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The cuneiform reception of *Enuma Elish*

Frances Reynolds

Enuma Elish remained a touchstone and a rich intellectual resource for cuneiform scholars for about a thousand years. The supremacy of Marduk, his city Babylon, and his temple Esagil were embedded in the poem, and scholars used the poem to promote this worldview. At times, when political, theological, or cultic realities conflicted with the poem's ideology, cuneiform scholars reinterpreted it to conform with their current priorities. The composer of the epilogue of *Enuma Elish* set out a programme for the poem's written and oral transmission and reception (VII 145–59) and this corresponds closely to the realities of the poem's circulation. Even scholars who reinterpreted the poem could allude to the model in the epilogue.

As a didactic poem about Marduk's supremacy, *Enuma Elish* functioned as a paradigm for divine and human kingship (see Gösta Gabriel in this volume). As a result, the poem was linked with temple rituals, especially in the cult of the god Marduk in Babylon and, through cultural appropriation, in the cult of the god Assur in the city of Assur. In the earlier period, the focus was on rituals where the king participated, principally the *akītu* ritual in the New Year festival in the first month Nisannu (see Céline Debourse in this volume). In this ritual the statue of the chief god temporarily left his city in a controlled ritual to secure the land's good fortune during the year ahead. In the Late Babylonian period, the imperial kings of Babylonia were more remote, and scholars connected the poem with non-royal rituals, while nostalgically looking back to a more glorious past.

Akkadian texts written on clay tablets provide nearly all the evidence for the cuneiform reception of *Enuma Elish*. Babylonian and Assyrian scholars used the poem as a tool for interpreting other works, concepts, and phenomena. The intellectual endeavour of transmitting, quoting, and interpreting the poem continued until the final centuries of the first millennium BCE. The sources often accord with *Enuma Elish* and its Marduk theology, but scholars also reinterpreted the poem to align with political, theological, and cultic developments. Warfare and in particular the looting of Marduk's principal statue from the Esagil, whether actual or feared, played a major role in shaping the poem's reception. This can be seen in the war poem *Erra and Ishum*, in the religious reforms of the Assyrian king Sennacherib after his sack of Babylon, and in the Late Babylonian calendar treatise on rituals against Babylonia's invasion.

The relative status of other gods compared to Marduk resulted in major changes in the poem's reception. While Marduk was the supreme god in earlier Babylonia, the god Assur held this role in Assyria, driving Assyrianized responses to the poem. The increased status of Marduk's son Nabû in the first millennium BCE was also an influential factor, and the poem may have been rejected in Babylon itself during Nabonidus' short-lived promotion of the god Sîn. Variations between the gods worshipped in different Babylonian cities meant that, in the first millennium, Marduk's supremacy became increasingly regional and in the Late Babylonian period it was restricted to northern Babylonia with Babylon as the epicentre. The cities of Nippur and Uruk, with their worship of Enlil and Anu respectively, rejected the poem. In the Late Babylonian period, the intellectual networks of Babylon's cuneiform scholars had shrunk dramatically, and they were marginalized politically within externally imposed empires.

Scholars quoted *Enuma Elish* in different contexts. Quotation in commentaries on *Enuma Elish* enabled rich scholarly interpretations of the poem, which could accord with traditional Marduk theology or Assyrianized theology. Four other compositions quoting or citing the poem serve as case studies for exploring what *Enuma Elish* could mean to ancient scholars. A work from earlier Babylonia quotes *Enuma Elish* as part of interpreting Marduk's names in Babylon's *akītu* festival. The explanatory work called *Marduk's Ordeal*, which can be associated with Sennacherib, and a scholar's letter to his successor, the Assyrian king Esarhaddon, attest to contrasting responses. *Marduk's Ordeal* subverts the poem as part of reinterpreting Babylon's *akītu* festival to humiliate Marduk and promote Assyria's state god Assur; but the letter quotes the poem to hold up Marduk as a model for Esarhaddon, although probably in the service of Babylonian factionalism. Finally, a Late Babylonian calendar treatise quotes and alludes to the poem in its interpretation of rituals in the Esagil cult as bulwarks against enemy attack. This treatise portrays Marduk as the victorious warrior king who is analogous to Babylonia's human king, but this analogy had become a vehicle for nostalgic Babylonian aspiration during a time of marginalization.

After an overview of previous research, I compare the poem's own programme for its circulation as set out in the epilogue to the realities of its transmission. Following some brief remarks on kingship ideology, I outline the poem's reception history: Babylonian reception in earlier sources, Neo-Assyrian reception, and Babylonian reception in later sources. This outline takes account of key developments in contemporary politics, theology, and temple cult. Focusing on quotations, I finally give a brief overview of commentaries on *Enuma Elish* and four case studies of compositions that quote or cite the poem to illustrate its changing meanings to ancient scholars.

Previous research

This section gives a broadly chronological overview of some of the relatively recent research on the cuneiform reception of *Enuma Elish*. The publications included here contain further bibliography, which gives access to the earlier scholarship.

In two books Alasdair Livingstone (1986, 1989) edited and discussed six works quoting and alluding to *Enuma Elish* that remain key to the poem's reception. The explanatory compendium *Inamgishhurankia* may be a Babylonian composition (Livingstone 1986: 22–5, 40–2; see also Francesca Rochberg in this volume), while the other works are Neo-Assyrian: Assurbanipal's hymn to Marduk and his wife (Livingstone 1989: no. 2); three compositions interpreting royal ritual, including *Marduk's Ordeal* (Livingstone 1989: no. 34, 35, 37, 40); and an explanatory compendium with cosmogonic and ritual material (Livingstone 1989: no. 39). More important primary sources followed: Galip Çağirgan and Wilfred G. Lambert (1991–1993: 96) published the first edition of a text describing previously unknown ritual in Babylon in the ninth month Kislimu with the recitation of *Enuma Elish* and ritual interpretation quoting the poem; Simo Parpola (1993: no. 112 and 365) re-edited two letters from scholars to the Assyrian king that quote and allude to *Enuma Elish*; and Petra Gesche (2000: 177–8, 808) published Neo- and Late Babylonian school texts quoting *Enuma Elish*, identified as the most frequently quoted literary text in the curriculum.

In two versions of a seminal and wide-ranging study, Eckart Frahm (2010; 2011: 345–68) discussed politically driven responses to *Enuma Elish* in and beyond Mesopotamia from 900 BCE to 500 CE. He analysed the poem *Erra and Ishum* as a Babylonian counter-text to *Enuma Elish*, and, in a survey of the Neo-Assyrian reception of *Enuma Elish*, he focused on reinterpretations that promote the god Assur, including an Assyrianized version of the poem and *Marduk's Ordeal*. Concerning Babylonia in the Neo- and Late Babylonian periods, Frahm argued that the poem's promotion of Marduk and Babylon could sustain its popularity in that city but could also have a negative impact, including in the city of Uruk. The revised version of Frahm's study includes a focus on three text commentaries, two of them on *Enuma Elish*, and elsewhere in the book he discusses commentaries and other texts related to the poem (Frahm 2011: 105, 112–17, 355–60, 470; see also 2010: 10–12). Frahm's analysis remains central to understanding the poem's reception.

Within three years, three important books on *Enuma Elish* were published. Thomas Kämmerer and Kai Metzler (2012: 23–33, 355–60) edited the poem and included analysis of the Assyrianized version. They gave an overview of the textual reception, including *Marduk's Ordeal*, school texts, commentaries on the poem, a related lexical text, allusions in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, and ritual recitations in Babylon in the first month, Nisannu, and the ninth month, Kislimu (p. 33–45). Their notable overview of the iconographic reception of the poem includes a cylinder seal made for a statue of Marduk and a description of an *akītu* house gate in the city of Assur (p. 45–9). Lambert (2013) used more textual sources both in his edition of *Enuma Elish* and in his contextual study. Besides sections on the versions of and commentaries on *Enuma Elish*, his discussion of related texts ranged from ritual recitations of the poem to quotations and allusions in other works, including ritual explanatory texts and royal inscriptions (p. 4–9, 135–42, 187–90, 197–8, 202–47, and *passim*). The book listed commentary entries and quotations for specific lines after the edition of each Tablet (p. 60, 72, 82–3, 94, 106, 120, 134). Lambert also edited the *Defeat of Enutila, Enmeshara, and Qingu* and the *Exaltation of Nabû*, two Babylonian narrative works relevant to the

transmission of *Enuma Elish*, including the depiction of Nabû and Ninurta as warriors under Marduk's authority (p. 281–98, 326–9, 346–9). He also published (though in cuneiform copy only) a new source for a list of Marduk's names during the Babylon *akītu* festival that quotes *Enuma Elish* (p. 106, 134, 187, pl. 41). Gösta Gabriel (2014: 29–106) investigated the ancient locations and dates of the sources of the poem and analysed the epilogue.

The first key online resource for the reception of *Enuma Elish* is the *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (*CCP*), initiated by Frahm.[1] This project published a searchable electronic database of Mesopotamian text commentaries with introductory material, bibliography, many tablet photographs, and some annotated editions. The texts relevant to this chapter, some of which are published by *CCP* for the first time, are commentaries on *Enuma Elish* and commentaries on other works that quote the poem.[2] Building on these advances, Frahm and Enrique Jiménez (2015) published the first full editions of the commentary on *Enuma Elish* I–VII and an explanatory text on Elamite month names with quotations of the poem.

In a study of Assyrian religion and ideology, Beate Pongratz-Leisten (2015: 179–80, 188–91, 306–21, 407–34) shed new light on the Neo-Assyrian reception of *Enuma Elish* and discussed allusions to the poem in royal inscriptions and texts describing and interpreting state rituals, including the *akītu* ritual in the city of Assur.[3] She concluded that the central ritual role of the king as conqueror of chaos assimilated Marduk's role in the Babylon *akītu* ritual and involved symbolic gestures representing acts of conquest (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 432–4; 2017: lxxiii–lxxv).

New knowledge was also gained about the poem's reception in and beyond Babylonia. In his doctoral thesis, Jiménez (2013) identified complex networks of intertextuality and allusions to *Enuma Elish* in *Erra and Ishum*, lexical sources, curse formulas, and royal inscriptions, including the earliest direct allusion to the poem.[4] Selena Wisnom (2020: 182–215) published another important study of intertextuality that included allusions to *Enuma Elish* in *Erra and Ishum*. In a book on a Babylon calendar treatise, I published the first full edition of this Late Babylonian work (Reynolds 2019), which interprets rituals in the Esagil cult in order to boost the temple's elite. Marduk, Tiamat, and Qingu are depicted as analogues to the kings of Babylonia, Elam, and Subartu, respectively, and thus the battle in *Enuma Elish* is the subject of poetic narrative, unattested elsewhere, and gives rise to other quotations of and numerous allusions to the poem (Reynolds 2019: 12–17, 39–45, 50–4, 73–5). Building on recently available Late Babylonian sources, and focusing on the priorities of the Esagil's scholars, I also published a wider survey of the impact of politics and cult on the reception history of Marduk and Tiamat's battle, and urged greater consideration of non-textual transmission through ritual practices and heavenly bodies (Reynolds 2021: 77–8).

The second transformative online project is the *Electronic Babylonian Literature* (*eBL*) project, directed by Jiménez.[5] This project has already revolutionized access to cuneiform sources of the poem and works that quote and allude to it. At the time of writing, the core *eBL* Corpus of electronic editions includes *Enuma Elish* I–VII (L.I.2) and *Erra and Ishum* I (L.I.5). The manuscript sources listed for *Enuma Elish* include quotations in other works, notably the expanded corpus of Babylonian school tablets. The accompanying *eBL* Fragmentarium, an electronic database of cuneiform tablet

pieces with sophisticated search functions, includes most of the manuscript sources listed in the Corpus editions and a wealth of other material.[6]

The best resource for understanding the impact of the god Nabû on the reception of *Enuma Elish* is Zachary Rubin's (2021) doctoral thesis. Drawing on the *eBL* project, Anmar Fadhil and Jiménez (2021) published first editions of three manuscripts of *Enuma Elish* from a library in the city of Sippar, recovering most of the two final lines of the epilogue, and supplemented Lambert's lists of quotations of the poem. Continuing to publish the Sippar tablets, they edited a new hymn to Marduk and identified it as a manifesto for his absorption of other gods in the form of a pastiche of *Enuma Elish* (Fadhil and Jiménez 2022).

In her book on Babylon's New Year festival, Céline Debourse (2022: 90–176, 296–300, 331–2) re-edited the festival ritual texts, which specify the recitation of *Enuma Elish* in the first month Nisannu, and concluded that these texts are Late Babylonian compositions, written when the festival was largely only a cultural memory. She argued that *Enuma Elish* was more relevant for the Neo-Assyrian New Year festival and reframed the ritual texts as Late Babylonian priestly literature, produced by Esagil priests as self-validation without the need for ritual enactment (Debourse 2022: 41–2, 46–7, 255–62, 399–420). However, the relative scarcity of texts from Babylonia in the earlier first millennium BCE should be taken into account.[7]

New primary sources continue to be published, including a piece of *Marduk's Ordeal* from excavations in Nineveh (MacGinnis et al. 2022). Research on the cuneiform reception of *Enuma Elish* will continue to break new ground.

Transmission and reception according to *Enuma Elish*

The epilogue in *Enuma Elish* VII 145–64 contains instructions about the poem's proper transmission and reception (Gabriel 2014: 81–101). The epilogue stipulates that Marduk's names listed in Tablets VI–VII should be grasped and that the *maḫrû*, 'the first one', should reveal them (VII 145). The first scholar to know the poem is discussed below. As onward oral and written transmission, *enqu*, 'the wise one', and *mūdû*, 'the learned one', should discuss the names; *abu*, 'the father', should repeat them and teach them to *māru*, 'the son', signifying scribal training; and finally the ears of *rē'û*, 'the shepherd', and *nāqidu*, 'the herdsman', should be opened, referring to the oral instruction of the Babylonian king by these scholars (VII 146–8). If the king does not neglect Marduk, king and land shall prosper (VII 149–50); this probably refers to royal ritual in Babylon's New Year festival in the month of Nisannu. Reinforcing the necessity for proper behaviour, the heart of the epilogue is a description of Marduk as omnipotent, unrelenting in his anger, and omniscient of wrongdoing (VII 151–6).

The epilogue then revisits the theme of the poem as *taklimtu*, 'a revelation', by 'the first one', now explaining that he recited it before Marduk, wrote it down, and deposited it for future generations to hear (VII 157–8). According to this origin myth, the poem's author is an elite cultic functionary and cuneiform scholar who recited the poem in front of Marduk's statue in the Esagil. Once written down, the poem was to be recited or sung in onward oral transmission through future generations. As a further framing

device, the epilogue returns to the transmission of Marduk's destiny and name (VII 159–60) before the poem is summarized as *zamāru ša marūtuk*, 'a song of Marduk', who conquered Tiamat and assumed kingship (VII 161–2). One tablet from a library excavated in Sippar and another tablet likely to be from Sippar, both probably dating to the sixth century BCE, include two partially legible final lines mentioning senior gods, Babylon, and the Esagil (VII 163–4); but a Neo-Assyrian tablet from Huzirina in south-eastern Turkey, datable to the eighth or seventh century BCE, ends with a double ruling and does not include these two lines.[8] Whether these two lines predate or postdate the Neo-Assyrian tablet, they offer a distinctively Babylonian closing reference to Marduk's Esagil cult in Babylon.

This skilfully composed epilogue sets out the author's aspirations for the transmission and reception of the poem. Scribal and cultic practice shaped and realized these aspirations. As shown below, the realities of the poem's reception match the epilogue's programme: oral and written transmission and interpretation, including scribal training and the poem's recitation in the Esagil's cult; the importance of Marduk's names; the poem's role in securing Marduk's favour and well-being for the human king and his land; the centrality of Babylon and the Esagil with its scholars and cultic experts; and the predominant roles of Marduk as victor and king. Two compositions that subvert traditional *Enuma Elish* probably close with material about their transmission that alludes to the epilogue: the Babylonian poem *Erra and Ishum*; and *Marduk's Ordeal,* a hostile Assyrian interpretation of Babylon's New Year festival.[9] Within the framework of Sennacherib's religious reforms (for which see Eckart Frahm and Sophus Helle in this volume), the wider realities of the poem's transmission still correspond to the epilogue's programme, albeit with the replacement of Marduk by the god Assur. The Assyrianized version of *Enuma Elish* VII has not survived but this could have included a version of the epilogue centred on the god Assur and his city Assur.

The reception of *Enuma Elish*: Kingship ideology

The poem's cuneiform reception is intrinsically related to ancient Mesopotamian politics and their impact on theology and cult, including those members of the elite who were both scholars and ritual experts. Of fundamental importance is the poem's role as an origin myth and charter for the supremacy of Marduk, Babylon, and the Esagil, and for the supremacy of Babylonia's human king as Marduk's analogue. The poem expresses Marduk's supremacy by portraying him as a king who is both a victorious warrior and the creator of the world. The list of Marduk's names in *Enuma Elish* VI–VII celebrates his absorption of other gods and affirms his sovereignty (Gabriel 2014: 170–6; in this volume, see Marc Van De Mieroop on the role of the names and Gösta Gabriel on the political philosophy of the poem).

The harnessing of *Enuma Elish* as the source of analogies between the human king and the victorious divine king, and between human and divine enemies, in pursuit of scholars' interests and state or regional security continued into the Late Babylonian period. The New Year *akītu* festival in Babylon in the first month Nisannu and its

relationship with Marduk's defeat of Tiamat and *Enuma Elish* is of fundamental importance (Reynolds 2021: 64–7; Debourse 2022: 255–62; on the use of *Enuma Elish* in the *akītu* festival, see Céline Debourse in this volume). In this festival, Marduk's principal cult statue, accompanied by the king as his human analogue, traditionally made a return journey from the Esagil to the *akītu* house outside Babylon as part of an annual affirmation of divine and human kingship. This controlled ritual journey of Marduk's statue from the Esagil was interpreted as signifying his battle victory over Tiamat, and the festival secured Babylonia's well-being for the year ahead. As part of his religious reforms after the destruction of Babylon, Sennacherib transferred this festival to Assyria's state god Assur and his city Assur.

Neo-Assyrian letters and royal inscriptions reflect a direct relationship between scholars and the king centred on a palatial hub (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 30–8, 448–67). By the Late Babylonian period, this model had disappeared. Babylonia's imperial rulers, the Achaemenid, Hellenistic, and Arsacid kings, were more remote and scholars in their temple communities were more inward-looking. Esagil scholars elaborated the analogy between victorious Marduk and the Babylonian king, but these ideas were now rooted in nostalgia rather than political or cultic reality, as demonstrated in the Babylon calendar treatise (see the case study below).

Evidence for the reception history of *Enuma Elish*

The following outline of the poem's reception highlights the impact of politics, theology, and cult; it does not aim to be exhaustive, especially not in the case of allusions. The sources from Babylonia and Assyria are divided into two chronological phases. The first phase runs until the fall of the Neo-Assyrian empire around 612 BCE; I consider first the Babylonian and then the Assyrian sources from this phase. The second phase encompasses other sources from Babylonia until the end of cuneiform scholarship. For each category, I examine first reception that is aligned with the theology of Marduk's supremacy, then reception that adapted this theology.

What constitutes evidence for the reception of *Enuma Elish*? The onward transmission of a composition through copying and curating it on clay tablets shows scholars' continued interest in the work. Besides versions of the poem itself, scholars also quoted and alluded to it in other works. Creating a new composition that quoted or alluded to the poem shows scholars' innovation and productivity. Cuneiform texts on clay tablets are thus the principal evidence for the poem's reception. Both scribes and tablets were mobile, so tablets can be found in secondary settings. The number of available cuneiform tablets from Babylonia in the earlier period of the poem's reception is relatively low compared to the wealth of tablets from the Neo-Assyrian and later Babylonian periods. Nearly all the Babylonian tablets come from northern Babylonia and most of them entered the British Museum's Sippar and Babylon Collections in the late nineteenth century CE and they are usually unprovenanced and undated (Reade 1986; see also Leichty, Finkel, and Walker 2019). The terms 'Sippar Collection' and 'Babylon Collection' correspond to the find-spots of most of the tablets, but each collection also includes tablets from different northern Babylonian cities. Most tablets

in the Sippar Collection come from the late seventh to early fifth centuries BCE, during the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty and early Achaemenid periods, and most tablets in the Babylon Collection are Late Babylonian, from the late Achaemenid into the Arsacid period, chiefly from tablet collections associated with the Esagil (Clancier 2009: 185–213). Without archaeological contexts or dates on the tablets, tablet-dating criteria include museum registration numbers, cuneiform sign forms, and the spelling of words. Undated tablets in the Sippar and Babylon Collections are included under later evidence, although some of them, including school tablets, may be contemporary with the Neo-Assyrian period. Reproducing earlier works was a core element of cuneiform scholarship, so the date of a tablet is often later than the date when the work on it was composed. Dates of composition are usually unknown, with proposals based on textual content (see Enrique Jiménez in this volume). In particular, works attested only on Assyrian and/or later Babylonian tablets can represent compositions, ideas, or practices that already existed in earlier Babylonia when the available evidence is relatively scant.

Babylonian reception in earlier sources

The overall picture is of the faithful transmission of *Enuma Elish* and its embedded theology, but the poem was also adapted in response to political, theological, and cultic concerns. In northern Babylonian cities, four Neo-Babylonian manuscripts of *Enuma Elish* and a pyramidal school extract text quoting the poem have clear excavation contexts (to varying degrees) and may all date to this earlier period (Gabriel 2014: 49, 54–8).

There is scattered evidence in other works for the onward transmission of *Enuma Elish* that accords with the poem's doctrine of Marduk's supremacy, including his conquest of Tiamat and creation of the heavens. The sources from Babylonia in this earlier period are relatively scarce but they are supplemented by works first attested on Neo-Assyrian tablets that are identified as earlier Babylonian compositions.[10] A curse formula in an inscription of the Babylonian king Marduk-nadin-ahhe (1099–1082 BCE) contains the earliest-known direct allusion to the poem, and this relates to Marduk's conquest of Tiamat (Jiménez 2013: 316; see also Jiménez in this volume). A Babylonian composition interpreting the outward procession in Babylon's *akītu* festival in Nisannu quotes *Enuma Elish* in the exposition of names given to Marduk (see the case study below). A text commentary on *Enuma Elish* VII may have been composed in Babylon (see below for overviews of commentaries). Babylonian compositions may also include a text commentary on another work that quoted a name of Marduk and the explanatory treatise *Inamgishhurankia* that quoted from Marduk's creation of the heavens.[11]

Babylonian politics, theology, and cult resulted in three types of divergence in the poem's reception. As a reflection on war and disruption, the Babylonian poem *Erra and Ishum* was probably composed in the ninth or eighth century BCE and had a wide circulation in Assyria and later Babylonia (Jiménez 2013: 161–2, 196–8, 203–6, 251–5, 268–72; Wisnom 2020: 159–61, 182–215). The poet used allusion to subvert

Enuma Elish and portray Marduk as a gullible king of the gods who lost control to the war god Erra. Because Erra persuaded Marduk to have his cult statue refurbished, this statue left its normal home in the Esagil and Marduk's kingship was suspended. Despite promising to maintain stability during the interregnum, Erra unleashed war and destruction until reined in by the god Ishum. The closing passage of the poem concerns its onward transmission, including via singers, scribes, and scholars in oral discussion, and alludes to the epilogue of *Enuma Elish* (Frahm 2011: 349; Wisnom 2020: 238–40). *Erra and Ishum* provides a theological rationale for war and portrays the presence and proper maintenance of Marduk's principal statue in the Esagil as essential for Babylonia's peace and stability. Despite Marduk's gullibility as a plot device, I would argue that this poem aimed to promote Marduk and his Esagil cult as essential for state security.

Speculative theology promoting Marduk that went beyond *Enuma Elish* was a second cause of divergence. The hymn *Erish Shummi* can be identified as a Babylonian work composed before the eighth century BCE and there is evidence of circulation in Assyria and later Babylonia (Fadhil and Jiménez 2022). It speculatively awards the names, and thereby the identities, of other gods to Marduk and emulates *Enuma Elish* in terms of the structure in Tablets VI–VII and some vocabulary.

A third factor was the increased importance of the god Nabû, Marduk's son, in Babylonia and Assyria during the first millennium BCE. *Enuma Elish* does not mention Nabû, but the poem's theology was reinterpreted to boost Nabû's status through partial syncretism with Marduk, although Marduk continued to exist as a separate god, sometimes superior to his son. Two works on tablets from Assur that were probably composed in Babylonia exemplify this. A hymn to Nabû drew on the theology of *Enuma Elish* and the structure and vocabulary of Tablets VI–VII, including a quotation from *Enuma Elish* VII, to support reallocating a name of Marduk to Nabû (Ebeling 1953: no. 16, l. 9, quoting *Enuma Elish* VII 35; Lambert 2013: 147–8; Rubin 2021: 184–6).[12] In a narrative termed the *Exaltation of Nabû*, Marduk retains his supremacy, but he celebrates Nabû's dominance over Tiamat in Babylon's New Year *akītu* festival (Lambert 2013: 346–9, 509–10; Reynolds 2021: 68–9).

Neo-Assyrian reception

The Neo-Assyrian reception of *Enuma Elish* also displays varying degrees of adherence to or adaptation of the poem in response to political, theological, and cultic developments.[13] Assur was the state god of Assyria and head of the Assyrian pantheon in the Neo-Assyrian period and this directly conflicted with Marduk's supremacy in *Enuma Elish*. Some Neo-Assyrian compositions still aligned, at least broadly, with Marduk's roles as a warrior and cosmic creator in the poem, although the Assyrian king replaced the Babylonian king as Marduk's human analogue. However, in the most extreme form of cultural appropriation, some works directly replaced Marduk with Assur. This new, Assyrianized response to the Babylonian poem can be attributed to religious reform by the Assyrian king Sennacherib after his sack of Babylon and removal of Marduk's principal cult statue.

Manuscripts of the Babylonian version of *Enuma Elish* from Neo-Assyrian cities are plentiful, but only two school tablets quoting the poem are known, both excavated in the city of Assur and datable to the seventh century BCE.[14] Other works attest to the onward transmission of *Enuma Elish* in at least broad agreement with the poem's theology. Allusions to the poem have been identified in Assyrian royal inscriptions from at least the time of Sargon II until Assur-etel-ilani, one of the last Assyrian kings (e.g. Frame 1995: no. B.6.35.2; Jiménez 2013: 425–6, 431; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 179–80, 189, 306–21). These passages are understood to reference Marduk's creation of the heavens and battle victory in *Enuma Elish*, often in analogies with the Assyrian king, but they usually occur within the framework of Assur's supremacy. A Babylonian scholar's letter encouraged the Assyrian king Esarhaddon to defeat his enemies like Marduk by quoting *Enuma Elish* (see the case study below). Marduk's expanded role as a warrior resulted in works alluding to Marduk's defeat of Tiamat and Qingu, but also other conquests beyond the scope of *Enuma Elish*. A hymn dedicated by the Assyrian king Assurbanipal to Marduk alludes to *Enuma Elish* in its subject matter and vocabulary (Livingstone 1989: no. 2). It celebrates Marduk as supreme god, including his victories over Tiamat, Qingu, and Anzû, as well as his creation of the heavens and the Esagil. Marduk's repertoire of enemies is also extended in Neo-Assyrian works interpreting rituals (Livingstone 1989: no. 37 and 40). Quotation concerning his creation of the heavens occurs in a treatise interpreting Elamite month names that is probably an Assyrian composition (Frahm and Jiménez 2015: 338–43, A 15, quoting *Enuma Elish* V 24; the sources come from Nineveh and Achaemenid Babylon). Marduk theology aligned with *Enuma Elish* is mixed with Assyrianized interpretation in some works, including a commentary on *Enuma Elish* I–VII.[15]

In the most extreme Assyrian reactions to the poem, *Enuma Elish* and Babylon's *akītu* festival in the first month Nisannu were culturally appropriated and reinterpreted to serve Neo-Assyrian political and religious agendas, including the direct replacement of Marduk and his human analogue the Babylonian king by the god Assur and the Assyrian king (Frahm 2010: 8–13; 2011: 349–56; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 416–26; Debourse 2022: 40–7; see also Eckart Frahm in this volume). This ideological endeavour probably dates to the reign of the Assyrian king Sennacherib after his sack of Babylon and removal of Marduk's statue in 689 BCE; he also mapped Babylon's *akītu* festival in Nisannu onto the city of Assur as part of his religious reforms. An Assyrianized version of *Enuma Elish* itself is attested on two tablets from the city of Assur and one tablet from Nineveh.[16] One of the tablets from Assur was found in the house of a family of cult singers, together with a tablet of the traditional version of *Enuma Elish* (Pedersén 1986: 2:N3.37, 2:N3.38). In the repurposed version, Assur, Assyria's state god, replaced Marduk, Babylonia's state god, and consequent changes included the city of Assur, called Baltil, replacing Babylon. A fragmentary letter from a scholar to the Assyrian king, possibly Esarhaddon, quotes Assyrianized *Enuma Elish*, apparently in relation to the scholar's dream about the enthroned king with a tablet of Assyrianized *Enuma Elish* IV in front of him (Parpola 1993: no. 365, l. 10′–12′, quoting Assyrianized *Enuma Elish* IV 17; for discussion, see Parpola 1983: no. 288). I would suggest that this letter may hold up Assur in Assyrianized *Enuma Elish* as a model for the Assyrian king concerning the proper treatment of loyal subjects. The battle in

Tablet IV of the Assyrianized *Enuma Elish* is also transmitted via cultic topography and iconography. Sennacherib's new *akītu* house outside the city of Assur had ceremonial names celebrating Tiamat's defeat and a bronze gate depicting Sennacherib, the battle-ready god Assur as his divine analogue, and Assur's opponent Tiamat (Grayson and Novotny 2014: no. 160). A ritual interpretation work known as *Marduk's Ordeal* gives an Assyrianized interpretation of Babylon's *akītu* festival in Nisannu to Marduk's detriment that mentions the singing of *Enuma Elish* before Marduk's statue and also cites the poem (see the case study below).

Babylonian reception in later sources

Scholars continued to promote Marduk and the Esagil until the final stages of cuneiform culture. However, politics and the localized cults of Babylonian cities meant that this promotion was a regional phenomenon in northern Babylonia with Babylon as the epicentre. In the Late Babylonian period scholars deployed the poem to assert the continued centrality of Marduk's cult at the Esagil despite Babylonia's reduced status as a province within externally imposed Achaemenid, Hellenistic, and Arsacid empires. The Late Babylonian reception of *Enuma Elish* was part of an intellectual response by scholars, especially those associated with the Esagil, to the marginalization of Babylon and their increased remoteness from the king (Reynolds 2019: 12–17, 22–3; Reynolds 2021: 71–6; Debourse 2022: 399–403). The scholars' nostalgic and self-referential assertions that Marduk's Esagil cult was essential for Babylonia's security, including the retention of Marduk's statue in the Esagil, are an instance of ancient clericalism. The Babylonian sources considered here include quotations of the poem in numerous school extract texts, as well as commentaries on other works. In ritual and explanatory texts, as well as narratives about the gods, *Enuma Elish* was associated with a range of rituals and gods in Babylon, although Marduk's cult at the Esagil remained the principal focus.

Most tablets are unprovenanced and undated, but they can be attributed to northern Babylonia, chiefly the cities of Sippar and Babylon, in the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty period (626–539 BCE) and the Late Babylonian period (539 BCE – first century CE), when Babylonia was ruled by the Achaemenid, Hellenistic, and Arsacid empires. The nature of these tablets and the scarcity of sources from earlier Babylonia mean that some of the reception features discussed in this section may have been earlier innovations.

Politics and cultic variation between and within Babylonian cities affected the transmission of the poem. Manuscripts of *Enuma Elish* from northern Babylonia are datable to the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty and the Late Babylonian period, although excavation contexts and dated tablets are relatively rare.[17] Two excavated manuscripts from the city of Uruk are the only direct evidence from southern Babylonia for manuscripts or quotations of the poem (Gabriel 2014: 60–2).[18] Frahm has argued that these tablets date to the period of control by the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, after which Marduk theology centred on Babylon conflicted with Uruk's new focus on the god Anu and his cult (Frahm 2010: 17–18; 2011: 361–2; Krul 2018: 16–19). In royal inscriptions,

allusions to *Enuma Elish* have been identified in texts of the Neo-Babylonian kings Nabopolassar and Nabonidus, but only before the latter's short-lived promotion of Sîn in Marduk's stead (Da Riva 2013: no. 2.2.7 C32, i 15-16; Jiménez 2013: 438–42).

School tablets from northern Babylonia were a major vector for the poem's regional transmission. Teachers dictated extracts from *Enuma Elish* and other works for trainee scribes to write down. The *eBL*'s Fragmentarium has expanded the known corpus of school tablets quoting *Enuma Elish* to seventy-two, with more to follow.[19] In the later first millennium BCE, the northern Babylonian school curriculum was focused on Marduk. This was part of an intellectual drive to promote and embed Marduk's theology, including the supremacy of Marduk, the Esagil, and Babylon. The teachers' choice of school extracts as a way of transmitting knowledge not only gave exposure and prestige to the poem and its theology, but also reflected and reinforced relationships between *Enuma Elish* and a network of other compositions. The school texts demonstrate that the poem was part of the intellectual apparatus of scholars and a key element in knowledge transfer, both oral and written, between scholars and their pupils. The school curriculum was fundamental to scribes who went on to reproduce and compose texts and teach pupils of their own. *Enuma Elish* is by far the most frequently quoted literary text on school tablets; and most instances are on the tablets from the Babylon Collection, which can usually be attributed to collections linked with the Esagil (see Gesche 2000: 808 for examples; on the Babylon Collection, see above). *Enuma Elish* I–VII are all quoted, but Tablet I is the most popular. Typically, an *Enuma Elish* passage of about six lines is accompanied by other extracts from literary and lexical texts, the latter expounding the meaning of specific words. The literary texts most frequently combined with the poem are the exorcistic series *Udughul*, 'Evil Demons', including a section known as 'Marduk's Address to the Demons', and the *Prayer to Marduk 2*.[20] As argued by Jiménez (2022: 4, 6–7, 29), in the first millennium BCE *Enuma Elish* was not quoted in school texts from the central Babylonian city of Nippur, because this city promoted its own local gods, led by Enlil and his son Ninurta.[21]

The onward transmission of *Enuma Elish* to promote Marduk theology in northern Babylonia is also chiefly attested in text commentaries and works relating to ritual. As well as composing new works, later scholars reproduced earlier works that quoted or alluded to the poem.[22] A written text commentary could draw on a combination of oral teaching and written sources (Gabbay 2016: 13–83). Commentators used techniques such as wordplay, number-play, and analogy to interpret existing compositions (Frahm 2011: 59–85). Evidence for the continued use of *Enuma Elish* as an interpretative tool includes its quotation in text commentaries.[23] Compared to the school tablets discussed above, text commentaries are a more advanced form of knowledge transfer between teachers and junior scholars or within a group of scholars. However, the remarks about school tablets and knowledge transmission through quotation also apply here. As with school texts, nearly all the commentaries quoting *Enuma Elish* are on unprovenanced Babylonian tablets, mostly in the British Museum's Sippar and Babylon Collections (see above). One Babylon Collection tablet is datable to around the end of the second century BCE.[24] Some commentaries interpret specific works: the lexical series *Aa*[25]; the list of divine names dubbed the *Weidner God List*[26]; and the medical series *Sagig*.[27] Others are based on combinations of extracts from different

works, often literary ones.[28] The list of Marduk's names in *Enuma Elish* VI–VII, which itself employed many commentary techniques, was quoted seven times, making Tablet VII the most popular tablet, but scholars also quoted Tablets I and III–VI of the poem. Commentaries quoting *Enuma Elish* also quoted other literary texts. The formative effect of the scribes' education is shown by an overlap with the texts quoted in the northern Babylonian school curriculum.[29] The commentaries on *Aa* quoted *Enuma Elish* to illustrate the meaning of specific words in context; in other commentaries, the relationship between the base text and the quotation is more elaborate.[30] Some of the more complex techniques used by scholars in commentaries are discussed in the case studies below.

In addition to text commentaries, works on Late Babylonian tablets that describe and interpret rituals attest to the late transmission of *Enuma Elish*. Scholars used the poem to promote Marduk's supremacy in Babylon, sometimes also undermining the chief gods of Nippur and Uruk in competitive theology. In a description of the New Year festival in Nisannu on day 4, a cultic functionary narrates *Enuma Elish* to Marduk's cult statue in the Esagil while Anu and Enlil, the chief gods of Nippur and Uruk, are ritually disempowered (Debourse 2022: 138, 144–7, l. 280–4 [ii 22–6]; see also Debourse in this volume). Early on day 5, prayers to Marduk's cult statue include addressing the god in astral form as Tiamat's conqueror (Debourse 2022: 139, l. 309 and 313 [iii 9 and 13], see also p. 308–9, 311; see further Reynolds 2019: 45, 358–60, 376–9). In a description of a ritual at the Esagil on day 4 of the ninth month, Kislimu, a cult singer is said to narrate *Enuma Elish* to Marduk's cult statue (Çağirgan and Lambert 1991–1993: 96, l. 62–4). From this oral quotation of the whole poem, Usmû's bringing of Damkina's gift to her victorious son Marduk in *Enuma Elish* V 83 is said to be analogous to a priest's offering of a palm frond to Marduk's statue. In the Babylon calendar treatise, the interpretation of rituals in the Esagil cult as averting foreign invasion includes quotations from and allusions to *Enuma Elish* (see the case study below).[31] These works can be understood as examples of Late Babylonian priestly literature: self-validatory compositions by scholars associated with the Esagil (Debourse 2022: 399–403).

Quoting and citing *Enuma Elish*: Case studies

Why am I quoting quotes? In the footsteps of ancient Mesopotamian scholars, I am aiming to transmit knowledge and support contentions, in this case about the reception of *Enuma Elish*. Quotation adds authority to both the source and recipient texts. The intentions of the author of the recipient text shape the selection and deployment of quotations. Ancient scholars dictated quotations from *Enuma Elish* to train scribes and embed Marduk theology; they quoted *Enuma Elish* in commentaries on the poem as a basis for interpreting it; and they quoted and alluded to the poem in other compositions as an explanatory tool, usually to interpret other works or aspects of theology or ritual. Other compositions rarely mention *Enuma Elish* by name, and quotations of the poem are usually unmarked. This chapter distinguishes literal or near-literal quotations from allusions. However, modern definitions of quotation vary in their strictness and allusions can be more nebulous, although Wisnom (2020: 11–15) adopted the helpful

criteria proposed by Oliver Taplin of prominence, coherence, and purpose (see also Fadhil and Jiménez 2022: 256–7).

Two commentaries on *Enuma Elish* are known. One interprets selected lines from *Enuma Elish* I–VII and is attested by six Neo-Assyrian tablets, five from 'Assurbanipal's Library' in Nineveh and one from the city of Assur, all datable to the seventh century BCE, as well as by three Babylonian tablets from the British Museum's Sippar Collection (Frahm and Jiménez 2015: 293–333; CCP 1.1.A with 1.6; see also Frahm in this volume). As the editors note, Marduk's names attract the most comment, but other recurring themes include the creation of the world and aspects of nature, such as the sun and moon, as well as divine feasting and gift-giving. While Babylon's *akītu* ritual in the first month Nisannu is mentioned, the commentary also refers to ritual in other months and gods linked with other Babylonian and Assyrian cities, sometimes in Assyrianizing interpretations: perhaps the author, a cuneiform scholar versed in cult practices, came from the Babylonian city of Nippur and wrote the commentary in Assyria (Frahm and Jiménez 2015: 330–3). The second commentary on selected lines of *Enuma Elish* VII is attested on two Neo-Assyrian tablets from 'Assurbanipal's Library' in Nineveh datable to the seventh century BCE (Lambert 2013: 139–42; CCP 1.1.B; on this commentary, see Marc Van De Mieroop in this volume). It interprets names awarded to Marduk through wordplay and is an expression of the Marduk theology centred on his city Babylon, where it may have been composed. There is no evidence that any commentaries on *Enuma Elish* were composed in the Late Babylonian period, but this may just be an accident of discovery.

The following four case studies explore works quoting or citing the poem that illustrate some of the most interesting developments in its reception. A Babylonian explanatory text lists a short sequence of Marduk's names during his statue's procession from the Esagil to the *akītu* house outside Babylon on day 8 of Nisannu during the New Year festival, and these names are closely related to *Enuma Elish* and the list of Marduk's fifty names in Tablets VI–VII.[32] In the entry on Marduk's fourth name, Sirsir, the explanatory text reads 'He sits on … in Maumusha and his name is Sirsir: When he tramples Tiamat, "Tiamat is his vessel, he is [her] sailor." When(?) [he(?) tramples(?).]' (*ina libbi* ^{giš}MÁ.UMUŠ.A *ina muḫḫi* … […] … *uššabma Sirsir šumšu / Tiamat kī ikabbasu /Tiamat rukūbšūma šū malā*[*ḫš*]*a kī ika*[*bbasu*(?)], l. 6–8).[33] The text makes an assertion, also known from other works, that Marduk is called Sirsir when his statue is in his barge called Maumusha during the procession to Babylon's *akītu* house (Lambert 1997: 79–80, l. 10). The explanatory text justifies this assertion by linking it to Marduk's defeat, literally his 'trampling', of Tiamat and by quoting *Enuma Elish* VII 77. In *Enuma Elish* this line is part of the entry on Marduk's name Malah ('Sailor') that is awarded to the god under his preceding name Sirsir (VII 70–7; this includes earlier interpretation of Marduk's victory over Tiamat that references her watery nature). Interpreting the processional barge as Tiamat and interpreting Marduk's statue as the sailor on board is a way of interpreting this ritual journey as signifying Marduk's victory over Tiamat. This interpretation is tailored to a specific stage of the *akītu* festival and is also theologically appropriate, since Tiamat was the deified sea. While there is overall agreement between the poem and the explanatory text, the latter lists only a short sequence of names of specific ritual significance and is far more concise.

Therefore, in the entry on Marduk's name Sirsir the material drawing on *Enuma Elish* is abbreviated and does not specify Malah as a name of Marduk. The explanatory text refers to the transport of Marduk's statue in the Maumusha in the final stages of the outward procession to the *akītu* house (on the barge's arrival there, see Da Riva 2022). Although the details are unclear, other evidence also suggests that this ritual journey was interpreted as signifying Marduk's defeat of Tiamat (Reynolds 2021: 65–6). In a more damaged entry concerning day 10 of Nisannu, the same explanatory text quotes *Enuma Elish* V 81–2 about the goddess Damkina hailing and dressing her son Marduk after his victory over Tiamat and this constitutes further evidence for Marduk's post-battle recovery and celebration in Babylon's *akītu* house. This explanatory text is thus important Babylonian evidence from the earlier first millennium BCE for the explicit linkage of Babylon's New Year *akītu* festival with *Enuma Elish*.

The second case study is a specifically marked quotation or citation of *Enuma Elish* in a Neo-Assyrian subversive work that reinterprets Babylon's New Year festival in Nisannu to disempower Marduk and promote the god Assur (Livingstone 1989: no. 34 and 35; Frahm 2011: 352–4; see also Frahm 2010: 12–13). This ritual interpretation work, dubbed *Marduk's Ordeal* by modern scholars, is unusually written in the Neo-Assyrian dialect and probably dates from Sennacherib's reign, after his sack of Babylon in 689 BCE. The Assur version is attested on two tablets from that city, one from the main temple of the god Assur and one from the house of a family of exorcists, as well as on one tablet from the North-west Palace in the city of Kalhu (Postgate 1973: no. 268; Pedersén 1986: 2:N1.121, N4.453). The Nineveh version is known from seven tablets from that city, one of which was excavated in 2022 (MacGinnis et al. 2022). According to both versions, *Enuma Elish* that is sung before Marduk's cult statue in Nisannu concerns his imprisonment, in what is clearly an Assyrianizing subversion of the ritual and the poem (Livingstone 1989: no. 34, l. 34; no. 35, l. 11, 28). As part of this Assyrianizing agenda, both versions claim to quote or cite *Enuma Elish* about the primeval creation of the god Anshar and the later creation of Marduk. The Assur version reads: 'The garment which is on him (i.e., Marduk), about which it says as follows: "It is water." They are lies. It said in *Enuma Elish* – When heaven (and) earth were not created, Anshar [came into existence]. When city and house existed, he (i.e., Marduk) came into existence. – It is the water which is on Anshar' (*šer'itu ša ina muḫḫīšu ša iqabbûni mā mû š*[*u*]*nu sili'āte šina* / *šū ina libbi enūma eliš iqṭibi kī šamê erṣeti lā ibbanûni anšar it*[*tabši*] / *kī ālu u bētu ibšûni šū ittabši mû ša ina muḫḫi anšar*, l. 53–5).[34] To add weight to the claim, the text specifically marks *Enuma Elish* as the source of the assertion about Anshar and probably also the assertion about Marduk.[35] However, this is not a case of quotation from the poem. The assertion about Anshar is a highly abbreviated paraphrase of *Enuma Elish* I 1–12, but the assertion about Marduk conflicts with the poem, where Marduk is created long before the creation of the earth, mankind, Babylon, or the Esagil. This passage aims to disempower Marduk by portraying him as a very junior god, coming into existence when the world was well established, in contrast to primeval Anshar who could legitimately be associated with Apsû and Tiamat as the primordial creator gods (I 3–4). Given the references to water and the nature of *Marduk's Ordeal*, this subversive passage presumably aims to oust Marduk from his role as Tiamat's conqueror. Both versions of *Marduk's Ordeal* close

with curses on anyone who does not disseminate the composition, referring to both written and oral transmission. This can be seen as a subversive response to the epilogue of *Enuma Elish*, as suggested by Frahm (2011: 353–4).

The third instance is in a letter found at Nineveh and it is marked as being the words of the great gods to Marduk, although *Enuma Elish* is not specified (identified in Parpola 1983: 286). The Babylonian scholar Bel-ushezib, who was probably from Nippur but living in Nineveh, wrote to Sennacherib's son and successor Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), and drew on Marduk's enthronement scene, quoting *Enuma Elish* IV 8: 'The great gods spoke to Bel, as follows: "To raise high and bring low, [this shall be] in your hand". You are Marduk of the people. Bel as destinies decreed […], your joys. [The king, my lord, should] act just like Bel. Make the high low and [raise] the low [high].' (*ilānū rabûtu / ana Bēl iqtabû umma šušqû u šušpulu / [šī l]ū qātukka Marduk ša nišī attā Bēl akî šīmāti / [… ta]šīlātīka iltēm akî ša Bēl maḫru / [šarru bēlī lī]puš šaqû šuppil u šapli [šušqi]*, r. 29–33; Parpola 1993: no. 112; translation mine). This passage follows Bel-ushezib's warnings to the king about unrest and conspiracy in Babylonia, involving the governor of Nippur called Shumu-iddin (Fabritius 1999; Luukko 2011). Bel-ushezib encourages the king to model himself on Marduk in his exercise of sovereign power. He draws an analogy between the great gods' awarding of the sovereign power to promote and demote to Marduk as divine king and Marduk's decreeing of a good destiny for Esarhaddon as human king. In accord with this analogy, Bel-ushezib encourages Esarhaddon to act like Marduk and exercise his sovereignty to demote and promote his subjects. The reversed order, with demotion first, and the earlier warnings suggest that this pro-Assyrian Babylonian scholar, who regularly wrote to Esarhaddon, was encouraging the king to crush the Babylonian rebels. Esarhaddon did not espouse the Assur-centred religious reforms of his father Sennacherib but was instead committed to restoring Babylon after its sack. Bel-ushezib deployed the traditional Marduk kingship ideology of *Enuma Elish* for very specific political objectives in direct communication with this Assyrian king. He subverted the poem by drawing an analogy between Marduk and the Assyrian king and directing this against his fellow Babylonians, who were probably opposed to his own interests in Nippur as well as the interests of the Assyrian state.

The final case study is a condensed account of Tiamat and Marduk's battle and its aftermath in the Late Babylonian calendar treatise. This is attested on three tablets from Babylon and reinterprets non-royal rituals at the Esagil in different months of the year as preventing the invasion of Babylonia and the looting of Marduk's statue from the Esagil (Reynolds 2019). It is probable that this Late Babylonian treatise was composed in the Hellenistic period and that it was still being copied around 170 BCE (Reynolds 2019: 13–17, 111–20). A section that may concern the second month Ayaru includes this passage of narrative poetry:

mulmul issukma i[ḫtepi karassu]
[ša Qing]u ḫāmirīšu ina kakki lā gamāl i[tt]akis kišāds[u]
[ultu] Tiamat ikmû ilqû šarrūssu

[*u tuppi*] *šīmāti ša Qingu itmuḫu qātuššu*
[*ṣalmīš*]*unu ibnīma Bāb Apsî ušaṣbit*
[*aḫrataš ū*]*mū ana lā mašê epšēti Tiamat*

He shot an arrow and [broke open her (i.e. Tiamat's) belly],
he cut through the neck of [Qingu], her consort, with a merciless weapon.
[After(?)] he defeated Tiamat, took his sovereignty,
[and(?)] secured in his hand the [Tablet of] Destinies of Qingu,
he made [images] of them (i.e. Tiamat's monsters) and installed them in the Gate of the Apsû,
so that the deeds of Tiamat be not forgotten [in future] days.
(i 1′–6′; Reynolds 2019: 190–1, 238–44)

This concise account is related to selected events in *Enuma Elish* IV–V, and its structure and vocabulary allude to this much longer poem. The first line, although restored, is an almost literal quotation of *Enuma Elish* IV 101, and there are especially close relationships between the third line and VII 162 in the epilogue and between the final two lines and V 75–6. It is significant that the second and fourth lines about Qingu are less closely related to *Enuma Elish*: in the treatise Marduk kills Qingu in battle, but in *Enuma Elish* the Igigi gods kill him after the conflict to enable mankind's creation. The treatise links the allusion to Tiamat's defeat in the epilogue of *Enuma Elish* with the defeat of Qingu. However, the epilogue only mentions Tiamat.

The treatise's overall focus is on Babylonia's defeat of two historic foreign enemies, Elam and Subartu, the latter signifying Assyria. This traditional terminology harks back to past invasions of Babylonia, when Marduk's statue was looted, especially by the Elamites in the twelfth century BCE before it was retrieved by Nebuchadnezzar I (Reynolds 2019: 70–101; see Enrique Jiménez in this volume). The treatise draws a complex analogy between Babylonia's conflict with Elam and Subartu, on the one hand, and Marduk's conflict with Tiamat and Qingu, on the other. This two-enemy model explains the treatise's innovations about Qingu. Related material in the treatise includes a condensed poetic narrative about the build-up and onset of Marduk's battle; wordplay interpreting Tiamat and Qingu as Elam and Subartu respectively; quotes from *Enuma Elish* about the battle; and elaborate interpretations of heavenly bodies as representing the three combatants (Reynolds 2019: 39–45, 50–4, 73–5).

It is striking that this treatise from the late first millennium BCE still used *Enuma Elish* as its model for divine and human kingship. Late Babylonian kings were more remote in terms of both ritual participation and contact with the scholars and ritual experts associated with the Esagil, the community where this treatise was composed and copied. This nostalgic work harks back to the days of Babylonian sovereignty when the Esagil's cult specialists were seen as essential for the king's well-being and for state security. The treatise was self-validation by scholars in response to the realities of the Esagil's marginalization in provincial Babylonia under remote imperial rulers (Reynolds 2019: 12–17, 22–3; 2021: 72–6).

The cuneiform reception of *Enuma Elish* changed over the centuries but, despite the poem's varying fortunes, Marduk's victory and Tiamat's deeds remained a powerful paradigm: they were certainly not forgotten.

Further reading

The following are recommended as further reading, with more detailed references in the discussion above. The online *eBL* project has published a corpus of Akkadian literature, including an edition of *Enuma Elish* (L.I.2) that lists quotations, as well as a wealth of cuneiform tablets in the Fragmentarium. An online corpus of Akkadian commentaries with accompanying resources is available online through the *CCP* project. Frahm (2010; 2011: 345–68) assessed politically motivated responses to the poem in and beyond Mesopotamia, including an Assyrian focus. Lambert (2013) offered editions of *Enuma Elish*, the *Defeat of Enutila, Enmeshara, and Qingu*, and the *Exaltation of Nabû* and collected extensive material attesting to the cuneiform reception of *Enuma Elish*. Elsewhere, I (Reynolds 2021) analysed the broad transmission history of Marduk and Tiamat's battle, paying particular attention to Babylonian sources, and published and contextualized a Late Babylonian calendar treatise that quoted and alluded to the poem (Reynolds 2019). Frahm and Jiménez (2015) edited and discussed a commentary on *Enuma Elish*. Pongratz-Leisten (2015, 2017) analysed Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions and ritual texts that attest to the reception of *Enuma Elish*. Debourse (2022) assessed the New Year festival and its relationship to the poem, especially in the Late Babylonian period. Fadhil and Jiménez (2022) edited and discussed a Marduk hymn, identified as a pastiche of *Enuma Elish*.

Notes

1 Eckart Frahm et al., Cuneiform Commentaries Project (2013–23), https://ccp.yale.edu/.

2 CCP 1.1.A, with 1.6, and 1.1.B (on *Enuma Elish*); CCP 3.1.12.A; 3.1.u32; 4.1.4.B; 6.1.9.B; 6.1.10.B; 6.1.13.A; 6.1.13.B.a; 6.1.16.A.a; 6.7.A; 7.1.1; 7.1.6.A (ritual interpretation); 7.2.u27; 7.2.u92; 7.2.u93.

3 For a slightly revised version of chap. 10, see Pongratz-Leisten (2017: xxxi–lxxv). More speculatively on royal inscriptions of Assurbanipal, see Crouch (2013).

4 P. 161–2, 196–8, 203–6, 251–5, and 268–72 for *Erra and Ishum*; p. 247 for lexical material; p. 316–22 for curse formulas; and p. 425–6, 431, and 438–42 for royal inscriptions.

5 Enrique Jiménez et al., Electronic Babylonian Library Project (2018–23), https://www.ebl.lmu.de/. As noted there, future plans include data-mining the *eBL* corpus for intertextual parallels.

6 As well as the school tablets, newly accessible sources include three commentaries quoting *Enuma Elish* (*eBL* Fragmentarium BM 36978 (L.I.2 SB I BabaNBQuo1); BM 36848 + 37521 (L.I.2 SB VII BabaLBQuo2); BM 41071 + 41171 (L.I.2 SB VII BabaLBQuo5)) and a new source for *Marduk's Ordeal* (*eBL* Fragmentarium 1882,0323.4).

7 For related discussion of another corpus of texts, see Frahm (2011: 26–7).
8 Fadhil and Jiménez (2021: 227–8); *eBL* L.I.2 SB VII SipNB1, BabaNB2, HuzNA1a.
9 On *Erra and Ishum*, see the section on Babylonian reception in earlier sources; on *Marduk's Ordeal*, see the case study.
10 The commentary on *Enuma Elish* VII; CCP 3.1.12.A; *Inamgishhurankia*; *Erra and Ishum*; *Erish Shummi*; and three compositions focused on Nabû (see outline below).
11 CCP 3.1.12.A.a(+)b, i 12 (quoting *Enuma Elish* VII 57) is attested on a Nineveh tablet; see also *eBL* Fragmentarium K 2281. *Inamgishhurankia* (Livingstone 1986: 22–5, l. 11, 24, quoting V 17, 21, respectively) is attested on Nineveh tablets, one dated to 683 BCE, as well as a tablet attributable to Babylon, dated 488 BCE. On *Inamgishhurankia*, see Francesca Rochberg in this volume.
12 See the Neo-Assyrian treatise on Nabû on a tablet from Nineveh *eBL* Fragmentarium K 104, r. 54–6 (quoting *Enuma Elish* I 101–2 on Marduk's names); Lambert (2013: 164; I propose: r. 54 *ma-ri-u*$_2$*-tu*$^{la!}$); Rubin (2021: 165–6).
13 The following compositions were also in circulation in Assyria but are discussed above under Babylonian reception: commentary on *Enuma Elish* VII; CCP 3.1.12.A; *Inamgishhurankia*; *Erra and Ishum*; *Erish Shummi*; and three compositions focused on Nabû.
14 *eBL* L.I.2 lists of manuscripts. For the school tablets, see *eBL* L.I.2 SB 1 AssNASch1, AssNASch2; Lambert (1960: 356–7).
15 See below for an overview of commentaries on the poem. Another 'mixed' work is a Neo-Assyrian explanatory compendium that alludes to the poem and quotes it concerning Marduk's creation of the world from Tiamat's corpse (Livingstone 1989: no. 39, r. 2, quoting *Enuma Elish* IV 137). The interpretations of ritual extend Marduk's conquests beyond Tiamat and Qingu; present Ninurta as the analogue to the Assyrian king; and include Assyrianized interpretations (Frahm 2011: 355; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 409, 446). See also Eckart Frahm in this volume.
16 *eBL* L.I.2 SB I AššNA5, III AššNA1, V NinNA; Kämmerer and Metzler (2012: 26–33, 355–60).
17 Four excavated tablets from the Sippar Library probably date from the sixth century BCE (Gabriel 2014: 58–60; Fadhil and Jiménez 2021). Excavated tablets from Kish and Meturan may post-date the fall of Assyria (see above on earlier sources). An *Enuma Elish* tablet in the British Museum's Babylon Collection is probably dated to the twenty-seventh year of Darius I, 495 BCE (Gabriel 2014: 37–8; *eBL* L.I.2 Colophons SB I BabaLB1).
18 Scholarly tablets found at Uruk very rarely mention Tiamat and Qingu, and then not as Marduk's conquests (Reynolds 2019: 30, 40, 292, 365, 370).
19 *eBL* L.I.2 listed for *Enuma Elish* SB 1–7 with notations BabaNBSch, SipLBSch1, SipNBSch1; Gesche (2000: 174–83).
20 E.g. *eBL* L.I.2 SB 1 BabaNBSch1, BabaNBSch4, BabaNBSch9, BabaNBSch13, BabaNBSch18, BabNBSch 19. See *eBL* L.III.3 Marduk's Address to the Demons; Oshima (2011: 216–70). More work remains to be done on relationships between all the texts involved.
21 As with Uruk, scholarly tablets from Nippur very rarely mention Tiamat and Qingu and then not as Marduk's conquests (Reynolds 2019: 30, 40, 292, 370).
22 *Inamgishhurankia*, *Erra and Ishum*, and *Erish Shummi* are included under Babylonian reception in earlier sources; a treatise on Elamite month names and a commentary on *Enuma Elish* I–VII under Neo-Assyrian reception.
23 For a list of *Enuma Elish* quotations, see Fadhil and Jiménez (2021: 228); *eBL* Fragmentarium BM 41071 + 41171.

24 *eBL* Fragmentarium BM 41071 + 41171, r. 7′–10′; see CCP 3.4.1.A.i.
25 CCP 6.1.9.B, l. 14′ (quoting I 139); 6.1.10.B, r. 18′ (quoting I 22); 6.1.13.A, l. 4 (quoting VII 62); 6.1.13.B.a, r. 15 (quoting VI 148); 6.1.16.A.a, l. 7 (quoting III 129).
26 CCP 6.7.A, l. 11′ (quoting IV 82).
27 CCP 4.1.4.B, l. 14 (quoting IV 101).
28 CCP 7.1.1, r. 3–5 (quoting VI 151–3); 7.2.u93, l. 3 (quoting VII 5); *eBL* Fragmentarium BM 41071 + 41171, r. 3′–4′ (quoting VII 143–4).
29 As an example, some text commentaries quote *Enuma Elish* with 'Marduk's Address to the Demons' and/or the *Prayer to Marduk 2* (CCP 7.2.u93, l. 1, 3, 9; *eBL* Fragmentarium BM 36848 + 37521, l. 3′–5′; BM 66956 + 76066 + 76498, l. 12′–18′, 26′–33′). On these works in the school curriculum, see above.
30 For an example of a commentary quoting *Enuma Elish* in more complex exegesis, see CCP 4.1.4.B, l. 14 (quoting IV 101); Jiménez (2013: 331–4).
31 For a further example of a Late Babylonian explanatory text related to gods and ritual that quotes the poem, see CCP 7.1.6.A.a and 7.1.6.A.b, l. 27, 31 (quoting I 60, VII 35). I would suggest that one tablet attesting to the *Defeat of Enutila, Enmeshara, and Qingu* may be another example (Lambert 2013: 328–9, BM 47530, l. 2–6, quoting I 22–6).
32 The two duplicate sources are: a tablet excavated in Babylon and dating to the seventh century BCE (Cavigneaux 1981: no. 79.B.1/30, l. 8, 12–13; 1999: 385–91; see Al-Mutawalli 1999: 191–4); and a Babylon Collection tablet copied from a Babylon source (Lambert 2013: pl. 41; *eBL* Fragmentarium BM 38706 + 39843, l. 8, 11–2).
33 Based on *eBL* Fragmentarium BM 38706 + BM 39843 (transliteration); translation mine. *eBL* L.I.2 SB VII 77 BabaLBQuo3 suggests reading l. 8 to give a marked quotation, although the phrasing would be unusual (Gabbay 2016: 201–63).
34 Livingstone (1989: no. 34, l. 53–5; translation mine; see also no. 35, l. 44–5); MacGinnis et al. (2022: 34, l. 6′, with the variant *kī annî iqṭibi*).
35 On *šū ina libbi enūma eliš iqṭibi* possibly expressing the agency of scripture, see Gabbay (2016: 260–1).

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