

Enki and the world order

(Sumerian text, around 2500 BC, University of Oxford translation, The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature)

Grandiloquent lord of heaven and earth, self-reliant, Father Enki, engendered by a bull, begotten by a wild bull, cherished by Enlil, the Great Mountain, beloved by holy An, king, *mec* tree planted in the Abzu, rising over all lands; great dragon who stands in Eridug, whose shadow covers heaven and earth, a grove of vines extending over the Land, Enki, lord of plenty of the Anuna gods, Nudimmud, mighty one of the E-kur, strong one of heaven and earth! Your great house is founded in the Abzu, the great mooring-post of heaven and earth. Enki, from whom a single glance is enough to unsettle the heart of the mountains; wherever bison are born, where stags are born, where ibex are born, where wild goats are born, in meadows, in hollows in the heart of the hills, in green unvisited by man, you have fixed your gaze on the heart of the Land as on split reeds.

Counting the days and putting the months in their houses, so as to complete the years and to submit the completed years to the assembly for a decision, taking decisions to regularise the days: Father Enki, you are the king of the assembled people. You have only to open your mouth for everything to multiply and for plenty to be established. Your branches green with their fruit, do honour to the gods. in its forests is like a fleecy garment. Good sheep and good lambs do honour to When the prepared fields, will accumulate stockpiles and stacks. there is oil, there is milk, produced by the sheepfold and cow-pen. The shepherd sweetly sings his rustic song, the cowherd spends the day rocking his churns. Their products would do honour to the late lunches in the gods' great dining hall.

Your word fills the young man's heart with vigour, so that like a thick-horned bull he butts about in the courtyard. Your word bestows loveliness on the young woman's head, so that the people in their settled cities gaze at her in wonder.

2 lines unclear

Enlil, the Great Mountain, has commissioned you to gladden the hearts of lords and rulers and wish them well. Enki, lord of prosperity, lord of wisdom, lord, the beloved of An, the ornament of Eridug, who establish commands and decisions, who well understands the decreeing of fates: you close up the days, and make the months enter their houses. You bring down, you have reached their number. You make the people dwell in their dwelling places, you make them follow their herdsman

2 lines unclear

You turn weapons away from their houses, you make the people safe in their dwellings

When Father Enki goes forth to the inseminated people, good seed will come forth. When Nudimmud goes forth to the good pregnant ewes, good lambs will be born; when he goes forth to the fecund cows, good calves will be born; when he goes forth to the good pregnant goats, good kids will be born. If you go forth to the cultivated fields, to the good germinating fields, stockpiles and stacks can be accumulated on the high plain. If you go forth to the parched areas of the Land,

2 lines missing or unclear

Enki, the king of the Abzu, rejoicing in great splendour, justly praises himself: "My father, the king of heaven and earth, made me famous in heaven and earth. My elder brother, the king of all the lands, gathered up all the divine powers and placed them in my hand. I brought the arts and crafts from the E-

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kur, the house of Enlil, to my Abzu in Eridug. I am the good semen, begotten by a wild bull, I am the first born of An. I am a great storm rising over the great earth; I am the great lord of the Land. I am the principal among all rulers, the father of all the foreign lands. I am the big brother of the gods, I bring prosperity to perfection. I am the seal-keeper of heaven and earth. I am the wisdom and understanding of all the foreign lands. With An, the king, on An's dais, I oversee justice. With Enlil, looking out over the lands, I decree good destinies. He has placed in my hands the decreeing of fates in the place where the sun rises. I am cherished by Nintur. I am named with a good name by Ninhursaga. I am the leader of the Anuna gods. I was born as the firstborn son of holy An."

After the lord had proclaimed his greatness, after the great prince had eulogised himself, the Anuna gods stood there in prayer and supplication:

"Praise be to Enki, the much-praised lord who controls all the arts and crafts, who takes decisions!"

In a state of high delight Enki, the king of the Abzu, rejoicing in great splendour, again justly praises himself: "I am the lord, I am one whose word is reliable, I am one who excels in everything."

"At my command, sheepfolds have been built, cow-pens have been fenced off. When I approach heaven, a rain of abundance rains from heaven. When I approach earth, there is a high carp-flood. When I approach the green meadows, at my word stockpiles and stacks are accumulated. I have built my house, a shrine, in a pure place, and named it with a good name. I have built my Abzu, a shrine, in, and decreed a good fate for it. The shade of my house extends over the pool. By my house the suhur carp dart among the honey plants, and the ectub carp wave their tails among the small gizi reeds. The small birds chirp in their nests."

"The lords pay heed to me. I am Enki! They stand before me, praising me. The abgal priests and abrig officials who stand before me distant days. The enkum and ninkum officiants organise, They purify the river for me, they the interior of the shrine for me. In my Abzu, sacred songs and incantations resound for me. My barge 'Crown', the 'Stag of the Abzu', transports me there most delightfully. It glides swiftly for me through the great marshes to wherever I have decided, it is obedient to me. The stroke-callers make the oars pull in perfect unison. They sing for me pleasant songs, creating a cheerful mood on the river. Nijir-sig, the captain of my barge, holds the golden sceptre for me. I am Enki! He is in command of my boat 'Stag of the Abzu'. I am the lord! I will travel! I am Enki! I will go forth into my Land! I, the lord who determines the fates,,"

4 lines unclear

"I will admire its green cedars. Let the lands of Meluha, Magan and Dilmun look upon me, upon Enki. Let the Dilmun boats be loaded with timber. Let the Magan boats be loaded sky-high. Let the magilum boats of Meluha transport gold and silver and bring them to Nibru for Enlil, king of all the lands."

He presented animals to those who have no city, to those who have no houses, to the Martu nomads.

The Anuna gods address affectionately the great prince who has travelled in his Land: "Lord who rides upon the great powers, the pure powers, who controls the great powers, the numberless powers, foremost in all the breadth of heaven and earth; who received the supreme powers in Eridug, the holy place, the most esteemed place, Enki, lord of heaven and earth, praise!"

All the lords and rulers, the incantation-priests of Eridug and the linen-clad priests of Sumer, perform the purification rites of the Abzu for the great prince who has travelled in his land; for Father Enki they stand guard in the holy place, the most esteemed place. They the chambers, they the

emplacements, they purify the great shrine of the Abzu They bring there the tall juniper, the pure plant. They organise the holy in the great watercourse of Enki. Skilfully they build the main stairway of Eridug on the Good Quay. They prepare the sacred uzga shrine, where they utter endless prayers.

7 lines fragmentary or unclear

For Enki, squabbling together, and the suhurmac carp dart among the honey plants, again fighting amongst themselves for the great prince. The ectub carp wave their tails among the small gizi reeds.

The lord, the great ruler of the Abzu, issues instructions on board the 'Stag of the Abzu', the great emblem erected in the Abzu, providing protection, its shade extending over the whole land and refreshing the people, the pillar and pole planted in the marsh, rising high over all the foreign lands. The noble captain of the lands, the son of Enlil, holds in his hand the sacred punt-pole, a mec tree ornamented in the Abzu which received the supreme powers in Eridug, the holy place, the most esteemed place. The hero proudly lifts his head towards the Abzu.

6 lines missing or unclear

Sirsir, the boatman of the barge, the boat for the lord. Nijir-sig, the captain of the barge, holds the holy sceptre for the lord. The fifty lahama deities of the subterranean waters speak affectionately to him. The stroke-callers, like heavenly gamgam birds,

The intrepid king, Father Enki in the Land. Prosperity was made to burgeon in heaven and on earth for the great prince who travels in the Land. Enki decreed its fate:

"Sumer, great mountain, land of heaven and earth, trailing glory, bestowing powers on the people from sunrise to sunset: your powers are superior powers, untouchable, and your heart is complex and inscrutable. Like heaven itself, your just matrix, in which gods too can be born, is beyond reach. Giving birth to kings who put on the good diadem, giving birth to lords who wear the crown on their heads, your lord, the honoured lord, sits with An the king on An's dais. Your king, the Great Mountain, Father Enlil, the father of all the lands, has blocked you impenetrably like a cedar tree. The Anuna, the great gods, have taken up dwellings in your midst, and consume their food in your giguna shrines among the unique and exceptional trees. Household Sumer, may your sheepfolds be built and your cattle multiply, may your giguna touch the skies. May your good temples reach up to heaven. May the Anuna determine the destinies in your midst."

Then he proceeded to the sanctuary of Urim. Enki, lord of the Abzu, decreed its fate:

"City which possesses all that is fitting, bathed by water! Sturdy bull, altar of abundance that strides across the mountains, rising like the hills, forest of hacur cypresses with broad shade, self-confident! May your perfect powers be well-directed. The Great Mountain Enlil has pronounced your name great in heaven and on earth. City whose fate Enki has decreed, sanctuary of Urim, you shall rise high to heaven!"

Then he proceeded to the land of Meluha. Enki, lord of the Abzu, decreed its fate:

"Black land, may your trees be great trees, may your forests be forests of highland mec trees! Chairs made from them will grace royal palaces! May your reeds be great reeds, may they! Heroes shall them on the battlefield as weapons! May your bulls be great bulls, may they be bulls of the mountains! May their bellowing be the bellowing of wild bulls of the mountains! The great powers of the gods shall be made perfect for you! May the francolins of the mountains wear cornelian beards! May your birds all be

peacocks! May their cries grace royal palaces! May all your silver be gold! May all your copper be tin-bronze! Land, may all you possess be plentiful! May your people! May your men go forth like bulls against their fellow men!"

2 lines unclear

He cleansed and purified the land of Dilmun. He placed Ninsikila in charge of it. He gave for the fish spawn, ate its fish, bestowed palms on the cultivated land, ate its dates. Elam and Marhaci to devour The king endowed with strength by Enlil destroyed their houses, demolished their walls. He brought their silver and lapis-lazuli, their treasure, to Enlil, king of all the lands, in Nibru.

Enki presented animals to those who have no city, who have no houses, to the Martu nomads.

After he had turned his gaze from there, after Father Enki had lifted his eyes across the Euphrates, he stood up full of lust like a rampant bull, lifted his penis, ejaculated and filled the Tigris with flowing water. He was like a wild cow mooing for its young in the wild grass, its scorpion-infested cow-pen. The Tigris at his side like a rampant bull. By lifting his penis, he brought a bridal gift. The Tigris rejoiced in its heart like a great wild bull, when it was born It brought water, flowing water indeed: its wine will be sweet. It brought barley, mottled barley indeed: the people will eat it. It filled the E-kur, the house of Enlil, with all sorts of things. Enlil was delighted with Enki, and Nibru was glad. The lord put on the diadem as a sign of lordship; he put on the good crown as a sign of kingship, touching the ground on his left side. Plenty came forth out of the earth for him.

Enki, the lord of the destinies, Enki, the king of the Abzu, placed in charge of all this him who holds a sceptre in his right hand, him who with glorious mouth submits to verification the devouring force of the Tigris and Euphrates, while prosperity pours forth from the palace like oil, Enbilulu, the inspector of waterways.

He called the marshes and gave them the various species of carp; he spoke to the reedbeds and bestowed on them the old and new growths of reeds.

2 lines missing

He issued a challenge Enki placed in charge of all this him from whose net no fish escapes, him from whose trap no living thing escapes, him from whose bird-net no bird escapes,

1 line unclear, who loves fish.

The lord established a shrine, a holy shrine, whose interior is elaborately constructed. He established a shrine in the sea, a holy shrine, whose interior is elaborately constructed. The shrine, whose interior is a tangled thread, is beyond understanding. The shrine's emplacement is situated by the constellation the Field, the holy upper shrine's emplacement faces towards the Chariot constellation. Its terrifying sea is a rising wave, its splendour is fearsome. The Anuna gods dare not approach it. to refresh their hearts, the palace rejoices. The Anuna stand by with prayers and supplications. They set up a great altar for Enki in the E-engura, for the lord The great prince the pelican of the sea.

1 line unclear

He filled the E-kur, the house of Enlil, with goods of all sorts. Enlil was delighted with Enki, and Nibru was glad. Enki placed in charge of all this, over the wide extent of the sea, her who sets sail in the holy shrine, who induces sexual intercourse, who over the enormous high flood of the subterranean

waters, the terrifying waves, the inundation of the sea, who comes forth from the, the mistress of Sirara,, Nance.

He called to the rain of the heavens. He as floating clouds. He made rising at the horizon. He turned the mounds into fields Enki placed in charge of all this him who rides on the great storms, who attacks with lightning bolts, the holy bar which blocks the entrance to the interior of heaven, the son of An, the canal inspector of heaven and earth, Ickur, the bringer of plenty, the son of An.

He organised ploughs, yokes and teams. The great prince Enki bestowed the horned oxen that follow the tools, he opened up the holy furrows, and made the barley grow on the cultivated fields. Enki placed in charge of them the lord who wears the diadem, the ornament of the high plain, him of the implements, the farmer of Enlil, Enkimdu, responsible for ditches and dykes.

The lord called the cultivated fields, and bestowed on them mottled barley. Enki made chickpeas, lentils and grow. He heaped up into piles the early, mottled and innuha varieties of barley. Enki multiplied the stockpiles and stacks, and with Enlil's help he enhanced the people's prosperity. Enki placed in charge of all this her whose head and body are dappled, whose face is covered in syrup, the mistress who causes sexual intercourse, the power of the Land, the life of the black-headed, Ezina, the good bread of the whole world.

The great prince fixed a string to the hoe, and organised brick moulds. He penetrated the like precious oil. Enki placed in charge of them him whose sharp-bladed hoe is a corpse-devouring snake that, whose brick mould in place is a tidy stack of hulled grain for the ewes, Kulla, who bricks in the Land.

He tied down the strings and coordinated them with the foundations, and with the power of the assembly he planned a house and performed the purification rituals. The great prince put down the foundations, and laid the bricks. Enki placed in charge of all this him whose foundations once laid do not sag, whose good houses once built do not collapse, whose vaults reach up into the heart of the heavens like a rainbow, Mucdama, Enlil's master builder.

He raised a holy crown over the upland plain. He fastened a lapis-lazuli beard to the high plain, and made it wear a lapis-lazuli headdress. He made this good place perfect with greenery in abundance. He multiplied the animals of the high plain to an appropriate degree, he multiplied the ibex and wild goats of the pastures, and made them copulate. Enki placed in charge of them the hero who is the crown of the high plain, who is the king of the countryside, the great lion of the high plain, the muscular, the hefty, the burly strength of Enlil, Cakkan, the king of the hills.

He built the sheepfolds, carried out their cleaning, made the cow-pens, bestowed on them the best fat and cream, and brought luxury to the gods' dining places. He made the plain, created for greenery, achieve prosperity. Enki placed in charge of all this the king, the good provider of E-ana, the friend of An, the beloved son-in-law of the youth Suen, the holy spouse of Inana the mistress, the lady of the great powers who allows sexual intercourse in the open squares of Kulaba, Dumuzid-ucumgal-ana, the friend of An.

He filled the E-kur, the house of Enlil, with possessions. Enlil was delighted with Enki and Nibru was glad. He demarcated borders and fixed boundaries. For the Anuna gods, Enki situated dwellings in cities and disposed agricultural land into fields. Enki placed in charge of the whole of heaven and earth the hero, the bull who comes out of the hacur forest bellowing truculently, the youth Utu, the bull standing triumphantly, audaciously, majestically, the father of the Great City (an expression for the underworld), the great herald in the east of holy An, the judge who searches out verdicts for the gods, with a lapis-lazuli beard, rising from the horizon into the holy heavens, Utu, the son born by Ningal.

He picked out the tow from the fibres, and set up the loom. Enki greatly perfected the task of women. For Enki, the people in garments. Enki placed in charge of them the honour of the palace, the dignity of the king, Uttu, the conscientious woman, the silent one.

Then, alone lacking any functions, the great woman of heaven, Inana, lacking any functions, Inana came in to see her father Enki in his house, weeping to him, and making her complaint to him:

"Enlil left it in your hands to confirm the functions of the Anuna, the great gods. Why did you treat me, the woman, in an exceptional manner I am holy Inana, where are my functions?"

"Aruru, Enlil's sister, Nintur, the lady of giving birth, is to get the holy birth-bricks as her prerogative. She is to carry off the lancet for umbilical cords, the special sand and leeks. She is to get the sila-jara bowl of translucent lapis lazuli (in which to place the afterbirth). She is to carry off the holy consecrated ala vessel. She is to be the midwife of the land! The birthing of kings and lords is to be in her hands."

"My illustrious sister, holy Ninisina, is to get the jewellery of cuba stones. She is to be the mistress of heaven. She is to stand beside An and speak to him whenever she desires."

"My illustrious sister, holy Ninmug, is to get the golden chisel and the silver burin. She is to carry off her big flint antasura blade. She is to be the metal-worker of the Land. The fitting of the good diadem when a king is born and the crowning with the crown when a lord is born are to be in her hands."

"My illustrious sister, holy Nisaba, is to get the measuring-reed. The lapis-lazuli measuring tape is to hang over her arm. She is to proclaim all the great powers. She is to demarcate boundaries and mark borders. She is to be the scribe of the Land. The planning of the gods' meals is to be in her hands."

"Nance, the august lady, who rests her feet on the holy pelican, is to be the fisheries inspector of the sea. She is to be responsible for accepting delectable fish and delicious birds from there to go to Nibru for her father Enlil."

"But why did you treat me, the woman, in an exceptional manner? I am holy Inana, where are my functions?"

Enki answered his daughter, holy Inana : "How have I disparaged you? Goddess, how have I disparaged you? How can I enhance you? Maiden Inana, how have I disparaged you? How can I enhance you? I made you speak as a woman with pleasant voice. I made you go forth I covered with a garment. I made you exchange its right side and its left side. I clothed you in garments of women's power. I put women's speech in your mouth. I placed in your hands the spindle and the hairpin. I to you women's adornment. I settled on you the staff and the crook, with the shepherd's stick beside them."

"Maiden Inana, how have I disparaged you? How can I enhance you? Amongst the ominous occurrences in the hurly-burly of battle, I shall make you speak vivifying words; and in its midst, although you are not an arabu bird"(a bird of ill omen), I shall make you speak ill-omened words also. I made you tangle straight threads; maiden Inana, I made you straighten out tangled threads. I made you put on garments, I made you dress in linen. I made you pick out the tow from the fibres; I made you spin with the spindle. I made you colour tufted cloth with coloured threads.

"Inana, you heap up human heads like piles of dust, you sow heads like seed. Inana, you destroy what should not be destroyed; you create what should not be created. You remove the cover from the cem drum of lamentations, Maiden Inana, while shutting up the tigi and adab instruments in their homes. You

never grow weary with admirers looking at you. Maiden Inana, you know nothing of tying the ropes on deep wells."

"But now, the heart has overflowed, the Land is restored; Enlil's heart has overflowed, the Land is restored. In his overflowing heart of mankind,"

4 lines unclear

"..... lapis-lazuli headdress is your prerogative, is your prerogative, is your prerogative, is your prerogative."

10 lines unclear

Praise be to Father Enki.