonian Creation Myth in Akkadian Cuneiform

The *Enûma Eliš* exists in various copies from Babylon and Assyria. The version from Ashurbanipal's library dates to the 7th century BCE. The composition of the text probably dates to the Bronze Age, to the time of Hammurabi or perhaps the early Kassite era (roughly 18th to 16th centuries BCE), although some scholars favor a later date of c. 1100 BCE, but still slightly earlier than Genesis.

The epic names two primeval gods: Apsû (or Abzu), who represents fresh water, and Tiamat, representing oceanic waters. Several other gods are created - [Ea](#) and his brothers - who reside in Tiamat's vast body. They make so much noise that the babel or noise annoys Tiamat and Apsû greatly. Apsû wishes to kill the young gods, but Tiamat disagrees. The vizier, Mummu, agrees with Apsû's plan to destroy them. Tiamat, in order to stop this from occurring, warns Ea (Nudimmud), the most powerful of the gods. Ea uses magic to put Apsû into a coma, then kills him, and shuts Mummu out. Ea then becomes the chief god. With his consort Damkina, he has a son, Marduk, greater still than himself. Marduk is given wind to play with and he uses the wind to make dust storms and tornadoes. This disrupts Tiamat's great body and causes the gods still residing inside her to be unable to sleep.

They persuade Tiamat to take revenge for the death of her husband, Apsû. Her power grows, and some of the gods join her. She creates 11 monsters: Bašmu, Ušumgallu, Mušmaḥḥū (all three-horned snakes), Ugallu (lion-headed storm demon with bird feet), Umū dabrūtu (name literally means “fierce day”), Kulullû (fish woman), Kusarikku (a human head, arms, and torso, and bovine hindquarters), aqrabuamelu or girtabliluaka (Scorpion Men, head, torso, and arms of a man and the body of a scorpion) to help her win the battle, and elevates

Kingu, her son by Abzu – and subsequent consort - to “supreme dominion.” A lengthy description of the other gods’ inability to deal with the threat follows. Marduk offers to save the gods if he is appointed as their leader and allowed to remain so even after the threat passes. When the gods agree to Marduk's conditions he is selected as their champion against Tiamat, and becomes very powerful. Marduk challenges Tiamat to combat and destroys her. He then rips her corpse into two halves with which he fashions the earth and the skies. Marduk then creates the calendar, organizes the planets and stars, and regulates the moon, the sun, and weather.

The gods who have pledged their allegiance to Tiamat are initially forced into labor in the service of the gods who sided with Marduk. But they are freed from these labors when Marduk then destroys Tiamat's husband, Kingu, and uses his blood to create humankind to do the work for the gods. Most noteworthy is Marduk's symbolic elevation over Enlil (literally “Lord of the Storm” - god of breath, wind, loft and breadth), who was seen by earlier Mesopotamian civilizations as the king of the gods.