

numbers of fish. Finally, Enlil convenes the gods and imposes an oath on them not to reveal his next measure, a flood. Enki warns Atrahasis indirectly by talking to the wall of a reed enclosure where Atrahasis sleeps to receive divine communication. Atrahasis builds an ark, fills it with belongings, artisans, and animals, and survives the flood. In the aftermath of the flood, the gods discover their dependency on the human race and so devise better ways to control the population, including taboos on marriage and childbirth and death for all human beings at different times and in different ways.

The story is presented here in four versions. The Old Babylonian, or Classical version (II.36a), is based principally on an Old Babylonian manuscript of the seventeenth century B.C. Various other Old Babylonian manuscripts have been incorporated into the translation of this version where possible, plus some later fragments. The original consisted of three tablets containing 1245 lines of poetry, of which about 60 percent are preserved in whole or in part.

The Middle Babylonian version (II.36b), dating to the Mature period, is known in two recensions, a fragmentary manuscript from Nippur (II.36b.1) and a short Atrahasis story from Syria (II.36b.2). The Late Babylonian version (II.36c), dating to the Late period, is often close to the Old Babylonian, but has some significant differences, many of which appear to be misunderstandings of an earlier text or editorial alterations. In only a few instances does the Late Babylonian version seem poetically or linguistically superior to the Old Babylonian one. The Late Assyrian version (II.36d) was perhaps derived from a Middle Assyrian reworking of the text, and diverges widely from the Old Babylonian. The Assyrian version, in particular, expanded some episodes, rewrote others, and, in general, levelled out the originality of the older text into a flat, standardized idiom full of repetition. Another version of this story is found in Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh epic.¹ In the translations of the later versions, cross-references are given to the Old Babylonian to assist the reader who wishes to compare them.

For the further convenience of the reader who wishes to see the story as a whole, key segments, as preserved in different versions, are tabulated below, where OB means the Old Babylonian version (II.36a); MB the Middle Babylonian versions (II.36b), LB the Late Babylonian version (II.36c), and LAssyr the Late Assyrian version (II.36d).

Prehistory and rebellion of gods OB I, 1-180; LB I, II, 1-80; LAssyr I i
Creation of humanity OB I, 181-247; LB II, 81-116

1. Foster, *Gilgamesh*, 84-91.

Institution of birth, marriage, procreation	OB I, 273-305; LAssyr I iii
Humans go to work	OB I, 328-339
Plague and rescue	OB I, 352-412; LB IV; LAssyr I iv, 1-36
Drought and rescue	OB II i, ii; LB V; LAssyr I iv, 37-62
Famine and rescue	OB II, iii, iv, v; LAssyr I v, vi
Oath and preparation for flood	OB II, vi, vii, viii
Atrahasis is warned, builds ark	OB III i, ii; MB b.1, b.2; LAssyr II iii
Flood	OB III ii, iii; LAssyr II, continuation
Aftermath	OB III iii, iv, v, vi

(a) OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION

Tablet I

(Before humankind existed, the great gods imposed forced labor on the lesser gods.)

When gods were man,¹ (1)
They did forced labor, they bore drudgery.
Great indeed was the drudgery of the gods,
The forced labor was heavy, the misery too much:
The great Anunna-gods, the seven,* were burdening (5)
The Igigi-gods with forced labor.
Anu their father was king,
Their counsellor was the warrior Enlil,
Their prefect was Ninurta,
[And] their bailiff(?) [En]nugi. (10)
They had taken the [] ... by its sides,*
They cast lots, the gods took their shares:
Anu went up to heaven,
[Enlil too]k the earth for his subjects,*

1. The line is a metaphor (Groneberg, AfO 26 [1978/9], 20), meaning "when gods were (like) men" (in that they had to work). This meaning was already argued, for different reasons, by Lambert, and borne out by a later quotation of this line in a seventh-century B.C. manuscript explicitly as "When the gods like men," (Lambert, OrNS 38 [1969], 533). This does not mean that the gods were actually human beings; rather, they had to work as humans do. A different interpretation, whereby "man" meant "boss" and "gods" was taken to be a divine name "Ilu," has been argued by Jacobsen (*Studies Finkelstein*, 117).

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[The bolt], the trap¹ of the sea,
 [They had gi]ven to Enki the leader.
 [Those of Anu] had gone up to heaven,
 [Those of Enki(?)] had descended to the depths,
 [Those ...] of heaven [had nothing to do],
 [They burdened] the Igigi-gods [with forced labor].
 [The gods] were digging watercourses,*
 [The waterways of the gods], the life of the land,
 [The Igigi-gods] were digging watercourses,
 [The waterways of the gods, the] life of the land.
 [The Igigi-gods dug the Ti]gris river,
 [And the Euphrates there]after.
 [Springs they opened up from] the depths,
 [Wells ...] they established.
 [] the depth
 [] of the land
 [] within it
 [] they lifted up,
 [They heaped up] all the mountains.
 [] years] of drudgery,
 [] the vast marsh.
 They [cou]nted years of drudgery,
 [] and] forty years,* too much!
 [] forced labor they bore night and day.
 [They were com]plaining, denouncing,
 [Mut]tering down in the ditch,
 "Let us face up to our [foreman]* the prefect,
 "He must take off (this) our [he]avy burden upon us!
 "[The god], counsellor of the gods, the warrior,
 "Come, let us remove (him) from his dwelling,
 "Enlil, counsellor of the gods, the warrior,
 "Come, let us remove (him) from his dwelling!"

1. Precise sense not clear (Falkenstein *apud* Wilcke, ZA 67 [1967], 160; Lambert's *ittadnu* is now confirmed by a later manuscript). The sea may be portrayed as a gigantic trap, holding all its fish within. In the Late Babylonian version (II.36c), the fish break out of the "trap" of the sea, according to Ea, and thus humankind is "accidentally" saved from starvation; George and Al-Rawi (*Iraq* 58 [1996], 153) suggest that the bolt "keeps the sea in check."

(15) [Awila]^{1*} made ready to speak,
 [And said to the] gods his brethren,
 "[Let us not(?) smite]² the prefect of olden days
 (*gap, the following from a later Assyrian fragment [CT 46 7]*)
 "[] let us kill [him]! (a)
 "[] let us break the yoke!"
 [] made ready to speak,
 [And said] to the gods his brethren,
 "[Let us smite] the prefect of olden days ..." (e)
 "The counsellor of the go[ds], the warrior,
 "[The god, counsellor of the gods, the warrior],
 "Come, let us remove (him) from his dwelling,
 "Enlil, counsellor of the gods, the warrior,
 "Come, let us remove (him) from his dwelling!" (60)
 "Now then, call for battle!
 "Battle let us stir up, warfare!"
 The gods heard his words,
 They set fire to their tools,
 They put fire to their spades,
 And flame to their workbaskets. (65)
 Off they went, one and all,
 To the gate of the warrior Enlil's abode.
 It was night, half-way through the watch, (70)
 The house was surrounded, but the god did not know.

1. One late manuscript has Alla here (see II.36c Tablet I, 42). This cannot easily be reconciled with the Old Babylonian version (see line 224). Alla was known in other Mesopotamian tradition as a "dead god," so he might have been substituted there for the original name of the rebel leader (for discussion, see M. Krebernik, "Geschlachtete Gottheiten und ihre Namen," AOAT 281 [2002], 289-298). The name Alla may, alternatively, have been etymologized by the poet as deriving from Aw-ila, which, in its turn, may have been a wordplay on the Akkadian word for "man" (*awilū*), as pointed out by various scholars (see George and Al-Rawi, *Iraq* 58 [1996], 150; Alster, *Studies Jacobsen*, 35-40).

2. This episode seems to have undergone change across different versions, becoming increasingly violent (see II.36c, Tablet I, 43-44). An inferior late manuscript allows the reading "Let us [not] strike" (Böck and Rowe, *Anla Orientalis* 17-18 [1999-2000], 170), but a better one reads "we will smite" (or the like) (George and Al-Rawi, *Iraq* 58 [1996], 158 line 44, clear, as read, on photo). Perhaps the original logic of this episode was that the rebels wanted to "confront" (later "smite," "kill") the prefect and remove Enlil from his dwelling, but the ringleader diverted attention from the prefect, saying that Enlil could always appoint another (II.36c, 170); this interpretation is not supported by textual evidence.

It was night, half-way through the watch,
 Ekur was surrounded, but Enlil did not know!
 Kalkal¹ noticed it and [looked out],
 He touched the bolt and looked out [].
 Kalkal woke [Nusku],
 And they listened to the clamor of [the Igigi-gods].*
 Nusku woke [his] lord,
 He got [him] out of bed,
 "My lord, [your] house is surrounded,
 "Battle has run right up [to your gate].
 "Enlil, your house is surrounded,
 "Battle has [ru]n right up to your gate!"²
 Enlil had provided(?) weapons(?) for his dwelling.
 Enlil made ready to speak,
 And said to the courier Nusku,
 "Nusku, bar your gate,
 "Get your weapons and stand before me."
 Nusku barred his gate,
 Got his weapons and stood before Enlil.
 Nusku made ready to speak,
 And said to the warrior Enlil,
 "My lord, your face is (gone pale as) tamarisk,³
 "Your own offspring! Why did you fear?
 "My lord, your face is (gone pale as) tamarisk,
 "Your own offspring! Why did you fear?
 "Send that they bring Anu down [here],
 "And that they bring Enki be[fore yo]u."
 He sent and they brought Anu down to him,
 They brought Enki before him.
 Anu, king of [hea]ven, was present,
 The king of the depths, Enki, was [].*
 With the great Anunna-gods present,
 Enlil arose, the debate [was underway].
 Enlil made ready to speak,

(75)

(80)

(85)

(90)

(95)

(100)

(105)

And said to the great [gods],
 "Against me would they be [trying this]?*
 "Shall I make battle [against my own offspring]?
 "What did I see with my very own eyes?*" (110)
 "Battle ran right up to my gate!"
 Anu made ready to speak,
 And said to the warrior Enlil,
 "The reason why the Igigi-gods
 "Surrounded(?) your gate,* (115)
 "Let Nusku go out, [let him learn their cause],
 "[Let him take] to [your] so[ns]
 "[Your great] command."
 Enlil made ready to speak,
 And said to the [courier Nusku],
 "Nusku, open [your gate], (120)
 "Take your weapons, [go out to the group].
 "In the group of [all the gods]
 "Bow down, stand up, [and repeat to them] our [command]:*
 'Anu, [your father],
 'Your counsellor, [the warrior] Enlil, (125)
 'Your prefect, Ninurta,
 'And your bailiff Ennugi have sent me (to say),
 "Who [is the god who was instigator of] battle?*" (130)
 "Who [is the god who was instigator of] hostilities?
 "Who [is it that stirred up] war,
 "[[That] battle has run up to the gate of Enlil]?""*
 [Nusku took the command(?) opened] his gate,
 [Took his weapons] and w[ent with the command of(?)] Enlil.
 [In the group of a]ll the gods,
 [He bowed down, s]tood up, set forth the c[omm]and,* (135)
 "Anu, your father,
 "[Your counsellor, the] warrior Enlil,
 "[Your prefect], Ninurta,
 "And [your bailiff] Ennugi [have sent me (to say)]:
 'Who is [the god who was instigator of] battle? (140)
 'Who is [the god who was instigator of] hostilities?
 'Who [is it that stirred up] war,

(110)

(115)

(120)

(125)

(130)

(135)

(140)

1. A doorkeeper god (W. G. Lambert, RLA 5, 323).

2. Note the omission of a verb of speaking, indicating excitement and abruptness.

3. Literally, "your features are tamarisk" (Borger, HKL 2, 158). For the tamarisk as symbolic of pallor born of fear, see III.19 line 29.

‘[(That) battle has run up to the gate of Enlil]?’”
 [The Igigi] answered him in [the group],
 [They were defiant, the labor gang]* (145)
 “Every [one of us gods has declared] war,
 “We formed [our group] in the [ditch].
 “[Excessive] drudgery [has killed us],
 “[Our] forced labor was heavy, [our misery too much]! (150)
 “And so every [one of us gods]
 “Has resolved on [a battle] with Enlil.”*
 Nusku took [the command],
 He went, he [brought back ...].
 “My lord, [you sent] me to the [group of the gods], (155)
 “I went, [I bowed down, I stood up],
 “I set forth [you]r great [command],
 “Al[the Igigi-gods(?), the labor gangs,
 were defiant against it(?)],*
 “[Every one of us] gods has declared war, (160)
 ‘We [have formed our group] in the ditch.
 ‘Excessive [drudgery] has killed us,
 ‘Our forced labor [was heavy], the misery too much!
 ‘[Now, every] one of us gods
 ‘Has resolved [on a battle] with Enlil.”* (165)
 When he heard that speech,
 Enlil’s tears flowed down,
 Enlil [became distu]rbed at what he said.
 He said to the warrior Anu,
 “Noble one, you should take authority off
 with you to heaven. (170)
 “Take the power you still have(?).
 “With the great gods in session before you,
 “Summon one god, let them make a new authority.”

(for what follows, see II.36c)

(The gap in the main edition is next partly filled by an Old Babylonian fragment [CT 44 20], collations Atrahasis, pl. 11; plus the Late Babylonian version [II.36c]. In the Old Babylonian version, Ea, rather than Anu, as in the Late Babylonian version, remonstrates, then goes on to propose creation of human beings to do the work of the laboring gods.)

Ea made ready to speak,
 And said to the gods [his brethren], (175)
 “What do we denounce them for?
 “Their forced labor was heavy, [their misery too much].
 “Every day the earth was ...
 “The outcry [was loud, we could hear their clamor].
 “There is [a task to be done], (180)
 (As another Old Babylonian manuscript resumes, Enki is speaking.)
 “[Mami, the birth-goddess],¹ is present,
 “Let the mother-goddess create a human being,* (190)²
 “Let man assume the drudgery of god.”
 They summoned and asked the birth-goddess,
 The midwife of the gods, wise Mami,
 “Will you be the birth-goddess, creatress of humankind?
 “Create a human being, let him bear the yoke, (195)
 “The yoke let him bear, the task of Enlil,
 “Let man assume the drudgery of god.”
 Nintu³ made ready to speak,
 And said to the great gods,⁴*
 “It is not for me to do it, (200)
 “Th(is) task is Enki’s.
 “He is the one who purifies everything,
 “Let him give me the clay so I can do the making.”
 Enki made ready to speak,
 And said to the great gods, (205)
 “On the first, seventh, and fifteenth days of the month,*
 “I will establish a purification, a bath.
 “Let one god be slaughtered,
 “Then let the gods be purified in it.
 “Let Nintu mix clay with his flesh and blood, (210)
 “Let that same god and man be thoroughly mixed
 in the clay.
 “Let us hear the drumbeat for the rest of time,

1. Later versions give her already the name Belet-ili; see, however, below, line 247.
 2. The standard line numbering of the Lambert-Millard edition is here to high (“190” should be about 182), but is maintained for ease of reference.
 3. Nintu, Mami, Mama, and Belet-ili are all names for the birth- or mother-goddess.
 4. Variant omits lines 200–205, thus making Nintu’s (or Mami’s) speech begin in 206.

"From the flesh of the god let a spirit remain,*
 "Let it make the living know its sign,
 "Lest he be forgotten, let the spirit remain."¹
 The great Annnna-gods, who administer destinies,
 Answered "Yes!" in the assembly.
 On the first, seventh, and fifteenth days of the month,
 He established a purification, a bath.
 They slaughtered Aw-ila,² who had the inspiration,
 in their assembly.
 Nintn mixed the clay with his flesh and blood.
 <That same god and man were thoroughly
 mixed in the clay.>
 For the rest [of time they would hear the drumbeat],³
 From the flesh of the god a spi[rit remained].
 It would make the living know its sign,
 Lest he be forgotten, [the] spirit remained.
 After she had mixed that clay,*
 He summoned the Anunna, the great gods.
 The Igigi, the great gods, spat upon the clay.
 Mami made ready to speak,
 And said to the great gods,
 "You ordered me the task and I have completed (it)!"
 "You have slaughtered the god, along with his inspiration.
 "I have done away with your heavy forced labor,
 "I have imposed your drudgery on man.
 "You have bestowed(?) clamor upon humankind.⁴

1. I interpret this speech as follows: "Kill the one god (*Awila*) who had the "inspiration" (*ēmu*) for the rebellion, purify the executioners, but let a "spirit" (*etemmu*) remain from the slain god, this to be part of new-created man (*awilu*). The pulsation of this spirit will be a perpetual reminder of the dead god." Other translations of this passage differ; for further discussion, see T. Abusch, "Ghost and God: Some Observations on a Babylonian Understanding of Human Nature," in A. I. Baumgarten, et al., ed., *Self, Soul and Body in Religious Experience, Studies in the History of Religion* 78 (Leiden, 1998), 363-383.

2. See p. 231 note 1 and III.18e line 25. Note that a later version adds "Alla, an Enlil of former time(?), they slew" (II.36c, line 104).

3. Or heartbeat. For discussion of this passage, see Kilmer, *OrNS* 41 (1972), 162-166.

4. That is (Pettinato, *OrNS* 39 [1968], 187 and 189; von Soden, *OrNS* 38 [1969], 425, *AHW*, 1128a, and ZA 68 [1978], 67), the only present given to humankind is something to complain of (*rigmu*). Ironically, *rigmu* "clamor" will be the cause for the gods' sending the flood. On the other hand, Stol suggests that *rigmu* means here the call to corvée work (*Birth in Babylonia*, 113 note 21).

(215) "I have released the yoke, I have [made] restoration."¹
 They heard this speech of hers,
 They ran, restored, and kissed her feet, (saying), (245)
 "Formerly [we used to call] you 'Mami',
 "Now let your n[am]e be 'Mistress-of-All-the Gods'
 (Belet-kala-ili)."
 (220)
 (225) (Breaks off; for the missing section, which describes the production of seven male
 and seven female foetuses, see Assyrian version, col. iii, 15'-37' [p. 270]. The
 first man and woman mature; she gives birth.)
 [And the young girl ...] her breasts,²
 [...] a beard
 [... on] the cheek of the young man.
 [In the garde]ns(?) and street* (275)
 Wife and husband will choose each other.*
 The birth-goddesses were assembled,
 And Nintu [sat rec]koning the months.
 [At the] destined [time(?)], they summoned the tenth month.
 The tenth month³ arrived; (280)
 She ..., opened the womb(?).
 Her face beaming and joyful,
 With covered head,
 She performed the midwifery. (285)
 She girded (the mother's) middle
 As she pronounced a blessing.
 She drew (a circle?) with meal and placed the brick,⁴
 "I am the one who created, my hands have made it!"

1. Freed from service, that is, returned matters to their original state before the great gods had imposed labor on the lesser gods (Charpin, *AFO* 34 [1987], 37-38).

2. The first pair of human beings has grown from babyhood (somewhere after line 38' of the late Assyrian version) to adolescence (Tablet I lines 271ff.) and has matured enough to reproduce (Tablet I line 276). In 277ff. the first mother-to-be is about to give birth.

3. The Babylonians reckoned by lunar months, so pregnancy would be longer reckoned by lunar months than if reckoned by solar months.

4. The text implies that placing of a brick in the room where a woman was about to give birth was to be a common practice. For further discussion, see A. Kilmer, "The Brick of Birth," *JNES* 45 (1987), 211-213; Stol, *Birth in Babylonia*, 118-122.

"Let the midwife rejoice in the sacrosanct woman's house.¹ (290)
 "Where the pregnant woman gives birth,
 "And the mother of the baby is separated(?),^{2*}
 "Let the brick be in place for nine days,
 "Let Nintu, the birth-goddess,³ be honored. (295)
 "Always call Mami their [mistres]s,
 "[Always praise the birth-goddess, praise Kesh.^{4*}
 "In [], when the bed is laid,
 "Let wife and her husband choose each other,* (300)
 "At the time for being man and wife,
 "They should heed Ishtar in the [marriage] chamber.
 "For nine days let there be rejoicing,
 "Let them [cal]l Ishtar Ishara.⁵
 "[] at the destined time (305)

(gap)

(Humankind, now reproducing, is put to work to feed the gods.)

A man []
 "Cleanse the dwelling(?) []"
 The son to [his] father [] (330)
 ... []
 They sat and []
 He it was who was carrying []
 He saw and []
 Enlil [] (335)
 They took up ... []*

1. Moran (*Biblica* 52 [1971], 58–59 with note 3) suggests that this refers to a woman who has just given birth, and so could not have intercourse for a taboo period, so line 300 would refer to the resumption of intercourse after delivery. But "sacrosanct woman" normally referred to some sort of priestess, so it is possible that certain sacrosanct women had lying-in facilities and the birth took place there (Stol, *Birth in Babylonia*, 116).

2. The obscure verb used here may refer to separation of the child from the mother by cutting the umbilical cord or to isolating mother and child from the rest of the household (for the latter proposal, see Stol, *Birth in Babylonia*, 117, where this passage is discussed).

3. Variant: Belet-ili.

4. Sanctuary of the birth-goddess; see p. 93 note 1.

5. Lines 301ff. may refer to consummation of marriage (differently Bottréro, "Supersage" as predicted in line 276. Ishara was another name for Ishtar; see W. G. Lambert, "Ishara," *RLA* 5: 176–177. The nine days may refer to a wedding ceremony and attendant festivities or to a honeymoon period.

They made n[e]w hoes and shovels,*
 They built the big canal banks.
 For food for the peoples, for the sustenance of [the gods]

*(large gap)**(Humankind reproduces continuously. Enlil is annoyed by their clamor and sends a plague to diminish it.)*

[Twe]lve hundred years [had not gone by],
 [The land had grown numerous], the peoples had increased,
 The [land] was bellowing [like a bull].
 The god was disturbed with [their uproar], (355)
 [Enlil heard] their clamor.
 [He said to] the great gods,
 "The clamor of humankind [has become burdensome to me],
 "I am losing sleep [to their uproar].
 "[] let there be ague..." (360)

*(three lines lost)**(Enki advises Atrahasis how to save humanity from the plague.)*

But he, [Atrahasis], his god was Enki,
 [He was exceedingly wise]. (365)
 He would speak [with his god],
 And his god [would speak] with him!
 Atrahasis [made] ready to speak,
 And said to [his] lord,
 "How long []* (370)
 "Will they impose the disease on us [forever]?"
 Enki made ready to speak,
 And said to his servant,
 "Summon(?) the elders*
 "At the usual time in your house.¹ (375)
 "[Command]:

'Let heralds proclaim,

'Let them raise a loud clamor in the land:*

"Do not reverence your (own) gods,

¹ These lines are obscure, so the translation is hypothetical.

"Do not pray to your (own) goddesses,
 "Seek the door of Namtar,¹
 "Bring a baked (loaf) before it."
 (380)

"May the flour offering please him,
 "May he be shamed by the gift and withdraw his hand."*
 Atrahasis received the command,
 And assembled the elders to his gate.²
 Atrahasis made ready to speak,
 And said to the elders,
 "Elders ...
 "[] ...
 "[Command:]

'Let heralds proclaim,
 'Let them raise a loud [clamor] in the land:
 "[Do not reverence] your (own) gods,
 "[Do not] pray to your (own) [goddesses],
 "[Seek] the door of [Namtar],
 "[Bring a baked (loaf) before it."
 (385)

"May the flour offering please him,
 "May he be shamed by the gift and withdraw his hand."
 The elders heeded [his] words,
 They built a temple for Namtar in the city.
 They commanded and the [heralds] proclaimed,
 They raised a loud clamor [in the land].
 They did [not] reverence their (own) gods,
 They did [not] pray to [their (own) goddesses],
 They sought [the door] of Namtar,
 They [brought] a baked (loaf) before [it].
 The flour offering pleased him,
 [He was shamed] by the gift and withdrew his hand.
 [The ague] left them,
 They resumed [their clamor?],
 (390)

(two lines fragmentary)

Tablet II

i

(Enlil sends a drought.)

Twelve hundred years had not gone by, (1)
 The land had grown numerous, the peoples had increased,
 The land was bellowing like a bull.
 The god became disturbed by their uproar,
 Enlil heard their clamor. (5)
 He said to the great gods,
 "The clamor of humankind has become burdensome to me,
 "I am losing sleep to their uproar.
 "Cut off provisions for the peoples,
 "Let plant life be too scanty [fo]r their hunger. (10)
 "Let Adad withdraw his rain,
 "Below, let the flood not come up from the depths.*
 "Let the wind come to parch the ground, (15)
 "Let the clouds billow but discharge not a drop.
 "Let the field reduce its yields,
 "Let the grain-goddess close her bosom.
 "Let there be no rejoicing for them, (20)
 "Let [...] be gloomy,
 "Let there not []..."

(gap)

ii*

(Enki advises Atrahasis how to save humanity from the drought.)

[Enki made ready to speak],¹
 [Saying to his servant],
 "[Summon(?) the elders]
 "[[At the usual time in your house]. (5)
 "[Command:

'Let heralds proclaim],

1. God of plague.

2. There seems to be no way to correlate this line with the instructions in Tablet I line 375

1. From the Late Babylonian version, Tablet V (see II.36c), adapted according to lines 372-375 above.

[Let them raise a loud] cl[amor] in the land:

"Do not reverence your (own) gods,
 "Do not pray to your (own) [goddesses],
 "Seek [the door of] Adad
 "Bring a baked (loaf) [before it]."

1 "[May the flour offering] please him,
 "May he be shamed [by the] gift and withdraw his hand.
 "May he rain down mist in the morning,
 "May he stealthily rain down dew in the night,
 "That the fields just as stealthily bear ninefold."*
 They built a temple for Adad in the city.
 They commanded and the heralds proclaimed,
 They raised a loud clamor in the land.
 They did not reverence their (own) gods,
 They did [not] pray to their (own) goddesses,
 They [sought] the door [of Adad],
 [They brought] a baked (loaf) before it.
 The flour offering pleased him,
 He was shamed by the gift and withdrew his hand.
 He rained down mist in the morning,
 And stealthily rained down dew in the night,
 [The fields just as] stealthily bore ninefold.
 [Their handsome features returned],
 [Their former clamor resumed].¹

(gap)

iii*

(For a fuller version of what follows, see II.36c [pp. 263-265])

(Enlil sends a famine. Atrahasis wants to communicate with Enki, but apparently knows that the god is now under oath not to speak directly with him. He sleeps by the water for an indirect communication in dreams.)

[] ...
 [] of his god.
 [Out] of the city he set his foot,

1. From the Late Babylonian version, Tablet V (see II.36c).

Every day he would weep,
 Bringing dream offerings in the morning. (5)
 "My god [would speak to] me, but he is under oath,
 "He will [inform] (me) in dreams.
 "Enki [would speak to] me, but he is under oath,
 "He will [inform] (me) in dreams." (10)
 [] com]mand of his god,
 [] seated, he wept.
 He cast [the dream offering into the water],
 He would sit [facing the river], weeping constantly.
 W[hen the waterway] was silent, (15)
 He made libation at night,
 Sleep would come double fast.¹
 He said to the [waterway] of the river,
 "May the waterway take [this, may the river] bear it away, (20)
 "May my gift be set before [Enki], my [lord].
 "May [Enki] see [it and think of me],
 "May he [],
 "This night [may I have a dream]."
 After he had sent the message by the waterway, (25)
 He sat down [to weep] facing the river,
 From the bank []
 To the depths [his present] went down.
 Enki heard [his clamor],
 He [summoned] his hairy hero-men² [and said], (30)
 "The man who [],
 "Let this same one [],
 "Go, [take him my(?)] command,
 "Ask him, [tell me the news of his land]."

(gap, missing passages in II.36c, p. 264)

(1)

1. Obscure and doubtful.

2. Akkadian *lahmu*, a kind of hairy, human-shaped creature here associated with Enki; see Wiggermann, JEOL 27 (1981/2), 90-105 (this passage referred to on p. 96); Heimpel, AOAT 253 (1998), 129-135.

iv*

Above []
 The flood did not [rise] from the depths.
 The womb of earth did not bear,
 Plant life did not come forth.
 People were not seen about,
 The black fields whitened,
 The broad plain was filled up with salts.
 The first year they ate old grain,
 The second year they exhausted their stores.
 When the third year came,
 Their features were [gray]* from hunger,
 Their faces were crusted, like crusted malt,
 Life was ebbing, little by little.*
 Tall people shriveled in body,
 They walked hunched in the street.
 Broad-shouldered people turned slender,
 Their long stance grew short.
 Messengers took the command,
 They went before the sea,
 They stood and told him,
 [Their] orders to Enki the leader

(fragmentary lines, gap)

v

*(gap)**(Humanity has been saved from famine, apparently by a flood of fish.)*

He¹ was filled with anger [at Enki],
 "[All we] great Anunna-gods
 "Resolved together [on a rule].
 "Ann and Adad watched over [the upper regions],
 "I watched over the lower earth.
 "Where Enki went,
 "He released the yoke, he made restoration."²

1. Enlil.

2. That is, a return to conditions before the attempt to destroy the human race; see p. 237 note 1.

(1)

"He let loose produce for the peoples,¹ (20)

"He put [shade?] in the glare(?) of the sun."

Enlil [madē] ready to speak,

He said to the vizier Nusku,

(5)

"Let them bring to me the two comrades,*²

"Let them [send] them into my presence." (25)

They brought to him the two comrades.

The warrior [Enlil] said to them,

"[All we] great Anunna-gods

"Resolved together on a rule.

(10)

"Anu and Adad watched over the upper [regions], (30)

"I watched over the lower earth.

"Where you (Enki) went

"[You released the yoke], you made restoration. (1')

(15)

"[You let loose produce for the peoples],

"[You put shade?] in the glare(?) of the sun."

(gap)

vi

(20)

(Enlil is explaining to the gods how Enki frustrated his murderous plans.)

"Adad [withheld?] his rain (10)

"[But] filled the fields

"[And] the clouds(?) covered [].

"[You (gods), must not] feed his peoples,

"[Nor] supply provisions on which the peoples thrive." (15)

[The god] fretted for sitting idle,

[In] the assembly of the gods, worry gnawed at him.

[Enki] fretted for sitting idle,*

[In] the assembly of the gods, worry gnawed at him.

(15)

1. I take this speech to mean that Enki loosed a flood of fish upon the land and saved the people from starvation. The trick perhaps lay in the ambiguity of the word: Enki promised to send a flood of fish, which gods understood to be a flood to overwhelm the land, but which turned out, intentionally no doubt, to be harvest for the starving human race. This may have been the result of Atrahasis' prayer to the river and Enki's instructions to the hairy hero-men. (A different interpretation is found in CAD M/2, 124a.)

2. If correctly understood, perhaps two destroyer gods are meant, Shullat and Hanish (below, Tablet II vii 50; von Soden, TUAT III/4, 634).

'A windfall of birds, a spate(?) of fishes."¹
 He opened the water clock and filled it,
 He told it (the wall?) of the coming of the seven-day deluge.*
 Atrahasis received the command,
 He assembled the elders at his gate.
 Atrahasis made ready to speak,
 And said to the elders,
 "My god [does not agree] with your god,
 "Enki and [Enlil] are constantly angry with each other.
 "They have expelled me from [the land?].
 "Since I have always revered [Enki],
 "[He told me?] this.
 "I can[not] live in []
 "Nor can I [set my feet on] the earth of Enlil.
 "[I shall dwell?] with <my> god in(?) the depths.*
 "[This my god Enki] told me [] ..."

(gap of four or five lines)

ii

The elders []
 The carpenter [carried his ax],
 The reed-worker [carried his stone].
 [The rich man? carried] the pitch,*
 The poor man [brought the materials needed].

(gap)

Bringing []
 Whatever he [had]
 Whatever he had []
 Pure (animals) he sl[aughtered, cattle] ...*
 Fat (animals) [he killed, sheep?] ...*
 He chose [... and brought on] board.
 The [birds] flying in the heavens,
 The cattle(?) [and of the cat]tle-god,

1. Birds and fish falling from the sky are known to be occasional consequences, though not harbingers, of severe storms (A. R. Millard, "The Sign of the Flood," *Iraq* 49 [1987], 63-69; I. Finkel, "Raining Fish," N.A.B.U. 2002/19). The precise meaning of this line is unclear.

The [creatures(?)] of the steppe,
 [] he brought on board
 [] ... the month.
 [] he invited his people
 [] to a feast.
 [] his family he brought on board.
 While one was eating and another was drinking,
 He went in and out; he could not sit,
 he could not take his place,*
 For his heart was broken, he was retching gall.
 The outlook of the weather changed,
 Adad began to roar in the clouds.
 The god they heard, his clamor.*
 He brought pitch to seal his door.
 By the time he had bolted his door,
 Adad was roaring in the clouds.
 The winds were furious as he set forth,
 He cut the mooring rope, he released the boat.

iii

(four lines lost)

[] the storm
 [] were yoked
 [Anzu rent] the sky with his talons,
 [He] the land
 He broke its clamor [like a pot].
 [] the flood [came forth],
 Its destructive power came upon the peoples [like a battle].
 One person did [not] see another,
 They could [not] recognize each other in the catastrophe.
 [The deluge] bellowed like a bull,
 The wind [resound]ed like a screaming eagle.*
 The darkness [was dense], the sun was gone,
 [The offspring became] like flies.*
 [The gods became afraid of the clamor] of the deluge,
 They took [refuge in heaven],
 They [crou]ched [outside].
 [Anu became afraid of] the clamor of the de[lu]ge,

It was terri[fy]ng the gods.*
 [Enki] was beside himself,
 [That] his sons were carried off before him.
 Nintu, the great lady,
 Gnawed* her lips in agony.
 The Anunna, the great gods,
 Were sitting in thirst and hunger.
 The goddess saw it, weeping,
 The midwife of the gods, the wise Mami,
 "Let the day grow dark,
 "Let it turn back to gloom!
 "In the assembly of the gods,
 "How did I agree with them on annihilation?
 "Was Enlil so strong that he forced [me] to speak?
 "Like that Tiruru, did he make [my] speech confused?¹*
 "Of my own accord, from myself alone,
 "To my own charge have I heard (my people's) clamor!
 "[My] offspring — with no help from me —
 have become like flies.*
 "And as for me, how to dwell in (this) abode of grief,
 my clamor fallen silent?*"

iv

(gap)

Nintu was wailing []
 "... gave birth to(?) ...*
 "As dragonflies a watercourse, they have filled the sea.*
 "Like rafts they lie against the river meadow(?),*

(one line missing)

iv

(gap)

1. The meaning of the reference to Tiruru is unknown.

"Like rafts capsized they lie against the bank.
 "I saw and wept over them, (10)
 "I have exhausted my lamentation for them."
 She wept, giving vent to her feelings,
 While Nintu wailed, her emotion was spent.
 The gods wept with her for the land. (15)
 She had her fill of woe, she was thirsty for beer.
 Where she sat weeping, they too sat,
 Like sheep, they filled a streambed.¹ (20)
 Their lips were agonized with thirst,
 They were suffering pangs of hunger.
 Seven days and seven ni[ghts]
 There came the deluge, the storm, [the flood]. (25)
 Where it []
 [] was thrown down
 (gap of about twenty-five lines)

v

(gap of twenty-nine lines)

To the [four] winds [] (30)
 He cast []
 He was raining down food []² (35)
 []
 [The gods sniffed] the savor,
 They were gathered [like flies] around the offering.
 [After] they had eaten the offering, (40)
 [Nin]tu arose to rail against all of them,
 "Where has Anu come to, the chief decision-maker?
 "Has Enlil drawn nigh the incense?
 "They who irrationally brought about the flood,
 "And relegated the peoples to catastrophe?
 "You resolved upon annihilation,
 "So now (the people's) bright countenances are turned gray." (45)
 Then she drew nigh the big fly (ornaments?)*
 That Anu had ... []*

The gods are hoping to find water to drink.

A wordplay on "rain" and "provide food" may be intended.

"Mine is [their] woe! Proclaim my destiny!
 "Let him get me out of my misery, let him show me the way(?). (50)
 "Let me go out ... []

vi

"In []
 "Let [these] flies¹ be jewelry around my neck.
 "That I may remember it [every?] day [and forever?]."
 [The warrior Enlil] saw the vessel,
 And was filled with anger at the Igigi-gods.
 "All we great Anunna-gods
 "Resolved together on an oath.
 "Where did life(?) escape?*"

"How did a man survive the catastrophe?"
 Anu made ready to speak,
 And said to the warrior Enlil,
 "Who could do this but Enki?"
 "[] he revealed the command."
 [Enki] made ready to speak,
 [And said to] the great gods,
 "I did it [indeed] for your sakes!
 "[I am responsible] for safeguarding li[fe].
 "[] gods []
 "[] the flood
 "[] brought about
 "[O Enlil,] your heart
 "[] and relax.
 "Impose your penalty [on a wrong-doer],
 "[For] who is it that disregards your command?²
 "[] the assembly []

(gap)

"[] it
 "[] put,

1. The episode is obscure and seems to contain a play on words; perhaps the goddess's necklace is the rainbow. For discussion, see Kilmer, *Studies Reiner*, 175-180.

2. The thrust of the argument may be that he had sworn not to tell humankind of the flood, but did not swear to annihilate life.

"[] ... my heart." (40)
 [Enlil] made ready to speak,
 And said to Ea the leader,
 "[Come], summon Nintu the birth-goddess,
 "[Do you] and she take counsel together in the assembly."
 [Enki] made ready to speak, (45)
 And [said to] Nintu the birth-goddess,
 "[You], birth-goddess, creatress of destinies,
 "[Establish death?] for all peoples!*"
 "[]
 "[] let there be. (50)

(one line missing?)

vii

"Now then, let there be a third (woman) among the people, (1)
 "Among the people are the woman who has borne
 and the woman who has not borne.
 "Let there be (also) among the people the (she-)demon,¹
 "Let her snatch the baby from the lap of her who bore it, (5)
 "Establish high priestesses and priestesses,
 "Let them be taboo, and so cut down childbirth.
 "[] the cloistered woman,
 "[] the sacrosanct woman,

(fragmentary lines, then large gap)

viii

(gap)

"How we brought about [the flood],
 "But man survived the [catastrophe], (10)
 "You, counsellor of the [great] gods,
 "At [your] command have I brought a []* to be,
 "This [my] song (is) for your praise. (15)
 "May the Igigi-gods hear,
 let them extol your great deed to each other.
 "I have sung of the flood to all peoples: Listen!"

1. "The-One-Who-Wipes-Out" (family names).