

Enki's journey to Nibru

(Sumerian text, about-2500-3000-BC, University of Oxford translation, The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature)

In those remote days, when the fates were determined; in a year when An brought about abundance, and people broke through the earth like green plants, then the lord of the *abzu*, King Enki, Enki, the lord who determines the fates, built up his temple entirely from silver and lapis lazuli. Its silver and lapis lazuli were the shining daylight. Into the shrine of the *abzu* he brought joy.

An artfully made bright crenellation rising out from the *abzu* was erected for Lord Nudimmud. He built the temple from precious metal, decorated it with lapis lazuli, and covered it abundantly with gold. In Eridug, he built the house on the bank. Its brickwork makes utterances and gives advice. Its eaves roar like a bull; the temple of Enki bellows. During the night the temple praises its lord and offers its best for him.

Before Lord Enki, Isimud the minister praises the temple; he goes to the temple and speaks to it. He goes to the brick building and addresses it: "Temple, built from precious metal and lapis lazuli; whose foundation pegs are driven into the *abzu*; which has been cared for by the prince in the *abzu*! Like the Tigris and the Euphrates, it is mighty and awe-inspiring. Joy has been brought into Enki's *abzu*."

"Your lock has no rival. Your bolt is a fearsome lion. Your roof beams are the bull of heaven, an artfully made bright headgear. Your reed-mats are like lapis lazuli, decorating the roof-beams. Your vault is a bull raising its horns. Your door is a lion who is awe-inspiring. Your stairway is a lion coming down on a man."

"*Abzu*, pure place which fulfils its purpose! E-engura! Your lord has directed his steps towards you. Enki, lord of the *abzu*, has embellished your foundation pegs with cornelian. He has adorned you with and lapis lazuli. The temple of Enki is provisioned with holy wax; it is a bull obedient to its master, roaring by itself and giving advice at the same time. E-engura, which Enki has surrounded with a holy reed fence! In your midst a lofty throne is erected, your door-jamb is the holy locking bar of heaven."

"*Abzu*, pure place, place where the fates are determined, the lord of wisdom, Lord Enki, the lord who determines the fates, Nudimmud, the lord of Eridug, lets nobody look into its midst. Your *abgal* priests let their hair down their backs."

"Enki's beloved Eridug, E-engura whose inside is full of abundance! *Abzu*, life of the Land, beloved of Enki! Temple built on the edge, befitting the artful divine powers! Eridug, your shadow extends over the midst of the sea! Rising sea without a rival; mighty awe-inspiring river which terrifies the Land! E-engura, high citadel standing firm on the earth! Temple at the edge of the *engur*, a lion in the midst of the *abzu*; lofty temple of Enki, which bestows wisdom on the Land; your cry, like that of a mighty rising river, reaches King Enki."

"He made the lyre, the *aljar* instrument, the *balaj* drum of your *sur* priests, the *harhar*, the *sabitum*, and the *mirutum* instruments offer their best for his holy temple. The resounded by themselves with a sweet sound. The holy *aljar* instrument of Enki played for him on his own and seven *tigi* drums resounded."

"What Enki says is irrefutable; is well established." This is what Isimud spoke to the brick building; he praised the E-engura with sweet songs.

As it has been built, as it has been built; as Enki has raised Eridug up, it is an artfully built mountain which floats on the water. His shrine spreads out into the reedbeds; birds brood in

its green orchards laden with fruit. The *suhur* carp play among the honey-herbs, and the *ectub* carp dart among the small *gizi* reeds. When Enki rises, the fish rise before him like waves. He has the *abzu* stand as a marvel, as he brings joy into the *engur*.

Like the sea, he is awe-inspiring; like a mighty river, he instils fear. The Euphrates rises before him as it does before the fierce south wind. His punting pole is Nirah; his oars are the small reeds. When Enki embarks, the year will be full of abundance. The ship departs of its own accord, with tow rope held by itself. As he leaves the temple of Eridug, the river gurgles to its lord; its sound is a calf's mooing, the mooing of a good cow.

Enki had oxen slaughtered, and had sheep offered there lavishly. Where there were no *ala* drums, he installed some in their places; where there were no bronze *ub* drums, he despatched some to their places.

He directed his steps on his own to Nibru and entered the temple terrace, the shrine of Nibru. Enki reached for the beer, he reached for the liquor. He had liquor poured into big bronze containers, and had emmer-wheat beer pressed out. In *kukuru* containers which make the beer good he mixed beer-mash. By adding date-syrup to its taste, he made it strong. He its bran-mash.

In the shrine of Nibru, Enki provided a meal for Enlil, his father. He seated An at the head of the table and seated Enlil next to An. He seated Nintur in the place of honour and seated the Anuna gods at the adjacent places. All of them were drinking and enjoying beer and liquor. They filled the bronze *aga* vessels to the brim and started a competition, drinking from the bronze vessels of Urac. They made the *tilimda* vessels shine like holy barges. After beer and liquor had been libated and enjoyed, and after from the house, Enlil was made happy in Nibru.

Enlil addressed the Anuna gods: "Great gods who are standing here! Anuna, who have lined up in the Ubcu-unkena! My son, King Enki has built up the temple! He has made Eridug rise up from the ground like a mountain! He has built it in a pleasant place, in Eridug, the pure place, where no one is to enter, a temple built with silver and decorated with lapis lazuli, a house which tunes the seven *tigi* drums properly, and provides incantations; where holy songs make all of the house a lovely place, the shrine of the *abzu*, the good destiny of Enki, befitting the elaborate divine powers; the temple of Eridug, built with silver: for all this, Father Enki be praised!"