Gender and Power Dynamics

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GENDER AND POWER DYNAMICS IN ENŪMA ELIŠ AND THE PRIESTLY CREATION ACCOUNT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant cuneiform texts from the ancient world is *Enūma Eliš*.[1] It was discovered in the 19th century by Henry Austin and first published by George Smith. Composed during the Old Babylonian period and written by scribes involved in cultic leadership, the text narrates a myth about the rise of Marduk as head of the pantheon. In the myth, Apsû, the husband of the premortal goddess, Tiamat, is murdered for plotting rebellion against the pantheon. Angry that her husband has been killed, Tiamat prepares to destroy the current leadership and establish

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[1] This paper will draw primarily from the translation by W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013). Other translations which may be used will be noted accordingly: Benjamin R. Foster, "Epic of Creation (1.111) (*Enūma Elish*)," ed. William W. Hallo, *The Context of Scripture, Volume One: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (New York: Brill, 1997), 390-401; *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (*CAD*) (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956-2010).

her own order. When the pantheon hears of her plan, they attempt to

thwart it, but fail. The pantheon then turns to Marduk for help, to which he

agrees, but only if he is established as the supreme deity as recompense.

Because Marduk uses the bodies of Tiamat and Apsû to create mankind

and the world, scholars refer to this text as *The Babylonian Creation Myth*.

In Biblical Studies, *Enūma Eliš* influenced renewed discussion

regarding the historicity and mythological aspects of the Hebrew Bible.[2]

Concluding her analysis on how the discovery of *Enūma Eliš* impacted

scholarship through a comparative studies approach of Genesis 1, Joan

Heuer DeLano offered a polished summary:

> The comparative study, drawing as it did from comparative
> religion and anthropology, reached beyond the small group
> of scholars who engaged in the primary research. It
> impinged on biblical scholarship in its implicit questioning
> of Mosaic authorship. Its acceptance by biblical scholars
> afforded… a broader reception in biblical commentaries.
> These, in turn, made the primary research available to
> students, teachers, preachers, and other interested readers.
> Indeed, George Smith's initial publication and enthusiasm
> regarding the discovery of the Babylonian creation tablets

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[2] See Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle, Mercer Library of Biblical Studies (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997); Samuel Alfred Browne. "A new turning point in the study of creation." *Anglican Theological Review 3*, no. 1 (May 1, 1920) 1-17. Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval era and the Eschaton*, trans. William Whitney (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2006); Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1, Genesis 1-15* (Waco: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 236; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The cosmological and protological language of Deutero-Isaiah," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 73, no. 3 (July 1, 2011) 493-510; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis (New International Commentary On the Old Testament Series) 1-17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 1990), 58, 104.

sparked a scholarly discussion which went well beyond the limits of Assyriological scholarship. Like a pebble cast into a stream, the content, speculation and methodology of the comparative study spread into wider scholarly circles.[3]

While scholars like George Smith, A. H. Sayce, and L. W. King drew parallels between Genesis 1 and *Enūma Eliš* before 1895, comparative study garnered the most attention through Hermann Gunkel's *Schopfung und Chaos* (1895).[4] In his work, Gunkel utilized the ancient Near Eastern motif *Chaoskampf* while comparing Genesis 1 and *Enūma Eliš*. (*Chaoskampf* is a motif of "a cosmic battle with the powers of chaos" and "a combat between a patron god who is associated with order and

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[3] Joan Heuer DeLano, *The "Exegesis" of "Enûma Elish" and Genesis 1 – 1875-1975: A Study in Interpretation* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985), 280-281. Also see Bernard R Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 73-101; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis: Translated and Interpreted* (trans. M. E. Biddle; Mercer Library of Biblical Studies; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 102-33; John L. McKenzie, "Myth and the Old Testament," CBQ 21 (1959): 265-82; Lothar Ruppert, *Genesis: 1. Teilband: Gen 1,1-11,26. Ein kritischer und theologischer Kommentar* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2003), 61-63. Margo Kitts, "The Near Eastern Chaoskampf in the River Battle of Iliad," in *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*, vol. 13, issue 1 (2013), 86-112; John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea. Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1985); Joanna Töyräänvuori, "Weapons of the Storm God in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Traditions," in *Studia Orientalia Electronica* vol. 112 (2012), 147-180; Carolina López-Ruiz, "Greek and Canaanite Mythologies: Zeus, Baal, and their Rivals", in *Religion Compass*, vol. 8, issue 1 (2014), 1-10; Nicolas Wyatt, "The Religious Role of the King in Ugarit," ed. K. Lawson Younger, *Ugarit at Seventy-Five* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 41-73, esp. 50. See Kenton Sparks, "*Enūma Elish* and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126 no. 4 (2007), 625-648 n. 11, for the complete list of works connecting Genesis 1 and *Enūma Eliš*.

[4] Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos*, trans. William Whitney.

some sort of a power of chaos.")[5] Safwat Marzouk uses the term to

designate "a loss of boundaries and to describe a state of disorder."[6] This

understanding is misleading as it anachronistically defines oppositional

figures as "agents of chaos" or "cosmic evil" rather than what Debra

Ballentine has suggested as "agents of an alternative divine power

structure,"[7] a topic we will explore further as part of the methodological

assumptions.

Gender also has been a major topic of interest among scholars

regarding this myth. Tikva Frymer-Kensky's *In the Wake of the*

Goddesses thoroughly explores gender in the ancient Near East and the

Hebrew Bible. In her diachronic approach to myth and history, she argues

that the earliest Sumerian records provided royal women considerable

power; however, due to unknown factors, goddesses became eclipsed in

tandem with the public role of women. Frymer-Kensky asserts, "the end of

the second millennium was a male's world, above and below; and the

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[5] Safwat Marzouk, *Egypt as a Monster in the Book of Ezekiel*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe 76 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 16.

[6] Ibid., 16.

[7] Debra Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth & the Biblical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 186-189. For further discussion, see below. See also Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 20

ancient goddesses have all but disappeared."[8] More recently, Karin Sonik

explored how the character Tiamat steps outside of social boundaries to

become the monstrous antagonist.[9] While these works have provided

critical insight to portrayals of gender in *Enūma Eliš*, none utilize a

comparative approach to examine how the literature reflects the gender

and power dynamics in two related, albeit distinct, cultures in the ancient

world.[10] For instance, Frymer-Kensky explores Elohim in the Hebrew

Bible, Tiamat, and various other Mesopotamian deities; however, she

never attempts comparative analysis to unpack how gender and power

were related in the communities behind the Priestly Creation Account

(Genesis 1:1-2:4a; henceforth PCA) and *Enūma Eliš*. Likewise, Benjamin

Foster's work has also been important; however, he primarily provides

narrative overview rather than in-depth analysis.[11] It is my hope that this

paper will begin to fill a major lacuna in the scholarship on gender and

power dynamics in *Enūma Eliš* and PCA by elucidating our understanding

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[8] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 78-80. A similar trajectory is traced by Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image* (New York: Penguin Press, 1993), 273-298.

[9] Karen Sonik, "Gender Matters in Enūma Eliš," in *In the Wake of Tikva Frymer-Kensky*, eds. Richard H. Beal, Steven W. Holloway, and JoAnn Scurlock (Gorgias Precis Portfolios 4, Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2009), 85-101, esp. 93-94.

[10] See Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 19.

[11] Benjamin Foster, "Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature," *CSMS Journal* 7 (2012), 19-23.

of ancient cultures. Utilizing Ballentine's focus on alternative power

structures and the work of prominent scholars such as Frymer-Kensky and

Foster, we will compare the dynamics between gender and power in

Enūma Eliš and the Priestly Creation Account (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) as found in

the Genesis account within the Hebrew Bible.[12] In doing so, I argue that

the socio-political and religious atmospheres of each text will be further

elucidated. Additionally, I hope to demonstrate that *Enūma Eliš* as liturgy

encouraged a strong sense of patriarchal power over women, while PCA

as liturgy encouraged an egalitarian view of gender and power.

Prior to analysis, there are three preliminary issues to deal with:

terminology, methodological assumptions, and historical and literary

relationship between the two accounts.

TERMINOLOGY

Because this paper is about gender and power dynamics, it is

necessary to define the word gender. For this paper, "gender" refers to the

biological distinction between males and females. There are, however,

some nuances to address regarding this issue. First of all, eunuchs played

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[12] Helen Kraus, *Gender Issues in Ancient and Reformation Translations of Genesis 1-4* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) explores gender in Genesis 1-4; however, she does not distinguish between the P and J sources in the Genesis creation accounts.

important political and social roles in the ancient Near East.[13] They were

still considered male, as can be extracted from the text, which refers to

eunuchs with masculine pronouns.[14] To apply modern gender constructs is

anachronistic and misrepresents the text. Designation as a eunuch had

more to do with social opportunities than any sort of personal identity and

eunuchs were still considered male.[15] Secondly, Martti Nissinen highlights

an important third gender known in Mesopotamian literature as *assinu*,

kurgarrû, and *sinnišānu* who were known in different roles such as "cross-

dressing, ritual dance, healing, prophecy, and lament."[16] While this third

gender or non-gender was active in Mesopotamian history, their

justification for not conforming to cultural sexual ideals made them into

"acceptable gender roles by way of manifestly violating them."[17] As

defined by S. Crane, gender is "the exterior, social interpretation of sexual

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[13] Piotr Bienkowski and Alan Millard, "Eunich," in *Dictionary of the Ancient Near East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Hayim Tadmore, "The Role of the Chief Eunuch and the Place of Eunuchs in the Assyrian Empire," in Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki (July 2001); David Mark Rathal, "Eunuch", ed. John D. Barry et al, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).

[14] *COS* 2.132 §15, 2.117D, 2.118F, 2.118D, 2.119A, 1.159.75-79.

[15] Martti Nissinen, "Are There Homosexuals in Mesopotamian Literature", in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 130.1 (2010), 73-77, carefully notes that "ancient written sources were not composed with the… idea of 'sexuality' in mind and do not categorize human gender and its manifestations accordingly."

[16] Ibid, 75.

[17] Ibid, 76. See also Ilan Peled, *Masculinities and Third Gender*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament Band 435 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016), 32-34.

practices, specific to a particular society. Sexuality, broadly understood as the generation, expression, and organization of desire, is the ongoing behavior that informs gendered identities."[18] Ancient Mesopotamian gender and sexuality, therefore, ought to be viewed through their unique culture and society, namely with males, females, and the non-gender. In context of PCA and *Enūma Eliš*, though, the third gender never appears. Therefore, this study will utilize gender to reference males and females as two of three biological, gender, and social categories in ancient Mesopotamia.

The term "power" is the authority and ideological rule associated with kingship. Authority and ideological rule were often established through historiography in order to legitimize the king and his sponsoring deity.[19] Within ancient Near Eastern literature, one primary tool for legitimation was establishment of a temple, an important aspect to both *Enūma Eliš* and PCA.[20] Although *Enūma Eliš* is a mythological account, it

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[18] Harris, *Gender and Aging In Mesopotamia*, 142, citing S. Crane.

[19] John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 226. For the establishing temples for legitimation, see *COS* 1.111, "its real focus is on the elevation of Marduk to the top of the pantheon;" Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: the Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 7.

[20] Regarding *Enūma Eliš*, see Tablet 6.70-75; Hugh W. Nibley, "Return to the Temple," in *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 71-73, emphasizes focus on the lack of power by Marduk through

still fits under John Walton's categorization of types of historiographical

literature as legitimation, theological, polemical, and foundation history.[21]

Essentially *Enūma Eliš* legitimizes Marduk's leadership over the entire

pantheon of Mesopotamian deities and the cosmos via mythological

narrative and the establishment of a temple.[22] Likewise, PCA is a

foundational mythological narrative attesting to Elohim's power over the

cosmos and humanity. Although Elohim and Marduk are legitimized in

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translating Tablet 1.6 as "the most inner sanctuary of the temple… had not yet been
built;" Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ronan James Head, "The Investiture Panel at Mari and
Rituals of Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East", in *Studies in the Bible and
Antiquity* 4 (2012), 1-42; Andrea Seri, "The Role of Creation in Enūma Eliš," in *Journal
of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 12 (2012), 4-29 ; Regarding the priestly creation
account Daniel O. McClellan, "Temples in the Ancient Near East," *The Lexham Bible
Dictionary*; John Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns,
2011) 100-109; Frank Gorman, "The Ideology of Ritual Space" in *Journal for the Study
of the Old Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT Press), 39-45; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Structure of
P" in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly 38* (July 1976), 275-292; Victor Hurowitz, "I have
Built You an Exalted House" in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
Series*115 (Sheffield: 1992), 235-244; John Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Exodus*
(2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 473.

[21] Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Though and the Old Testament*, 231, notes that
"foundation narratives tend to be mythographical rather than historiographical." So
although *Enūma Eliš* and the Priestly Creation Account are myths, they can be
understood as legitimation historiography.

[22] C.A. Strine, "Ezekiel", *Oxford Encyclopedia of Bible and Theology* (New York:
Oxford University Press, 2014), 1:315, also assumes an "ancient Near Eastern paradigm
in which the construction of a temple for the deity to inhabit is the culmination of his
victory over enemy powers... The deity's victory in the divine realm exhibits his control
over the cosmos, which is symbolized in the earthly realm through the construction of a
temple for him to inhabit." On Marduk establishing dominion in *Enūma Eliš*, see Andrea
Seri, "The Fifty Names of Marduk in *Enūma Eliš*," in *Journal of the American Oriental
Society* 126.4 (2006), 507-519, esp. 518; Andrea Seri, "The Role of Creation in Enūma
eliš", 4-29, esp. 26; Andrea Seri, "Borrowing to Create Anew: Intertextuality in the
Babylonian Poem of "Creation" (*Enūma Eliš*)", in *Journal of the American Oriental
Society 134.1* (2014), 89-106, esp. 104, notes that *Enūma Eliš* "is a text about usurpation,
about legitimation and power;" Peeter Espak, *The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology
and Mythology* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 167.

distinct ways, with distinct religious, political, and social contexts, they

are both legitimized as king and primary deity through their respective

mythographical foundational narratives and the establishment of a temple

as the foundation and bond that holds together the cosmos.[23] Historically

these ideas were reinforced in society on a daily basis because temples

played a central role in ancient societies.[24] Although power is defined,

what is the "myth" in which power is legitimized?

"Myth" is often understood in the sense of falsehood or error.[25]

Douglas Knight and Amy-Jill Levine offer a more balanced approach to

defining myth: "[myth] means a story, usually set in the distant past when

the normal rules of physics do not apply (i.e., that world is not our world),

that offers a summary of a cultural worldview; it explains how life as we

know it came to be; it expresses our hopes and fears. It is true, in the same

way that a parable is true."[26] Likewise, Jan Assmann notes that "The

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[23] Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 102.

[24] J. Robertson, "The Social and Economic Organization of Ancient Mesopotamian Temples" *CANE* 1:444; J. N. Postage, "The Role of the Temple in the Mesopotamian Secular Community," in *Man, Settlement, and Urbanism*, eds. P. Ucko, R. Tringham, and G. W. Dimbleby (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1972), 811-825; J. Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt* (New York: Meptropolitan, 1996), 205.

[25]` Dexter E. Callender Jr. and William Scott Green, "Introduction: Scholarship between Myth and Scripture", Dexter E. Callender Jr. (ed.), *Myth and Scripture* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 3.

[26] Ibid, 3, Callender cites the definition of Douglas Knight and Amy-Jill Levine, *The Meaning of the Bible* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2011), 66-67.

theme of myth was not the essence of the deities, but rather … the essence

of reality … Myths establish and enclose the area in which human actions

and experiences can be oriented. The stories they tell about deities are

supposed to bring to light the meaningful structure of reality."[27] Assmann,

Knight and Levine focus on the reality of myth as an expression of social,

political, and religious situations and provide structure by which to

understand them. What needs to be avoided is the tendency to assume

myths are universally connected. J.G. Frazer argued for the "Urmyth,"

namely that all myths build off of one original myth—he was the first to

introduce this into scholarship. He also assumed that all mythology can be

compared without question of time period or geographical location.[28]

After analyzing various approaches to the myth and ritual theories,

including Frazer's, Catherine Bell aptly notes that her "analyses help

demonstrate that attempts to understand ritual," and thereby myth, "by

focusing on its supposed "origins" can be highly misleading; on the other

hand, they also suggest that a focus on underlying universal patterns

common to cultures across space and time is likely to come undone by the

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[27] J. Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2001), 44.
[28] Eric Csapo, *Theories of Mythology* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 37; A.E. Buster, "Myth", *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*.

details of history."[29] Therefore, we will not apply the Urmyth model and will consider the autonomous nature of different cultural myths to provide a broader understanding of each myth, whilst fully recognizing possible intercultural influences.[30]

Myth reflects the assumptions about gender and how it relates to power within a historical context.[31] In order to compare *Enūma Eliš* and PCA, there must be an established, historical relationship between the two mythological creation accounts. That relationship will be demonstrated after discussion of our methodological assumptions.

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

As Frymer-Kenskey demonstrates, by the period of composition of the Hebrew Bible, the feminine roles typified by goddesses in Sumerian and other early myths were now "performed by the One God of Israel."[32]

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[29] Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 20. For example, Benjamin Foster, "Enūma Elish as a Work of Literature", 20-21, notes how in *Enūma Eliš* myth fails to fall into popular, generalized categories where the son murders his father and marries his mother. Thus, right off the bat *Enūma Eliš* does not fit into this popular construct and must be understood in its own terms.

[30] Ballentine*, The Conflict Myth*, 31, comments, for example, that *Enūma Eliš*'s "divine legitimation of Babylon and the elevation of Babylon's patron deity within the pantheon would fit within a broader effort of Nebuchadnezzar I to promote "nationalistic revival" within the Babylonian state."

[31] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 14.

[32] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 96-99, especially 99.

Baring and Cashford, reaching similar conclusions, emphasize the

foundations of ancient Israelite religion:

> The Levite priesthood of Israel constructed its doctrine of pure
> monotheism with the image of the sole Father God, King of kings and
> God of gods. No apparent trace of the goddess and her son-lover
> remained to challenge it, although in other cultures this myth continued
> to live, however obscurely. Doctrinally (but only doctrinally) the drama
> of the conflict with the goddess is finished: the supreme Father is
> One.[33]

Baring and Cashford do well in emphasizing the absence of an

explicitly feminine role in ancient Israelite religion; however, the

conclusion is problematic, for they fail to identify the extent to which the

Levite Priesthood was actually representative of ancient Judahite religion.

In reality, Judahite elite drove the idea of divine exclusiveness and "for

most of the population…the existence of other deities and the propriety of

their private worship were never very much in question."[34] The average

Judahite did not adhere to the priestly school of thought. Thus the whole

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[33] Baring and Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess*, 298.

[34] Michael Satlow, *How the Bible Became Holy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 60. Also, Baring and Cashford utilize the term "monotheism" too strongly. Satlow's term, divine exclusiveness, fits the cultural paradigm better because the idea of "monotheism" is a modern idea rooted in the development of the modern sense of religion. Because his term is more descriptive than re-descriptive, it is a better term to utilize. For further discussion on monotheism as terminology in biblical studies, see Christian Frevel, "Beyond Monotheism? Some remarks and questions on conceptualizing "monotheism" in Biblical Studies," in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34(2), Art. #810, 7 pages: http://www.ve.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/810 (Accessed 2/5/2016). Samuel L. Adams, *Social and Economic Life in Second Temple Period Judea* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014) 20, emphasizes the marginalized status of most Judahites through the Second Temple Period, indicating that the majority likely did not approach Yahwism as a monotheistic religion.

of Judahite thought is not accurately represented in PCA.[35] Arvid S.

Kapelrud offers a similar conclusion: the author was likely a learned

scribe, held some sort of important position in the Judaean community,

and possibly participated in dialogue with Babylonians.[36] Therefore, in

analyzing PCA, the group represented is the Judahite elites who are part of

the priestly school of thought. Likewise, *Enūma Eliš* does not constitute

the norm in Babylonian thought; rather, as W. G. Lambert notes, it

"merely reflects the situation that it was popular in the period when the

libraries were formed from which most Babylonian literature has reached

us."[37] Augmenting Lambert's statement, *Enūma Eliš* likely reflects the

literate and elite class of peoples. While the thoughts and roles of the elite

in ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Israel enhance our understanding of

the ancient world, we should be careful not to apply the analysis to the

whole of each culture and society.

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[35] Although the Hebrew Bible generally encourages divine exclusiveness, archaeological
and literary evidence indicates the role of goddesses in the ancient Israelite household.
See Adams, *Social and Economic Life*, 49 n. 32, about the presence of the "Queen of
Heaven," associated with Ištar and Astarte, in ancient Israelite households. See also
Judith M. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2001); Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A
Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001); Carol Meyers,
Households and Holiness: the Religious Culture of Israelite Women (Minneapolis:
Fortress Press, 2005); William H. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? : Archaeology and Folk
Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2005).
[36] Arvid S. Kapelrud, "The Mythological Features in Genesis Chapter I and the Author's
Intentions," in *Vetus Testamentum* vol. 24 (April, 1974)178-186, esp. 186.
[37] Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 464-465.

Secondly, we will not utilize *Chaoskampf* and understand Tiamat as an agent of Chaos; rather, we will use Ballentine's approach to the conflict motif: competition between two power structures. Far too often, the conflict myth in *Enūma Eliš* is interpreted as an issue of Chaos versus Order with Tiamat as an agent of Chaos. Being an agent of Chaos, Tiamat becomes nothing more than one who breaks boundaries. To label Tiamat as an agent of Chaos anachronistically applies Greek and Roman traditions to the conceptual world of *Enūma Eliš*.[38] In her article on gender in *Enūma Eliš*, Sonik categorizes Tiamat's organization, in contrast to Marduk's, as "chaos incarnate."[39] However, the conflict myth and struggle between gods and goddesses, alternatively, should be read as a struggle for divine power structure and acceptance of it among the pantheon. As Ballentine points out, for example, Kingu's kingship and his possession of the Tablet of Destinies—a material, legal document declaring one's rule over the universe—is the same device utilized by other gods, indicating that the issue relates to the acceptance of divine hierarchy and the power of the

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[38] Contra Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 184-185, who utilizes Hesoid's *Theogony* and Virgil's *Aeneid* to draw out that chaos, opposite *cosmos*, "is more evident in the ancient Near East". See Frymer Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 75, "Ti'amat is not an evil force;" Foster, "Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature," 20, "our story is butchered by some experts on myth who claim that Tiamat is "chaos" so Marduk kills chaos to establish 'order.'"

[39] Sonik, "Gender Matters in *Enūma Eliš*", 95.

deity.[40] PCA will be read through a similar lens: it is not about Elohim

defeating Chaos and establishing Order, but about legitimizing his power

through the creation of mankind, his temple, and establishing order within

the world. Having established functioning definitions and our

methodological assumptions, we will proceed by demonstrating the

historical and literary relationship between the two texts in order to justify

their comparison.

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENŪMA ELIŠ AND THE PRIESTLY CREATION ACCOUNT

Although the two pieces of literature under examination do not

originate from the same cultural and geographical groups, there is

compelling evidence that both accounts are connected literarily and

historically. Kenton Sparks applies the mimetic phenomena to the priestly

account based on the idea that "peripheral cultures … seek legitimacy by

symbolically imitating the prestigious culture that dominates them."[41]

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[40] Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition*, 187 n. 1, citing Karen Sonik, "From Hesiod's Abyss to Ovid's *ruid indigestaque moles*: Reading Chaos into the Babylonian 'Epic of Creation," in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel's* Chaoskampf *Hypothesis*, eds. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard Beal (Winona lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 21-45. A
Regarding the character Kingu, he is the deity who takes charge of the army which Tiamat creates.

[41] Sparks, "*Enūma Elish* and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism", in *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 126, No. 4 (Winter, 2007), 625-648. See the classic

Considering the likelihood of Babylonian influence following the exile of

Judean elites, his proposition for mimesis and literary influence is highly

likely.[42] Adding to the corpus of already existing scholarship about the

similarities between Mesopotamian and Israelite rituals,[43] Sparks extends

the literary, and therefore historical, relationship between the two texts by

exploring the priestly corpus and connecting it to *Enūma Eliš* and the

Akītu rite. Specifically regarding PCA, a significant number of thematic

similarities between the two texts further indicate their historical and

literary relationship.[44] While Sparks's evidence is compelling, it is not

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study of mimesis by Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953).

[42] Contra a list provided by Sparks, "Enūma Elish and Priestly Mimesis", 629 n. 10, of Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis* (2 vols.; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, 1994), 1:110-11;W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," JTS16 (1965): 287-300; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis* (2 vols.; Waco: Word, 1987,1994), 1:8; Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (3 vols.; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984-86), 1:89. Though, as Sparks notes, the majority of scholars agree on the influence of *Enūma Eliš* upon the Priestly corpus.

[43] Sparks, "Enūma Elish and Priestly Mimesis", 634 n. 25, cites Baruch A. Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord: A Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel* (SJLA 5; Leiden: Brill, 1974); Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1067-70, 79-84; David P. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (SBLDS 101; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); James M. Fennelly, "The Persepolis Ritual", in *Biblical Archaeologist* (Summer, 1980), 140, even notes that a copy of Tablet 5 was copied for Assurbanipal's library (c. 668-626 BCE) and one Tablet of the myth dates to 495 BCE during Persian Empire. He also notes that *Enūma Eliš* likely influenced the Persian ritual at Persepolis, re-enforcing the history connection between PCA and *Enūma Eliš*. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 6, writes that one MSS dates to the Seleucid period, another indication that the author of PCA may have been aware of the myth.

[44] Sparks, "Enūma Elish and Priestly Mimesis", 631-632. For additional analysis of literary relationship between the two sources, see Babtunde Ogunlana, "Inspiration and

compelling enough to argue that the priestly "agenda was not merely to

imitate *Enūma Elish*; it was to imitate Mesopotamia in general."[45]

Essentially Sparks argues that the priestly author, the author who wrote

PCA, wrote all of the priestly material as a polemic against *Enūma Elish*.

Because the priestly writer existed in a common conceptual world as

Enūma Eliš, cultural exchange, development, and appropriations should

not be immediately considered polemical. We should not merely assume

that the author of PCA was directly responding to *Enūma Eliš*. The

priestly author should be permitted to maintain a voice with independent

intentions and some ideological autonomy.

      Although, Marduk's historical city of Babylon was destroyed by

Xerxes (485-465 BCE), studies demonstrate the continued existence of the

cult of Marduk and the use of *Enūma Eliš*.[46] As both texts existed within

the same historical framework, we are justified to compare them.

Therefore, historical and literary relationship between *Enūma Eliš* and

PCA is reasonable, so long as we permit PCA to maintain some sense of

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the Relationship between Genesis 1:1-2:4A and Enuma Elish", presented to Jos Bukuru
Theological Society (Jos, Nigeria: 07/11/2013).

[45] Sparks, "Enūma Elish and Priestly Mimesis", 642.

[46] Amélie Kuhrt, "Reassessing the Reign of Xerxes in the Light of New Evidence, ed.
Michael Kozuh, *Extraction & Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper*
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 165-166; Ivan Hrůša, *Ancient
Mesopotamian Religion: A Descriptive Introduction* (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2015), 58.

autonomy in its literary, mythological, and ideological choices.[47] Having

established the historical and literary relationship between *Enūma Eliš* and

PCA, we will explore the gender and power dynamics and then compare

the dynamics within each text.

ENŪMA ELIŠ: GENDER AND POWER

A basic assumption in *Enūma Eliš* is that deities are gendered.

Each genealogical development at the beginning of the text is the result of

some sort of divine sexual intercourse between a god and goddess; thus we

see gender play a major role within *Enūma Eliš*. The question remains;

what role does gender play within the text and how does it relate to

power?

Through the text *a-me-lu* is used to denote human beings as

opposed to deities and animals.[48] *A-me-lu* is the masculine form for

humankind. By referencing the term for humanity only in the masculine

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[47] For other potential literary and cultural influences see James Atwell, "An Egyptian Source for Genesis I", in *Journal of Theological Studies* vol. 51 no. 2 (October 2000), 441-447; Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 72; Nicholas Wyatt, *Myths of Power: Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition* UBL 13 (Munster: Ugarit Verlag, 1996); Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: The Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible* BZAW 231 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005); Neal Walls, "The Gods of Israel in Comparative Ancient Near Eastern Context", ed. Susan Niditch, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 261-277; Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Hennie J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel* (Boston: Brill, 2003).

[48] amīlu: See *CAD,* A2, p. 49, in the sense of "in contrast to gods and animals".

form, the author may subtly be conveying an idea that men are more

powerful than women. To claim this, though, is highly conjectural,

especially because *a-me-lu* may be used as a common term for humanity.

Thus, it should not be considered significant for understanding *Enūma*

Eliš's overall gender and power dynamics. The following arguments are

more substantial to the gender and power dynamics.

 Goddesses do have authority and power in *Enūma Eliš*. Of Tiamat

it is said "her commands were tremendous, not to be resisted" (1.145). The

word "command" (*te-re-tu-ŝa*) relates to a decree "referring to the order of

the cosmos," emphasizing Tiamat's perceived power.[49] Additionally, she

creates monsters to destroy the noisy pantheon and deems them gods

(1.138). While the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* reads that Tiamat literally

transforms the monsters into gods,[50] Lambert's translation depicts the

transformation as less literal, they are made godlike, rather than into gods.

Both translations, however, demonstrate extraordinary power on Tiamat's

part as she attempts to thwart the pantheon and establish a new power

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[49] têrtu: See *CAD*, T, p.363, which translates it as "her decrees are weighty, they are irresistible"

[50] Ilu: See *CAD*, I-J, p.91, where "(Tiamat) endowed (them) with radiance, (and thus) turned (them) into gods."

structure.[51] When Ea and Anu eventually attempt overthrowing Tiamat,

they do so in fear of her power and strength (2.85-94, 2.104-118).

Following Tiamat's defeat, Marduk commands humanity to bring food to

the gods and goddesses, symbolizing the recognition of both genders

(6.115-116). At least speaking generically, humanity is required to be

pious unbiasedly towards both genders in the pantheon.[52] In each of the

previous examples, the female gender is demonstrated to hold power in

some fashion; however, despite numerous expressions of women's

authority, the text also reveals that male deities tend to ridicule that

authority.[53]

      In his article on *Enūma Eliš* as literature, Benjamin Foster explores

the instances of gender conflict. After Foster establishes that Tiamat is the

only significant female character in the story arc, he notes that male gods

mock her strength as secondary to themselves: "Though a woman's

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[51] Being "godlike" versus a "god" does, though, nuance the extent to which each interpreter and poet understands Tiamat's power. *COS* 1.111 translates the phrase as "Causing them to bear auras like gods."

[52] ḫasāsu: See *CAD*, H, p. 122, "v.; (1) to think of a deity = to heed a deity, to be pious".

[53] See Foster, "Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature", 20. Regarding the overall narrative of Tiamat, Sonik, "Gender Matters in *Enūma Eliš*", 93-94, notes that after Tiamat chooses to avenge her husband Apsû, she becomes an unnatural force who "ceases to play the role of a goddess, of a proper domestic female, and takes on the mantle of a monster".

strength is very great, it is not equal to a man's."[54] Ironically, these

statements follow Ea and Anu's failures to defeat Tiamat, demonstrating

intent to overrule female power despite her clear supremacy, at least over

Ea and Anu.

Second, Tiamat is presented as a passive deity prior to her attempt

to destroy the pantheon. Rather than becoming angry, some children of

Tiamat must stir her from her indifference regarding Apsû's death:

> When Apsû, your spouse, was killed,
> You did not go at his side, but sat quietly[55] …
> You gave no thought to Apsû, your spouse, …
> And as for us, who cannot rest, you do not love us!
> Consider our burden, our eyes are hollow.
> Break the immovable yoke that we may sleep.
> Make battle, avenge them! ...
> Tiamat heard, the speech pleased her.
> She said, "Let us do now *all you have advised*."
> (1.113-114, 117, 119-123, 125-126; italics added for emphasis)

In this passage, Tiamat's children deride her inaction following

Apsû's death. She only acts under their advice. Tiamat's depiction as an

indifferent and passive character reflect words by Catherine Keller: when

Tiamat "falls into psychic disarray … the gods of the middle generation

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[54] Foster, "Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature", 21.These words also occur in 2.116 and 2.92.
[55] See qâliš: *CAD*, Q, 59, "adv. ; silently, in silence" indicates her passivity in the situation.

guilt-trip her."[56] Evidently Tiamat is subject to manipulation via guilt-tripping, the author painting her as a caricature of women. Expanding on how Tiamat shifts from being an indifferent pacifist into a fearsome aggressor and monster, Sonik explains it as "the charge of her restive children, striking at the core of her identity as a civilized being, that she is a failure as both a wife and a mother." As a result, Tiamat becomes an unnatural figure and no longer fits the feminine paradigm.[57] Thus the caricature of women functions by depicting Tiamat as breaking the social boundaries of what is expected from females.

Third, when Tiamat is finally provoked and convinced to rouse a rebellion, she places Kingu as the king of the alternative power structure, providing him army leadership, making him the weapon bearer, and giving him a throne (1.148-152). As a matter of fact, the term for the lordship ascribed to Kingu by Tiamat is the same ascribed to Marduk, the primary difference being that Marduk's lordship is explicitly unopposed.[58] Rather than glorifying Tiamat for her power, Kingu is instead glorified as the

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[56] Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London: Routledge, 2003), 29.

[57] Sonik, "Gender Matters in *Enūma Eliš*", 95.

[58] See ēnūtu: *CAD*, E, 180. Note Lambert's translation that Marduk's lordship was "superior and himself without rival" (6.106).

leader when she provides him the Tablet of Destinies (1.157).[59] Following

the rebellion, Ea accuses Kingu of making war (6.21-34), not Tiamat.

Especially note 6.29-30: "Qingu is the one who instigates warfare, / Who

made Tiamat rebel and set battle in motion." Foster highlights this

passage, noting that "by no stretch of the imagination did Kingu "suborn

to Tiamat" because he does nothing in the story itself."[60] Placing

responsibility upon Kingu rather than Tiamat highlights an important

aspect of the ideology behind *Enūma Eliš*, namely that women should

remain in their perceived boundaries as proper domestic females. For this

reason, power is ascribed to Kingu rather than Tiamat and Marduk

condemns Tiamat as an "unnatural mother."[61]

In each instance discussed above, it is evident that, while Tiamat

has power, men clearly perceive her power as inferior. Rather than

permitting Tiamat to maintain lordship, the author establishes male

antagonists that eventually overthrow her. An alternative divine power

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[59] Describing the Tablets of Destiny, Fennelly, "The Persepolis Ritual", 140, writes that "the Tablets of Destiny are like two stones on which the sacred law is written" (140). These tablets were representative that one controlled the destiny of the universe. Note the similarities between the Tablets of Destiny and the tablets from Mount Sinai: "When God finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, *he gave him two tablets* of the covenant, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God" (italics added for emphasis, NRSV, Exodus 31:18).

[60] Foster, "Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature", 21.

[61] Sonik, "Gender Matters in *Enūma Eliš*", 95; Tablet 4.79-84.

structure, which Tiamat establishes, is overthrown by Marduk who sets up his own divine power structure. His success is distinctly a male accomplishment.[62] Grounding these political dynamics in history through the yearly *akītu* festival,[63] Ballentine writes that it is "an example of how the ideology of *Enuma Elish*, a particular Babylonian articulation of the conflict topos, was used for political purposes and it offers a view of the legitimizing connotations of the conflict topos in Babylonian traditions."[64] Within those political purposes, the gender and power dynamic simultaneously become reinforced on a yearly basis. In agreement with Keller, "the new masculine creation is performed as a satiric aggression against the mother's body, to be replayed annually at the festival of the new year."[65] The satiric aggression to which Keller refers is how Tiamat's body becomes mutilated for the cosmos: "He split her into two like a dried fish: / One half of her he set up and stretched out as the heavens. / He stretched the skin and appointed a watch / With the instruction not to let her waters escape" (4.136-140). Annual liturgical reproduction of *Enūma*

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[62] Foster, "Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature, 22; See Sonik, "Gender Matters in *Enūma Eliš*", 95 who emphasizes the complete butchering of Tiamat the Mother Goddess as material for establishing Order.

[63] The *akītu* festival was a New Year festival in ancient Mesopotamia within which *Enuma Elish* was recited. See "Akitu Ceremony", Eric Orlin (ed.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Ancient Mediterranean Religions* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 27-28.

[64] Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth*, 38.

[65] Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming*, 107.

Eliš, thus, engrained even deeper into the minds of the viewers the power which men hold over women and, I argue, impacted the decline of the goddesses' role in the ancient Near Eastern pantheon.[66]

PRIESTLY CREATION ACCOUNT: GENDER AND POWER

The Priestly Creation Account (Genesis 1:1-2:4a) is a myth about how God created the world in seven days. In classic and recent studies, the priestly creation is the beginning of what is considered the priestly Source, a hypothesized source for the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Unlike Genesis 2:4a-24, PCA does not include the account of Adam and Eve.

Before engaging with Genesis 1:1-2:4a, there are two preliminary issues to deal with: the relationship between Tiamat and *tehom*,[67] and the role of man in the image (*ṣĕlĕm*) and likeness (*dᵉmûṯ*) of Elohim. First of all, Tiamat and *tehom*, the term in Genesis 1:2 used to reference the deep, are conceptually similar and have a cognate relationship.[68] Tsumura

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[66] See Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 80, "we do not know all the reasons for this decline" of women up to the Assyrian period. For alternative perspectives and explanations on the marginalization of women, see Avraham Faust, "Burnished Pottery and Gender Hierarchy in Iron Age Israelite Society", in *Journal of Meditteranean Archaeology* 15.1 (2002), 53-73; Espak, *The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology*, 65-66, 167-168.

[67] Recent and classic studies argue that *tehom* is a demythologized representation of Tiamat.

[68] Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 145, 7;

argues that *tehom* should not be understood as demythologized[69] chaos to be defeated.[70] In a critique of Tsumura's argument, Sparks notes that "nothing … precludes a Hebrew author using his own term, [*tehom*], in a polemic against the obviously related cognate term Tiamat."[71] Although Spark claims that Tsumura's argument does not hold, he fails to provide compelling evidence for *tehom* as a polemic term. After all, *tehom* is used in many contexts to represent primeval water.[72] These waters are used due to the ancient Near Eastern cognitive environment in which water was part of the pre-cosmic creation.[73] Therefore, the *tehom* in the Israelite portrayal "does not present the precreation state as negative or personal/personified; instead, it is a neutral, functionless ambiguity."[74] Such a conclusion is important because it clarifies that, at least when we compare PCA and

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[69] Merriam-Webster defines demythologize as "to divest of mythical elements or associations". "demythologize." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 2011.

[70] David T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 36-37. Contra Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 16-17.

[71] Sparks, "*Enūma Elish* and Priestly Mimesis", 630.

[72] Gen. 7:11, 8:2, 49:24; Exod. 15:5, 8; Deut. 8:7, 33:13; Job 28:14, 38:16, 30, 41:32; Ps. 33:7, 36:6, 42:7, 71:20; Ezek. 26:19, 31:4, 15; Jonah 2:5; Hab 3:10.

[73] Tobin, "Myths: Creation Myths," *OEAE* 2:469 (cited by John Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology,* 145, n. 57).

[74] Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 145. See also Roberto Ouro, "The Earth of Genesis 1:2 Abiotic or Chaotic? Part I", in *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 35.2 (Autumn 1998), 259-276.

Enūma Eliš, Tiamat and *tehom* should not be compared or examined in tandem for their gender and power dynamics.

Secondly, we need to determine the historical and cultural foundations of *ṣĕlĕm* and *dᵉmût*, along with their literary function in Genesis 1. *Ṣĕlĕm* is typically translated as "image" and *dᵉmût* as "likeness."[75] In an older, yet valuable, article on the image of God, D. Clines writes: "the term 'likeness' is an assurance that man is an adequate and faithful representative of God on earth. … The image is to be understood not so much ontologically as existentially: it comes to expression not in the nature of man so much as in his activity and function. This function is to represent God's lordship to the lower orders of creation."[76] Randall Garr argues that image relates to procreative ability and likeness relates to a representative role.[77] Regardless of the specific interpretation of the terms, the common denominator is that Elohim, to some extent, ordains humanity as rulers of the earth.[78] First, though, it is

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[75] So, according to Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (ESV).

[76] David Clines, "The Image of God in Man", *Tyndale Old Testament Lecture* (1967), 53-103, 101.

[77] Randall Garr, *In his Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[78] Kenneth A. Matthews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1-11:26* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 168; Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*,

important that we examine Yahweh's gender as constructed and depicted

within the Priestly Creation Account.

To understand the gender and power dynamics in PCA, we must

first discuss the representation of Elohim within the text. Unlike in the

gods in *Enūma Eliš*, Elohim is not represented as producing humanity or

gods through sexual relations. With regard to his divinity, gender is,

arguably, a less significant factor in how Elohim fulfills his role in the

narrative of PCA. Although Elohim is linguistically presented as male and

represented in masculine verbal forms, there is no conflict or sexual

relations with a woman figure. Therefore, I argue that gender should not

be overemphasized in our reading of Elohim's actions. Kevin Harris has

pointed out that Elohim is an androgynous divinity that could be

represented as *he* or *she*.[79] Therefore, while Elohim is represented in the

masculine plural, Elohim may be more accurately depicted as genderless

and possibly a-sexual.[80] Pushing against this proposal, Baring and

Cashford claim that the Hebrew culture inherited the idea of the supreme

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175-178; Gordon Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15*, 33. This topic will be explored below.

[79] Kevin Harris, *Sex, Ideology and Religion: Representation of Women in the Bible* (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1984), 2-3.

[80] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 98-99, supports this idea because she emphasizes how Elohim becomes the deity who is in control of all essential power, thereby removing the "powers in dynamic interrelationship," powers sometimes marked by gender difference.

Father; however, this conclusion is weak and not compelling because the

Hebrew Bible rarely refers to Yahweh, or Elohim, as father.[81]

Genesis 1:27-28 also introduces an important gender and power

dynamic within the text:

> (27) So God created man in his own image,
> In the image of God he created him;
> Male and female he created them.
>
> (28) And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply
> and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and
> over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the
> earth." (Gen. 1:27-28 ESV)

There is one major feature regarding gender and power in this passage.

Male and female are blessed together to perform equal tasks of ruling

(*radah*) and subduing (*kavash*), terms associated with kingship and

warfare.[82] No remarks or ideas dividing between power and gender are

present; rather, male and female are both considered humanity and both

are given power.[83] Essentially, their being made in the image and likeness

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[81] Baring and Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess*, 298. See also C. L. Crouch, "Genesis 1:26-27 as a Statement of Humanity's Divine Parentage", in *Journal of Theological Studies* vol. 6, no. 1 (April, 2010), 1-15, esp. 11, n. 24.
Although Elohim is at moments identified as a father, it is almost always in a prophetic portions of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, he is never designated "father" as an official title as a deity.

[82] On *kavash*, see Josh 18:1, 2 Sam 8:11, 1 Chron 22:18, Micah 7:19; on *radah* see Lev 25:43, Num 24:19, 1 Kings 4:24, Neh 9:28. See especially Joel 3:13 which in context of war preparation and utilizes the same verbal form.

[83] Contra James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis Volume I: Creation and Fall (Genesis 1-11)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 96-97, whose evangelical lens leads him to conclude

of Elohim (Genesis 1:26) results in both genders equally being royal representatives of divine authority and power.[84] Although 1:27b notes that God created "him," the pronoun functions as a term which encompasses both genders.[85]

Apparent through the minimal focus on gender and power issues in PCA, the author's cultural standards are fairly straightforward with regard to gender and power: males and females are equally representative of God, and God, although masculine by linguistic denotation, is depicted as androgynous and asexual.

COMPARISON OF *ENŪMA ELIŠ* AND THE PRIESTLY CREATION ACCOUNT

As demonstrated in the previous analysis, *Enūma Eliš* and PCA reflect much about the socio-cultural context of their respective communities. At moments, they portray similar ideas due to priestly

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that "man is to lead, protect, care for, cherish, act upon, and initiate. The woman is to respond, receive, be acted upon, bear, nurture, follow". Even as expositional commentary, absolutely nothing in the priestly creation account speaks to gender roles.

[84] Caterina Moro, "Dividing the Image of God", eds. Lukasz Niesiolowski-Spano, Chiara Peri, and Jim West, in *Finding Myth and History in the Bible: Scholarship, Scholars and Errors* (Bristol: Equinox, 2016) 105, notes that "In the image of God" and "male and female" parallel each other in order to emphasize that both genders are representatives of the image of God.

[85] Kraus, *Gender Issues in Ancient and Reformation Translations of Genesis 1-4*, 19-20.

mimesis;[86] however, they also reflect distinct cultural differences and

appropriations of ancient Near Eastern topoi regarding gender and power.

First, both texts revolve around the kingship of a central figure and

seek to legitimize their respective deities through different approaches.

Marduk's kingship is established through the divine combat topos. On the

other hand, Elohim's power is established through creation of the cosmos

without conflict. He also already has masculine and feminine roles and

does not need to overthrow any deity to attain them, with a number of

scholars suggesting an androgynous representation of Elohim in Genesis

1:1-2:4a. Both accounts also reflect kings acting in traditionally masculine

and feminine roles; however, PCA suggests an androgynous image of

divinity while *Enūma Eliš* focuses on overthrowing females in order to

attain feminine roles. A likely explanation is that although *Enūma Eliš* is

present during the history of the Judean exile, it has historical roots that

can be traced earlier than 1200 BCE.[87] Therefore, by the time the author of

PCA came in contact with *Enūma Eliš*, the cognitive environment and

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[86] See "Historical and Literary Relationship" section.

[87] See Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East: ca. 3000-232 BC, Third Edition* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 225; Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 86-87, 97.

how it approaches goddesses would have been very different than that in
which *Enūma Eliš* was originally written.[88]

Secondly, the creations of humanity in *Enūma Eliš* and PCA have
distinct aims and represent gender and power differently. In one respect
they are the same because both only briefly mention the creation of
mankind. *Enūma Eliš* keeps the situation relatively simple: mankind, as
opposed to animals, is supposed to serve the gods and goddesses. Humans
do not play a significant role in the cosmos and neither human gender is
provided with much power. PCA specifies male and female as humanity
and their roles as ambassadors of Elohim. While both narratives converge
in regard to the creation of humanity, PCA highlights males and females
as integral to the created Order and provides both parties with power, not
barring or speaking negatively about one or the other. Essentially, both
narratives present the creation of humanity apart from any specific order
of male power and female power; however, PCA specifies both genders as
having authority and power as royal representatives. Without
overemphasizing either narrative, it is evident that the communities behind

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[88] Noting the long progression to a man-oriented society, Espak, *The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology*, 66, writes that "the decline of the mother-goddess in Sumerian religion was probably a result of a long process of developments towards the more man-oriented society in general although the decline of her city must have also played a certain role".

Enūma Eliš and PCA held similar conceptions regarding the importance of males and females to worshipping their respective deities. However, each text has different expectations: *Enūma Eliš* focuses on the importance of temple worship in its community and PCA focuses on the importance of humanity as royal representatives of Elohim in its community.

Third, *Enūma Eliš* and PCA use different existing cultural paradigms regarding gender and power for their communities. *Enūma Eliš* uses traditional ideas of femininity to develop Tiamat as the antagonist in the narrative and applies already existing societal ideas about femininity to the narrative, reinforcing certain ideas through yearly reenactment of the myth. The Priestly Creation Account does not ascribe socio-cultural expectations to males and females, as is evident in the gender egalitarian representation of males and females as royal images (Genesis 1:26-28) and Elohim's seemingly androgynous representation. This is not to say that ancient Israel held no socio-cultural gender and power expectations; however, it does indicate that the author of PCA did not consider gender to be of the utmost importance in gender and power dynamics. One possible explanation, similar to the first conclusion, is that PCA's representation of women in power occurs in a world with different ideas about gender because they had already developed a sense in which Elohim performed

masculine and feminine tasks, with no focus on one male deity replacing

another male or female deity. In contrast, *Enūma Eliš* reflects a

community in which gender power was visibly shifting and therefore the

myth reflected gender and power as they were relevant to the audience.

Foster cautions that it is going too far to assume the author feared or hated

women;[89] however, we should recognize the possibility that the

distinctions between men and women were extremely important to the

community from which the text was derived.[90] The preceding evidence

suggests that PCA was composed by a community where gender and

power dynamics were not in question, while *Enūma Eliš* was composed

during periods of shifting social dynamics relating to gender power.

 Although the extent to which the texts represent their communities

is debatable, it is clear that the communities behind *Enūma Eliš* and PCA

each held unique conceptions of gender and power relations. Our

understanding is complicated because *Enūma Eliš* represents an ancient

text, which found its way to the period of the Judean exile. With the

reinforcement of the *akītu* festival regarding male hegemony, it may be

assumed that *Enūma Eliš* influenced greater segregation between males

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[89] Foster, "Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature", 22.

[90] Samuel Meier, "Women and Communication in the Ancient Near East", in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111 (1991), 544, suggests that this shift may be due to "orientation from female to male priority in institutionalized learning".

and females, thereby reinforcing male hegemony. PCA likely influenced

closer affiliation between males and females because certain ideas about

gender were already well-developed by the time of its composition. While

both texts portray women as wielding power, *Enūma Eliš* marginalizes the

power and authority of women. PCA places women and men on the same

plane of power. I argue that the community from which PCA derived

likely had a more egalitarian understanding in regard to gender and power

than the community behind *Enūma Eliš*.[91]

In conclusion, comparative literary analysis of *Enūma Eliš* and

PCA accomplishes a few major tasks. First, it further elucidates the socio-

cultural standards and expectations about gender and power behind the

two texts. Consequently, we attain a more developed understanding of

Mesopotamian and ancient Israelite society. Comparative analysis

provides a greater framework by which to understand Mesopotamian

culture and ancient Israelite culture by placing their ideas of gender and

power side-by-side. Although this study did not cover the full breadth of

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[91] Elizabeth Goldstein, *Impurity and gender in the Hebrew Bible: Ideological Intersections in the Books of Leviticus, Ezekiel, and Ezra* (University of Chicago Dissertation, 2010), 70, suggests that, regarding the priestly corpus as a whole, "men and women equally reflect a part of YHWH (Genesis 1), and yet their bodies and social roles must be sharply differentiated (Leviticus 15.)" In Goldstein's analysis, the priestly author did not write against females; rather, because women generally had more contact with impure substance, they tended to have more cultic regulations. Simply put, the priestly material is not anti-women.

priestly material, it is programmatic in the sense that it offers a new

avenue and approach to nuanced analysis of priestly material and *Enūma*

Eliš.

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