

Atra-Hasis (2021)

Andrew Knight-Hill

Composer / Researcher

Beach soundscapes and choral works sung from portions of the ancient flood myth poem Atra-Hasis. Written nearly 4000 years ago, the Babylonian Atra-hasis is an iconic poem with an eternal message for mankind. It tells the story of how a thoughtless population weighs heavily upon the earth, such that the gods are forced to act. They first send forth a great sickness, then a great famine. But when neither of these can quiet the noise and chaos of humans, they are forced to send forth a great flood to wash away all mankind.

These soundscapes and choral works were developed as part of the 'Over Lunan' performance project.

With special thanks to Dr. Martin Worthington, Prof. Nathan Wasserman, Charlotte Steeb M.A. for generous guidance and support in working through the Babylonian pronunciation and for filling in gaps in the text with their extensive knowledge of the latest scholarship and discoveries.

Composition and Sound Design – Andrew Knight-Hill

Choir – Chamber Choir from the University of St Andrews Music Centre

Rebecca Black

Sarah Greer

James McNinch

Nathanael Fagerson

Ross McArthur

Guy Minch

Elizabeth Unsworth Wilson

Jane Pettegree

Choir Director – Claire Innes-Hopkins

Voice – Prof. Nathan Wasserman

Additional Sound Recording – Steve Urquhart

Babylonian Language Consultants – Dr. Martin Worthington, Prof. Nathan Wasserman, Charlotte Steeb M.A.

Atra-Hasīs Text Adapted from – W. G. Lambert; A. R. Millard (1969) *Atra-ḥasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*. London: OUP. [with additions in bold]

Atra-Hasis Text

Adapted from – W. G. Lambert; A. R. Millard (1969) *Atra-ḥasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*. London: OUP. [with additions in bold]

Tablet I – vii.

English Translation	Transliteration
20. The inhabited land had expanded, the people multiplied.	20. ma-tum ir-ta-pi-iš ni-šu im-ti-da
21. The land was bellowing like a bull.	21. ma-tum ki-ma li-i i-ša-ab-bu
22. The god had been disturbed by their clamour,	22. i-na ḥu-bu-ri-ši-na i-lu it-ta-a'-da-ar
23. Enlil had heard their din.	23. En-líl iš-te-me ri-gi-im-ši-in
24. He said to the great gods,	24. iz-za-kàr a-na i-li ra-bu-tim
25. “Grievous has grown the din of mankind.	25. ik-ta-ab-ta ri-gi-im a-wi-lu-ti
26. Through their clamour I lose sleep.	26. i-na ḥu-bu-ri-ši-na ú-za-am-ma ši-it-ta
27. Give the command... let their be sickness,	27. [qí-ba-a-ma] X šu-ru-ub-bu-ú li-ib-ši

Tablet II – ii

English Translation	Transliteration
2. The inhabited land had expanded, the people multiplied.	2. ma-tum ir-ta-pi-iš ni-šu im-ti-da
3. The land was bellowing like a bull.	3. [m]a-tum ki-ma li-i i-ša-ab-bu
4. The god had been disturbed by their clamour,	4. [i-na] ḥu-bu-ri-ši-na i-lu it-ta-a^da-ar
5. Enlil had heard their din.	5. [En-l]íl iš-te-me ri-g[i-i]m-ši-in
6. He said to the great gods,	6. [iz]-za-qàr a-na i-li ra-bu-tim
7. “Grievous has grown the din of mankind.	7. ik-ta-ab-ta ri-gi-im a-wi-lu-ti
8. Through their clamour I lose sleep.	8. i-na ḥu-bu-ri-ši-na ú-za-am-ma ši-it-ta
9. Cut off sustenance from the people,	9. [pu]-ur-sa a-na ni-ši te-i-ta
10. Let the plants be few in ? their.....	10. [ana -bu] -bu-ti-ši-na li-še-šu ša-am-mu
11. Let Adad withhold his rain,	11. zu-un-ni-šu adad li-ša-aq-qí-il
12. From below let there not rise	12. ša-ap-li-iš a-ia il-li-ka
13. The water from the spring!	13. mi-lu i-na na-aq-bi

14. Let the wind come,	14. li-il-li-ik ša-ru
15. Let it sweep the earth bare!	15. ka-aq-qá-ra li-e-er-ri
16. Let the clouds pile up,	16. er-pí-e-tum li~ih-ta-an-ni-ba
17. Let no drop of rain fall!	17. ti-ku a-ia it-tu-uk
18. Let the field withdraw its yield,	18* li-iš-šu-ur a.šà iš-pi-ki-šu x x x x

Tablet III – iii

English Translation	Transliteration
5. For one day the tempest,	5. u-ma iš-te-en me-ḥu-ú
6. And the storm-wind they were joined together.	6. ù a-ša-as-ša-tu? iš-ša-am-du
7. ... Zu with his claws.	7. x [Zu-ú] x i-na šu-up-ri-šu
8. He rent (?) the heavens.	8. x [ú-šar-riṭ] x ša-ma-i
9. the land (?)	9. x x x x ma ? -tam-am
10. Like a pot (?) her cry smashed.	10. ki-ma ka-ar-pa-ti ri-gi-im-ša iḥ-pí
11. came/blew the flood.	11. x x x x x x a-bu-bu
12. Like battle over the people came the destroyer.	12. ki-ma qá-ab-li e-li ni-ši i-ba-a' / ka-šu-šu
13. Not a man saw his fellow,	13. ú-ul i-mu-ur a-ḥu a-ḥa-šu
14. They could not be distinguished in the disaster.	14. ú-ul ú-te-ed-du-ú i-na ka-ra-ši
15. The flood (?) bellows like a bull	15. a-bu-bu ki-ma li-i i-ša-ab-bu
16. Like an Eagle's scream	16. [ki-ma] e-ri-i na-e-ri
17. cries the wind	17. [i-šaas-sú-nim] ša-ru