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*Legends Walk - Truth & Justice Edition* only includes three pantheons, in the interests of keeping the book a manageable size, but of course there are many others from cultures around the world. So welcome to the third in a series of add-ons detailing some of these, with compact descriptions of the mythic entities and power programmes for your LWTJ game.

This one covers the myths of the ancient civilisations of Sumer and Babylon, adapting material that originally appeared in the *Clay and Blood* supplement for *Legends Walk Original Edition* in 2004.

*With the hope that the cradle of civilisation may know peace and prosperity again.*

## PANTHEON: MESOPOTAMIA

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# MESOPOTAMIA

These are the gods of the ancient Sumerian and Akkadian people of Mesopotamia - roughly the area covered by modern-day Iraq. They lived around and between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, draining from what is now eastern Turkey down into the Persian Gulf (Mesopotamia means "between the rivers"). Records of Sumer were only discovered by archaeologists in the mid-1800s, and part of the strange character of the mythology is due to missing or damaged records.

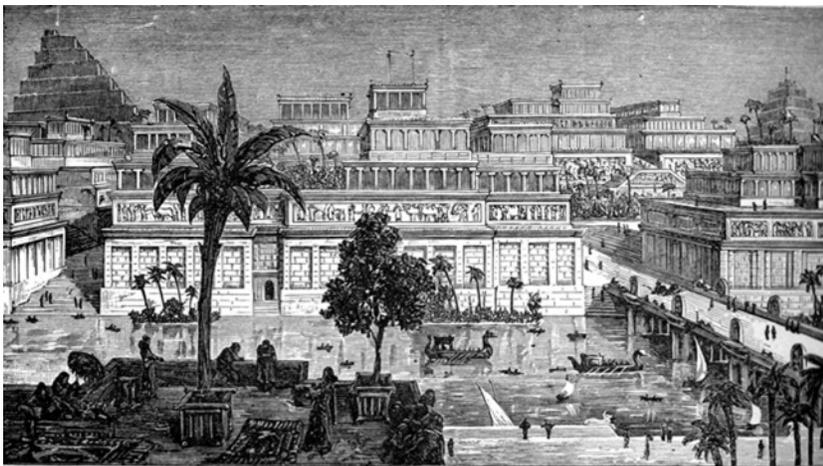
This area was perhaps the first in the world where humans made the transition to settled agriculture. The rivers deposited vast amounts of fertile silt in the extensive marshes, but large-scale farming meant overcoming floods, hot sun and low rainfall by developing irrigation and drainage systems, and organising that required government. Around 3500 BCE the Sumerians developed some of the world's first cities, with most of the population living behind their walls, and a system of writing. In 2330 BCE Sargon united the city-states of Sumer in the south and Akkad in the north. There followed cycles of rule by Assyria, Babylon, invading Hittites from present-day Turkey, and fractured city-states. At its greatest extent the empire ruled the Middle East from Egypt to the Persian Gulf. This chapter of history closed when the Persians took Babylon in 539 BCE.

What we can piece together about their mythology shows that the different peoples borrowed from

each other, often elevating their own local god. The character of the myths shows their preoccupation with the land and its working. The dealings of the gods are about the conflict between fresh and salt water, floods and storms, and the fertility of animals and, indeed, people. They're about the establishment of a physical and social order, with humans gaining a measure of control over their environment by borrowing the authority of the forces of nature. The exploits of Sumerian heroes form the world's oldest known literature, dating from around 2100 BCE. The conflict between cities (a relatively new way of life) and wilderness is a recurring theme. Part human, part animal figures are common, suggesting that the relationship between people and nature was an important issue.

## Belief

The gods were seen as human-like, but immortal, possessed of great powers, and invisible to human eyes. Each was in charge of one or more aspects of the world, from the Sun to the pick-axe. Each city recognised one god as its ruler and protector (though there might be many temples to other gods as well). A large staff served them: priests, soothsayers, magicians, musicians and even temple courtesans. Sacrifices of food, drink and incense were offered daily.



- Signs of Disease - you appear to be ill, with seriousness according to Rank. It doesn't actually harm or inconvenience you, but will affect social interactions.

## Ninurta

Also called Ningirsu; the son of Enlil. His name means "lord of the earth", and he was also called "lord of the ploughland". He was the god of war and hunting, the champion of the gods. He was also connected with irrigation and herds - "the god of fields and canals, who brings fertility". Ninurta's weapon was a mace called Sharur, with the power to move and communicate on its own, acting as a messenger allowing him to get advice from other gods. He also used a bow and a spear.

Ninurta was involved in a battle with the forces of nature, either because the mountain rocks and plants rose in rebellion against the plains or because his warlike nature provoked them to attack him. They were led by the Azag, a fierce warrior stone that crushed animals and people and attacked with landslides. Ninurta defeated it by weakening it with a rainstorm so he could thrust in his spear. After the battle he used the rocks he'd conquered to channel watercourses or gave them ignoble qualities like crumbling easily or serving in menial tasks. He blessed the stones that had aided him, assigning them noble uses and making them into the precious gems.

In another story the Anzu or Zu storm-bird (which was either a big monster or a half-man, half-bird) stole the Tablet of Destinies from the gods and Ninurta recovered it.

### Aegis

- Battle (+ where other people are fighting; - in places of peace and contemplation)

### Required Powers

- Master of Weapons\*

### Qualities

- Strength, Agility, Endurance, Presence, Construction, Unarmed Fighting, Intimidation

### Optional Powers

- Conqueror of Stones - can mimic Alter Properties\* or Warding\*, but working only on unrefined minerals.
- Control Water\* (ceiling Good)
- Fertility\* (ceiling Good)

### Mace - Sharur ("Smasher of Thousands")

- Flight\* (ceiling Good)
- Intelligence\*

### Vulnerabilities

- Lust for Battle - faced with an opportunity for physical conflict where a more thoughtful approach might be best, your judgment and composure get targeted.
- Stone Resentment - unrefined minerals act to cause you harm, within normal natural laws - eg a falling slab targets you, a rock shifts underfoot. This is triggered at important junctures when you're near such materials, and could be treated as a general debilitation or target whichever Qualities are appropriate.
- Stream in the Mountains - unrefined minerals nearby trickle with water, especially if you become emotional. A bit of a Meta marker.

## Tiamat

The personification of the saltwater ocean and the original chaos of the universe in the Babylonian stories. She was conceived as a kind of dragon, with a horrible and terrifying appearance. Angered by the slaying of Apsu, she gave birth to monsters to fight the younger gods, including enormous serpents, terrible dragons with glittering scales, tempest-monsters, savage dogs, scorpion-men, hurricanes, fish-men and rams. Only Marduk dared to face Tiamat: he loosed winds that held her mouth open so he could shoot in an arrow to kill her. Then he cut up her body to make the world. Despite her monstrous features she was not "evil" as such but representative of the old way of things that had to be conquered to make the gods' new order.

### Aegis

- Sea (+ in, on or beside salt water; - in a dry place like a desert or far inland)