**Resumptive Repetitionas Editorial Technique in Ancient Near Eastern Literature:**

**The Cosmogony and Anthropogony in *Enūma Eliš* as Case Studies**

**A. Resumptive Repetition as Editorial Technique**

Every literary work, by its very nature, contains repetitions of words, sentences, and passages that constitute part of its stylistic characteristics. However, there is a type of repetition that has nothing to do with style, but rather serves as a pure technical means for returning to the narrative thread after deviating from it, repeating, either precisely or with some variation, the textual material that precedes the deviation. This type of repetition has been named by German scholars *Wiederaufnahme*, translated into English as “resumptive repetition.” While one can list many reasons for deviating from the narrative, which require a resumptive repetition—such as adding a parenthetic remark or a retrospective look, relating to a simultaneous event, adding summarizing observations, or the like—the most interesting one, from a philological perspective, is the interpolation of secondary material into an existing sequence. Identification of this type of repetition enables us to gain a better understanding of the manner in which the text was formed and the stages it underwent on the way to its final version.

The determination of whether the material that is followed by a resumptive repetition is an interpolation of secondary material depends on philological and literary-historical examination. In short, the more the material that requires the resumptive repetition deviates in its linguistic, stylistic, and substantive character from the sequence, and the more the sequence (including the sentences that constitute resumptive repetition) reveals no awareness of the material that requires the resumptive repetition, the greater the chance that the resumptive repetition serves to insert secondary material into an existing continuum. In that sense, resumptive repetition can be compared to a bulging seam basting different traditions into the central narrative cloth.

Thus, for modern scholars, resumptive repetition can constitute the most prominent signpost for identifying secondary material in the interstices between two similar passages. And indeed, among the philological research fields, biblical scholars have long been aided by resumptive repetition in discerning interpolated traditions, due to the extensive use of that technique by the biblical editors and copyists.[[1]](#footnote-1) While the cuneiform texts testify as well to the use of resumptive repetition for various purposes, including an interpolation of secondary material into a narrative continuum, most ANE scholars have ignored this phenomenon and its significance for the understanding of the formation of literary works.[[2]](#footnote-2) In order to shed more light on such a philological tool, the present study suggests examining two case studies, occurring at central points in the Babylonian *Enūma Eliš*—the cosmogony and the anthropogony—and their possible implications for understanding the development of that work.

**B. The Resumptive Repetitions at the Cosmogony and Anthropogony in *Enūma Eliš***

*Enūma Eliš*, which depicts how Marduk, the god of Babylon, came to power over all the gods after defeating Tiāmtu, the sea, is composed of a variety of traditions. Many of those are known to us in relation to older gods, such as Enlil and his son Ninurta, and Enki/Ea and his son Asalluḫi, documented in literary works, god lists, and hymns.[[3]](#footnote-3) This wealth of traditions was applied by the Babylonian author to Marduk, compiling them together into a new plot. It thus should be no surprise that *Enūma Eliš* is replete with duplications, contradictions and inconsistencies caused by the melding of the traditions it comprises. Evidence for the author’s awareness of intentional changes in the sequence is provided by the frequent use of the technical idioms “After…” (Akkadian: *ultu/ištu*) and “When…” (Akkadian: *enūma*) to coordinate between various events—whose origins are often in different traditions—that occur simultaneously or consecutively. Another technique, which will be discussed here, is that of the resumptive repetition.

1. **The Cosmogony**

Many of the motifs embedded in the account of the combat between Marduk and Tiāmtu in *Enūma Eliš* were modeled on the story of Ninurta’s war against Anzû.[[4]](#footnote-4) As in *The Myth of Anzû* and its related traditions, so in *Enūma Eliš*, several gods are asked to do battle against a monstrous enemy that is holding the Tablet of Destinies, but they refuse, and eventually Ea summons the younger god to fight with. The latter agrees and battles with the help of winds, a net and arrows. Following his victory, the wind moves parts of the defeated enemy as an announcement of his death to the other gods. They all rejoice, and the Tablet of Destinies is removed from the enemy’s chest by the champion protagonist.

Since this narrative matches *The Myth of Anzû* so well, while it is inappropriate in many senses to *Enūma Eliš* (for example, the gods called to battle prior to Marduk in *Enūma Eliš* are not war-gods at all; the Tablet of Destinies has no importance in the plot of *Enūma Eliš*; etc.), there is no doubt that the direction of borrowing is from *The Myth of Anzû* to *Enūma Eliš*, rather than the two traditions drawing on one archetype.

This well-established Babylonian tradition was integrated into *Enūma Eliš* with an additional tradition, namely the creation of the cosmos, which had never been connected to Ninurta. Since that creation was based on the defeated Tiāmtu, the world being made of her dead body, it was inserted into the section devoted to the combat’s aftermath, known also from *The Myth of Anzû*: the seizure of the Tablet of Destinies by the victor, the announcement to the gods of the enemy’s death, and the gods’ rejoicing over the outcome of the battle.

It goes thus: following his victory, Marduk imprisoned the allies of the dead Tiāmtu and broke their weapons (IV 105–114):[[5]](#footnote-5)

…107Regarding her divine aides, who went beside her…

111He bound them and broke their weapons,

112and they lay enmeshed, sitting in a snare,

113hiding in corners, filled with grief,

114bearing his punishment, held in a prison.

He put ropes upon Tiāmtu’s eleven creatures and tied up their hands (ll. 115–118):

115Regarding the eleven creatures who were laden with fearfulness,

116the throng of devils who went as grooms at her right hand,

117he put ropes upon them and bound their arms,

118together with their warfare he trampled them beneath him.

And he counted Qingu, Tiāmtu’s spouse, among the dead, while taking the Tablet of Destinies from him (ll. 119–122):

119Regarding Qingu, who had risen to power among them,

120he bound him and reckoned with the Dead Gods.

121He took from him the Tablet of Destinies, which was not properly his,

122sealed it with a seal and fastened it to his own breast.

Then Marduk returned to Tiāmtu and announced her death to the gods. They rejoiced at the news and gave him presents (ll. 123–134):

…129The Lord trampled upon Tiāmtu’s lower part,  
130and with his merciless mace smashed (her) skull.  
131He severed her arteries,  
132(and) the north wind delivered (her blood) as tidings.[[6]](#footnote-6)  
133His fathers saw it and were glad (and) rejoiced;  
134They brought him gifts and presents.[[7]](#footnote-7)

These last lines seem allegedly to complete the battle’s aftermath, after which begins the cosmogony (IV 135 – V 66). However, in V 67, at the end of the cosmogony, the narrator repeats the same combat’s aftermath. First, he relates again to the placement of the ropes, but without identifying the prisoners, i.e., without naming the antecedent of the pronoun “them” (ll. 67–68):

67After he had formulated his regulations and composed [his] decrees,

68he put ropes and put them in Ea’s hands. (cf. IV 117)

Then the narrator returns to the Tablet of Destinies, telling how Marduk took it from Qingu and turned it over to Anu, without showing any awareness of the previous description in IV about Marduk’s taking the tablets from Qingu (ll. 69–70):[[8]](#footnote-8)

69[Regarding the Tablet] of Destinies which Qingu had taken and carried, (cf. IV 121)

70he took as an audience-gift and presented it to Anu.

After that, the narrator returns to the eleven creatures of Tiāmtu, portraying the breaking of their weapons and their arrest, while in tablet IV this exact description is applied to Tiāmtu’s allies (ll. 71–76):

…73[Regarding] her eleven creatures, to which Tiāmtu had given birth and . . ., (cf. IV 115)

74he broke their weapons and bound them to his feet. (cf. IV 111)

75He made images of them and stationed them at the [Gate] of the Apsû,

76to be a sign never to be forgotten.

Finally, the narrator repeats the gods’ rejoicing at the news of the victory (“the tidings”). Unlike the former passages, where the narrator relates events only briefly in comparison to IV, here he expatiates about the rejoicing much more than in IV, which is followed by a depiction of the removal of the battle’s dust from Marduk’s clothing and his enthronement (ll. 77–112):

77The [gods] saw (it) and were jubilantly happy, (cf. IV 133)  
78(that is:) [L]aḫmu, Laḫamu (and) all his fathers. (cf. IV 133)  
79Anšar [embra]ced him (= Marduk), the king pronounced a greeting to him.

80[A]nu, Enlil, and Ea gave him gifts. (cf. IV 134)

81[Mothe]r Damkina, who bore him, hailed him,  
82[wit]h clean ... she made his face shine.

83[T]o Usmû, who held her present (which was brought) for the tidings, (cf. IV 133, 135)

84[he entru]sted the position of vizier of the Apsû, to take care of the shrines.

85The Igigi a[ss]embled and all paid obeisance to him,

86The Anunnaki, all that existed, kissed his feet.

87[They all gathered] in their assembly to show their submission…

88[...] they stood and bowed down: “Behold the king!”

89[...] his fathers, took their fill of his beauty,  
90The Lord heard (it), his (robe’s) fringes girded with the dust of battle ...  
92Anointing his [b]ody with [...] cedar perfume,

93[he p]ut on [his] princely [ro]be

94a royal [au]ra, a terrifying crown …

106The gods, all that existed [...]

107Laḫmu and L[aḫam]u [...]

108opened their mouths and a[ddressed] the Igigi [god]s:

109“Previously, [Mar]duk (was) our beloved son,  
110Now, he is your king! Heed his command!”

111Again, they called and spoke up together:

112“Lugal-dimmer-an-ki-a is his name, trust in him!”

According to their content, style and syntax, V 68–84 thus form an accurate duplicate (though in a different order) of IV 105–134, both describing the aftermath of the battle, which eventually leads to Marduk’s enthronement (IV 85 ff). Between those two parts, however, is set the cosmogony (IV 135 – V 66), as the following chart (no. 1) demonstrates:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The battle’s aftermath  (V 67–84) | Cosmogony  (IV 135 – V 66) | The battle’s aftermath  (IV 105–134) |
| Ropes are put and the prisoners are presented to Ea  ([*ṣer*]*rēti ittadâ Ea uštaṣbit* [68]) | Tiāmtu’s enemies are tied up and their weapons broken  (*īsiršunūtima kakkīšunu ušabbir* [111]) |
| The Tablet of Destinies seized from Qingu and delivered to Anu  ([*u tuppi š*]*īmāti ša Qingu īkimu ubillamma… ana Anim iqtīša* [69–70]) | Ropes are put in the eleven creatures  (*u ištēn-ešret nabnīti… ittadi ṣerrēti idīšunu ukassi* [115–117]) |
| The eleven creatures’ weapons are broken, they are tied up, their images are placed in the temple of Apsû  ([*u*] *ištēn-ešret nabnīssa…* [*kakk*]*īšun iḫtepâ īsir šēpuššu* [73–74]) | The Tablet of Destinies seized from Qingu  (*u Qingu… ikmīšuma itti uggê šuata imnīšu*  *īkimšuma tuppi šīmāti lā simātišu* [119–121]) |
| The gods rejoice and present gifts  (*īmurū*[*ma ilū k*]*arassunu ḫa*<*dîš*> *iriššu*  [d*La*]*ḫmu u* d*Laḫamu kālīšunu abbīšu…*  [d*A*]*num* d*Enlil u* d*Ea uqa'’iššūš qīšāti* [77–78, 80]) | The news of victory is received, the gods rejoice and present gifts  (*īmurūma abbūšu iḫdû irīšū*  *igisê šulmānī ušābilū šunu ana šâšu* [133–134]) |
| Enthronement of Marduk  (V 85–112) |  |  |

The second part of the battle’s aftermath, as well as the scene of the enthronement of Marduk, does not display any awareness of the cosmogony and of the first part of the aftermath, as though they had never been told. Further, because the repetitive lines do not repeat precisely all the stages of the end of the battle—e.g., they do not list for a second time the identity of the gods who were imprisoned along with the eleven creatures, nor do they again tell of the Tiāmtu’s blood lifted by wind to bring news of the battle’s end—this duplicate creates many difficulties in the sequence.

As an example, one may assume that what the gods saw in the second part (l. 77 above) and the good news they heard (l. 83), due to which they were jubilantly happy and enthroned Marduk, are the acts of creation. However, the comparison of these lines to those that precedes the cosmogony material shows that the plot reprises at length the rejoicing at the news of Marduk’s victory over Tiāmtu as briefly recounted prior to the cosmogony. It is this news of Marduk’s victory that led to his cleansing from the dust of battle and his being anointed with cedar fragrance toward his enthronement.

However, assuming that the function of the second part of the battle’s aftermath was to serve as a resumptive repetition, i.e., to bring the work’s audience back to the narrative flow after it was interrupted by the cosmogony, that goal has been fully achieved. As a proof, if we only remove the cosmogony from the text along with most of this resumptive repetition, the text will be much smoother, leading directly from the scene of the gods’ rejoicing over Marduk’s victory at the end of the battle (IV 134) to Marduk’s enthronement (V 77 ff.).

1. **The Anthropogony**

A similar phenomenon takes place with regard to the creation of humankind, the anthropogony. This act of creation is set in the midst of the account of Babylon’s foundation, narrated along the lines of a temple’s construction story.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The section begins, right after the enthronement of Marduk, with the request of the gods from their new king to take care of their shrine (V 113–116):

113When they had given kingship to Marduk,

114They addressed to him a benediction for prosperity and success:

115“Henceforth you are the caretaker of our shrine,

116Whatever you command, we will do!”

To this request Marduk responds that he will build his city, Babylon, as a shrine to the gods, where they will rest when they arrive from the heavens and the Apsû (ll. 117–130):

…119 “Above the Apsû, the abode of Ḫašmanu-stone,[[10]](#footnote-10)  
120Opposite Ešarra, which I built above you—

121Below, the hard ground, I made its floor firm,[[11]](#footnote-11)

122 (there) I shall build a house, it shall be my luxurious abode,

123within it I shall establish its sanctuary,

124I shall appoint (it as) my cella, I shall establish my kingship.  
125When you (= the gods) come up from the Apsû to decree destinies,

126This shall be your resting place before your assembly.

127When you com[e do]wn from heaven to dec[ree destinies]

128This shall be your resting place before your assembly.  
129I shall call its name “Babylon” – “The Homes of the Great Gods.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

130Within it we will hold a festival, that will be the evening festival…

At this point, one would expect the implementation of Marduk’s plan to build Babylon as a resting place for the gods. However, that comes only at IV 59 ff.:

59The Anunnaki wielded the pick.

60For one year they made the needed bricks.

61When the second year arrived,

62They raised the peak of Esagil, a replica of the Apsû…

In the interim is set the anthropogony (V 131–VI 88), which offers a different interpretation of the gods’ rest. Since the human beings were created for serving the gods, the latter would finally rest forever.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Because the anthropogony interrupts the sequence, when the narrator resumes it he initially repeats the planning of the temple’s construction by means of a resumptive repetition. That repetition, however, as in the previous case study, does not display any awareness of the preceding text that it parallels. It begins with the division of the gods by Marduk between the heavens and the underworld (rather than between the heavens and the Apsû as in the previous lines), those being the places from which the gods will arrive at Babylon to rest (VI 39–44):

39King Marduk divided the gods,

40All the Anunnaki into upper and lower groups.

41He assigned 300 in the heavens to guard the decrees of Anu,

42And appointed them as a guard.

43Next he arranged the organization of the netherworld.

44In heaven and netherworld he stationed 600 gods.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Then the narrator repeats the request to build a shrine to Marduk, with the gods now asking Marduk for this as a gesture of thanks, as though Marduk had never suggested it before (ll. 45–54):

…49“Now, O lord, who established our relief,

50What favor can we do for you?

51Let us make a shrine of great renown. (cf. V 122–124)

52Your chamber will be our resting place wherein we may repose.

53Let us erect a shrine, a cult-platform there,

54Wherein we may repose when we arrive.” (cf. V 125–128)

With Marduk’s affirmative response, the gods finally build Babylon, and the narrative resumes the sequence that had been interrupted by the anthropogony (ll. 55–73):

…57 “Build Babylon, the task you have sought; (cf. V 129)

58Let bricks for it be molded, and raise the shrine!”

59The Anunnaki wielded the pick.

60For one year they made the needed bricks.

61When the second year arrived,

62They raised the peak of Esagil, a replica of the Apsû…

The chart below (no. 2) demonstrates the interim position of the anthropogony between the two parts of the temple’s planning:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Planning the temple  (VI 39–58) | Anthropogony  (V 131–VI 38) | Planning the temple  (V 113–130) |
| Wishing to build a temple,  (*i nīpuš parakkû ša nabû izzakru* [51]) | Wishing to build a temple,  (*lūpušma bīta lū šubat lālê’a* 122]) |
| which will be a resting place for the gods.  (*kummukku lū nubattanin i nušapšiḫ qirbuššu*  *i niddi parakkû nīmeda ašaršu*  *ina ūmē ša nikaššada i nušapšiḫ qirbuššu* [52–54]) | which will be a resting place for the gods.  (*enūma ultu Apsî tillâ ana purussî*  *ašruššu lū nubattakun ana maḫar puḫur*[*k*]*un*  *enūma ultu šamāmi turr*[*ad*]*â ana pur*[*ssî*]  *ašruššu lū nubattakun ana maḫar puḫurkun* [125–128]) |
| This temple is Babylon.  (*epšamma Bābili ša tēriša šipiršu* [VI 57]) | This temple is Babylon.  (*lubbīma šum*[*šu Bābili*] *bītāt ilāni rabûti* [129]) |
| Constructing the temple  (59–73) |  |  |

As in the previous case study, so here, when the narrator resumes the narrative sequence and tells of the actual construction of the temple, he ignores the anthropogony that is depicted just before, as well as its outcomes: while the anthropogony emphasizes the liberations of the gods from their difficult labor, it is still the gods, not human beings, who are building the shrine at their own initiative—and gladly so. However, if the anthropogony would be excised from the text along with parts of the overlapping resumptive repetition, the sequence would be smoothed, leading directly from the planning of the temple by Marduk to its construction by the gods, without any difficulties.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**C. The Distinct Material of the Cosmogony and the Anthropogony**

The examination above had revealed that both the cosmogony and anthropogony interrupt the sequence, and each is followed by a resumptive repetition that is itself replete with inconsistencies. Both are diversions from the main thread of *Enūma Eliš*. Their deviant character vis-à-vis the larger narrative is emphasized by the unique views and expressions they comprise, as well as by the contradictions they produce in relation to the rest of the work.

Regarding the cosmogony, it is worth noting that while Tiāmtu is the Akkadian generic name of “sea,” its watery nature being illustrated in most of the work, only in the cosmogony, and especially in the account of the inhabited world’s creation (V 47–63), is Tiāmtu is portrayed as a cow.[[16]](#footnote-16) Such a tradition—the creation of the world from a cow’s corpse—is not familiar from earlier Mesopotamian writings, but it might be influenced in a way by the old motif of humankind’s creation from a dead god’s body, according to which the anthropogony was shaped (see below). In contrast, the first parts of the cosmogony are known very well from ancient Mesopotamian traditions of creation, such as the division of heavens from earth, which had hitherto been related only to dry materials, and the arranging of the stars and the gods in the heavens, as in various mystical and astronomical writings.[[17]](#footnote-17) With regard to the resumptive repetition that follows the cosmogony, we have already mentioned the details that interfere with the sequence, such as the use at the beginning of the resumptive repetition of pronouns without antecedents, and the seizure of the Tablet of Destinies once by Marduk for himself (IV 121–122) and once by Marduk for Anu (V 69–70).[[18]](#footnote-18) The latter inconsistency is in fact divergent from the plot of *Enūma Eliš* as a whole, since it was the god Anšar, rather than Anu, who was considered as the chief of the gods *a-là* Enlil in the *Myth of Anzû*. Therefore, it is to Anšar, rather than Anu, that we would expect the Tablet of Destinies to have been delivered. The tradition reflected in these lines—for which no antecedent is known—is no doubt a unique one.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Regarding the anthropogony, the narrator made use of the tradition known from *Atraḫasis* to depict the creation of humankind who should replace the restless gods.[[20]](#footnote-20) This kind of tradition had already served the narrator in tablet I, when he relates in a negative tone to Tiāmtu’s and Apsû’s desire to rest and their distress due to the noise made by the other gods. In the anthropogony, on the other hand, it is these “other gods” who ask now to rest, even though, as has been mentioned, this idea would not be reflected later either, when the temple is built gladly by the gods. In the role of the god Wê—who serves in *Atraḫasis* as the basis for the creation of humankind after the gods trapped and slaughtered him—we find Qingu in the anthropogony; it is told that the gods turned him over to Marduk, who fashioned humankind from his blood (VI 20–34). This act, however, contradicts the earlier account of Marduk’s killing Qingu at the end of the war (IV 119–120).[[21]](#footnote-21) Concerning the resumptive repetition that follows the anthropogony, as was mentioned above, it cites the gods’ request to build a temple, thus overlapping and contradicting Marduk’s request depicted before. We should also take note of the unique terminology employed in the gods’ division between the heavens and the netherworld (*erṣetu*) at the beginning of the resumptive repetition (VI 39–46), in contrast to the gods’ division between the heavens and Apsû before the anthropogony (V 125–128) and after it (VI 69).[[22]](#footnote-22)

It seems, then, that the two indications of the possibility of an interpolation of secondary material into an existing continuum are both present in the depiction of the cosmogony and the anthropogony at *Enūma Eliš*: first, a diversion from the sequence that is followed by a resumptive repetition, creating various contradictions and inconsistencies; and second, unique content and expressions in that interpolation that do not appear elsewhere in the work or contradict other places within it.[[23]](#footnote-23)

**D. From War to Enthronement to Building a Temple**

In light of this, we may ask carefully whether there was an old sequence of *Enūma Eliš* that did not include the cosmogony and the anthropogony. Examination of the various manuscripts of *Enūma Eliš* cannot provide any assistance, as they are all very close to one another, suggesting they were developed from a single textual prototype.[[24]](#footnote-24) Moreover, in all the vast Mesopotamian literature that precedes *Enūma Eliš*, no such pattern, i.e., war – enthronement – building a temple, like the presumed sequence of *Enūma Eliš* without the cosmogony and the anthropogony, has been found.

The traditions relating to the god Ninurta, for example, which exerted considerable influence upon the combat account of *Enūma Eliš*, do not relate to his enthronement by the gods at the end of his wars. On the contrary, according to *The Myth of Anzû*, Ninurta’s victory led to his attaining fame and to the construction of temples in his honor,[[25]](#footnote-25) but not to his coronation.[[26]](#footnote-26) This is emphasized well in the message of the gods to Ninurta at the end of his war (III 118–121):

118You defeated Anzû, slew (him) with your strength,

119the winged Anzû you slew with your strength.

120Because you have become brave and slew the mountains,

121all the foes bow down at the feet of your father Enlil.

And indeed, one of the characteristic features of Ninurta, if not the most characteristic, is that he is the perennial heir to the throne, who gladdens his father’s heart and takes revenge on his behalf. This is concluded from further literary works in which Ninurta always returns to his father’s temple at the end of his journey, and from his epithet, “the Avenger of his Father.”[[27]](#footnote-27) Although Ninurta, like many other Mesopotamian gods (including the more junior among them), bears royal epithets, these are never expressed in narrative.

However, such a pattern, from war to enthronement to building a temple, is found in extra-Mesopotamian texts from the 2nd millennium BCE, which predate the composition of *Enūma Eliš*.[[28]](#footnote-28) The most (relatively) complete and well known of those texts is the Ugaritic *Baal Cycle*, which comprises the narrative of Baal’s war against Yamm (sea). This work does not ascribe to its protagonist the creation of the world and humankind, relating instead how Baal’s war against the sea led to his enthronement over the gods and the construction of his temple at Mount Ṣaphon (*KTU* 1.2–1.4).[[29]](#footnote-29) That pattern finds support in additional literary works from ancient Egypt and Hatti—all preceding *Enūma Eliš*—and in all of them much attention is paid to the coronation of the storm god after his war against the sea without ascribing him the act of creation.[[30]](#footnote-30)

An indication that the author of *Enūma Eliš*,too, saw the enthronement of Marduk that follows his war against Tiāmtu as the main point of the work emerges from the “credo” at the end of *Enūma Eliš,* which summarizing the plot in a few words (VII 157–162):

157The instructions that the former (poet?)[[31]](#footnote-31) recited in his (= Marduk’s statue’s) presence,

158wrote (it) down and stored (it) so that future (generations) might hear (it) ...[[32]](#footnote-32)

161He[re no]w is the song (*zamāru*) of Marduk,

162[who de]feated Ti[āmtu] and took the kingship.

Although *Enūma Eliš* has, since its earlier publications, been called elsewhere “the Babylonian Creation story,” it appears that according to its Babylonian author, in similarity to his counterparts beyond the Euphrates, the main thrust of *Enūma Eliš* was to tell how Marduk ascended to dominion over the gods after he defeated Tiāmtu. The cosmogony and the anthropogony play no role in that.

This external and internal evidence may thus lead us to surmise that during the formation of *Enūma Eliš*, it was initially based on an older narrative sequence that depicted the god’s war against the sea, his victory, and the construction of his temple, without relating to the creation of the world or human beings. Such a presumed sequence matches the equivalents of *Enūma Eliš* from across the Euphrates, as well as the “credo” at the end of *Enūma Eliš*. To that old sequence, as the philological and literary examination above indicate, the Babylonian author added—at a rather late stage in the work’s formation—the sections dealing with the creation of the world from the organs of the defeated Tiāmtu and the creation of humankind from the blood of the defeated god Wê (and, as has been already suggested, the list of Marduk’s names at the conclusion of the work).[[33]](#footnote-33) Each of those themes has been adapted for its placement—the cosmogony was connected to the war’s aftermath, while the anthropogony was connected to the foundation of Babylon, and each was concluded with a resumptive repetition. Through critical eyes, those repetitions imbue the sequence with contradictions and duplications, but for the narrator and his audience, this was the common literary technique to resume the old sequence.

**E. Summary and Conclusions**

The present paper has examined two case studies of the use of resumptive repetition in *Enūma Eliš*. The contradictions, duplications, and inconsistencies that are caused by those repetitions have led us to conclude that each of the sections they follow, i.e., the cosmogony and the anthropology, is an interpolation that was added at a later stage of the work’s formation. Additional evidence for that view emerged from the distinct content and terminology present in these sections and the resumptive repetitions that follow them, in relation to the rest of the work. Removing these sections—as well as parts of their resumptive repetitions—from the narrative produces not only a smoother text, but it is consistent with the “credo” of *Enūma Eliš* at the culmination of the work, and it has clear precedent in other compositions related to the storm god’s combat against the sea originating in extra-Mesopotamian cultures before *Enūma Eliš*. All those indicators strengthen the suggestion that the cosmogony and the anthropogony were integrated at a later stage of the formation of *Enūma Eliš,* implying that this might be *the* great innovation of the Babylonian composition in relation to its ancient Near Eastern predecessors.

1. For the phenomenon of resumptive repetition in the Hebrew Bible, see C. Kuhl, “Die Wiederaufnahme: Ein literarkritisches Prinzip?”, *ZAW* 64 (1952), 1–11; I.L. Seeligmann, “Hebraische Erzahlung und biblische Geschichtsschreibung”, *TZ* 18 (1962), 312–324; S. Talmon, “The Presentation of Synchroneity and Simultaneity in Biblical Narrative,”, in: J. Heinemann and S. Werses (eds.), *Studies in Hebrew Narrative Art Throughout the Ages* (ScriptHiero 27), Jerusalem 1978, 12–25; A. Rofé, *The Book of Balaam*, Jerusalem 1979, 55, n. 106; B.O. Long, “Framing Repetitions in Biblical Historiography,” *JBL* 106 (1987), 385–399; M. Anbar, “La Reprise,” *VT* 38 (1988), 385–398; J.-L. Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (trans. P. Dominique), Winona Lake 2006, 77–82 (and further bibliography in pp. 77–78, nn. 4–7). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For a discussion of the literary use of resumptive resumption in the Mari letters and Ugaritic compositions after a parenthetical remark, simultaneity, a “sidebar” expansion, or the like, which is beyond the scope of this study, see Anbar, “La Repris”; S. Natan-Yulzary, “The Use of Resumptive Repetition for the Construction of Time and Space in the Ugaritic Epic of Aqhat,” *UF* 48 (2017), 373–390. For a short discussion of the use of resumptive repetition after an interpolation of secondary material in the inscriptions of Nabonidus (Nbn 4 and 5) and in the Hurro-Hittite *Song of Ullikummi*, see N. Ayali-Darshan, “The Formation of the Prayers in the Nabonidus’ Inscriptions Nbn 4 and Nbn 5: Between Lower and Higher Criticism,” in A. Baruchi-Unna et al. (eds.), *“Now It Happened in Those Days”: Studies in Biblical, Assyrian, and ANE Historiography Presented to Mordechai Cogan on His 75th Birthday*, 2, Winona Lake 2017, 525–535; idem, *The Storm-God and the Sea: The Origin, Versions, and Diffusion of a Myth throughout the Ancient Near East* (English revised edition; ORA 37), Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 2020, 58–65, 70–71. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This has been much discussed elsewhere. See mainly W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths* (MC 16), Winona Lake, 2013; and cf. *inter alia,* P. Machinist, “Order and Disorder: Some Mesopotamian Reflection”, in S. Shaked (ed.), *Genesis and Regeneration: Essays on Conceptions of Origins*, Jerusalem 2005, 31–61; T. Oshima, *Babylonian Payers to Marduk* (ORA 7), Tübingen 2011; Ayali-Darshan, *The Storm-God and the Sea*, 112–149, and further bibliography there. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. W.G. Lambert, “Studies in Marduk”, *BSOAS* 47 (1984), 1–9, and cf. idem, *Babylonian Creation Myths*. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The text of *Enūma Eliš* is based on Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, with modifications. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Literally: “the north wind delivered to tidings.” Scholars are divided as to how to read this line. The preposition *ana* precludes understanding the abstract (genitival) noun *busratim* as a direct object. Some have thus suggested reading *ana puzrātim* “(to deliver …) to an undisclosed place”, as *AHw*, 885b (among others). The context does not suit this interpretation, however, neither in the *Myth of Anzû* I, 69–72 (where Ekur parallels the “undisclosed place” in this reading) nor in *Enūma Eliš* V 83. The significance the authors of both the *Myth of Anzû* and *Enūma Eliš* attribute to the gods’ awareness that their terrible adversary is dead also suggests that this sentence signifies the delivery of the news at the end of the battle rather than an insignificant aside relating to the hiding of the corpse’s parts in an unknown location (and cf. E. Reiner, *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut: Poetry from Babylonia and Assyria*, Ann Arbor 1985, 64–66). For the current translation, cf. e.g., *CAD* B, 346–47; W.G. Lambert, “Ninurta Mythology in the Babylonian Epic of Creation”, in K. Hecker and W. Sommerfeld (eds.), *Keilschriftliche Literaturen* (RAI 32), Berlin 1986, 55–60; M.E. Vogelzang, *Bin šar dadmē: Edition and Analysis of the Akkadian Anzu Poem*, Groningen 1988, 103. Although this interpretation does not fully resolve the initial grammatical difficulty, the reading *ana puzrātim* is completely foreign to the literary context and must be rejected out of hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. While it is hard to imagine blood being carried on the wind rather than spilled on the ground, this depiction too was modeled on an equivalent scene in the *Myth of Anzû,* where the bird’s broken wings were carried by the winds to announce his defeat to the gods. See Lambert “Ninurta Mythology”, 59, and cf. Reiner *Your Thwarts in Pieces*, 65–66; Machinist “Order and Disorder,” 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. It may be argued that connecting V 69–70 with IV 121–122 hints at Ninurta’s act when he took the Tablet of Destinies initially for himself, and eventually delivered it to Enlil. However, not only do these lines display no awareness of each other, but the view that it was told so about Ninurta is not at all certain, since the lines in question in the *Myth of Anzû* are broken (see A. Annus, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Anzu* [SAACT 3], Helsinki 2001, xiii, 27–28). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For the borrowing of the Babylon foundation’s account from the traditions of the ancient cities of Eridu and Nippur, see A.R. George, “ʽBond of the Landsʼ: Babylon, The Cosmic Capital”, in G. Wilhelm (ed.), *Die orientalische Stadt: Kontinuität, Wandel, Bruch: 1. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 9–10. Mai 1996 in Halle/Saale*, Berlin 1997, 125–145; Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 200–201. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The selection of this blue stone evinces the Mesopotamian belief that the subterranean water (= the Apsû) was blue: see W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*2 (MC 8), Winona Lake 2011, 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. According to these lines, Babylon is situated between the Apsû and the Ešarra. For a discussion of Babylon’s cosmic location in light of *Enūma Eliš* and other texts, see Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 121–122; Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 196–200. For the meaning of Ašrata as a “hard ground,” rather than “heaven,” see Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, ibid and 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The name “Homes of the Great Gods” refers to the common local etymology of the name of Babylon, based on the phrase *bāb ilī*, literally “the gate/doorway of the god(s).” As an ideogram, it is spelled KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI, bearing the same meaning. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This tradition is based primarily on *Atraḫasis*; see below. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Although this is the sole occurrence of the underworld in *Enūma Eliš* (cf. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 122), the reference to the Anunakiassumes that we are to understand the expression *erṣetu* as “underworld” rather than “earth” (and so it is translated in Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 113). This unique terminology joins other abnormalities in the anthropogony and in the resumptive repetition that follows it; see below. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Cf. I.T. Abusch, “Some Observations on the Babylon Section of *Enūma eliš*,” in idem, *Essays on Babylonian and Biblical Literature and Religion*, Leiden 2020, 233–237 (first published in *RA* 113 [2019]), who – based on similar arguments – suggests that the whole section dealing with Babylon, including the anthropogony and the dedication banquet (V 116–VI 92), was inserted in later stage of the formation of *Enūma Eliš*. However, his comprehensive solution does not explain the inconsistencies within this section, nor considers the parallel sequence in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, as was noted by Abusch himself (ibid, n. 9), and see further below. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Cf. B. Landsberger and J. V. Kinnier Wilson, “The Fifth Tablet of Enuma Eliš,” *JNES* 20 (1961), 175; F.A.M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts* (CM 1), Groningen 1992, 163. The characteristic bovine features of Tiāmtu include udders (*ṣirtā*: V 57), tail (*zibbatu*: V 59), and saliva (*rupuštu*: V 47). The last term, according to Landsberger and Kinnier Wilson, bears this meaning only with regard to bovine creatures and parallels the Hebrew term *rpš*. To those limbs we may add the following, which might be appropriate for any creature: head (*qaqqadu*: V 53), eyes (*īnā*: V 55), nostrils (*naḫīrā*: V 56), and thighs (*ḫallā* V 61). VAT 8917, a late hermeneutic-mystical text, additionally mentions Tiāmtu’s horns (and her legs and tail), which were cut off by Marduk, thus confirming the acceptance of this tradition. See A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*‎, Oxford 1986, 82, rev. 1, 13. A different tradition was held by Berossus, according to which the defeated Tiāmtu was a woman (cf. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 132–134). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. For the splitting of heavens and earth, cf. G. Komorószy, “The Separation of Sky and Earth: The Cycle of Kumarbi and the Myths of Cosmogony in Mesopotamia”, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 21 (1973), 21–45; F.A.M. Wiggerman, “Mythological Foundations of Nature”, in D.J.W. Meijer (ed.), *Natural Phenomena: Their Meaning, Depiction and Description in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Colloquim, Amsterdam, 6–8 July 1989*, Amsterdam 1992, 282; Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 169–171. For the arrangement of stars and gods, see Landsberger and Kinnier Wilson, “The Fifth Tablet,” 172–175; W. Horowitz, “The Astrolabes: Astronomy, Theology and Chronology”, in J.M. Steele (ed.), *Calendars and Years: Astronomy and Time in the Ancient Near East*, Oxford 2007, 101–113; idem, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 114–116; Lambert, ibid, 172–200. It should be noted that the present study does not focus on the detailed traditions comprised by the cosmogony (about which much has been written elsewhere), but rather only the manner in which they became attached to the narrative continuum of that work. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. For the suggestion that both were affected by the *Myth of Anzû*, see n. XX above. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Cf. Lambert, “Ninurta Mythology,” 58, who, due to the uniqueness of this motif, maintains that Anu’s reception of the Tablet of Destinies must indicating that the author had before him a firm tradition relating to Anu as holding the Tablet. In contrast, Annus, *The God Ninurta*, 149, and P. Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enūma Eliš: Introduction, Cuneiform Text, Transliteration, and Sign List with a Translation and Glossary in French* (SAACT 4), Helsinki 2005, 96, both posit that the cardinal epithet D60, traditionally understood as one of Anu’s appellations, must relate exceptionally to Ea here. His depiction as having the Tablet of Destinies rests on an early tradition exemplified in the fragmentary *Ninurta and the Turtle* and visual representations. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For older traditions than *Atraḫasis* with a similar notion, see, e.g., W.G. Lambert, “The Relationship of Sumerian and Babylonian Myths as Seen in Accounts of Creation”, in D. Charpin and F. Joannès (eds.), *La Circulation des biens, des personnes et des idees dans le Proche-Orient ancient* (Actes de la XXXVIIIe R.A.I., Paris, 8–10 juillet 1991), Paris 1992, 129–135. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Note that Goldfless (S.K. Goldfless, “Babylonian Theogonies: Divine Origins in Ancient Mesopotamian and Literature”, Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1980, 135) and Lambert (*Babylonian Creation Myths*, 286–287) conferred [**THIS CANNOT BE THE RIGHT VERB HERE (since you’d be saying that the two authors consulted with each other), BUT I AM NOT SURE WHAT YOU INTEND. ]** between the portraying of Qingu during the battle, his defeat and his death—as distinct from his depiction in the cosmogony—and the traditions of Enmešarra, the veteran king of the gods, who was killed by Enlil and descent to the netherworld. Lambert’s suggestion depends on an uncommon interpretation of *Enlil and Namzitarra*, according to which Enmešarra stole the Tablet of Destinies, as did Anzû. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Many consider VI 69 as a late gloss (cf. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 124; Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 479). It is not implausible, however, that this gloss, which also refers to the heavens and the Apsû, telling of 900 gods called Igigi (in place of Ananuki in the resumptive repetition), was added before the passage in question. For the traditions of the gods’ division and the terminology employed in them, see ibid and ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Nevertheless, given that *Enūma Eliš* comprises so many traditions, the second indication is of relatively less significant than in other, more homogenic, literary works. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. For a list of the manuscripts, see Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 442; R. Kämmerer and K.A. Metzler, *Das babylonische Weltschöpfungsepos Enūma elîš* (AOAT 375), Münster 2012. For the view that all the extant copies derive from a single origin, therefore containing the same errors, see Lambert, ibid. For further discussion, see also G. Gabriel, *Enūma eliš – weg zu einer globalen Weltordnung: Pragmatik, Struktur und Semantik des babylonischen ‘Lieds auf Marduk’*, (ORA 12), Tübingen 2014, 29–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Note, however, that in the Neo-Assyrian version of *The Myth of Anzû* it is stated that Ninurta will bring his shrines *into the Ekur*, the temple of Enlil, and not that he will have his own temple/palace. A late development of this idea might be found in *KAR* 307 (A. Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* [SAA 3], Helsinki 1989, 102), telling of Ninurta’s revenge and inheritance of the Ekur from his father. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Thus according to the complete Neo-Assyrian version (III 127ff.), cf. Vogelzang, *Bin šar dadmē*, 139, who was not yet familiar with the third tablet, but sensed it accurately. For the following lines from *The Myth of Anzû*, see Annus *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Anzu*, 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. For Ninurta’s epithet, see Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 451–452. This apparently is also the reason why Nabû, as the son of Marduk, king of the gods, was identified with Ninurta in a later period. See A. Annus, *The God Ninurta in the Mythology and Royal Ideology of Ancient Mesopotamia* (SAAS 14), Helsinki 2002, 47–48. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The first manuscripts of *Enūma Eliš* are dated to the tenth century BCE, thus its *terminus ante quem* is as late as the beginning of the first millennium bce (cf. T. Abusch, “Marduk”, in K. van der Toorn et al., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Grand Rapids 1999, 543–548). Nevertheless, most scholars tend today to date *Enūma Eliš* to Nebuchadnezzar I’s short reign (ca. 1100 bce), after the Kassite rule came to an end, and slightly prior to the first manuscripts of *Enūma Eliš*. It was at that time that the first official documents relating to Marduk’s reign were compiled. These coincide with the decline of Nippur, the most sacred and important city in southern Mesopotamia until that point, and the consequent rise of Babylon: see W.G. Lambert, “The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion”, in W.S. McCullogh, *The Seed of Wisdom: Essays in Hounor of T.J. Meek*, Toronto 1964, 3–13; idem, “Studies in Marduk”, *BSOAS* 47 (1984), 1–9; idem, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 248–77, 439–44. Numerous scholars have followed in Lambert’s wake, adducing further factors: see, *inter alia*, P. Michalowski, “Presence at the Creation”, in T. Abusch *et al*. (eds.), *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (HSS 37), Atlanta 1990, 381–396; Horowitz, “The Astrolabes”; D. Katz, “Reconstructing Babylon: Recycling Mythological Traiditions toward a New Theology”, in E. Cancik-Kirschbaum (ed.), *Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident*, Berlin 2011, 123–134. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. For the Ugaritic text, including a comprehensive commentary, see M.S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (VTSup 55), I, Leiden 1994; M.S. Smith and W.T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (VTSup 114), II, Leiden 2009; Ayali-Darshan, *The Storm-god and the Sea*, 74–107. To date it would be difficult to find scholars who deny the strong relations between these works, but while some hold that their basic narrative originated in Mesopotamia, from which it was disseminated to other ancient Near Eastern cultures (so, e.g. W.G. Lambert, “A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis”, in R.S. Hess and D.T. Tsumura [eds.],*“I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood”: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11* [SBTS 4], Winona Lake, 1994, 110–113; Annus, *The God Ninurta*, 171–186), others argue for its origin on the eastern Mediterranean coast and its inheritance by the Babylonians (so, e.g., T. Jacobsen, “The Battle between Marduk and Tiamat”, *JAOS* 88 [1968], 104–108, S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others*2, Oxford 2000, 230; D. Schwemer, “The Storm-Gods of The Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies, 2”, *JANER* 8 (2008), 27). The latter view might be further strengthened by the argument presented in this study. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See Ayali-Darshan *The Storm-god and the Sea*, 16–73, and further bibliography there. In contrast, the biblical texts integrate the cosmogony with YHWH’s struggle against the sea and YHWH’s coronation, in a similar way to *Enūma Eliš* (see ibid, 165–203), but appropriate to the local environment; see further N. Ayali-Darshan, “The Question of the Order of Job 26:7–13 and the Cosmogonic Tradition of Zaphon”, *ZAW* 126 (2014), 402–417. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Some scholars suggest that this is a reference to a mythical figure such as Oannes/Adapa, regarded in later Mesopotamian tradition as responsible for the ancient writings; see P. Talon, “*Enūma Eliš* and the Transmission of Babylonian Cosmology to the West”, in R.M. Whiting (ed.), *Mythology and Mythologies: Methodological Approaches to Intercultural Influences: Proceedings of the Second Annual Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project Held in Paris, France, Oct. 4–7, 1999* (Melammu symposia 2), Helsinki 2001, 271. The term *maḫrû* (rendered here: “former”) can also signify “preeminent”; see Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 133. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. A similar instruction is issued in the *Erra* epic, dated to the first millennium bce. For further similar texts, see B.R. Foster, “On Authorship in Akkadian Literature”, *AION* 51 (1991), 17–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. For the list of names as a separate source, added as a distinct unit to the plot of *Enūma Eliš* during a later stage of the work’s formation, see A. Seri, “The Fifty Names of Marduk in *Enūma eliš*”, *JAOS* 126 (2006), 507–519; Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 456–463. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)