

Mesopotamian Pantheon Myths and Major Gods

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Learning Objectives

- Know the great Mesopotamian gods and their functions: Anu, Enlil, Enki, Shamash, Inana and Marduk
- Know how the Mesopotamian gods are represented and how they are connected with the City States
- Know the basic plots of the following myths
 - Inana's descent into Hell
 - Marduk - *Epic of Creation*
 - Adapa at the Gate of Heaven



Mesopotamian Gods

- Explain the Functioning and Hazards of This World
 - Responsible for a Natural Phenomena or Human Concept
 - Both the Concept and God Responsible for Governing it
 - Anu – Heaven
 - Shamash– Sun
 - Ashnan – Grain
 - Namtar – Decisions , Turning Points in Our Destiny
 - Misharu – Justice

The Gods are:

- “Powerful” or “All powerful”
- “Great” or “Very great”
- “Very highly placed”
- “Majestic”
- “Glorious”
- Sublime”
- “Perfect”
- “Unsurpassable”

Gods' Intellectual Abilities

- “Intelligent”
- “Wise” or “Very Wise”
- “Aware”
- “Clever”

Mesopotamian Gods Can Die

– No Natural Death

- Always Violent and Intentional
- Marduk kills Tiamat
- Kingu– (Tiamat's champion) killed to make Man

Great Gods

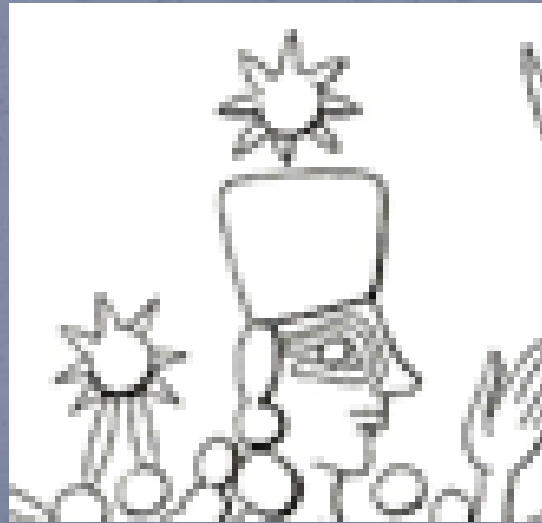
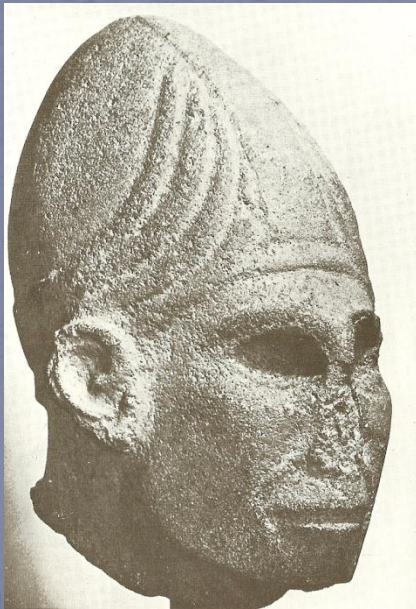
- An – Founder and Chief - Divine Ruling Dynasty
- Enlil – An's Son/Current Ruler of the Gods and the World
- Inana – Feminine Element Among the Gods
- Enki –God of subterranean freshwater. God of Wisdom or God of Civilization
- Shamash - Sun god

City States and the Gods

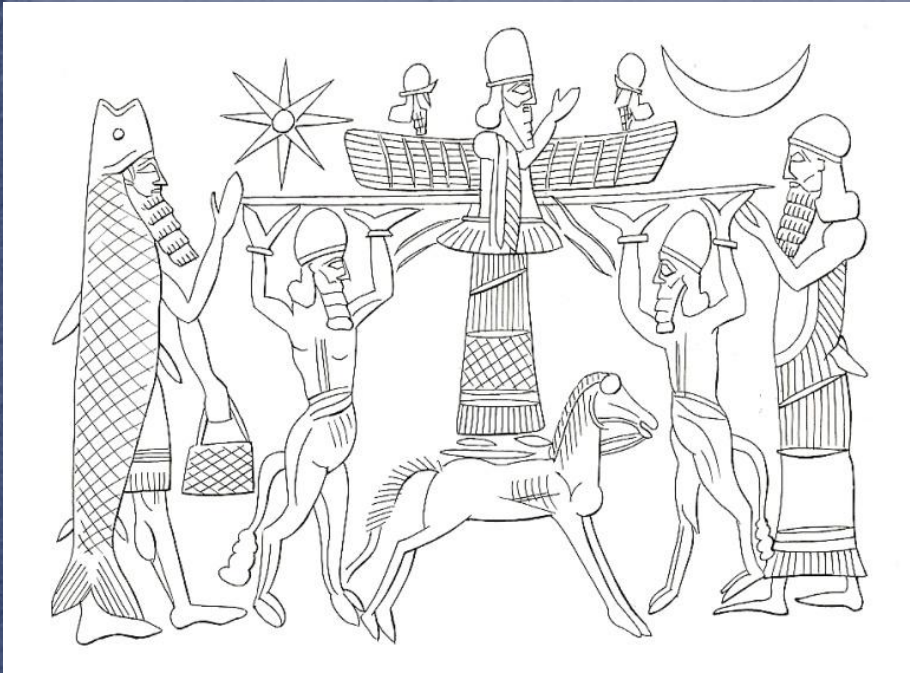
- 3rd Millennium Each City-State Associated with a Great God
- Enki – Eridu
- Enlil – Nippur
- An (and Inana) – Uruk
- Nanna – Ur
- Utu – Larsa and Sippar

Images of the Gods

- Anthropomorphic
- Animals and Objects – Emblems of Certain Deities
- Horned Headdresses and Polos



Gods' Animals



Shamash on a horse

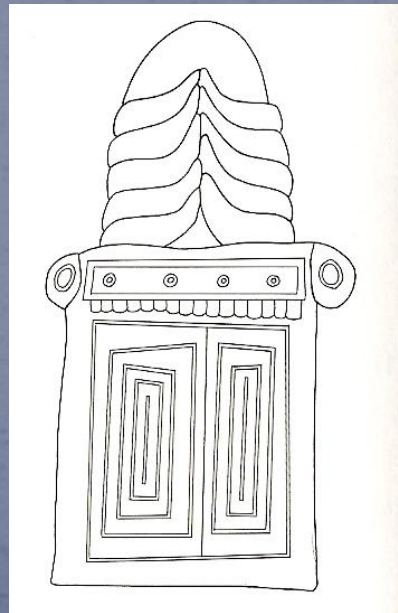


Enki and his goat fish

Great Gods

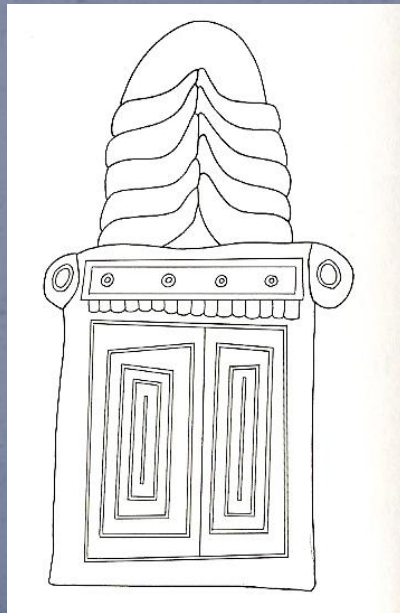
An (Anu) Heaven or Sky God

- Prime mover in creation
- Distant Supreme Leader of the Gods
- Occupied Top Level of Heaven
- Neo Assyrian Symbol for Anu is a Horned cap



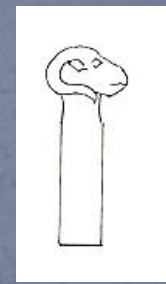
Enlil Earth or Storm God

- The Other Gods Cannot Look Upon His Splendor
- Takes an active interest in human affairs
- Also a creative element

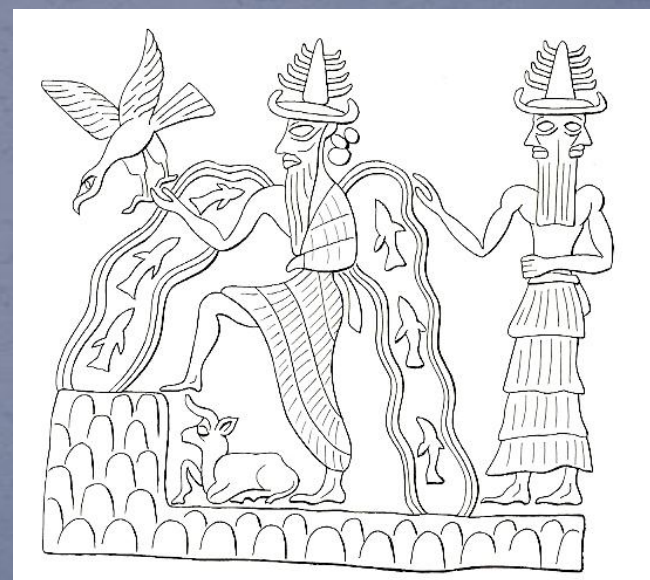


Enki (Ea) Water God

- God of Subterranean Freshwater Ocean (abzu)
- Wisdom, magic and incantations
- Arts and Crafts
- Epithets
 - Stag of the Azu
 - Nudimmud
- Wife was Damgalnuna
- Father of Marduk
- His Beast was the Goat Fish



Enki 's (Ea) Symbols



Enki (Ea) with Usmu

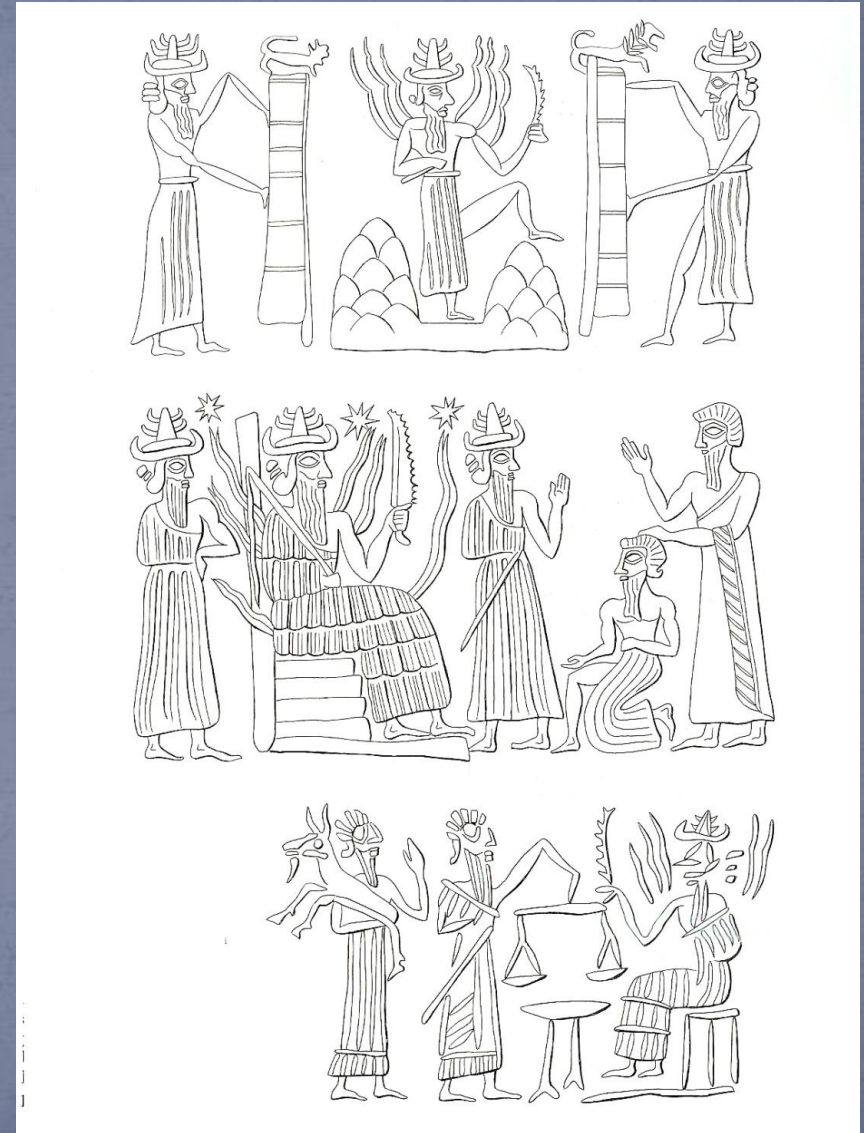
Shamash

- Aspects
 - Brilliant Light of the Sun
 - God of Truth, justice and right
 - Protector of Kings



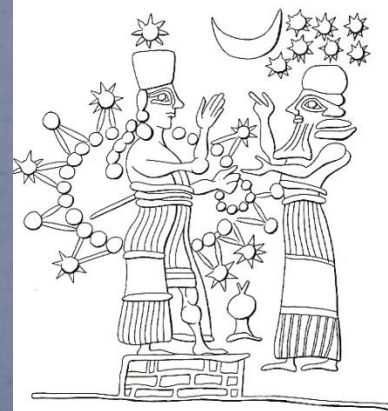
Shamas

- Rising Sun
- At Court receiving worshipers
- Dispenser of Divine Justice



Inana (Ištar)

- Most Important Female Deity
- Akkadian Name Ištar
- Daughter
 - An
 - Moon God Nanna (Sîn) and Sun god Utu (Šamaš)
- Aspects
 - Love and Sexual Behavior
 - Warlike Goddess fond of Battle
 - Planet Venus

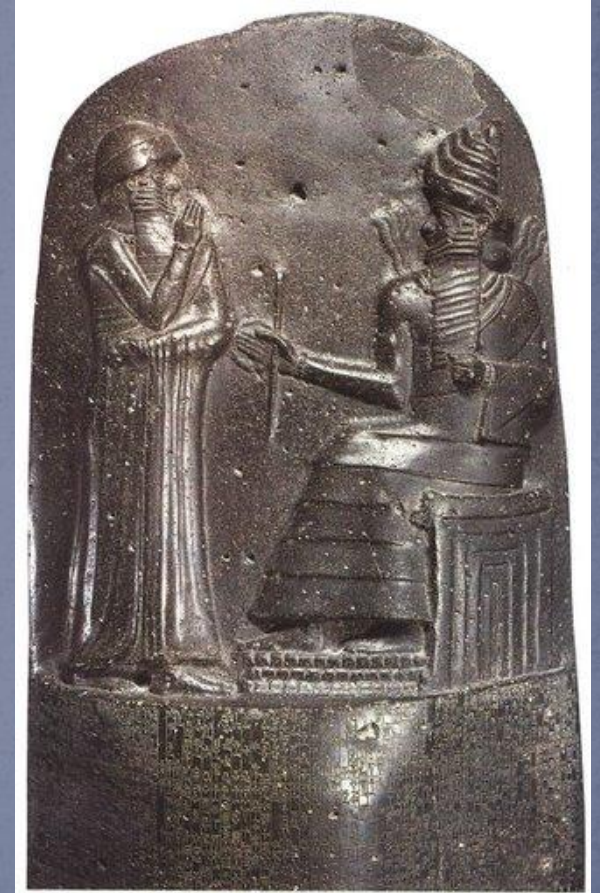


Inana 's Descent into Hell

- Reflective of myths that explain the seasons
- Inana goes to the underworld to reign there in her sister's place
- She is imprisoned and kept in torment
- While she is in the underworld – animals and men no longer mate
- Enki demands she be given the water of life and returned to the upper world

Hammurabi Law Code (1792-1750 BCE)

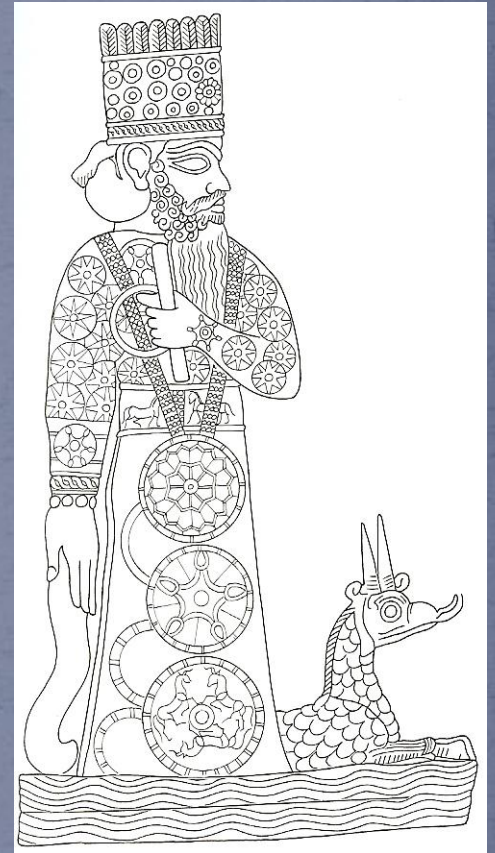
- Reduced Number of Gods
- Exalts Marduk
- Only Thirty Gods Mentioned
 - Pantheon Familiar to the “Common People”



King Hammurabi and Šamaš

Marduk

- Patron God of Babylon
- Name signs mean “Bull-calf of the Sun”
- Son of Enki (Ea)
- Wife Sarpānītu
- Animal is the Snake Dragon



Marduk – *Epic of Creation*

- Apsu and Tiamat ruled when there was nothing but water
- The divine family increases – very noisy – Apsu wants to kill them – Enki killed Apsu
- Enki has a son Marduk – trickster and angered the gods
- Tiamat takes up battle against Enki and makes monsters
- Marduk elevated to the position as King of Gods
- Defeats Tiamat – splits her body to create firmament and the earth
- Marduk creates humans from Kingu the Champion of Tiamat

Adapa at the Gate of Heaven

- Usually interpreted as referring to man's lost opportunity to achieve immortality
- Possible connection to Adam and the fruit of the tree of knowledge

Adapa at the Gate of Heaven

- Adapa – created by Enki looked like a man but had the wisdom of a god
- Broke the wings of the South Wind
- Summoned before Anu – Enki intervenes gives bad advice do not eat the food it is death
- Food is actually for immortality thus Adapa misses out on immortality

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