THE
BABYLONIAN
GILGAMESH
EPIC

INTRODUCTION, CRITICAL EDITION
AND CUNEIFORM TEXTS

Volume I

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This book is fundamentally a work of textual reconstruction. It seeks to establish an accurate text of the Babylonian Gilgamesh for use as a tool in the study of ancient Mesopotamian literature and thought. I have not brought to it the fashionable methodologies of modern literary criticism; that is for others to do. The research that underpins the editions of texts given in the following pages has already generated a translation published three years ago in Penguin Classics. That rendering was aimed at a non-specialist audience and concessions were made in the interests of readability. The translation that accompanies the editions offered below is for Assyriologists and scholars in related fields. Consequently it is in many places less fluent but I hope it is also more exact.

The volume is the culmination of more than sixteen years’ personal labour, but it builds on the engagement of others with the text of the epic over a much longer period. Professor W. G. Lambert has been a ceaseless searcher after Gilgamesh for almost fifty years. In the 1960s, especially, his publication of tablets from Babylon and Nineveh greatly added to our knowledge of the text and fuelled his intentions of writing a new edition to replace the obsolete book by R. Campbell Thompson. Dr I. L. Finkel’s appointment to the staff of the British Museum in 1979 produced another spate of discoveries, which led to tacit agreement with Lambert to edit the whole poem in partnership. When I arrived in London in 1985, looking for a new research topic, Lambert very generously invited me to join their effort, first by copying the Kuyunjik tablets and subsequently by beginning to write the editions. Both Lambert and Finkel placed at my disposal material they had already produced.

Lambert furnished me with his unpublished copies of the Old Babylonian tablet now split between Berlin and London (OB VA + BM), the two tablets from Tell Harmal (OB Harmal,1,2), the Middle Babylonian tablet from Ur, since published (MB Ur), Assyrian MS x, and six sources of the Standard Babylonian epic (SB MSS a,2, c, d, d2, w1,2, and z). During the course of my work he drew my attention to still more manuscripts that he had identified (Assyrian MS z and SB MSS E4, V4, Z4, E1, b, s, t, and v) as well as parts of F1, W6, P and d3). He also provided me with his personal transcriptions of OB Harmal; and MB Ur.

Finkel made available to me several more sources of the Standard Babylonian epic that he discovered in the British Museum (SB MSS e, k, m1, p, the larger parts of c and h and, at the last moment, a new piece of n), and also passed to me his copies of two stray fragments from Emar (MB Emar, b and c). Though other commitments prevented Lambert and Finkel from contributing more than these materials, nevertheless the debt that the work owes to both is very considerable. To them both I express especial gratitude.

Others, too, have been kind enough to contribute primary materials. Professor Aage Westenholz allowed me use of his copies of the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II), a second piece
in Philadelphia (OB UM), the tablet from Nābe tum (OB Ishchali), and Middle Babylonian fragments from Ur, Nippur and Megiddo (MB Ur, MB Nippur, MB Megiddo), most of which have since been published in *Studies Lambert*. Professor Aaron Shaffer granted me use of his unpublished copy of the Yale tablet (OB III). Professor Eibert von Weiser allowed me access to his copies of three fragments from Uruk, well before their appearance in *Urruk IV* (SB MSS a, c, and e), and sent me unpublished photographs of two of them. Likewise Father Werner R. Mayer passed to me photocopies of J. van Dijk’s copies of two pieces from Babylon in advance of their publication in *VA* *XXIV* (SB MSS x and y), and Professor Stefan M. Maul made available to me photographs and copies of several tablets from Ašārū before their publication in *MDOG* (Assyrian MS y1-2), SB MSS c and e. Professor Nick Veldhuisen sent me his copies of Middle Babylonian exercises later published in *BiOr* 56 and *JCS* 52 (MB Nippur 3-4). Professor J. N. Postgate led me to the fragment here booked as SB MS W 5. Dr T. Kwasman shared with me his discovery of RM 956, now part of SB MS d. Takayoshi Oshima sent me his copy of MB Megiddo.

Several scholars have generously allowed me to use drafts of unpublished articles. Professor Jacob Klein sent me his forthcoming study of Gilgamesh’s oppression of Uruk. Professor Michael Schwartz forwarded to me on request a paper on Gilgamesh in Arabic magic. Professor W. G. Lambert furnished me with a draft of his treatment of an incantation in which Gilgamesh appears as an underworld god, and with his edition of a fragment of Atra-hasis now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Professor Gonzalo Rubio made available to me two papers on Sumerian literary fragments of the Ur III period. Dr Douglas R. Frayne sent me a draft manuscript on the Sumerian Gilgamesh.

Many scholars have contributed in other ways. The late Professor O. R. Gurney sent me an unpublished photograph of the Sultanetpe tablet, SB MS e Professor W. G. Lambert collated several signs on the same tablet during a visit to Ankara and passed to me prints of old photographs of George Smith’s flood tablets (SB MSS C, J, and W.). He also provided me with Edward Chiera’s unpublished collations of the Pennsylvania tablet, as entered in the margins of Chiera’s copy of *PBS* X/3 and photocopied by David I. Owen. Professor Erle Leichty supplied me with prints of photographs of the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II). Dr Laith M. Hussein passed on prints of photographs of the more poorly preserved tablet from Tell Harmal (OB Harmal 2). Dr Eleanor Robson took and transmitted to me digital photographs of a Nimrud tablet in Baghdad (Assyrian MS z). Mr Daniel A. Nevzyl performed the same task in regard to a cast held by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (MB Nippur 5). Dr Rene Kovacs provided me with digital photographs of one of the tablets in the Schøyen Collection (OB Schøyen). She and Professor Jens Braarvig, in charge of the collection’s publication, expedited my visit to the collection. Professor Miguel Civil sent me a photograph of the Schøyen collection’s Sumerian fragments utilized in Chapter 12. Dr Tällay Ornán of the Israel Museum provided me with a photograph of the terracotta published in fig. 14 and drew my attention to the existence of a similar object in the Iraq Museum. Professor Aaron Shaffer gave me a copy of Haupt’s *Nimrodes*, Professor Stephen J. Tinney and Kevin Danti answered several requests for collation and other information relating to the Babylonian Section, University Museum, Philadelphia. Other colleagues who responded to queries were Dr Jeanette Fincke, Professor Robert Englund, Professor Manfred Krebernik, Professor Klaas R. Veenhof, Professor Alfonso Archi, M. Dominique Charpin, Dr Graham Cunningham, Dr Heather Baker, Dr John Merkel, Professor Miguel Civil, Professor Pietro Mander, Professor Karl Hecker, Professor Richard L. Zettler, Dr Yuval Goren, Dr Wayne Horowitz, M. J.-C. Margueron, M. Yves Calvet, Mr Terence Mitchell, Dr Stephanie Dalley and Mme Florence Malbran-Labat.

In the course of writing this book I have benefited hugely from the advice of those with more experience of Gilgamesh than I. Most of the text of the epic was read in seminar with Professor J. D. Hawkins and Professor M. J. Geller between 1985 and 1991. The first draft of the text editions that make up Chapters 5, 6 and 11 was read by Professor Aage Westenholt between 1988 and 1994. The edition of SB Tablet I was read by the late Professor Thorkild Jacobsen in 1991. A large part of the whole book was read by Professor W. G. Lambert in 1998-9. The composite edition of the Standard Babylonian epic in Chapter 11 is derived from synoptic (‘score’) transcriptions of all twelve tablets prepared at the outset of the project. In 1998 these transcriptions were checked against the cuneiform copies by Mrs Janet Politi. It is hoped that eventually they will be posted in electronic form on an internet site. All these exercises led to very welcome improvements in my understanding of the text of the epic.

For the first time since Haupt’s *Nimrodes*, the individual cuneiform text of every available piece of the Babylonian Gilgamesh is given in the plates. The copies are largely from my hand, and all but one prepared from first-hand study of the original tablet, but I did not find it necessary to make new copies of everything. Those Late Babylonian sources published by Lambert in *CT* 46 and not recopied since are reproduced here. So too are Finkel’s copy of SB MS 4, originally published in *AJF* 29-30; von Weiser’s copy of SB MS e from *Urruk IV*, Maul’s copies of the tablets from Ašārū in recent issues of *MDOG* and Oshima’s copy of MB Megiddo. In addition I have been glad to include Lambert’s previously unpublished copies of OB VA + BM, OB Harmal 3-1, SB c, and w 1-2, and Finkel’s unpublished copies of all the fragments identified by him.

It is a pleasure to record my gratitude to the authorities of the many museums visited during the course of the writing of this book, to their trustees, directors and curators for permission to study and publish objects held in their keeping and to individual members of staff for assistance kindly given during my visits: the Trustees of the British Museum, Mr Terence Mitchell and Dr John Curtis, successive keepers of the Department of the Ancient Near East (formerly Western Asiatic Antiquities), Mr C. B. F. Walker and Dr I. L. Finkel; Dr L. Jakob-Rost, Dr E. Kieleng-Brandt and Dr Beate Salje, successive Directors of the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, and Dr J. Marzahn, curator of cuneiform tablets; Professors J. A. Brinkman and W. Farber, successive curators of the tablet collections of the Oriental Institute Museum, the University of Chicago, Messrs John Nolan and Jonathan Tenney, assistant curators, and Mr John A. Larsen, museum archivist; Professors Åke W. Sjöberg, Erle Leichty and Stephen J. Tinney, curators of the Babylonian Section of the University Museum, Philadelphia; Professors W.W. Hallo and Benjamin R. Foster, curators of the Babylonian Collection, the Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, and Dr Ulla
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In Baghdad I enjoyed in 1987 and 1989 the hospitality of the British Archaeological Expedition under successive directors, Dr J. A. Black and Dr Roger Matthews, and with the help of Dr Graham Philip. In Turkey in 1992 I had the use of the facilities of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. Travel to Berlin in May 1993, March 1998 and December 2000 was expedited by the Freie Universität Berlin, and a visit to Philadelphia in September 1996 by the Kevorkian Fund of the University of Pennsylvania. Longer periods of leave abroad that greatly expedited my research and writing were spent in Iraq and the United States of America in January to August 1989, funded by the School of Oriental and African Studies, and in Germany in October to December 2000, made possible by a Visiting Professorship at the Seminar für Sprachen und Kulturen des Vorderen Orients, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, by kind invitation of Professor Stefan M. Maul. Research leave spent in the United Kingdom was undertaken by the School of Oriental and African Studies in January to March 1996 and September to December 1999, and by the Arts and Humanities Research Board in January to March 2001.

To those named in the preceding paragraphs, institutions and individuals, as well as to those whose names should have appeared but were omitted by oversight, go my heartfelt thanks. All of them have helped in one way or another to make this book. None of them is responsible for those errors of fact and opinion that surely lurk within.

The inception of my labour on Gilgamesh coincided with the appearance of an extraordinary spoof article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 4 October 1985 (Michael Krüger, 'Das 12. Buch: Entdeckungen der Gilgamesch-Forschung', brought to my attention by Professor Aaron Shaffer), which reported a loan by the Iraq Museum to the University of Washington of '13 Tontafeln mit bisher unbekannten Texten aus dem Umfeld der Gilgamesch-Legende', and described the astonishing 'discovery', made on the basis of the supposed new material, that the epic's original ending had the god of the heavens, Anu, make Gilgamesh immortal as his son and substitute. The following years produced surprises but nothing to match that either in boldness or in invention.

More solid developments greeted the closing stages of the book's preparation, with the discovery of the important early Neo-Assyrian fragments in Berlin and the exciting Old Babylonian pieces in Norway. Indeed, the spate of new sources for the epic—more recently a flood—shows no sign of drying up. On this account this book does not quite succeed in its objective, to bring together in one place all the currently extant sources of the Babylonian Gilgamesh. Already another manuscript from Aššur is known, a source for SB Tablet I that Professor Stefan M. Maul discovered too late for inclusion here. A more intriguing tablet of Gilgamesh is reported to have been unearthed in 1994 in the Late Bronze Age house of Urnānu at Ugarit. Enquiries about this text met with no reply, but I understand that M. Daniel Arnaud of the Sorbonne will publish it in due course. Other sources will surely follow.

A. R. George

London
26 April 2002
CONTENTS

VOLUME I

List of Figures in the Text
Bibliographical Abbreviations
Other Conventions

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. The Literary History of the Epic of Gilgameš
   Introduction...
   Gilgameš in Old Sumerian literature...
   The Sumerian poems of Gilgameš...
   The origins of the Babylonian Epic of Gilgameš...
   The Old Babylonian Gilgameš...
   The Middle Babylonian Gilgameš...
   Sin-leqi-unninni and the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš epic...
   The Epic of Gilgameš in the literary life of Babylonia...
   Case studies in the evolution of the epic...
   Tablet XII: what, when and why?
   The Epic of Gilgameš outside the cuneiform tradition...

2. The Name of Gilgameš and its History...

3. Literary, Historical and Religious Traditions About Gilgameš...
   Gilgameš and the wall of Uruk...
   Gilgameš the hero...
   Gilgameš the king...
   Gilgameš the god...
   Other attestations of Gilgameš...

4. Enkidu and Others...
   Enkidu...
   Humbaba...
   Ninsun...
PART TWO: THE OLDER VERSIONS OF THE EPIC

5. Old Babylonian Tablets and Fragments
   The Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (OB Tablets II and III) 159
   A fragment in Philadelphia (OB UM) 216
   Two tablets now in Norway (OB Schøyen) 219
   An excerpt tablet from Nippur (OB Nippur) 241
   The tablets from Šaduppûm (OB Harmal) 246
   An excerpt tablet from Nèrebtum (OB Ishchali) 259
   A tablet in Baghdad (OB IM) 267
   The tablet reportedly from Sippar (OB VA+BM) 272

6. Middle Babylonian Tablets and Fragments
   The exercise tablets from Nippur (MB Nippur) 287
   The Ur tablet (MB Ur) 294
   The fragments from Boğazköy (MB Boğ) 306
   The fragments from Emar (MB Emar) 326
   The Megiddo fragment (MB Megiddo) 339

7. Assyrian Fragments of One or More Intermediate Versions
   The fragments from Aššur (Assyrian MSS x and y) 353
   A tablet from Nimrud (Assyrian MS z) 364
   The excerpt tablet from SultanTepe (Assyrian MS e) 369
   A variant version at Nineveh? (Kuyunjik MSS YY and ZZ) 373

PART THREE: THE STANDARD BABYLONIAN EPIC

8. The Manuscripts of the Standard Babylonian Epic
   On the Kuyunjik manuscripts 379
   Tablet I 381
   Tablet II 391
   Tablet III 395
   Tablet IV 399
   Tablet V 403
   Tablet VI 404
   Tablet VII 406
   Tablet VIII 408
   Tablet IX 409
   Tablet X 410
   Tablet XI 411
   Tablet XII 415

9. Introduction to the Text of the Standard Babylonian Epic
   Textual variants and recensional differences 418
   Some features of language and style 431
   Spelling conventions in the Kuyunjik manuscripts 437
   Concluding remarks 443

10. Synopsis and Exegesis of the Standard Babylonian Epic
    Tablet I 444
    Tablet II 445
    Tablet III 448
    Tablet IV 458
    Tablet V 463
    Tablet VI 466
    Tablet VII 470
    Tablet VIII 478
    Tablet IX 484
    Tablet X 490
    Tablet XI 498
    Tablet XII 508

    Summary list of manuscripts 531
    Tablet I 535
    Tablet II 558
    Tablet III 572
    Tablet IV 586
    Tablet V 602
    Tablet VI 616
    Tablet VII 632
    Tablet VIII 648
    Tablet IX 666
    Tablet X 676
    Tablet XI 700
    Tablet XII 726
    Colophons of the manuscripts 736
VOLUME II

12. Bilgames and the Netherworld 172–End
   Manuscripts 745
   Transliteration 748
   Translation of the Sumerian text 771

13. Critical and Philological Notes on the Standard Babylonian Epic
    Tablet I 778
    Tablet II 804
    Tablet III 809
    Tablet IV 817
    Tablet V 821
    Tablet VI 829
    Tablet VII 844
    Tablet VIII 852
    Tablet IX 862
    Tablet X 868
    Tablet XI 878
    Tablet XII and Bilgames and the Netherworld 172–end 898

Bibliography 906
General Index 951
Philological Index 963
Selective Index of Quotations, Previous Publication, and Other Citations 965
Index of Cuneiform Tablets and Other Objects by Museum Number 977

CUNEIFORM TEXTS Plates 1–147

LIST OF FIGURES IN THE TEXT

VOLUME I

1. Cylinder seal of dark brown agate and modern impression depicting Gilgåmeš and Enkidu despatching the Bull of Heaven. SC 1989; Neo-Assyrian style; height 3.9 cm, diameter 1.7 cm. Photograph by the author, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection. 101

2. Stone mace-head dedicated to the divine Gilgåmeš by Ur-Namûṣû. SC 4577; probably Ur III; width 5.3 cm, diameter 6.7 cm. Photographs by the author, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection. 123

3. The tablet OB Schøyen, obverse (left) and reverse (right). SC 2652/5; height 3.6 cm, breadth 7.1 cm, thickness 2.8 cm. Photographs by the author, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection. 222

4. The tablet OB Schøyen, obverse (left) and reverse (right). SC 3025; height 20.3 cm, breadth 7.3 cm, thickness 3.2 cm. Photographs by M. Gallery Kovacs, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection. 228

5. The tablet OB Schøyen, details of upper obverse. Photographs by M. Gallery Kovacs, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection. 229

6. The tablet OB Schøyen, details of lower obverse. Photographs by M. Gallery Kovacs, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection. 230

7. The tablet OB Schøyen, details of upper reverse. Photographs by M. Gallery Kovacs, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection. 231

8. The tablet OB Schøyen, details of lower reverse. Photographs by M. Gallery Kovacs, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection. 232–3

9. The two fragments of OB VA + BM, joined to reveal consecutive text on the reverse. Scale 1 : 1. Photograph courtesy of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin. 274

10. The tablet SB MS bh, obverse (left) and reverse (right). Scale 5 : 4. Photographs courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. 397

11. The tablet SB MS 3e. Scale 5 : 4. The original number 23013 has been altered by hand to 23018. Photograph courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. 398

12. George Smith's Flood tablets, SB MSS J (top right) and parts of W (top left) and C (bottom), obverse. Photographed c. 1873 when Smith was still rebuilding MS C. © The British Museum. 413

13. George Smith's Flood tablets, SB MSS J (top right) and parts of W (top left) and C (bottom), reverse. Photographed c. 1873 when Smith was still rebuilding MS C. © The Trustees of the British Museum. 414
14. Terracotta plaque apparently depicting a man tearing out the heart of a slaughtered bull. Israel Museum 70.71.571; Old Babylonian; height 7.5 cm, width 13.5 cm. Photograph courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

VOLUME II

15. The two fragments of BN MS r1, r2 = SC 3361 (top) and r1 = SC 2887 (bottom). SC 3361: height 5.7 cm, breadth 9.0 cm, thickness 2.5 cm; SC 2887: height 11.2 cm, breadth 8.4 cm, thickness 2.5 cm. Photographs by the author, courtesy of the Schøyen Collection.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

AAA Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology (Liverpool)
AAAS Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes
AASF Annales Académie Scientiarum Fenitca
AASOR Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB Assyriologic Bibliothek
AbB Althbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung
I: Kraus, Briefe aus dem British Museum (CT 43 und 44)
II: Frankena, Briefe aus dem British Museum (LH und CT 2–33)
VI: Frankena, Briefe aus dem Berliner Museum
VIII: Cagni, Briefe aus dem Iraq Museum (TIM II)
XI: Stol, Letters from Collections in Philadelphia, Chicago and Berkeley
XII: van Soldt, Letters in the British Museum [1]
Abel-Winckler, KGV Abel and Winckler, Keilschrifttexte zum Gebrauch bei Vorlesungen
ABL Harper, Assyrian and Babylonian Letters
ACh Ilhar Virolleaud, L'astrologie chaldéenne. Fascicles 3 and 7. Ishtar
ACh Sama Virolleaud, L'astrologie chaldéenne. Fascicles 2 and 6. Shamash
Acta Or Acta Orientalia
Acta Sum Acta Sumerologica
ADD Johns, Assyrian Deeds and Documents
ADFU Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka
AFK Archiv für Keilschriftforschung
AFO Archiv für Orientforschung
AHw von Soden, Akkadisches Handwörterbuch
AJA American Journal of Archaeology
AJSL American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
Alster, Proverbs Alster, Proverbs of Ancient Sumer
AMT Thompson, Assyrian Medical Texts
ANES Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University
ANET Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament
AnOr Analecta Orientalia
AnSt Anatolian Studies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AOAT</th>
<th>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AoF</td>
<td>Altorientalische Forschungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOS</td>
<td>American Oriental Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARET</td>
<td>Archivi reali di Ebba, Testi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARM</td>
<td>Archives royales de Mari (cuneiform texts) II: Jean, Lettres V: Dossin, Lettres X: Dossin, La correspondance feminine XIV: Biot, Lettres de Yaqim-Addu, gouverneur de Sagerastum XXVI/1: Durand, Archives épistolaires de Mari I/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARMT</td>
<td>Archives royales de Mari (text editions) XXI: Durand, Textes administratifs des salles 134 et 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ArOr</td>
<td>Archiv Orientali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Assyriological Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aula Or</td>
<td>Aula Orientalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUWE</td>
<td>Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka, Endberichte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischem Sprachwissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V/S</td>
<td>MacMillan, Some Cuneiform Tablets Bearing on the Religion of Babylonia and Assyria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI/1</td>
<td>Meek, Cuneiform Bilingual Hymns, Prayers and Penitential Psalms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaF</td>
<td>Baghdader Forschungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagh. Mitt.</td>
<td>Baghdader Mitteilungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAM</td>
<td>Köcher, Die babylonische-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAsOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauer, Asb</td>
<td>Bauer, Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauer, AwL</td>
<td>Bauer, Altsumerische Wirtschaftstexte aus Lagasch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAW</td>
<td>Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBR</td>
<td>Zimmern, Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBS1</td>
<td>King, Babylonian Boundary Stones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBVO</td>
<td>Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiOr</td>
<td>Birot, Tablettes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birot, Tablettes économiques et administratives d'époque babylonienne ancienne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>King, Babylonian Magic and Sorcery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Böhl</td>
<td>Böhl, Het Gilgamesj-epos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Böhl, Leiden Coll.</td>
<td>Böhl, Mededelingen uit de Leidse verzameling van spijkerschrift-inscriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boissier, Chois</td>
<td>Boissier, Choix des textes relatifs à la dévotion assyro-babylonienne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boissier, DA</td>
<td>Boissier, Documents assyriens relatifs aux priéres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Böllnerücher, Nergal</td>
<td>Böllnerücher, Gebete und Hymnen an Nergal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOR</td>
<td>Babylonian and Oriental Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borger, BAL</td>
<td>Borger, Babylonische-assyrische Lesestücke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borger, BIWA</td>
<td>Borger, Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borger, Esarh.</td>
<td>Borger, Die Inschriften Assarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borger, Zeichenliste</td>
<td>Borger, Assyrisch-babylonische Zeichenliste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botéro</td>
<td>Botéro, l'épopée de Gilgamesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braun-Holzinger, Weihgaben</td>
<td>Braun-Holzinger, Mesopotamische Weihegaben der frühdynastischen bis altbabylonischen Zeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBR</td>
<td>Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV: Clay, Epics, Hymns, Omens, and Other Texts</td>
<td>Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSOAS</td>
<td>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>38, 39, 40, 41: Figura, Cuneiform Texts . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figur, Sumerian and Babylonian Letters</td>
<td>42: Figur, Old Babylonian Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art</td>
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<td>Greengus, Old Babylonian Tablets from Ishchali and Vicinity</td>
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<td>Haupt, Akkadische und sumerische Keilschrifttexte</td>
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<td>Haupt, Das babylonische Nimrodopes</td>
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<td>14: Lachman, Excavations at Nazi 5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hunger, Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone</td>
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<td>Hunger, Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk</td>
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<td>Hrouda et al., Isnin-Iššu Bâhrîyaši 2. Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 1975–1978</td>
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<td>Jacquesen Mem. Vbl.</td>
<td>V: de Genouillac, Épave prêssargomique, époque d’Agadé, époque d’Ur</td>
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<td>Jacobsen, Harps</td>
<td>Abusch, Riches Hidden in Secret Places</td>
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<td>Jacobsen, Treasures</td>
<td>Jacobsen, The Harps that Once . . .</td>
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<td>Jacobsen, The Treasures of Darkness</td>
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<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genooschap, «Ex Orientie Lux»</td>
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<td>Jeremias,</td>
<td>Jeremias, Izdubar-Nimrod, eine altbabylonische Heldensage</td>
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<td>Jestin, Nouvelles tablettes sumériennes de Sarrukkan</td>
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<td>Jeyes, Old Babylonian Extisipyc: Omen Texts in the British Museum</td>
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<td>JRA S (NS)</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (new series)</td>
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<td>KAV</td>
<td>Schroeder, Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts</td>
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<td>Keilscriptliche Bibliothek</td>
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<td>KBo</td>
<td>VI/1: Jensen, Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen</td>
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<td>Maul, 'Herzberuhigungsklagen': Die sumerisch-akkadischen Erzählungsgedichte</td>
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<td>Mayer, Gebets-</td>
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<td>MDOG</td>
<td>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</td>
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<td>Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse</td>
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<td>II: Scheil, Textes élamites-sémítiques, première série</td>
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<td>XXII: Scheil, Actes juridiques susiens</td>
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<td>XXVII: van der Meer, Textes scolaires de Suse</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mélanges Garrelli</td>
<td>Charpin and Joannès, Marchands, diplomates et emperurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mélanges Limet</td>
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<td>Mission de Ras Shamra</td>
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<tr>
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<td>IV: Landsberger et al., Bases Vocabulary, Old Babylonian Grammatical Texts, Neo-Babylonian Grammatical Texts</td>
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<td>VIII/2: Landsberger, The Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia 2. HAR-ra = šubullu Tablets XIV and XVIII</td>
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<td>IX: Landsberger and Civil, The Series HAR-ra = šubullu Tablet XV and Related Texts</td>
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<td>X: Landsberger et al., The Series HAR-ra = šubullu Tablets XVI, XVII, XIX and Related Texts</td>
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<td>XI: Reiner and Civil, The Series HAR-ra = šubullu Tablets XX–XXIV and Related Texts</td>
<td></td>
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<td>XII: Civil et al., The Series Li = ša and Related Texts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>XIII: Civil et al., Iṣu = išū, Kā-gal = abullu and Nīg-ge = makkānu</td>
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<tr>
<td>XIV: Civil et al., Ea A = nāqu, A2 A = nāqu, with their Forerunners and Related Texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>XVI: Finkel and Civil, The Series SIG–ALAN = Nabūtu</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>XVII: Cavigliaux et al., The Series Erimhulu = anantu and An-ta-gal = šaqu</td>
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<tr>
<td>SS 1: Civil et al., The Sag-Tablet, Lexical Texts in the Ashmolean Museum, Middle Babylonian Grammatical Texts, Miscellaneous Texts</td>
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<td>X: Grégoire, Inscriptions et archives administratives cunéiformes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>XIII: Sigrist et al., The John Frederick Lewis Collection 2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>NABU</td>
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<td>Orbis Biblicus et Orientals</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>VII: Langdon, The Herbert Wild Collection</td>
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<td>Parpola, LAS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td><em>Thureau-Dangin, Rituels accadiens</em></td>
</tr>
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<td>RB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse</td>
<td><em>Revue biblique</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II/2: Clay, <em>Documents from the Temple Archives of Nippur Dated in the Reigns of Cassite Rulers</em></td>
<td><em>Repertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Poebel, <em>Historical and Grammatical Texts</em></td>
<td>II: Edzard and Farber, <em>Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der Zeit der 3. Dynastie von Ur</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X/3: Langdon, <em>The Epic of Gilgamesh</em></td>
<td>III: Groneberg, <em>Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der altbabylonischen Zeit</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV: Lebrain, <em>Royal Inscriptions and Fragments from Nippur and Babylon</em></td>
<td>V: Nashef, <em>Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der mittelbabyloni schen und mittelassyrischen Zeit</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pettinato</td>
<td>VIII: Zadok, <em>Geographical Names According to Neo- and Late-Babylonian Texts</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pohl, <em>Rechtsurkunden</em></td>
<td><em>Revue hitite et asiatique</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgate, <em>Palace Archive</em></td>
<td>Richter, <em>Panthea</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgate, <em>The Governor’s Palace Archive</em></td>
<td>Richter, Untersuchungen zu den lokalen Panthea Süt- und Mittelbabylonien in altbabylonischer Zeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgate, <em>Neo-Assyrian Royal Grants and Decrees</em></td>
<td>Riffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><em>Rima</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radner and Baker, <em>The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire</em></td>
<td>Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRU</td>
<td>1: Grayson, <em>Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC</em> (1114–859 BC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSBA</td>
<td>2: Grayson, <em>Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC</em> (858–745 BC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>RIMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawlinson et al., <em>The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia</em></td>
<td>Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II: Rawlinson and Norris, <em>A Selection from the Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Assyria</em></td>
<td>RIME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ebeling et al., Reallexikon der Assyriologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Römer, SKIZ</td>
<td>Römer, Sumerische 'Königshymnen' der Isin-Zeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTC</td>
<td>Thureau-Dangin, Recueil des tablettes chaldéennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>State Archives of Assyria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Parpola, The Correspondence of Sargon II, 1. Letters from Assyria and the West</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>III: Livingstone, Court Poety and Literary Miscellanea</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI: Kwasman and Parpola, Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh 1. Tigrath- Pilesar III through Esarhaddon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII: Fales and Postgate, Imperial Administrative Records 1. Palace and Temple Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII: Hunger, Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX: Parpola, Assyrian Prophecies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Parpola, Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII: Kataja and Whiting, Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII: Cole and Machinist, Letters from Priests to the Kings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV: Mattila, Legal Transactions of the Royal Court of Nineveh 2. Assurbanipal through Sin-karru-ibân</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAB</td>
<td>State Archives of Assyria, Bulletin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAACT</td>
<td>State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAALT</td>
<td>State Archives of Assyria Literary Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salamberg, Kalender</td>
<td>Salamberg, Der kulturelle Kalender der Ur III-Zeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salonen, Landfahrzeuge</td>
<td>Salonen, Die Landfahrzeuge des alten Mesopotamiens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salonen, Türen</td>
<td>Salonen, Die Türen des alten Mesopotamiens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salonen, Vögel</td>
<td>Salonen, Vögel und Vogelfang im alten Mesopotamiens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salonen, Wasserfahrzeuge</td>
<td>Salonen, Die Wasserfahrzeuge in Babylonien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANE</td>
<td>Sources from the Ancient Near East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAOC</td>
<td>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBH</td>
<td>Reinsen, Semitisch-babylonische Hymnen nach Thonatef griechischer Zeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCCNH</td>
<td>Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10: Owen and Wilhelm, Nuzi at Seventy-Five</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwerner, Rituale</td>
<td>Daniel Schwerner, Akkadische Rituale aus Hattuša</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefati, Love Songs</td>
<td>Sefati, Love Songs in Sumerian Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selz, Göterwelt</td>
<td>Selz, Untersuchungen zur Göterwelt des altsumerischen Stadtstaates von Lagas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Chiera, Sumerian Epics and Myths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaffer, 'Sumerian Sources'</td>
<td>Shaffer, 'Sumerian Sources of Tablet XII of the Epic of Gilgamesh'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sjöberg, Mondgott</td>
<td>Sjöberg, Der Mondgott Nanna-Suen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Chiera, Sumerian Lexical Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLTN</td>
<td>Kramer, Sumerian Literary Texts from Nippur in the Museum of the Ancient Orient at Istanbul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>von Soden and Röllig, Syllabar</td>
<td>von Soden and Röllig, Das akkadische Syllabar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speiser</td>
<td>Speiser, 'The Epic of Gilgamesh', in ANET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamm, Namengebung</td>
<td>Stamm, Die akkadische Namengebung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StBoT</td>
<td>Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stol, Epilepsy</td>
<td>Stol, Epilepsy in Babylonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stol, OB History</td>
<td>Stol, Studies in Old Babylonian History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stor</td>
<td>Studia Orientalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streck, Asch</td>
<td>Streck, Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streck, Bildersprache</td>
<td>Streck, Die Bildersprache der akkadischen Epik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STT</td>
<td>Gurney et al., The Sulkiantepe Tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Diakonoff</td>
<td>Dandamaev, Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Greenfield</td>
<td>Zevit et al., Solving Riddles and Untying Knots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Hallo</td>
<td>Cohen et al., The Tablet and the Scroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Lambert</td>
<td>George and Finkel, Wisdom, Gods and Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Moran</td>
<td>Abusch et al., Lingering over Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Oppenheim</td>
<td>Biggs and Brinkman, Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Reiner</td>
<td>Roehl-Allan, Language, Literature, and History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Sahig</td>
<td>Leichty et al., A Scientific Humanist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Sjöberg</td>
<td>Behrens et al., DUMU-ê-DUB-BA-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Talmon</td>
<td>Fishbane and Tov, 'Sh'mar Telemon'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STVC</td>
<td>Chiera, Sumerian Texts of Varied Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumerian Gods</td>
<td>Finkel and Geller, Sumerian Gods and their Representations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolae Böhl</td>
<td>Beck et al., Symbolae biblicae et mesopotamicæ Francisco Maria Theodori de Liguere Böhl dedicatæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szlechter, TJA</td>
<td>Szlechter, Tablettes juridiques et administratives de la IIIe Dynastie d'Ur et de la IVe Dynastie de Babylone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAPS</td>
<td>Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 71/VII: Klein, The Royal Hymns of Shulgi King of Ur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCL</td>
<td>Textes cunéiformes du Louvre I: Thureau-Dangin, Lettres et contrats de l'époque de la première dynastie babylonienne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III: Thureau-Dangin, Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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TCM
Textes cunéiformes de Mari

TCS
Texts from Cuneiform Sources

III: Stöbberg and Bergmann, The Collection of Sumerian Temple Hymns

Thompson, DACG
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Thompson, Gilgamish
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Tigay, Evolution
Tigay, The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic

TIM
Texts in the Iraq Museum

II: van Dijk, Old Babylonian Letters and Related Material
IV: van Dijk, Old Babylonian Contracts and Juridical Texts
V: van Dijk, Old Babylonian Contracts and Related Material
IX: van Dijk, Texts of Varying Content

TuL
Ebeling, Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier

TuM
Texte und Materialien der Frau Professor Hilprecht
Collection of Babylonian Antiquities in the Eigentum der Universität Jena

NF III–IV: Bernhardt and Kramer, Sumerische literarische Texte aus Nippur 1–2

UCP
University of California Publications in Semitic Philology

IX/6: Lutz, The Verdict of a Trial Judge in a Case of Assault and Battery

UE
Ur Excavations
II: Woolley, The Royal Cemetery, a Report on the Predynastic and Sargonic Graves

UET
Ur Excavations, Texts
I: Gadd et al., Royal Inscriptions
II: Burrows, Archaic Texts
III: LeGrain, Business Documents of the Third Dynasty of Ur
V: Figulla, Letters and Documents of the Old Babylonian Period

VI: Gadd and Kramer, Literary and Religious Texts
VIII: Soltsberger, Royal Inscriptions, Part II

UET 2 Supplement
Alber and Pomponio, Pre-Sargonic and Sargonic Texts from Ur
Edited in UET 2, Supplement

UF
Ugarit-Forschungen

Unger, Babylon
Unger, Babylon, die heilige Stadt

UVB
Vorläufiger Bericht über die . . . in Ur Ok-Warka unternommenen Ausgrabungen

VAB
Vorderasiatische Bibliothek

VAS
Vorderasiatische Schriftenkataloge

II: Zimmern, Sumerische Kultstätten aus altbabylonischer Zeit 1
V: Ungnad, Neubabylonische Urkunden 3
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Wiggermann, Mesopotamian Protective Spirits

Die Welt des Orients
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WVDOG</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WZf</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang, Adab</td>
<td>Yang Zhi, Inscriptions from Adab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOR</td>
<td>Yale Oriental Series, Researches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V/3: Clay</td>
<td>V/3: Clay, A Hebrew Deluge Story in Cuneiform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOS</td>
<td>Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Clay</td>
<td>I: Clay, Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Babylonian Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II: Lutz</td>
<td>II: Lutz, Early Babylonian Letters from Larsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Goetze</td>
<td>X: Goetze, Old Babylonian Omen Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI: van Dijk et al.</td>
<td>XI: van Dijk et al., Early Mesopotamian Incantations and Rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII: Feiglin and Oppenheim</td>
<td>XII: Feiglin and Oppenheim, Legal and Administrative Texts of the Reign of Samsu-Iluna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII: Finkelstein</td>
<td>XIII: Finkelstein, Late Old Babylonian Documents and Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX: Beaulieu</td>
<td>XIX: Beaulieu, Legal and Administrative Texts from the Reign of Nabonidus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZA</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZDMG</td>
<td>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</td>
</tr>
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<td>Zettler, Ur III Temple</td>
<td>Zettler, The Ur III Temple of Inanna at Nippur</td>
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### OTHER CONVENTIONS

The symbol // stands _passim_ for 'duplicates' or 'is a (near) duplicate of'. In transcription of poetry the single forward slash / denotes the boundary between two lines, the symbol | marks the boundary between adjacent stress-bearing units in the same line, and || signifies a pause or caesura.

In the tables of manuscripts that accompany the individual text editions in Chapters 5–7 and 11 the following abbreviations are used:

- **C** copy
- **P** photograph
- **T** transliterated text
- **Tr** translation

When these abbreviations appear in lower case (c, p, t, tr) they signify partial treatment, e.g. a translation of only part of the text.
Part One

INTRODUCTION
The Literary History of the Epic of Gilgameš

INTRODUCTION

This book offers a new academic edition of the Babylonian text known today as the Epic of Gilgameš. It seeks to replace the long-obsolete edition of R. Campbell Thompson and the pioneering works of Paul Haupt and Peter Jensen which preceded that edition. In collecting between the covers of a single book every extant fragment of the Babylonian Gilgameš available at the time of writing, it aims to provide a definitive treatment that will place the study of the text on a sound footing until such time as future discoveries make another new edition necessary.

When applied to Gilgameš the term ‘epic’ is a coinage of convenience, for the word has no counterpart in the Akkadian language. By it is meant a long narrative poem describing heroic events that happen over a period of time. The Babylonian Gilgameš fits this definition well. The poem tells the story of a great king, the hero Gilgameš, who so tyrannizes the people of the city of Uruk that the gods create his counterpart, the wild man Enkidu, to divert him. Enkidu is brought up by animals but seduced by a prostitute and civilized. Gilgameš and Enkidu fight, become inseparable companions and go together on a risky adventure to fell timber in the far Cedar Forest. On the way Gilgameš has a series of terrifying nightmares but nevertheless they slay the forest’s guardian, the divinely appointed Humbaba, and fell the cedar. On their return Gilgameš repudiates the overtures of the goddess Ishtar and, with Enkidu’s help, despatches the monstrous Bull of Heaven that she sends to exact vengeance. For these twin misdemeanours the gods sentence Enkidu to death and he falls sick. He has a vision of the Netherworld and dies, whereupon his friend is distraught with grief. After a magnificent funeral Gilgameš is consumed by the fear of death and sets off on a quest to the ends of the earth. The journey takes him where no mortal has been before, along the Path of the Sun and across the Waters of Death. He comes at last to the realm of the wise Utnapishti, who survived the great flood sent by the gods in time immemorial and was granted immortality as a result. Under his instruction Gilgameš learns that there is no secret of everlasting life and is made to recognize his own human frailties. He returns home a wiser man and sets down his story for the benefit of future generations.
The poem's climactic episodes make clear that it is more than just an exciting narrative of great deeds. Alongside the heroic feats lies a profound exploration of the limitations of the human condition. This, and the formal conceit of the epic, at least in its last version, that it comprises Gilgamesh's own words to those that come after, allows it to be read as a piece of 'wisdom' literature with a message for posterity.¹ The poem's preoccupation with human experience and values and its jaundiced view of the authority of individual deities has prompted some to read it as a humanistic work, even the 'first embodiment in dramatic form and in explicit statement of the idea of humanism'.² Nevertheless the poem is not completely impervious to the religiosity of the culture from which it stemmed. In its recognition of man's ultimate powerlessness under the supreme authority of the divine the epic borrows to the religious ideology of its time. As a piece of literature the epic leaps the divide between then and now, alone among the poetic narratives of ancient Mesopotamia, but it remains a distinctively Babylonian creation, nonetheless.

The Babylonians referred to the poem by its opening words, 'Surpassing all other kings' (Sîtar elî karrī), later 'He who saw the Deep' (Sa naqba imurī), and as the Series of Gilgamesh (iškar Gilgamēš). These titles, discussed more fully below, immediately reveal that the epic existed in at least two different versions. The truth is more complex than that, however. The story of Gilgamesh has a long history in the ancient Mesopotamian literary traditions. Not only are there several different versions of the Babylonian epic in Akkadian, depending on time and place, but there are also related poems in Sumerian. Some nineteen centuries separate the oldest Sumerian fragment from the latest Babylonian manuscripts. Indeed, one can well say that the compositions telling the tale of the legendary king of Uruk offer between them a paradigm of ancient Mesopotamian literature. This, the first of four introductory chapters, will place the various Gilgamesh texts in the context of the historical development of the literature of Sumer and Babylonia.

³

**GILGAMESH IN OLD SUMERIAN LITERATURE?**

The earliest recognizable body of literature recovered from ancient Mesopotamia is the Old Sumerian corpus of narrative compositions from the Early Dynastic IIIA period, roughly

¹ See already George, *Epic of Gilgamesh* (Penguin), pp. xiv-xvii. Note also G. Baccellini, 'Wisdom and not: the case of Mesopotamia', *TBS* 101 (1981), pp. 35-47, where the epic is adduced as one of several examples of Babylonian 'wisdom'; cf. especially p. 38: 'Gilgamesh (in its latest version] is the great paradigm of this type of inner adventure i.e. the acquisition of knowledge through humility; a fact that has largely gone unnoticed because of the outer "epical" garb.'


³ An earlier and much briefer attempt to do this is W. G. Lambert's essay 'Zum Forschungsstand der sumerisch-babylonischen Literaturgeschichte', *ZDMG* Suppl. 3 (1975), pp. 65-9; though overtaken by the discoveries of recent years it remains a valuable account. The longer treatment by J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia, 1982), is marred by a tendency to see the various second-millennium fragments of the epic as standing in a single linear descent. Newly discovered sources have made it ever more clear that the second millennium was characterized by a profusion of deviant texts.
INTRODUCTION

Gilgamesh. According to later tradition, Amanšumgalanna signifies the ruler of Uruk in his role as Dumuzi, the husband of Inanna. Dumuzi is the subject of a large body of later Sumerian literature and it would be no surprise to find a text devoted to his praise in the Old Sumerian corpus. Nevertheless, the claim of association with Gilgamesh persists, for the composition has recently been referred to as the 'Early Dynastic Hymn to Gilgamesh'.

For my part I see little in the text, if anything, to support the statement of the commentator who coined this title that 'many allusions to episodes appearing in the later-attested Gilgamesh cycle of legends do appear, and there can be little doubt that this composition as a whole glorified Gilgamesh'.

It is true that little of the text is readily intelligible, despite the fact that it is damaged only in its last sixth. However, the relatively complete state of preservation of the text immediately gives rise to a formal objection. Given that the Early Dynastic spelling of the name of Gilgamesh is well known and immediately recognizable (see Chapter 2), an identification of this text as a hymn to Gilgamesh rests on the unacceptable presumption that its composer omitted to identify by name the object of his adoration, unless he did so right at the end where the text is damaged. Perhaps in time detailed justification for this controversial interpretation will be put forward, but until then the text should be disregarded as far as the literary history of Gilgamesh is concerned.

The third Old Sumerian tablet in question is not yet fully published and cannot be described definitively. Now in Norway as part of the Schøyen Collection, it has been provisionally identified by an anonymous cataloguer as an archaic manuscript of Bilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven. Personal study of the piece did not lead to a specific identification but gave no grounds for agreeing with the cataloguer.

The early rulers of Uruk had a great impact on poets of the third millennium, much as the Trojan war and its aftermath had on Homer. The reigns of Enmerkar, Lugalbanda and Gilgamesh entered legend as the heroic age of Sumer. One can imagine that court minstrels and storytellers began to compose oral 'lays of ancient Uruk' soon after the lifetime of these heroes, and it would then be no surprise for epic tales of Gilgamesh and his predecessors in due course to appear in writing. At the moment one cannot be sure that this happened in the Early Dynastic period, but it had certainly happened by the end of the millennium.

While referring to and quoting from the Sumerian poems I retain the Sumerian form of the name. So in English we read of Odysseus in Homer and Ulysses in Vergil. The relationship with Gilgamesh claimed by the kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur in the last century of the third millennium is discussed below, in Chapter 3, the section on family connections. From the point of view of literary history the salient point is that what is for the moment our oldest published fragment of a Sumerian Gilgamesh poem comes from the Ur III period. It is a fragment of Bilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven from Nippur. In addition, there awaits publication at least two more fragments of the same period that give literary narrative concerning Gilgamesh. One of them is too small to be useful. The other describes how Gilgamesh, disporting himself with young men and women, interrupted the dancing to copulate with an otherwise unknown woman and kiss her. This fragment does not fit any of the poems of Gilgamesh known from later periods, although it clearly reports the tradition in which the hero tyrannized his people with his excessive appetites for sex and play.

According to present understanding much of the courtly literature of this era—and evidently not all—was set down for posterity in King Šulgi's academies at Nippur and Ur and developed into the traditional corpus of Sumerian literature that provided the curriculum of Old Babylonian scribal schools. The vast majority of manuscripts of the Sumerian poems about Gilgamesh are the products of eighteenth-century scribal apprentices, but we can be reasonably certain that the other Gilgamesh poems were once, like Bilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven, part of the literature of the Ur III period. Their function at this time was probably to provide entertainment at court. Music and singing were in all periods much in demand in ancient Mesopotamian palaces, as can be seen from lists of personnel from as far apart in time and space as Neo-Sumerian Girsu, Old Babylonian Mari and Neo-Assyrian Nineveh. Some idea of the circumstances in which the court poets sang can be had from the poem of Bilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven, in which the hero's musician, Lugalbagal, plays while his master drinks beer. The royal poets of Ur-Nammu and Šulgi were familiar with the legends of their adopted 'brother', Gilgamesh, and the poems that celebrated his exploits were surely part of the repertoire of palace minstrels of their time.

Leaving aside the fragments of Ur III date, there are five Sumerian poems that tell legends of Gilgamesh, one of them existing in two versions. They survive in different degrees of

THE SUMERIAN POEMS OF GILGAMESH

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completion, depending on the state of preservation of the extant fragments and the extent to which the text written on them rendered the whole composition. Tablets from Šur, Mé-Turan and elsewhere sometimes provide fuller texts than the more numerous Nippur exemplars. By the eighteenth century it is unlikely that the traditional Sumerian corpus of literature was alive outside those places where scribes were trained. The rise of Babylon, whose kings had no interest in claiming links with the faded glories of Šur, surely killed off any demand that remained for Sumerian entertainment at court. The number of Old Babylonian manuscripts extant for any given composition of the Sumerian corpus thus reflects its popularity as a school copy-book. Bilgames and Ḫuwaswa A, the story of Gilgameš's expedition to the Cedar Forest, was by far and away the most popular of the five poems, a fact that is explained by the recent discovery that it constituted the last of ten compositions in the second group of set texts encountered by the would-be scribe. In contrast, the second version, B, is much less well known and remains incomplete. Bilgames and Akka and Bilgames and the Netherworld both received much attention in the ancient schools and have been recovered almost in their entirety. Bilgames and the Bull of Heaven and the Death of Bilgames were much less in vogue and their plots have, for this reason, only recently been properly understood; neither of them is yet fully recovered.

I give the titles, synopses of plot and other details of the Sumerian poems of Gilgameš as follows. The order of the texts is arbitrary.

**Bilgames and Akka**


The story tells how the city-state of Urkach achieved hegemony over the city-state of Kiš. Akka, King of Kiš, sends emissaries to Urkach, evidently to demand the submission of that city. Bilgames seeks the counsel of the elders, putting to them that Urkach should not submit to Akka and go to war. The elders counsel submission. Bilgames ignores their advice and puts the same proposal to the young men of the city. They agree with Bilgames, lauding his prowess and predicting the rout of Kiš. Bilgames orders his servant Enkidu to prepare for war. Very soon Akka arrives and lays siege to Urkach. Bilgames asks for a volunteer to challenge Akka to single combat. One of his personal guards, the valiant Birḫururta (the reading of the name is uncertain), duly volunteers, but as soon as he leaves the city he is captured, beaten and brought before Akka. At that moment the steward of Urkach appears on the city wall and Akka asks Birḫururta if this is Bilgames. Birḫururta replies that it is not and that if it were battle would surely commence and, in an inevitable sequence of events, Akka would be defeated and captured. For his impudence he receives a second beating. Then Bilgames himself climbs on to the city wall. As the weak cower under the spell of his glory, the young men prepare for battle and, led by Enkidu, go forth from the gate. Meanwhile, Akka has spotted Bilgames on the rampart and asks Birḫururta again whether it is his king who stands there. Birḫururta replies in the affirmative and inexorably the sequence of events takes place exactly as he had predicted: battle commences and in due course Akka is defeated and captured. In the dénouement Bilgames addresses Akka as his superior, recalling how Akka had once given him safe refuge. Akka asks Bilgames to repay his favour and Bilgames accordingly lets him go free to Kiš.

Doxology: 7.bîl-ga.mes en kul.â(ab) a, ak.ká, zâ.mi.zu dug.ga.am, 'O Bilgames, lord of Kullab, sweet is your praise!'

**Bilgames and Ḫuwaswa, Version A**


In fear of death Bilgames turns his thoughts to deeds of glory and proposes an expedition to the fabled Cedar Mountain. His servant Enkidu tells him that he should seek the approval of the Sun God, Utu. This Bilgames does, giving as reason for the expedition that he has noted the impermanence of the human condition and wishes to establish his fame. Utu grants him the help of seven constellations to guide him on his journey. Bilgames mobilizes the young men of Urkach, arms them and sets out. The constellations lead him to the mountains where cedars grow. After crossing seven mountain ranges in search of a suitable tree, finally he finds one to his liking. Without further ado he fells the chosen cedar and his companions cut it into logs. Thereupon Ḫuwaswa, the cedars' guardian, awakes and launches at Bilgames one of his auras, the radiant numinous powers that protect him. Bilgames and Enkidu are stunned and fall unconscious. Enkidu wakes and eventually rouses Bilgames too.

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20 Note the following collations and corrections, disregarding misprints (Ur MSS collated): 1. 2, UES 64 b, gm.e 1 kur.tâ.ti.la.la.gâzu.gâ.dâ ni a.na.an.gâ.bû.1. 41, Ur; A: [mud] sag.kâz.su (or cemal) [1. 1] 'a serpent whose fangs (or tongue) ... 1. 56, UES 82.1: 4a, 66a, URS: akkû ka.bi.1. 102a, UrB: zu utûr zig.gâ.dû[a]m L 148a, URS: ni.e 1.ni e[â]m. 1. 56c, URS: min.nas.na.bi bi.e 1.ki.ki kâ.na 1. 1. 52c, URS: 'u3 a.mu n[a] à'[b], à'.
21 Here and elsewhere the translation 'cedar' is conventional; for the problems, botanical and geographical, see Klein and Abraham's discussion in *CRRA 44/III*, pp. 65-6.

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Note also that Tablet XII of the Standard Babylonian epic derives from a version of Bilgames and the Netherworld more complete than that copied at Nippur, which omits the hero's visit to the Moon God.

Note that the translation 'cedar' is conventional; for the problems, botanical and geographical, see Klein and Abraham's discussion in *CRRA 44/III*, pp. 65-6.
Bilgames swears to discover the identity of his assailant. Enkidu describes to him the terrible being that is Huvawa but Bilgames is confident that the two of them will succeed where one would fail.

As they approach Huvawa’s dwelling Bilgames is stopped in his tracks and a voice calls to him, telling him not to be afraid but to kneel on the ground. Bilgames then pretends to wish to form a marital alliance with Huvawa and offers him her sisters, Enmebaragesi and Pēkūr, as wives. He promises Huvawa other pleasures of life that are evidently unknown in his remote mountain lair: fine flour, water in leathern bottles, sandals large and small, choice gemstones and other presents. For the betrothal of the sisters and the promise of each further gift the gullible Huvawa surrenders one of his protective auras. These are conceptualized as great cedars, which Bilgames’s men duly cut into logs for the journey home. When Huvawa has no auras left and is helpless to attack, Bilgames strikes him and takes prisoner. Huvawa then pleads for his life, complaining to Utu of Bilgames’s treachery. Bilgames shows him princely mercy but Enkidu warns that this is too dangerous: if they let Huvawa go they will never see home again. As Huvawa turns on Enkidu in anger, Enkidu cuts the ogre’s throat. The heroes take his head to the god Enil. Enil angrily asks them why they have killed Huvawa and tells them they should instead have treated him with every politeness. Enil distributes Huvawa’s auras.

Doodology: kal.gi ˌbi.la.gas mi.dug.ga ˌni.saba zâ.mi, ‘Honour to the mighty Bilgames, praise to Nissaba’. 28

Bilgames and Huvawa, Version B


27 The speaker is not identified but is sometimes taken as Huvawa (Edzard, TČVT III/3, p. 546, fn. a; Toormay and Stader, p. 299; George, Penguin, p. 150), sometimes as Enkidu (Penington, p. 318; D. Frayn ed. B. R. Foster, The Epic of Gilgamesh (New York, 2001), p. 110).

28 Outside Nippur there were other versions of this doxology that mentioned Huvawa and Enkidu; see Edzard, Z4 81, p. 232.

29 This is the common spelling but there are interesting variants in the literary catalogues and elsewhere in the Gilgamesh poems: i.a.lu.i.u i.â.lâ.šû i.â.i.lâ.û i.â.i.i.lâ.û i.â.i.i.lâ.û (see the next footnote); i.â.i.i.lâ.û (Edzard, Z4 81, p. 224, 164); i.a.lu.i.e (Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, RA 887 (1993), p. 107, 120); i.a.lu.i.e (ibid., p. 126, 18); and a.i.i.i.û (PSA A, p. 109); cf. perhaps i.a.lu.i.e in OIP 94 278 ii 77.4 // AR2 V 20 viii 4 //.21 2. The variants make it difficult to believe that the common spelling should be interpreted literally, e.g. ‘flooded from granum’ or ‘magnum d’embougement’ (Cavigneaux), ‘horizontal one’ (B. A. Stoter, Mesopotamian Epic Literature, p. 66), ‘Oh you who are’ mentioned with fine oil: ‘(D. Frayn, Bulletin CSMS 34 (1999), p. 46). Civil’s translations, ‘the one who thrives’ (Farmer’s Instructions, p. 89) ‘enriches’ (AIA 40:2, p. 185), appear to take the first two as an exceptional verbal prefix chain. Edzard took them as exclamation, rendering them ad numen as ‘Heldendäster’. I suspect the whole sequence to be an interjection, subst. i.e. cf. the exclamation written a.i.i.i.û in laments and a.i.i.û in various contexts. (The paper by G. Marchesi, ‹lû.lullum, gû.lull-mû su-su. On the incipit of the Sumerian poem Gilgamesh and Huvawa B, in S. Graziani (ed.), Studi sul Vicino Oriente antico dedicati alla memoria di Luigi Cappe 2 (Naples, 2000), pp. 673-84, announced in October 2001, appeared too late to be consulted here.)

20 TČVT XV 28, 36, ed. Kramer, BASOR 86, p. 18, 39; i.a.lu.i.e, ibid., p. 15, 15; i.a.lu.i.e, UET VI 123 10, ed. Kramer, RA 55, p. 171: i.a.lu.i.e, UET IV 96, 16. i.a.lâ.û. 31

28 Corrections: i.lâ.û, A better di: ig.nlm (cf. Bilgames and Huvawa A 68); i.lâ.û, B. di: nu.uk.sî.igung (with copy).

Version B is shorter than Version A and exhibits many minor variations. A major difference is one of plot. At the crucial point in the story, when Bilgames awakes at last from the sleep induced by Huvawa’s auras, instead of encouraging the fearful Enkidu with a show of bravado, the hero doubts his own ability to match the monster in strength and calls on his god, Enki, to ‘emerge’ in his words. Through the medium of Enkidu, who apparently blurs out the words Bilgames should use, Enki does exactly that and the plot moves directly on to the meeting with Huvawa and Bilgames’s deceitful diplomacy. The very end is missing, together with any doxology. Some speculate that in this version Huvawa was spared. 32

Bilgames and the Bull of Heaven


Following a hymnic prologue, Bilgames begins to converse with his mother, the goddess Ninsum. Ninsum gives him instructions to carry out his duties, though what he has to do is for the moment difficult to understand. The passage is repeated as narrative. Soon afterwards Inanna tries to detain Bilgames in her chamber so that he cannot fulfill his secular functions, here epitomized as sitting in judgement. The goddess of sexual love has other plans for him, proposing that he become lord to her lady. 34 In some versions Bilgames reports Inanna’s overtures to his mother, adding that Inanna accused him at the city gate in the lee of the wall, a place where prostitutes traditionally plied their trade. Ninsum forbids him to accept Inanna’s gifts. Bilgames next encounters Inanna as he goes out to fulfill another of his lordly duties, to capture livestock to replenish the goddess’ animal pens. He brusquely orders her out of his way. In the lacuna that follows one may imagine that he poured scorn on her, for when the text resumes, Inanna is found weeping. Her father, An, asks her why she is crying. She answers that it is because she has not been able to get her own way with Bilgames and asks her father for the Bull of Heaven, so that she can kill Bilgames. He objects that the Bull of Heaven grazes at the celestial horizon (for it is the constellation Taurus) and would have no food on earth. Throwing a tantrum Inanna starts to scream, /
making a noise so infernal that An gives in. Inanna leads the Bull of Heaven down to Uruk, where it devours the date-groves and drinks the river dry. Meanwhile Bilgamo’s minstrel, Lugalgabalgal, is entertaining his king during a drinking session. Going outside to relieve himself he sees the Bull amid the devastation and returns to tell Bilgamo. The news his minstrel brings in no way diverts the hero from his pleasure, for Bilgamo calls for more ale and orders the music to recommence. Only when his thirst is quenched does he prepare for battle. He arms himself and instructs his mother and sister to make sacrifices in the temple of the god Enki. He vows to dismember the Bull of Heaven and give its meat to the poor. As Inanna looks on from the city wall, Bilgamo and Enkido tackle the Bull. Enkido finds its weak spot and Bilgamo duly dispatches the monstrous animal. He hurls one of its haunches at Inanna. Bilgamo wishes he could treat her as he has the animal of Heaven. And just as he had sworn, the carcass is dismembered and its meat given to the poor. Its horns, however, are dedicated to Inanna in her temple, Eanna.

Doxology: gud.an.an ugg; ga kii ‘Inanna, ke, zà.mi.zu dûg; ga, ‘the Bull of Heaven being slain, O holy Inanna sweet is your praise!’ (Mé-Turan). A related text is the Gudam poem, a fragment about a mythical bull on the rampage in Uruk; the story mentions Lugalgabalgal (as nar.a nì lugal; gaba gâl; di, ‘his minstrel, L’.) and Inanna but not Bilgamo.18

Bilgamo and the Netherworld


This composition begins with a mythological prologue: a long time ago, shortly after the gods had divided the universe between them, there was a huge storm. As the god Enki was sailing down to the Netherworld, presumably to take up residence in his cosmic domain, the Abzu, hailstones piled high in the bottom of his boat and waves churned around it. The storm blew down a willow tree on the bank of the River Euphrates. Out walking one day, the goddess Inanna picked up the willow and took it back to her house in Uruk, where she planted it and waited for it to grow. She looked forward to having furniture made from its timber. As the tree grew it was infested by creatures of evil and Inanna was sad. She told the whole story to the Sun god, her brother Utu, but he did not help her. Then she repeated the story to the hero Bilgamo. Bilgamo took up his weapons and rid the tree of its vile inhabitants. He felled the tree and gave Inanna timber for the furniture she needed. With the remaining wood he made two playthings, apparently a ball and a mallet.19

Bilgamo and the young men of Uruk play with his new toys all day long. The men are worn out by their exertions and their women are kept busy bringing them food and water. The next day, as the game is about to restart, the women complain and the playthings fall through a hole deep into the Netherworld. Bilgamo cannot reach them and weeps bitterly at his loss. His servant Enkido volunteers to go and fetch them. Bilgamo warns him about going to the Netherworld. If Enkido is to avoid fatal consequences in the presence of the gods of the dead he must show the proper respect for them, acting with sensitivity and not drawing attention to himself. There in the Netherworld he will come upon the awful spectacle of the goddess Ereškigal, queen of the dead. Deathly pale and prostrate in perpetual mourning, clothes torn from her breast, she raises her flesh with her fingernails and tears her hair. Enkido goes down to the Netherworld and blithely ignores Bilgamo’s instructions. He is duly taken captive by the Netherworld and fails to return.

Realizing with horror what has happened, Bilgamo petitions the gods. Only Enki is willing to help him. He instructs the Sun God, Utu, to bring up Enkido’s shade as he rises from the Netherworld at dawn. Temporarily reunited, Bilgamo and Enkido embrace. In a long session of question and answer Bilgamo asks Enkido about conditions in the Netherworld.

The principal message of the beginning of the heroes’ dialogue is that the more sons a man has, the more the thurst that plagues his ghost in the afterlife will be relieved, for in Babylonia it was the responsibility of those who survived the deceased to offer his shade regular libations of fresh water. Shades who are childless suffer particularly badly, for nobody exists above on earth to make the vital offerings to them. The dialogue then turns to a discussion of those who have it in common that they cannot be buried whole, either because they have been disfigured by leprosy or other diseases or because violent ends have mangled their bodies. The particular horror of such a death was not just that the deceased was not whole when buried but that his disablement persisted for eternity in the afterlife. The revulsion towards dying without a full complement of body parts persists in the Near East today.

19 The composition has the same opening line as the instructions of Šunuppak and shares an abbreviated form of the incipit, ut; tì a, with most manuscripts of Enki’s Journey to Nippur and with a fourth text. The abbreviated versions entered in seventh position in two of the curricular catalogues (ut; tì a in TCUV 38, 6, ed. Kramer, BASOR 85, 7, and in Rhind, p. 15, 7.) is shown unambiguously to be Enki’s Journey by the curricular catalogue published by van Dijk, Ornis 58, p. 447, 7. [ut; tì a nam ba i mu, i mu, i mu; tì a nam ba i mu, i mu.] The two entries for ut; tì a later in the first two catalogues signify either Bilgamo and the Netherworld or the Instructions of Šunuppak and a further text (TCUV 38, 13–14, ed. Kramer, BASOR 88, p. 17, 14–15, and ibid., p. 15, 20–1). The order and identity of the three compositions is established by one of the catalogues of Ut, where the full incipit of Enki’s Journey, either Bilgamo and the Netherworld or the Instructions of Šunuppak, and the fourth composition are given consecutively (USTV 123, ed. Kramer, RASS 55, pp. 171–2, 28–30); ut; tì a nam ba i mu, i mu, i mu; tì a nam ba i mu, i mu. It is uncertain which of these texts is meant by the abbreviated version of the incipit entered in the catalogue TCUV 38, 6.
One recension adopts a moral tone, dealing also with those who have dishonoured their parents and others who have taken a god’s name in vain. Like these, many shades are in for a grim experience in the afterlife but, besides the fathers of many sons, there are others who suffer less. Those who die of old age enjoy a comfortable existence, as blessed in death as in life. Stillborn children are compensated for their fate by an afterlife spent in luxury. However, those who are burned to death disappear in smoke and find no place in the Netherworld. The message is that the ghosts of such people cannot be summoned from the Netherworld for the ritual offerings that other shades enjoy and so are faced always to haunt the living with thirst unsatisfied and hunger unabated, the most feared of all revenant spirits. Burning to death was consequently the worst fate of all, a fitting climax to Enkidu’s report. The horror of death by burning endured to this day in Islam.

In one tradition of copying the text ends at this point, but a tablet from Ur provides a continuation that gives a more explicit lesson in how to care for the dead. Enkidu reports that the shades of the ‘sons of Sumer and Akkad’, and particularly of Girsu, have been overrun by Amorite tribesmen, who keep them away from the places in the Netherworld where the libations of fresh water are received from the world above and force them to make do with foul, polluted water. When Bilgames discovers that the shades of his own forebears suffer the same fate he is shamed into filial piety. In the poem’s conclusion he is prompted to fashion statues of his ancestors, to institute mourning rites for them and to instruct the people in the same rites.

Doxology: ur.sag bil.gi.am du du nin.sun.za mâ.zi.du.gi.am, ‘O warrior Bilgames, son of Ninsun, sweet is your praise!’ (Ur). 41

The Death of Bilgames

In the great land of the gods Enki shows Bilgames a vision, in which he finds himself at a meeting of the gods’ assembly. The business in hand is his own destiny. The gods review his heroic career, his exploits in the forest of Cedar, his journey to the end of the world and the wisdom he learned from Ziusudra, the survivor of the Deluge. Their predication is that Bilganes, though a man, is the son of a goddess: should he be mortal or immortal? The final judgement seems to be voiced by Enki. The only mortal, he says, to achieve immortality is self-same Ziusudra, but in special circumstances. Despite his divine birth Bilganes must descend to the Netherworld like other men. But there he will have a special position as the chief of the shades, sitting in judgement over the dead like Ningishzida and Dumuzi. Not only this, but after his death Bilganes will be commemorated among the living during an annual Festival of Lights, when young men will wrestle with each other. Then Enlil appears and explains in simpler terms the message of the dream thus far: Bilganes was born to be a king but he cannot escape the doom of mortal man. Even so, he is not to despair. In the Netherworld he will be reunited with his family and his beloved Enkidu, and he will be numbered among the lesser deities.

Bilganes awakes, stunned by what he has seen. The text is damaged at this point but it seems that the hero seeks counsel. At all events, the poem launches into a wholesale repetition of the dream, and the simplest explanation of this is that Bilganes is retelling the dream to those whose advice he seeks regarding its import (even if this verbatim repetition does ignore the expected change from third person in the narrative to first in the reportage). The reply of Bilganes’s interlocutors is that he should not be sad. Death is inevitable, even for a king, and he should be pleased with the exalted status that he will enjoy after death.

A gap in the text intervenes at this point, after which, prompted by Enki, the people of Uruk set to work on building Bilganes’s tomb. The break prevents us from knowing exactly how Enki communicated what was to be done, but the agent was apparently a dog rather than a man. The message so conveyed evidently answered the question of where to site Bilganes’s tomb so that it would be inviolable. As a result of Enki’s wisdom the labour force diverted the River Euphrates and the tomb is built of stone in the river bed. The royal bier and entourage take their places in the tomb and prepare to accompany their king in the afterlife. To ensure that Bilganes and his retinue receive a favourable reception in the Netherworld, gifts are presented to the deities of Ereškigal’s court. Then Bilganes himself is laid down. The doorway is sealed with a great stone fashioned for the purpose and the river is returned to its bed so that the site of the tomb cannot be discovered. The people of Uruk mourn their king.

Two different endings survive. One, less well preserved, simply voices the praise of Bilganes, the greatest of kings. The other, more didactic, explains that men past and present live on after death in the memories of those alive. First, the practice of placing votive

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40 The absence of the shades of the burned from the Netherworld has been boldly explained by Alster as implying that death by burning brought ‘total annihilation of body and soul’ and an end to the cycle of life and death (B. Alster, ‘The paradigmatic character of Mesopotamian heroes’, RA 68 (1974), pp. 59–60). Bauer thought similarly, stating that ‘Das Verbrennen der chehre, die Vollendung der menschlichen Existenz bedeutet. ‘Ein Totenfeuer existiert nicht!’ (J. Bauer, ‘Der “schlimme Tod” in Mesopotamien’, Studia Assyriaca, p. 24). However, the texts do not confirm that in Mesopotamian belief death by burning achieved such a result. In the Babylonian dioramic handbook the ghosts of the burned, énim pali, are a known menace to the living (Sukel/ó 75, edition, TDP, p. 172; in énim(dilmu) qa-la-ta-lu-abu (‘the ghost of one burned to death has seized him’), XXVI 73, edition, Stolper, Epilogue, p. 70; in énim(dilmu) qa-la-ta-lu-abu (‘the ghost of one burned to death’)). The ghost of the one burned in a fire is cited among others that died unnatural deaths in an incantation-prayer from an exorcistic ritual against revenant spectres (LKA 64 obv. 27; in énim(dilmu) qa-la-ta-lu-abu (‘the ghost of one who was burned in fire’)).

41 A Nippur manuscript has the shorter doxology, unfortunately broken: [ s ... ] zu.mi, ‘Praise to ( ... )’ (Shaffer, ‘Sumerian Sources’, pl. 6, MS H vi 385). Veldhuis’s important article appeared too late to be utilized in this book. An unpublished source of the Death of Bilganes is housed in the Scheub Collection as SC 1027; its text is a variant of Cavignaux’s MS N2, ll. 20–end.

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42 M 238: mas.gi, bi ur lagal.ta bi.in.bûr t[î n][a].me nu.bûr.bûr, ‘that vision, the king’s dog solved it, no man solved it’. The second statement seems to preclude the interpretation of ur lagal.ta as a reference to Bilganes’s son, known as both Ur-lugal and Ur-Nungal, or alternatively as a reference to the human ur that act as champions of the rulers of Uruk and Aratta in other Sumerian epic poems (Emmerick and the Lord of Aratta 457–61 etc.; Emmerick and Enmaiddanna 126–7). Or is this a joke at Ur-lugal’s expense?
epic, in which the grief and horror that Enkidu’s death provokes in Gilgamesh impel the hero on a search for eternal life. As will be argued later, the Living One of the incipient of Bilgames and Huyawa A is the goal of his quest, the immortal Ziusudra, even though this figure plays no role in the story of Gilgamesh’s expedition to the Cedar Forest as it survives. The three-line bridge therefore is not evidence for a cycle of Sumerian poems. Instead it reveals that the epic story told by the Babylonian poems was already so well embedded in the literary mind in the early eighteenth century BC that people began to adapt the Sumerian poems to fit the expectations aroused by that poem.

In the eighteenth century, a period when Sumerian literature survived almost entirely among teachers and pupils, the Sumerian poems of Gilgamesh enjoyed currency only in places of learning. Outside the world of education a new, vibrant poetry was in fashion, using the vernacular language, Babylonian Akkadian, with different degrees of literary affectation that speak for its use in a wide variety of contexts. By the late Old Babylonian period court literature in Sumerian had dwindled almost to nothing. Hymns in praise of the king and prayers to deities on his behalf increasingly used Akkadian.

**THE ORIGINS OF THE BABYLONIAN EPIC OF GILGAMESH**

Among the many thousands of Old Babylonian school tablets so far recovered at Nippur, Ur, Isin and other sites are a very few that hold passages from compositions in Akkadian, enough to reveal that, alongside the Sumerian poems of Bilgames, students could also practice their writing skills by setting down passages of Babylonian Gilgamesh. Of the several Old Babylonian tablets of the epic edited in this book, one is certainly from a school environment (OB Nippur from House F on Tablet Hill), another very probably (OB Ishchali). As many as four others might also be school tablets (OB IM, OB Harmal 1, OB Schayen 3). The Babylonian epic was certainly not part of the traditional curriculum of scribal education in the eighteenth century, but the existence of contemporaneous library tablets inscribed with portions of the poem means that Gilgamesh in Akkadian was already established in the written tradition. These library tablets, the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (OB II–III) and two or three smaller pieces (OB UM, OB VA + BM, probably OB Schayen 3) — or more probably others like them — may have been the sources from which the scribes of OB Nippur etc. took passages of the Babylonian epic, but this is not the only possible origin of such excerpts. The people of this time could have been familiar with Gilgamesh stories in the vernacular Akkadian from an oral tradition. The Gilgamesh motifs found on terracotta plaques of the Old Babylonian period support such a view, for they are more likely to reflect people’s knowledge of orally transmitted stories than to witness popular familiarity with a written version.

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*44* On this topic see further below, Ch. 3, the sub-section on Crossing the ocean.

*45* The process of displacement of Sumerian by Akkadian in royal literature is clearly seen in the chronological list of Neo-Sumerian and Old Babylonian royal hymns compiled by Klein, Ṣalgi, pp. 226–34.

*46* On Gilgamesh art see Ch. 3, the sub-section on the Hero in art.
One can imagine that popular interest in Gilgamesh was expressed in song, both in court circles and in the marketplace, and that people of all walks of life were used to hearing tales of Gilgamesh sung in Akkadian. Young scribes may well have written down passages committed to memory after repeated exposure to sung versions of the story or, perhaps tired of the classical curriculum with its difficult Sumerian poetry, may even have improvised lines in Akkadian for the fun of it. It is significant that the single-column school tablets all hold text from one or other part of the episode of the expedition to the Cedar Forest. As already noted, the comparable Sumerian poem, Gilgamesh and Huwawa A, held a special place in the school curriculum and the episode in question must have been the most familiar to learner scribes.

The question then arises, how far was the Old Babylonian material in Akkadian dependent on its Sumerian antecedents? In the sixty years since Sumerian literary texts first started to be understood as coherent wholes, the relationship of the Babylonian epic to the Sumerian poems has been examined several times. The results obtained can be recapitulated here in brief. Two episodes of the Standard Babylonian version of Gilgamesh tell stories that were already the subject of one of the Sumerian poems of Gilgamesh. The expedition against Humbaba in Tablets III–V, which is also well represented in the Old Babylonian sources, can be compared with the two versions of Gilgamesh and Huwawa. The encounter with Istar and the Bull of Heaven in Tablet VI, which is not yet extant in the Old Babylonian period, has the same subject matter as Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven. Both episodes share a common plot in general terms but many details are different. Nowhere do passages of the Babylonian poem match any of the Sumerian texts line for line. Some individual lines of the Babylonian poem have counterparts in the Sumerian compositions but nowhere do the two languages tally word for word.

The account of the Deluge in Tablet XI of the Standard Babylonian epic was once thought to derive from the Sumerian flood myth—a text that has nothing to do with the Sumerian Gilgamesh—though there was (and still is) no evidence for the incorporation of the flood story in any second-millennium text of the Babylonian Gilgamesh. Since the relatively recent recovery of the Babylonian poem of Atra-Hasis this view has been revised and the flood story in Tablet XI has been recognized more exactly as a straightforward and sometimes verbatim adaptation of part of that poem. It is thus at least one step removed from Sumerian literary tradition. Tablet XII, on the other hand, is a literal translation of the latter part of Gilgamesh and the Netherworld and clearly a direct descendant of the Sumerian poem. The meetings of Gilgamesh with the elders and townsmen of Uruk in Tablets II–III of the Standard Babylonian poem, also well attested in the Old Babylonian epic, recall similar passages in the early part of Gilgamesh and Akka but a direct dependence of the Babylonian on the Sumerian is not proved. Both compositions are making use of an established literary motif in which a ruler ignores the cautious counsel of the aged in favour of the aggressive urges of youth.

New evidence in both languages means that more can be said on this subject. Now that its text is almost completely recovered, the one Sumerian poem not mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the Death of Gilgamesh, can be seen to hold material in common with the death and funeral of Enkidu, as told in Tablets VII–VIII of the Standard Babylonian epic. The dream of doom and the presentation of grave goods to the chthonic gods are the two principal motifs that occur in both texts. The tomb in the river bed, in Mesopotamian literature found only in the Death of Gilgamesh, may also put in an appearance in Tablet VIII, but the passage in question is not yet complete and is open to other interpretations. Nevertheless, it looks very much as if the Sumerian Death of Gilgamesh shares a literary pattern with the death of Enkidu in Akkadian. Unfortunately, nothing is extant of this part of the Old Babylonian epic.

The reference to Gilgamesh’s journey to Ziusudra in the Death of Gilgamesh, also found in the newly recovered bilingual Poem of Early Rulers, shows that the quest for immortality that occupies Gilgamesh in Tablets IX–XI of the Standard Babylonian epic—also known from corresponding passages of the Old Babylonian tablet reportedly from Sippar (OB VA + BM)—was in fact well known in Sumerian literary tradition.

It has previously gone unnoticed that the hero’s interview with the spirit of Enkidu in Gilgamesh and the Netherworld very probably influenced Tablet VII, where in the gap that follows Enkidu’s deathbed dream of the Netherworld a few traces of text survive to suggest that on waking he tells his friend of the conditions experienced in the afterlife by different individuals.

Finally, the new fragments of Gilgamesh and the Netherworld and the Death of Gilgamesh from Mé-Turan both reveal that the contrast formerly observed between the servant Enkidu of the Sumerian poems and the bosom-friend Enkidu of the Babylonian epic was not as clear cut as commentators have conventionally supposed. When Enkidu is taken prisoner by Death in Gilgamesh and the Netherworld, Gilgamesh weeps for him in terms that go far beyond a master regretting the passing of a loyal servant. And when he lies on his own deathbed he is consoled by the knowledge that in the Netherworld he will at last be reunited with his favourite companion, his “precious friend and little brother.” The language of these passages makes it clear that the deep love of Gilgamesh and Enkidu was a theme that sometimes informed the Sumerian tradition as well as the Babylonian.

Though we obtain thus a picture in which there are more points of contact between the Sumerian poems of Gilgamesh and the Babylonian epic than previously observed, nevertheless two essential points remain true with regard to the relationship between the two literary traditions. First, it grows ever clearer that there was no unified Sumerian

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53 As in the story of Rehoboam (1 Kgs. 13). The episode of Bīlames and Akka has repeatedly been used as evidence for the nature of political institutions of the third millennium but unwisely so; see R. T. Ridley, 'The saga of an epic: Gilgamesh and the constitution of Uruk', OR 69 (2000), pp. 341–67.

54 See in more detail Ch. 10, the introduction to SB Tablet VII.

55 For full documentation see below, the section of Ch. 4 on Enkidu.
INTRODUCTION

Epic of Gilgamesh even a cycle of related texts, only five separate and independent compositions. The fashioning around the character of Gilgamesh of a majestic epic poem, with its great, unifying themes of power and kingship, wilderness and civilization, friendship and love, victory and arrogance, death and life, man and god—this was a Babylonian achievement.

The second point is that in reworking the story of the hero Gilgamesh the Babylonian poet did more than adapt the traditional Sumerian literature. In one form or another the Sumerian tradition provided him with some material but other sources were also taken as inspiration. In this regard one thinks first of the legend of the wild man brought up by the animals. There is no sign of this motif in Sumerian literature, though it recurs in other Asian literatures and clearly had a wide currency; the Sumerian stereotyping of nomads as barbarians is quite another issue. Other episodes extant in Old Babylonian versions that seem not to have been adapted from Sumerian sources, as our knowledge of the corpus now stands, are stages in the taming of Enkidu: the seduction and civilizing by a woman, the dreams portending Enkidu’s coming, the combat between the two heroes. All these arose from a need to transform the character of Enkidu from beloved servant to alter ego and may have been original inventions. Elsewhere in the extant Old Babylonian epic the dreams about Humbaba, the cursing of the prostitute, the tavern at the world’s end and the myth of the Stone Ones all have no parallel in Sumerian literature. Either they are also original inventions or we have yet to discover their sources. Some of these sources may have been Akkadian. The race in darkness along the Path of the Sun is perhaps related to traditional Babylonian stories about Sargon of Akkad, who in the King of Battle and various omen apodises is said to have marched through a region of darkness before emerging into sunlight. The sitting of the Cedar Forest in the Levant may also reflect the traditions about Sargon and Narâm-Sîn, who claimed military successes in the uplands of Amanus and Lebanon. We must leave out of this discussion episodes that are not certainly part of the Old Babylonian poem—most prominently the Deluge myth, taken over from the poem of Atra-hašidu, but also other, more incidental episodes that seem to have drawn eclectically on the mythology of Babylon and neighbouring regions: the sumbering of Lebanon, the cultural myths relating to new technology (oases, sail, deep-sea diving), the myth of the snake and the Plant of Rejuvenation. These may have been later additions and thus irrelevant to a discussion of the origins of the Babylonian poem in its oldest versions.

The presence in the Old Babylonian epic of so much material that seems to have no place in the traditional written literature of the day brings us to the question of the poem’s dependence on oral traditions. Real certainty in this regard is made difficult by the obvious absence of evidence for oral literary traditions in long-dead languages. The presence of poetic features supposedly diagnostic of oral telling is evidence compromised by the probability that Babylonian poets adopted the language, style and plots of oral poetry as a conscious mannerism even when composing new written poems. Nevertheless, it is to my mind inconceivable that ancient Mesopotamia was without traditions of oral poetry throughout its long history, both because the majority of people in all periods could not read or write and in the light of the strong traditions of oral literature in the more recent Near East.

The Babylonian Gilgamesh is one of several poetic narratives in literary Akkadian that appear fully developed as independent compositions in the Old Babylonian period; alongside Atra-hašidu there were also Etana, An Zu and other less long-lived mythological poems. None of these is likely to have sprung from a scholastic background, for at the time Sumerian was the language of instruction and composition. In the particular case of the Epic of Gilgamesh, the sparsity of the poetry and the lack of reliance on the Sumerian poems in matters of detail also makes it very improbable that it is the product of a Babylonian scholar-poet who sat down to write an Akkadian version of the Sumerian poems that he had learned during his education. The author may have known the Sumerian poems but I doubt that he actually used them as primary sources. It is easier to allow that these poems informed his work in a secondary way, as general background, but equally possible that the similarities between the Sumerian and Babylonian material is the result of their dependence on old legends, motifs and other traditional material held in common.

Like other mythological narratives in Akkadian the Epic of Gilgamesh was captured in written form at a time when, under pressure from the new political masters, conventional forms were being abandoned. The royal court of Isin was traditionalist and had held to the old style of literature, though the scholars of the academy at Nippur mocked the abilities of their counterparts in the capital. Under the kings of Larsa and, especially, Babylon, Akkadian joined Sumerian as the vehicle for royal literature. As already noted, royal hymns and inscriptions began predominantly to be phrased in the Akkadian language. Just as it seems the courts of Šulgi and his successors were entertained by minstrels singing the lays of Gilgamesh and other ancient kings in Sumerian, so we can assume that, two hundred years later, the courts of Rim-Sîn and Hammurapi heard singers tell the story of the great hero in a language they understood. The written poem of the Old Babylonian period that we possess today in fragments is best imagined as stemming from such a background.

The origins of the Old Babylonian epic are less easy to pin down in time. In my view the written text lies at the end of a long development as a poem transmitted orally. Diakonoff held the view that the origins of the Akkadian Gilgamesh lay in the Old Akkadian period itself. However, Old Akkadian forms are nowhere visible in the Old Babylonian epic; if Diakonoff was right, the language of the poem must have undergone in the interval a comprehensive modernization that completely expunged the old dialect. I find that improbable.


See further below, Ch. 3, the sub-section on Climbing mountains.
INTRODUCTION

How exactly the oral material came to be committed to writing is impossible to deduce. In the days before voices could be recorded for posterity, literate people must have been impelled to capture oral performance by the only means they knew, in writing. Whether the epic took the form that we know at that moment, or whether it passed through a further period of development as a written text, we cannot know. The interval between the time of the poem's incorporation into the written tradition and the date of the extant Old Babylonian tablets is also an unknown quantity. Nevertheless, such is the beauty and power of the Old Babylonian fragments that one may be sure that the poem was originally the work of a single poetical genius, whether he sang it or wrote it. In the last analysis this is the more important point.

THE OLD BABYLONIAN GILGAMESH

It is time to consider in more detail what early Babylonian material we have and what we know of the poem's development in periods for which we have evidence. The texts of the Old Babylonian period are a mixed bunch. As already seen, there are four or five library tablets, by which I mean well-written tablets, usually divided into several columns, that were intended as permanent records of the text. Such tablets speak for the existence of a new written tradition in literary texts composed in Akkadian rather than Sumerian; they may have been the products of scribal apprentices, nevertheless. Two of these library tablets are the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (OB I and III). They form a pair of tablets numbered two and three in a series called ‘Surpassing All Other Kings’ (šētur eli erek), following the first line of the missing first tablet (OB I). Then there is the substantial fragment reportedly from Sippur (OB VA+BM), and also the much smaller pieces that run parallel with the Yale tablet without exactly duplicating it (OB UM, OB Scheyen). The last two sources at once make clear that there was more than one version of the epic established in the literary tradition of the Old Babylonian period. This much can also be supposed from the different formats displayed by the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets, with text divided into six columns, and the Sippur tablet (four columns).

Apart from these five pieces, we have six further Old Babylonian tablets on which excerpts of the epic were written (OB Scheyen, OB Nippur, OB HarmaI, OB Ishchali, OB IM). They are all inscribed in single columns and at least some of them are the work of scribes. Where a given episode survives on more than one of these six tablets there is little verbatim agreement, as in the account of Gilgamesh's death. The Cedar Forest (OB Ishchali and OB IM). Radically different accounts are extant of the first of Gilgamesh's dreams from the journey to the Cedar Forest (OB HarmaI and OB Scheyen) and of the death of Huwawa (OB Ishchali and OB HarmaI). This is further evidence for the existence in the early second millennium of more than one version of the Babylonian epic. Neverthe-
The Middle Babylonian Gilgamesh

Tablets from later in the second millennium offer glimpses of the epic at further stages in its development. The texts have been gathered in the chapter devoted to Middle Babylonian Gilgamesh tablets, but they are a disparate group of tablets that hold little in common. From southern Mesopotamia come the Ur tablet (MB Ur) and the school exercise tablets from Nippur (MB Nippur I). The Late Bronze Age was a time when the cuneiform writing system was much in demand in the chanceries of Syria, Palestine and Anatolia, even putting in a brief but famous appearance in Egypt at El-Amarna. As a result Babylonian literary texts were copied throughout the West. Gilgamesh tablets have so far been recovered from Emar on the great bend of the Euphrates (MB Emar I), from Ugarit on the Syrian coast (MB Ugarit, unpublished), from Palestine (MB Megiddo) and from Bogazköy in Anatolia, where at least two different versions of the Babylonian poem were known (MB Boğ I). In addition, the story so caught the imagination that versions of it were composed in local languages, Hittite and Hurrian. These remain the only languages of Gilgamesh narratives apart from Sumerian and Akkadian. A recent suggestion that the epic was dramatized in Elamite has been shown to be wrong.


The situation has been made more complex by the discovery of early Neo-Assyrian manuscripts that preserve text deviating from the Standard Babylonian version. These are edited in Chapter 7, where it is argued that they represent fragments of one or more intermediate editions of the epic that remained current on the periphery while the Standard Babylonian version became adopted as the standard or 'canonical' version in Babylonia. One of them, Assyrian MS Y, shows clear affinities with the Old Babylonian Yale tablet while at the same time manifesting Assyrianisms of grammar and spelling. It is a late copy of a version with a long history and almost certainly bears witness to a Middle Babylonian recension of the Gilgamesh epic current in Assyria for some centuries, at least since the Middle Assyrian period. Thus it must be taken into consideration at this point in the discussion as well as later.

The episodes of the epic that are witnessed in these Middle Babylonian fragments are the taming of Enkidu (MB Nippur I, MB Boğ I), the expedition to the Cedar Forest (MB Boğ I, MB Emar I, Assyrian MS Y, probably MB Nippur II), Ištar and the Bull of Heaven (MB Boğ I, MB Emar I), and the doom, sickness and death of Enkidu (MB Boğ I, MB Ur, MB Megiddo). Here one must also take account of contemporaneous versions of the story in other languages. The Hittite paraphrase survives only in fragments. The episodes extant are the fashioning of Gilgamesh, his tyranny, the taming of Enkidu, the expedition to the Cedar Forest, Ištar and the Bull of Heaven, the doom of Enkidu, Gilgamesh's wandering the world over, and the encounter with the immortal survivor of the Flood (Ulu). The Hurrian version remains largely unintelligible. The plot of the epic as it is known from mid- to late-second-millennium sources is thus revealed to be much the same as that observed in the Old Babylonian material, with the addition of the Bull of Heaven episode, the prostitute's destiny and Enkidu's dream of Hell. There is still no sign of the incorporation in any version of an account of the great Flood.

In terms of literary history the Middle Babylonian tablets bridge the gap between the Old Babylonian material and the Standard Babylonian version current in the first millennium. The oldest pieces seem to be the edition represented by MB Boğ (c. 1400 BC), which in places is very close to the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (OB II-II). These fragments offer a glimpse of a poem that must have been the edition represented by MB Boğ, known from a tablet more than a century younger than MB Boğ, offers a very different version of the epic, best described as a paraphrase. In the dream episode on its reverse it matches an Old Babylonian tablet quite well (OB Sayatu) but the reverse offers little that compares with versions of other epics. The serious corruptions show that not all the poem was still comprehensible, and speak for a process of transmission that included a long residence outside Babylonian-speaking lands. The text that survives on MB Megiddo exhibits the same problem and a similar history probably attaches to it.

By contrast, the poem extant in Emar of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries is comparatively close to the Standard Babylonian version. In places the text of MB Emar I runs parallel to Tablet VI with almost verbatim agreement, but elsewhere serious differences are seen.
Most notable is the inclusion of a section on Ishtar's love of the nomad, a passage not present in the late text. The text represented by MB Ur can be described similarly: It matches Tablet VII of the Standard Babylonian epic in many lines but also includes a section not present there. The fragments gathered under the group MB Nippur or are too small to reveal much, though MB Nippur is also closely related to the Standard Babylonian version. Assyrian MS y falls midway between the Old Babylonian version represented by the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (Ishtar eli barri), or one similar to it, and the Standard Babylonian version, but in places it deviates from both. The edition it represents may be a remote descendant of Ishtar eli barri but it cannot be considered a direct ancestor of the late text. The tablet from Ugarit is not yet available for study but is reported to be an independent composition based on the epic rather than a source for the epic itself. No doubt it was a local composition.

The Babylonian Gilgamesh of the mid- to late second millennium can be subdivided into the following groups:

(a) Old or early Middle Babylonian texts exported to (Syria and) Anatolia in the sixteenth or fifteenth centuries: MB Bogi (fifteenth- or fourteenth-century copy)
(b) Local Akkadian paraphrases: MB Bogi (thirteenth-century copy), MB Megiddo (fifteenth- or fourteenth-century copy?), perhaps MB Ugarit (twelfth-century copy?)
(c) Translations into local languages: Hitite Gilgamesh, Hurrian Gilgamesh (fourteenth- to thirteenth-century copies)
(d) Late Middle Babylonian texts from Babylonia: MB Ur (thirteenth- or twelfth-century copy), MB Nippur, (thirteenth-century copies?)
(e) Late Middle Babylonian texts exported to Syria (and Anatolia)? in or after the Amarna period: MB Emar, (twelfth-century copies)
(f) One or more Middle Babylonian recensions current in Neo-Assyrian copies: Assyrian MSS e, x, y, z, Kuyunjik MSSYY and ZZ (tenth- to seventh-century copies)

Group (a) is closely related to one or more Old Babylonian versions of the poem. Groups (b) and (c) represent adaptations of old or Middle Babylonian versions of the epic. Groups (d) and (e) are more closely related to the Standard Babylonian version and clearly represent the epic at a later stage of development than Group (b). The same can be said for some of the fragments that make up Group (f), though MS y stands somewhere between Groups (a) and (e).

The picture that emerges from the Middle Babylonian tablets of Gilgamesh fits what we know of the spread of Babylonian culture in the second millennium. The diaspora of the traditional literature of lower Mesopotamia was the result not of a single act of borrowing but of a steady process over many centuries. The written culture of southern Mesopotamia was already exported to the West in the Early Bronze Age, as we know from the finds of third-millennium tablets at Elba, Mari, and Tell Beydar. A small proportion of these tablets were inscribed with literary texts that originated in south Mesopotamia. In the Middle Bronze Age the cuneiform writing system continued to be used as far afield as, for example, Qatna and Alalah in Transjordan, Syria and Kaniš (Kültepe) in Anatolia.

New evidence shows that Babylonian intellectual culture continued to make an impact wherever the cuneiform script was used in this period. A tablet inscribed with an Old Assyrian version of a pseudo-autobiography of Sargon of Akkad was found in a merchant's archive at Kaniš in 1958 and recently published. This finds reveal that literature of Babylonian origin or inspiration was known in Cappadocia during the period of the Assyrian trading colonies, early in the second millennium. The merchants' presence in Anatolia over several generations must have resulted in some exchange of intellectual goods. The influence of traditional Babylonian education in Sumerian made itself apparent at Mari again in the Old Babylonian period, when local scribes were capable of composing literary letters in Sumerian and Akkadian bilingual format. The discovery of a copy of the Sumerian King List at Tell Leilan (probably Šubat-Enil) is another high-profile indication of the impact of the Babylonian intellectual legacy on the routes to the north and west.

Future discoveries may uncover more Sumerian and Babylonian literature at sites and other Early and Middle Bronze Age sites far from Babylonia. As matters stand, the literary traditions of Babylonian literature again had influence on Anatolian scribes in the Old Hitite period (seventeenth and sixteenth centuries). In the ensuing centuries it seems Babylonian literature was imported to Anatolia either through Hurrian intermediaries or directly. At the same time Sumerian and Babylonian texts were being copied in many other lands of the West. The role of Akkad and of Syrian scribal centres like Mari, Ugarit, and Emar in this long period of transmission has not yet been the subject of a thoroughgoing study, but one can expect it to have been large. The considerable prestige that attached to the Akkadian language in the Late Bronze Age, as seen in the diplomatic correspondence of the Amarna period, meant that Babylonian texts traditionally associated with the teaching curriculum were much copied in the West in the two centuries before life was interrupted by the catastrophes that overtook the eastern Mediterranean in the twelfth century.

To sum up, the Middle Babylonian period, even more than the Old Babylonian period, is characterized by a proliferation of different versions of the epic, both in Babylonia and abroad. Into this mess stepped—perhaps—the figure of Sin-Išip uninni.}

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47. For these questions see E. Beckman, "Mesopotamians and Mesopotamian learning in Harran", JCS 35 (1983), pp. 101-3.
48. "Sin is one who accepts a prayer", less probably Sin-Išip uninni, "I Sin, accept my prayer": on the name see P.-A. Boulieu, 'The descendants of Sin-Išip-uninni', Fr. Orient, p. 2. An item of evidence not cited by Boulieu is the spelling of the second element of the name as š-ep (Van Dijk and Mayer, Rel-Hittitum no. 6, 42, 44:39; š-ep-dwhy, no. 16 rev. 2:).
SIN-LĘQI-UNNINNI AND THE STANDARD BABYLONIAN GILGAMESH EPIC

It is well known that the Babylonians considered Sin-lēqi-unninni to be the man responsible for the epic. The evidence for this belief is a Neo-Assyrian list described by its modern editor as a catalogue of texts and authors. The entry for the Gilgamesh epic reads as follows:

\[ \text{šikar (šē.gār) } 4\text{šiš-g-maš: ša pi-}: 5\text{šiš-g-in (30) - leq-qa-nin-ni } x\text{[ (x)x]} \]
W. G. Lambert, JCS 16 (1962), p. 66, VI 10

Series of Gilgamesh from the mouth of Sin-lēqi-unninni, the [. . .]44

In this text the expression ša pi signifies authorship,78 so it attests to a tradition in which the 'series' of Gilgamesh was held to be the work of a professional scholar called Sin-lēqi-unninni.

In colophons of the Standard Babylonian epic the Series of Gilgamesh is the title given to the text otherwise known by the incipit 'He who saw the Deep' (ša naqba īmuru). The incipit sometimes reads ša naqbi īmuru, 'He who saw the Deeps'. It is not known whether singular or plural is original. The colophons differ in the manner of reference. The poem is identified by both incipit and series in the colophons of MSS A, C, D, F and O (all from Kuyunjik), A (Ashur) and O (Babylon), and probably also in the unplaced Kuyunjik fragment MS FF (restored). The order of citation is always incipit first, series second. The text is known by series only in the colophons of MSS H, N, Q and W (all Kuyunjik) and f (Babylon) and by incipit only in MSS G and B (both Kuyunjik). The latter, exceptionally, writes not the abbreviated incipit but the entire first line, [ša naqbi īmuru] 1 83 māt. MSS R (Kuyunjik) and dd (Uruk) are too damaged to determine whether their colophons recorded only the incipit or both incipit and series. On all other first-millennium manuscripts no colophon survives.

Outside the colophons the text is listed by series in two inventories of accessions to the libraries of Ashurbanipal:

1: šikar (šē.gār) 4šiš-g-im-mašt

K MIN (= šikar) 4šiš-g-im-mašt

\[ 4\text{šiš-g-im-maš; ša pi: } 5\text{šiš-g-in (30) - leq-qa-nin-ni } x\text{[ (x)x]} \]

44 SIN-LĘQI-UNNINNI was probably a scribal term used by the scribal assistants to indicate the scribe of the text. In the colophons of the Standard Babylonian epic, this title is used to identify the author of the text. The phrase ‘Sin-lēqi-unninni’ is a common Babylonian scribal term used to indicate the author of a text.

78 The end line contains the man's profession, a term of consequence. Lambert reads “šiš-g-im-mašt” and translated 'he who saw the Deep'. According to the copy very little would be missing after this restoration, perhaps nothing, so that Sin-lēqi-unninni was by profession an esoteric. This is the generally accepted view. However, two other suggestions have been made. First, the identification of Sin-lēqi-unninni as a 'divination priest or seer' (kābu) by S. Dalley in J. C. Reeves (ed.), Tracing the Threads, p. 236, alerts one to an alternative restoration: "šiš-g-im-mašt", 'diviner'. This is possible. Second, the reading "šiš-g-im-mašt" proposed by G. J. P. McGowan, JCS 4, p. 13, fn. 43, and revived by Beaulieu, Es Oster, p. 3, identifies Sin-lēqi-unninni as a "šaš-šiš-g-im-mašt", 'divination priest'. This restoration is discounted by the surviving trace.

75 Lambert, JCS 16, p. 72.

References to the text by series, šikar Gilgamesh, have also been supposed in a Neo-Assyrian fragment from Kuyunjik that relates to the cult of Štar of Nineveh, but collation places this in doubt.79

As we have seen, the incipit of at least one of the Old Babylonian versions of the epic, that represented by the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets, was 'Surpassing all other kings' (štar eli šarr). In the Standard Babylonian version this phrase occurs at 1.29 of Tablet I, where the mood suddenly switches to triumphant hynm of Gilgamesh’s heroic glory and magnificent achievements. The preceding twenty-eight lines (SB 11–28) were evidently attached later to form a new prologue, one that comprises a sombre reflection on the hero’s travails. This prologue includes the stanza that is repeated at the end of the epic, the famous lines that describe the walls of Uruk and the city that lies inside them, but we cannot yet determine whether the concluding stanza was present in the Old Babylonian epic or not. In comparing the Standard Babylonian version with the older manuscripts, as far as these are preserved, several other major changes stand out at a glance. Gilgamesh’s dreams of Enkidu move out of the narrative and are told at second hand. Ninsun’s role in the poem is greatly enlarged by a long monologue addressed to the Sun God. The narrative of the journey to the Cedar Forest is enormously expanded by long-winded repetitions. The tavern-keeper loses her speech of wisdom and with her individuality as a character. Other major changes are suspected but, for lack of evidence, cannot yet be confirmed (see below). Many minor changes can also be observed. The evolution of the epic has been fully discussed elsewhere,77 but some case studies generated by the new material are given later in this chapter.

Nothing else is known of Sin-lēqi-unninni except that many cult-singers (kallû) and other intellectuals of the priestly classes of Late Babylonian Urkuk considered him their remote ancestor, a claim that may have been inspired by intellectual ambition or wiseftul thinking rather than by truth. A Late Babylonian list of kings and scholars places him in the reign of King Gilgamesh, an anachronism of obvious derivation.80 Other traditional Babylonian authors were also associated with historical periods that long pre-date the time of composition of the texts for which they were held responsible. By means texts were invested with the authority of great antiquity.81 Sin-lēqi-unninni first appears as a scribal ancestor in the seventh century, but the name itself was already current in the late Old Babylonian period.82 Because several of the well-known scribal ancestors have names typical of the Kassite period it is suspected that the scholar named Sin-lēqi-unninni who was associated with Gilgamesh lived in this era.83 However, no one can be sure on present evidence. No person of the Kassite period could be the original author of the epic, for, as we have seen, the oldest Babylonian fragments come from the mid-Old Babylonian period, perhaps five hundred years earlier. We have to allow the possibility that the Sin-lēqi-unninni associated with the
GILGAMESH EPIC MAY HAVE BEEN AN OLD BABYLONIAN. BUT A LATER DATE CAN BE EXPLAINED AS APPROPRIATE BY CONSIDERING WHAT WE KNOW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF BABYLONIAN LITERATURE IN THE LATE SECOND MILLENNIUM.


THE NOTICE IN THE CATALOGUE OF TEXTS AND AUTHORS SHOULD BE READ AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND OF EDITORIAL WORK. IN BABYLONIAN TRADITION SIN-ŠEŠŠU-UNNINNI WAS THE MAN WHO PRODUCED THE SERIES OF GILGAMESH. THIS INFORMATION CAN BE INTERPRETED IN TWO WAYS: (A) SIN-ŠEŠŠU-UNNINNI WAS A LEGENDARY POET, LIKE HOMER, CREDITED IN LATER MEMORY WITH COMPOSING THE FIRST VERSION OF THE TRADITIONAL BABYLONIAN POEM THAT IN ITS FINAL FORM WENT BY THE TITLES SERIES OF GILGAMESH AND ŠA NAQBA IMARU, OR (B) HE WAS A LATER SCHOLAR HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHING THE TEXT OF THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH IN THE FORM FAMILIAR FROM FIRST-MILLENNIUM COPIES. IF (A), HE LIVED EARLY IN THE OLD BABYLONIAN PERIOD; IF (B), HE LIVED LATER IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM. ON PRESENT KNOWLEDGE I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT (B) IS RIGHT, AND THIS ASSUMPTION INFORMS THE REST OF THIS SECTION. WHETHER OR NOT THE POEM'S EDITOR REALLY WENT BY THIS NAME—AND THERE IS NO REASON TO DOUBT THAT HE DID—I HAVE FOLLOWED BABYLONIAN TRADITION IN REFERRING TO THE POEM ŠA NAQBA IMARU AS ITS CREATION.

IT IS NOT YET POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE EXACTLY AT WHAT STAGE SIN-ŠEŠŠU-UNNINNI—if it was—he intervened in the history of transmission of the epic. THE POEM ENTITLED ŠA NAQBA IMARU IS CURRENTLY KNOWN FROM AT LEAST TWO PERIODS. THE OLDER SOURCES ARE THE TABLETS FROM ÂŠURJÁNPÂLî'S LIBRARIES AT KUYUNJIK AND NEO-ASSYRIAN PRIVATE LIBRARIES IN OTHER CITIES, WHICH CAN BE NO LATER THAN MID-TO LATE SEVENTH CENTURY. THE YOUNGER SOURCES ARE THE TABLETS FROM THE OLD BABYLONIAN LIBRARIES, CHIEFLY IN URUK AND BABYLON, WHICH MAY BE FROM ANY TIME IN THE FIFTH TO FIRST CENTURIES BC. IN BOTH GROUPS OF SOURCES THE POEM WAS DIVIDED INTO TWELVE TABLETS. THERE IS NO COMPELLING REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT THIS DIVISION WAS NOT IMPOSED BY SIN-ŠEŠŠU-UNNINNI. THE NEO-ASSYRIAN AND LATE BABYLONIAN TABLETS FURNISH A TEXT THAT IS, ALLOWING FOR MINOR RECENSIONAL DIFFERENCES, CONSISTENT AND FIXED. WE CALL IT THE STANDARD BABYLONIAN VERSION.


THE SURVIVAL OF ONE OR MORE OLD EDITIONS OF THE EPIC INTO THE FIRST MILLENNIUM, WHEN THEY WERE—AT LEAST IN ASSYRIA—CONCURRENT WITH ŠA NAQBA IMARU, IS NOT WITHOUT PARALLEL. SOMETHING COMPARABLE CAN BE OBSERVED WITH AT LEAST THREE OTHER WELL-KNOWN LITERARY COMPOSITIONS WITH LONG HISTORIES. THE MILITARY BATTLE BETWEEN NINURTA AND ANZÉ TOWARDS THE END OF THE POEM OF ANZÉ OCCURS IN TWO DISTINCT FIRST-MILLENNIUM VERSIONS, THE STANDARD BABYLONIAN TABLET III KNOWN FROM TABLETS FROM KUYUNJIK AND TARBIQU AND A VERY DIFFERENT ACCOUNT SURVIVING ONLY ON TWO TABLETS FROM SULTANTEPE. ÅŠURJÁNPÂLî'S LIBRARIES AT NINEVEH HELD TWO DIFFERENT EDITIONS OF THE POEM OF ARRA-BASU, A STANDARD BABYLONIAN VERSION THAT ALSO OCCURS AT BABYLON AND SIPIR, AND AN ASSYRIANIZED RECENSION SO FAR KNOWN ONLY AT KUYUNJIK. SIMILARLY, AT ÛBÂR THERE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN TWO VERSIONS OF ÏSTAR'S DESCENT CURRENT IN THE NEO-ASSYRIAN PERIOD, ONE THAT MATCHES THE EDITION EXISTENT AT NINEVEH AND ONE THAT DOES NOT. WITH ALL THREE TEXTS, AS WITH GILGAMESH, IT IS A CASE OF ONE OR TWO ASSYRIAN COPIES OFFERING TEXTS THAT TO A GREATER OR LESSER EXTENT DEVIATE FROM THE MUCH BETTER-ATTESSED EDITIONS KNOWN FROM ÂŠURJÁNPÂLî'S LIBRARIES AND OTHER CENTRES.


introduce the reader to the historical and cultural context of the Epic of Gilgamesh. The text discusses the literary history of the epic, emphasizing its influence and impact on later works. It also delves into the character of Sin-leqi-unninni and the contributions of other authors and scribes who helped shape the epic. The text is rich in scholarly commentary and analysis, providing insights into the epic's evolution and its significance in Mesopotamian literature. The discussion is complemented by references to other texts and scholars, offering a comprehensive overview of the epic's reception and study.
problems of human existence.\footnote{\cite{Kraus1950}} True as that is, I think that by citing nationality he missed the point. What he wrote would be truer still if the word ‘Babylonian’ were exchanged with ‘human’. Böhl defended the phrase ‘national epic’ from another angle, pointing out that it had no rival in Babylonian poetry for power, beauty and scope.\footnote{\cite{Bohl1950a}} This is undeniably so, but whether it truly justifies the phrase is open to argument. It is certainly true that the epic is a long poem on a grand theme which is clearly a very great literary masterpiece, and thus stands in a definitive relation to Babylonian language and culture in the same way as the plays of Shakespeare do to English language and culture.

Some would reject the notion of the poem of Gilgamesh as a ‘national epic’ on other grounds: that it was little known in antiquity. Other works of Babylonian literature—the Creation Epic, for example—are known from many more manuscripts and thus seem to have been demonstrably more popular in antiquity. Another factor that informs the claim that the poem did not enjoy great popular acclaim is a perception that the epic was poorly represented in first-millennium schools, where the text was neither much used to practise writing nor often quoted by Babylonian scholars in oral teaching. Only a single passage from Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh appears on the extant Late Babylonian school exercise tablets, and lines from the text are, so far, cited only twice in the commentaries that derive from the oral instruction of scholar-teachers.\footnote{\cite{Bohl1950b}}

The question of the epic’s place in Babylonian literate society and scribal education is one that needs discussion. It has been proposed above that, like the Sumerian poems of Šulgi’s period, the Babylonian Gilgamesh had its origins in court entertainment, though there is no direct evidence for this. Turning to the first millennium, one piece of evidence has been cited in favour of the oral performance of traditional narrative poems. The library of the family of nargallu, ‘chief singers’, from seventh-century Aššur is suspected of revealing the kind of compositions sung by the nará in the Neo-Assyrian period.\footnote{\cite{Beaulieu1985}} This collection of tablets, which contains only the extant literary tablets written by scribes who style themselves as musical performers, is a fairly typical example of a first-millennium private library, including many school tablets and some archival documents alongside copies of traditional texts from the scribal tradition. Less typical is the prevalence among the latter of hymns and mythological poems. The mythological poems include a copy of Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh Tablet VI (MS A).\footnote{\cite{Beaulieu1985}} The hymns, some of them associated with royal personages, were surely copies derived from their performance in cultic contexts. It may be that on occasion

family members sang or recited the mythological poems, too, but this remains uncertain. Other texts in their library, for example the lexical lists, were certainly not performed. And even if the mythological poems were performed, we do not know in what context and we cannot be sure that performed versions of these poems would have replicated the fossilized versions of the scribal tradition. There is certainly no proof that these and other compositions in the singers’ library were performed at the royal court. To what extent, if at all, Babylonian narrative poems of the written tradition were still living literature in the mid-first millennium is unknown. What we learn from the singers’ library is merely that senior family members taught their juniors the scribal art, and with it traditional written texts that bore on the family’s occupation and informed its craft.

Moving from court to classroom, we have already seen that in the Old Babylonian period, when scribal training was conducted in Sumerian and used Sumerian set texts, nevertheless some learner scribes were demonstrating very capable that they could set down on clay episodes from Babylonian narrative poetry, whether by extemporizing, by composing from memory or by copying from a master tablet. The text most often selected for this exercise was Gilgamesh.

At present we are much less well informed about scribal training in Babylonia later in the second millennium, but some evidence is available in the Middle Babylonian exercise tablets from Nippur.\footnote{\cite{Hofmann1932}} These show that in the thirteenth century the Akkadian Gilgamesh was a text that learner scribes encountered early in their careers. A better view of scribal education at about this time can be had from western centres in Syria and Anatolia. At Emar, Ugarit and Hattusa there is ample evidence for the Akkadian Gilgamesh. At Emar it occurs as one of a small number of Sumerian and Babylonian literary texts of which copies were kept in the scriptorium excavated in the 1970s. The surviving colophons report that these tablets were the work of advanced scribes, but at least one of the compositions survives in more than one copy.\footnote{\cite{Hoffmeier1977}} This fact suggests that the function of these texts in the scriptorium was pedagogic, a view that is reinforced by the selection of genres represented, which are typical of scribal training. Copies alongside Gilgamesh were folk-tale (Enlí and Namzišarra, the Fowler and the Sun God), fable (Tamarisk and Date Palm), other wisdom literature (the Poem of Early Rulers) and traditional sayings (lame milišam), a small corpus of texts that constituted a smattering of literature alongside a great quantity of lexical lists.\footnote{\cite{Hoffmeier1977}}

A new study of the first-millennium school tablets that derive from Babylon, Sippar, Kish, Ur and Uruk shows that then the elementary training of learner scribes fell into two phases.\footnote{\cite{Iserles1994}} Two distinct repertoires of texts were written on two different types of tablet. On
this evidence the less advanced of these phases was mostly given over to mastering the basic syllabary and lexicon but included the essential pantheon, the study of proverbs and an acquaintance with a very limited group of literary texts. These literary texts constituted a minor element in the first phase of instruction, for they are present on only a tiny number of the extant tablets. They include Gilgamesh, the birth-legend of Sargon, the Cuhean Legend of Naram-Sin, the literary letter once known as the Weidner Chronicle, a literary letter of Samsuiluna, and the Poor Man of Nippur. Oral versions of the legends of Gilgamesh, Sargon and Naram-Sin were probably well known to Babylonian children, and their early exposure to written texts about these fabled heroes of remotest antiquity in the first level of schooling taught not to neglect of this familiarity. The humorous Poor Man of Nippur, widely circulated in antiquity, would also have been a familiar and entertaining tale. One may safely observe that young children will always show interest in a good story.

The second phase of elementary instruction exposed the student to much more literature, for the tablets typical of this phase often include several passages from different literary texts. When considered against the traditional body of literature passed down through the generations, however, the corpus of texts studied at this point was restricted. Apart from vocabularies and other advanced lexical texts it comprised principally compositions that extol Marduk and Babylon (notably Enûma elîš, Lugal Âl bit mûnâqa, the Marduk prayers and Tintir = Babylon) and texts related to esoterism. Its purpose, then, was twofold: to fill the student’s mind with the theological and political ideology current in the capital and to prepare him for a apprenticeship as a junior Ṿâpu, a position that we know from colophons was held by many novice scribes. As far as exposure to literature goes, the storytelling that characterized the first phase has given way to more serious matters, the inculcation of a world-view and the acquisition of practical expertise.

What emerges from study of Late Babylonian school tablets is that the Epic of Gilgamesh was not alone in being poorly represented as a copybook during the second phase of instruction. It seems that many traditional texts, including all the old mythological narratives such as Etana, Adapa, Anzu, Nergal and Ereškiagal and Atra-šaši, were completely ignored in elementary education. I believe that this was not because they were unpopular but because they did not suit the pedagogical needs of primary training in the first millennium ac.

It may be instructive to look at how things stood before the first millennium. It is clear that in the Old Babylonian period there came a point in his education when the pupil moved on from copying out short excerpts of traditional literature to inscribing long tablets with whole compositions or with substantial sections of them. This move marked the transfer of apprentice scribes from the elementary phases of education to a more advanced engagement with the text. It is the products of these advanced students that modern scholarship is currently employing in the task of recovering the Old Babylonian corpus of traditional Sumerian literature.

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101 More importantly for the present discussion, the Old Babylonian curriculum provides a model that can serve to shed light on the progress of later Babylonian scribes. Our knowledge of first-millennium scribal literature is dominated by the tablets from Kuyunjik, whence came the royal libraries that were collected by Aššurbanipal and his predecessors on the Assyrian throne and that provided the foundation-stone for the discipline of Assyriology. Although this collection of tablets remains the richest source of manuscripts for most Babylonian literary compositions, it was unique as a library of clay tablets. The norm for what we call a library, both in Babylonia and in Assyria, is a collection of tablets stemming from a domestic dwelling, typically tablets accumulated over several generations of a single family in which the men were employed in one or other of the intellectual professions—diviners, exorcists, cult singers—for which literacy had become necessary. The origin of many tablets, their time and place of composition, can often be determined from the colophons typically appended to the main text. And in Late Babylonian colophons of library tablets from Ur and Babylon we read, time and again, that a given tablet belongs to So-and-so, a professional man, but was actually written out by Such-and-such, his son, nephew or other young relative. Writers of such tablets often explicitly identify themselves in colophons as apprentices or junior professionals. A study of the careers of members of the scholarly families of Ur in the Persian and Seleucid periods shows that writing scholarly tablets was generally a task for young men; the same tablets’ owners, by contrast, were more senior, usually by a whole generation. Another revealing case is the two Middle Assyrian copies of a bilingual hymn to Nisinnû written on the same day by sons of the same father (‘junior scribes’); each brother checked the work of the other. It is more plausible to explain this event not as evidence that, for some reason, the father needed two copies of this text, but as witness to a test of the proficiency of scribal apprentices. We know that the scribal art in Mesopotamia was, like many a traditional craft, passed down through the generations from father to son. It seems to me very likely that most tablets written by youngsters for their seniors are the final products of a boy’s education. They were the proof that he had mastered the art of writing and the immense body of learning that went with it. In this view very many manuscripts of literary texts from the first-millennium sites—

102 Son: Hunger, Kölophone, nos. 87–8, 91, 97–8, 100, 102–5, 143, 146–9, 167, 410; nephew: no. 92. At Urk senior members of one of the well-known scholarly families also owned tablets written for them by other young relatives of the male line (e.g. ibid., nos. 90, 95, 95B), and by younger members of one of the other families, who were very probably related by marriage (e.g. ibid., nos. 89, 94, 95A, 96, 99).


104 A. H. Clunie, ‘The activities of Ana-šu-lûmû’, Fr Olen, pp. 331–41, where they conclude that ‘there were two stages to a scribe’s career. In the early stage, he wrote or copied tablets ... later he owned tablets and may have continued his scribal activities as well’ (p. 341). Contrary to their understanding, there is no evidence for the older Ana-šu-lûmû as the writer of scribal tablets after 84, when he was 21. Thereafter colophons cite him only as the owner of tablets written by his three sons in the 108–21, when he was in middle age, or as these sons’ patrocinium.

105 See forthcoming studies by E. R. A. Machin, ‘Two such scholars’ careers are already discussed by L. E. Pearce and T. T. Docty, ‘The activities of Ana-šu-lûmû’, Fr Ollem, pp. 331–41, where they conclude that ‘there were two stages to a scribe’s career. In the early stage, he wrote or copied tablets ... later he owned tablets and may have continued his scribal activities as well’ (p. 341). Contrary to their understanding, there is no evidence for the older Ana-šu-lûmû as the writer of scribal tablets after 84, when he was 21. Thereafter colophons cite him only as the owner of tablets written by his three sons in the 108–21, when he was in middle age, or as these sons’ patrocinium.

106 KUR 12–16, ed. Hunger, Kölophone no. 44; see further George, JEA 88 (1976) p. 100.
and expected their students to recognize and understand. These two factors, copying and recognition, imply a considerable familiarity with the epic on the part of advanced students.

To sum up, I would maintain that in the late second and the first millennium the Babylonian Epic of Gilgames̄ had two functions in training scribes. It was a good story and thus useful, in small quantities, for absolute beginners. And as a difficult classic of traditional literature it was studied at greater length by senior pupils nearing the end of their training. If its use in the formal curriculum of scribal education was limited in this way, this does not necessarily mean that the poem was unpopular in wider circles. Indeed, the evidence assembled in this discussion of Gilgames̄ in education also speaks for a considerable popularity among literate people. The number of manuscripts from centres excluding Nineveh far exceeds those of Ammān, Eshnunna, Nergal and Ereškigal, Atra-haššānu and Ibazu’s Dessert put together. Of the great narrative poems only Enûma elīš exceeds Gilgames̄ in the number of its sources, and for the same reason that passages of it appear so often as excerpts on second-stage school exercise tablets. As a vehicle for inculcating ideology Enûma elīš, the holy writ of the cult of Marduk, held a unique place in the first-millennium tradition. On the number of extant manuscripts the Erra epic approaches Gilgames̄ in popularity, but it too has a special advantage, for the apotropaic function its poet claims for it was widely believed to be effective and some copies of the poem were produced as charms.

The presence of multiple copies of the epic in Assurbanipal’s libraries is further evidence for the popularity of Gilgames̄, as is the existence of no fewer than eleven Old Babylonian library tablets and excerpts, and at least three pieces from Babylonia of the later second millennium, which has otherwise yielded almost nothing of Babylonian literature. The use of episodes from the epic as traditional motifs in ancient Mesopotamian art also speaks for a wide currency of the legends that surrounded him, if not necessarily for the popularity of the written poem itself. The surest sign of the epic’s popularity as a copy-book lies in the well-observed fact of its appearance in Syria, Palestine and Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age. Only a limited selection of Babylonian literature was studied by boys learning to write cuneiform in the West, though libraries could hold representative selections of a wide spectrum of texts from the scribal tradition. No such text achieved the ubiquity of Gilgames̄, and few others so struck the local people that they produced local versions in Hitite and Hurrian as well as Akkadian.

**CASE STUDIES IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE EPIC**

Much has been written on the evolution of the text of the Babylonian Gilgames̄ epic from the first appearance of fragments of the epic in the Old Babylonian period, through the Middle Babylonian texts of the Late Bronze Age to the well-known epic current in libraries of the first millennium. The main developments between the Old Babylonian

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and Standard Babylonian texts were summarized by Tigay in the conclusion to his monograph on the evolution of the epic:

Lines are reworded in degrees varying from negligible to complete, with some lines being dropped and many more added. In some cases the reformulation modernizes the language of the epic, and in a few cases the older text has been simplified, corrupted, or misunderstood; in many other cases, the editor seems to have simply revised according to his taste. Lines and sections are revised so as to be much more similar to related lines and sections in the late version, resulting in a repetitious, pedantic, and homogenized style. Numerous thematic and verbal motifs recur throughout the epic. In addition, entire sections or episodes are restructured.197

In this development the Epic of Gilgames is typical of the traditional narrative poetry of Babylonia.198

The recovery of additional text of the epic presents further opportunities to compare passages that are extant in different versions of the epic. A comprehensive study of the relationships that exist between the various versions goes beyond the goals of the present volume and would repeat much of Tigay's treatment. This section will examine just two examples of passages that can be studied comparatively, all of which are chosen because they are replete with new sources of text have come to light very recently.

The first such passage is the elders' response to Gilgamesh's announcement that he intends to mount an expedition to the Cedar Forest. The Old Babylonian evidence remains the account on the Yale tablet (OB III). A later version of this is now to be read on an early Neo-Assyrian tablet from Ashur that holds a fragment of Middle Babylonian text going back to the Middle Assyrian period (Assyrian MS y). The Standard Babylonian text has benefited from the identification of three more Late Babylonian duplicates (MSS e, s and ee) that between them fully restore the text for the first time. First the Old Babylonian passage:

189 šibium ša Uruk rēšīm
190 šiqrā uṣurrāt ana Gilgameš
191 pešēnna Gilgameš lēbbāka našīka
192 mimma ša ānsāppūlu li ilde
193 nēšmišna lišānu ša tēnu šišū
dn uššuna 193 209
194 manitu [e] im akḵar 193 209
195 ana šērū [bērī] nimmī ṣātīum
196 mammu [u] ar [la] ana tābtā
197 ḫusānu [ri] mašu abīnu
198 nīsā Gimmūna nāmū̱māni mūsam
199 awānuma štāšiš arni'um epēša
200 qabal ša maḥār šupat 207
201 OB III 189–200, translated on p. 203

As the marginal notations show, the speech is partly a reprise of Enkidu's first speech of warning (OB III 106–16). Lines from Enkidu's second speech of warning are not repeated but they are given here for reasons of comparison with the later versions:

129 ki nīlalak 193 ša anā ṣītī (ṣārīm)
131 nāṣariš 193 207 217 dān ša 217 (ša)
133 ḫusānu Or[r] . . .
134 Anād šat[ša] 193 ša (ṣārīm)
136 aššum šātīum 193 (ṣārīm)
137 pūlītašum šebe šātīum Ellīšu?

OB III 129–37, translated on pp. 199–201

A fragment of a similar but more condensed version of the elders' speech survives in the older material from Bogazköy:

[šātītu ša Ur[. . ] . . .]

ana šāmin ta[n]išš anna epēša
[晟bal ša maḥār šat[ša] šu nāšīka]
[mammu ša šišānu kaggūšu?]
[ana šērū] bērī nimmīša ṣātīu . . .

MB Boğ, d 5'–7', translated on p. 315

Compare the Middle Babylonian version of the elders' speech from Ashur:

6' [išāma malkūšab 193 ša ṣātītu]

izruqqa 193 [ana Gilgameš]

7' [šērīš] bēṭī lēbbāka našīka

8' [(u) šāmin ša taqabbū maqä 193 . . .]

9' [(u) šērīš] lu bēṭī [i] lēbbāka našīka

10' [(u) šāmin ša taqabbū maqä 193 . . .]

11' [xx x x] ši x ḫūbbebe [dānu Ellīšu 193 . . .]

12' [(u) Šaš [Girmu šāmin ša Ellīšu]

13' [x x x] ši x bērī lamāsunu (gaštu?)

14' [mammu ša urrubba ša Ellīšu]

Adas šāmiš ša ša lādi

15' [aaša šātītu erēš][u]

pūlītašu ša nāšī (šātītu Ellīšu)

OB III 134–5

MS y2 obv. 6'–15”, translated on p. 359

Finally, the Standard Babylonian version of the elders' warning. The passage is one for which different sources preserve different orders of lines.199 As given here the text follows the Late Babylonian MS e:

287 išāma malkūšab 193 ša ṣātītu

288 šītu uṣurrāt ana Gilgameš

199 See in detail the section of Ch. 9 on Textual variants and recensional differences in the SB epic.
Analysis of these passages shows immediately that there is no direct linear descent from the Yale tablet through the related versions exported to Anatolia and Assyria and on to the Standard Babylonian text. This is not surprising. The three older texts are only samples of the many different versions extant in the second millennium, most of which are now lost. It is inherently improbable that we will ever recover the many missing links in a direct chain of descent from the Old Babylonian period to the seventh century.

A closer comparison is instructive. The opening couplet changes considerably, with the two later sources agreeing on the wording of the first line but each going their own way with the second. The first line of the next couplet remains largely unchanged, but the sense of the second line is altered by the use of one or other of a choice of alternative verbs, *taqabbā* and *āšamman* for OB *āšamppušu*. In the Middle Assyrian text the couplet is repeated, but not in the Standard Babylonian. The description of Ḫumbaba in the two later versions uses lines that have appeared in two different passages of the Old Babylonian text. In the Standard Babylonian version the elders’ warning has become more nearly a verbatim repetition of the speech made earlier by Enkidu. This editorial process, by which the text is expanded or otherwise altered to impose a greater similarity on originally dissimilar passages, is what Tigny called ‘homogenization’.

During the process of ‘homogenization’ several of the lines describing Ḫumbaba were altered in one way or another. OB III 195 was seriously reworked and given a new verb, probably because the old verb was no longer understood. The two later passages do not agree on the new verb (OB *nammāt* ~ MA *lamāsū* ~ SB *šemmēna*), nor on whence to derive it: *lamāsū* is plausible as an emendation of *nammāt*, if not a corruption; in the Standard Babylonian text *šemmēna* is freely interpolated in a more radical restructuring and *nammāt’s* place is taken by a noun, *rīmman*. These facts confirm the later versions as not directly related. In OB III 196 // SB II 295 *šēbbītu* gives way to *qittūtu*, a minor substitution. Two additional lines are introduced: SB II 294 and 296, that develop OB III 196. Neither of

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110 For a detailed exposition of the relationship between the Yale tablet (OB III), Assyrian MS y and SB II see the edition of MS y in Ch. 7.

111 The SB manuscripts write this word with a ligature,  [+en], which can be read ūšēn and šēn.
change the tense of the second verb alters from present to preterite. Also in the matter of prosody, note that the division into couplets that is a hallmark of the older text (and of Old Babylonian Gilgamesh in general) survives almost unscathed in the Standard Babylonian version.

The third passage for consideration is Gilgamesh's nightmare about being caught in an avalanche and Enkidu's explanation of it as favourable. On OB Schayen, the avalanche is Gilgamesh's first dream en route to the Cedar Forest. In a Middle Babylonian edition represented by a fragment from Boğazköy it is the second.

13’ ina šurtuša itib šadâ [. . .]
14’ itišdânni šifsiša itašba na [. . .]
15’ [. . .] šalammatu uddannin šilin eš[. . .]
16’ ina māštai damiṣna dumuṣu [. . .]
17’ šašān šantrāni šišarpana [. . .]
18’ mē šagišarmin liṭabilit ipṣa [. . .]
in[a] 19’ qašsiru šalatnin šiši[ša]
20’ Enkidu ana šiṣaši lišuqaqar itashaši 21’ anaGilgamesh itib erišišakk [. . .]
[u] šurša 22’ mēškušiša šallur ušišarpana [. . .]
[er] 23’ ul šuršan mēškušiša šallur [. . .]

OB Schayen, 5–22, translated on pp. 233–5

On another occasion it seems that the Middle Babylonian version is longer because it conflates this passage with another dream. The mention in MB Boğ i 18’–23’ of a figure who gave the dreaming Gilgamesh water is not a match for anything in OB Schayen, but tallies with Enkidu's explanation of the dream of bull-wrestling, reported in one of the tablets from Tell Harmal:

10 [iš]um itib ša nallatišum
11 ul nimmatu nukkur minimma
12 rišru ša tâmušu Šamaš namram
13 ina dannatim šišbat qâdišu
14 ša mē nāšiša šišbâšu
15 īka mukkâbi qaṣqâdhu Lugalbanda

OB Harmal, 10–16, translated on p. 251

It must also be conceded that the reverse is true: that in places the later version is more concise than the older (compare OB Schayen, 17–19 with MB Boğ i). Here one should bear in mind that the Boğazköy tablet may not report the text fully. The Middle Babylonian text is too fragmentary to allow comparison of the two passages from the point of view of prosody.

The evolution of the narrative passages that punctuate the dream episodes can also be studied with new results. The stages of the journey, pitching of camp and waking from dream are reported in the Old Babylonian texts as follows:

Stage 1. The journey is not extant but the sleep and waking are:

1 Gilgamesš sakip nil
2 nannatu maššatim šabatušu?
3 ina qablitšum šitašu ugalištu
4 itiš šastušu anna itibšu
5 širri šišmar šutam
6 anna amannišim lē šadâ’anni maššiši palšat

OB Schayen, 1–4, translated on p. 233

A variant version of Stage 1 on a school tablet does not report the full text:

1 elšan anna ṣarrim ša šadûm, napiš [. . .]
2 štattum ša šti anâšu emēšu
3 itib šištum atšul
4 kī štattû šuṭam
5 ša šuršu košša
6 ina šišmar šutam
7 ša šutam šūtîni
8 ša šuṭum ša šuṭum

OB Harmal, 1–3, translated on p. 249

Stage 2

25 māšak īmâbbal līn a šalâšišu
26 šišar aša ša-[ša]-sha
27 Šima Gilgamesh a-nu šir šadûm
28 itišmâšašiša šištû šuṭû
29 ina šišmašiša šuṭûn šuṭû
30 šišmar šuṭû ša šuṭû
INTRODUCTION

Stage 3

31 ina qabītum šittatı ugalītus
32 ite ša usūdatu ana uḳatū
33 ibīr atmāmar šanītum
              eli šūtim ša šanīr su nātītim palūt

Stage 4

82 mubattum iskiši intū
83 ibēna Gilgamē šittatı ugalītum
84 ibīr atmāmar šalūšum

OB Schøyen, 25–33, translated on p. 235

Stage 4

9 ibīr atmāmar šalūšum
10 eteq eli šalūšum lanatītya

OB Nippur, obv. 9–10, translated on p. 239

The literary history of the epic

Sadūhū ša uṭatū amāt [damnītītu] šāmū
ipútalūtemma Enkidū ana [ñašatu] šītū qaṣīqi
dalāt šarūtī ina babīšu
ubīlīsimma ina kippari [. . .] uṣurti
[. . .] ša ūmē šītū qatū [. . .] šarašī šu barāšu
Gilmēšē ina kašitu šummaqtema šaqasqu
[. . .] ša šītū šalūšum imgut
[in]a qabītum šittatı uṣurti
ibēna šalūšum ana ibīr
ibīr ul šalūšum ammītī erēku
ul šalūšum ammītī šalūšum
ul šalūšu šam ammītī šalūšu
ibīr atmāmar (x) šalūšu
ul šalūšu ša šummaqtema šašu

OB Schøyen, 29
// OB Schøyen, 30
// OB Schøyen, 2 // 31
// OB Schøyen, 3 // 32
// OB Schøyen, 4 // 33 // 84 // OB Nippur 9
// OB Schøyen, 33b, OB Nippur 10, MB Boğ, i 12

SB IV 1–22 // 34–55 // [79]–100 // 120–[42] // 163–[83], translated on p. 589 etc.

As can be seen from the marginal annotations, many of these lines have counterparts in the older versions of the text, so that it is clear what has happened. A process of standardization has taken place, with the heterogeneous narratives of the old versions being combined with additional lines of other origin into a composite whole, which is then repeated on each occasion. This development can be seen elsewhere in the late epic, notably in Gilgamesh’s encounters with Siduri, Ur-šanabi and Uta-napišti in Tablet X, where an even longer passage is repeated three times. These are more examples of Tigay’s ‘homogenization’. The conflation of different lines into standardized passages of repetition yields a more monotonous narrative that robs the text of spontaneity and interest. From the aesthetic point of view the result is a poorer work of literature. But, as argued above, the late version of the epic is a vehicle more for thought than entertainment. Message has become more important than style.

The Standard Babylonian epic stands at the end of a long history of editorial activity. And this activity did not end when Sin-lēqi-unnini established his text. Though the manuscripts of the first-millennium version provide a remarkably consistent text, they are not always unanimous. Significant variants provide evidence for the development over the centuries of minor recensional differences. The question of how fixed the Standard Babylonian text actually was will be investigated in Chapter 9, in the section on Textual variants and recensional differences.

TABLE XII: WHAT, WHEN AND WHY?

Table XII of the Standard Babylonian epic is a translation into Akkadian, more or less word for word, of much of the latter part of the Sumerian poem of Gilgamesh and the Netherworld.

112 See already J. S. Cooper, ‘Symmetry and repetition in Akkadian narrative’, JAOS 97 (1977), p. 510, commenting on Anzu, Eanna and the Legend of Ninurta-Sin: ‘The older texts have been reworked to their disadvantage, and our opinion of the SB corpus and its academic redactors is disappointingly diminished.’
This in itself is peculiar. Few Sumerian literary texts survived the great changes in the scribal curriculum and literary canon that occurred sometime in the mid- to late second millennium, and those that did were passed down, almost without exception, in bilingual format, Sumerian and Akkadian. Of all the Sumerian narrative poems about the legendary kings of Uruk, only one, the Lugalbanda epic, survived in this format.113 The only extant monolingual Akkadian translation of a Sumerian literary text apart from Tablet XII of Gilgamesh is the Babylonian Instructions of Šuruppak, known from a fragment of a Middle Assyrian recension.114

As a translation, and a mechanical one at that, Tablet XII is different in style and language from the epic.115 One cannot detect in it the poetic genius that pervades the great poem. There are no literary touches. The word order and vocabulary are plain and unimaginative. The trochaic line-end of poetry is so often absent that the ancient translator evidently did not seek to impose it. In short, Tablet XII is basic prose. Then there is the very obvious inconsistency of plot. In the preceding epic Enkidu dies at the end of Tablet VII. At the beginning of Tablet XII he is alive. The text gives another account of how he died, being detained in the Land of No Return for drawing attention to himself when rash enough to descend there on an errand, and goes on to relate how his ghost, summoned from imprisonment in the Netherworld, gives Gilgamesh an account of the conditions endured there by the shades of the dead.

A third factor is the structure of the preceding poem. The epilogue of Tablet XII brings the epic to a conclusion that is signalled in the poem’s structure. Not only are lines of the prologue repeated to form a literary frame, but the division into eleven tablets is itself symmetrical. The first five tablets lead up to and describe Gilgamesh’s great success, the heroic adventure in the Cedar Forest. Tablet VI, in the middle, is a short and rapid episode that presents the protagonist at the peak of his glory. In the exploit described it looks back to the heroism of Tablets I-V; in the development of the plot it sets in motion the events that lead inexorably to the grief and desperation of Tablets VII-XI. These last five tablets lead up to and describe Gilgamesh’s famous failure, his solitary quest in search of immortality.116 And at the end the poet delivers his final thoughts of wisdom on the great theme of death and immortality. As a work of literature Tablets I-XI thus form a satisfying whole, structurally and thematically.

These three factors then—language, plot and structure—clearly mark Tablet XII out as a separate text with no original connection to the eleven-tablet epic. It is a prose appendix, designated Tablet XII because it was attached to the eleven-tablet poem as part of a series.

113 See the fragments from Ninovet edited by C. Wilcke, Das Lugalbandaepos, as MSS A1 and B2 add also BM 123395, since published as CT 51 181.


115 This point has also been made by Stephanie Dalley, ‘Authorship, variation and canonality in Gilgamesh and other ancient texts’, International Journal of the Tvesh Nash Foundation 2 (1999), p. 41.


[The Literary History of the Epic]

‘the series of Gilgamesh’. No one sensitive to language and plot can disagree with this conclusion, which has been self-evident since Kramer made clear the tablet's Sumerian antecedents more than fifty years ago.117 We have to consider when it was appended and why.

The Sumerian poem of Gilgamesh and the Netherworld was a popular copy-book in the eighteenth century. The date of the translation of its latter part into Akkadian prose cannot be determined with any certainty. The terminus ante quem is the end of the eight century, when the Assyrian scholar Nabû-zuqqu-kēnu writes in the colophon of MS N of making a copy of Tablet XII from an older master-copy. A perverse but strangely tenacious view is that it must have been Nabû-zuqqu-kēnu who was himself responsible for the text’s translation and addition to the series.118 This position has been made more improbable by the discovery in the last forty years of two Late Babylonian manuscripts (MSS a and q). These two tablets, almost certainly from Babylon, speak for the inclusion of Tablet XII in the traditional text of the Series of Gilgamesh as handed down over the centuries in the Babylonian capital. The literary products of the Assyrian court did not normally interest Babylonian scholars, with the exception of a clique at pro-Assyrian Uruk.119 Even if one disallows the objection raised by MSS a and q on the grounds that the scholars of Babylon may have acquired Tablet XII from Assyria via Uruk, there is still the testimony of Nabû-zuqqu-kēnu’s own words. He copied his tablet from an old master-copy, therefore Tablet XII already existed in his time, if not long before.

One linguistic feature thought diagnostic of a late origin of the translation is the use of a variant form of the infinitive in the construct state (parēs or parēs instead of parēs at SB XII 145). New evidence suggests that this form may not be as late as once thought; in any case, it might represent an intrusion of a word not original to the text. Other features, such as the vocabulary, look Middle Babylonian. The absence of Sumerian Gilgamesh and most of the canonical Sumerian literature from the several first-millennium libraries known to us also suggests that the translation was made earlier rather than later, and so probably in the second millennium. One may suppose with good reason that Tablet XII was added to the Akkadian poem of Gilgamesh at the time when the Standard Babylonian version, la Ṽaqqa ināru, was redacted. It was thus the product of a Middle Babylonian editor—in convenient language, the work of Sin-lēqi-unninni.

The reason for the appendage of Tablet XII to the epic presents a much harder problem, however, and is a question that has provoked a wide variety of claims. Formerly arguments were put forward for its place in the epic in ignorance of its direct dependence on a Sumerian forerunner. Even after the breakthrough in understanding afforded by Kramer's recovery of the Sumerian text that lies behind Tablet XII, some scholars have continued to
take the position that the epic is not complete without it. Most of them, but not all, are sensitive enough to literature to recognize that the last tablet is an appendage but nevertheless consider it in one way or another a meaningful one, even an essential one. It is legitimate to ask why Tablet XII was attached to the epic but one must always remember that in literary terms it is, so to speak, a parvenu. A survey of the various opinions expressed in favour of including Tablet XII in the epic shows that this has not always been the case.

Oppenheim held the view that Gilgamesh learns from Enkidu’s ghost ‘about his inescapable fate’, and considered it possible that ‘the last tablet of the epic could be meant to be the crowning stone with the answer to the eternal question of mankind, namely that knowledge, not escape, is to be its goal’. What Gilgamesh hears from Enkidu, however, is not a message of his own inevitable doom—that is imparted to him by Udā-napišti—but something much less personal and much more specialized, a report of the different levels of comfort and distress endured by the various lucky and unlucky shades. Komoróczy argues that ‘the Akkadian Gilgamesh epic elaborated only the first half of the Sumerian model’, that is, the original Sumerian poem of Bilgames and the Netherworld, and that in supplying the missing second half Tablet XII completes the ‘model’. Tablet XII thus functions as a ‘conscious closing down of the ideas of the epic’, added because the ‘translator-poet of Tablet XII wanted to bring the Akkadian Epic of Gilgamesh nearer to the Sumerian tradition’. The equation of Tablets I–XI with Bilgames and the Netherworld 1–171 is not, in my view, real, for they share neither plot nor theme. Nor do I see how the heroes’ dialogue ‘closes down the ideas’ of the epic satisfactorily. Its parting message regarding commemorative ritual is tangential and no grand summation of the epic’s great theme of life and death, so expertly concluded in Udā-napišti’s counsel and the poem’s epilogue.

Alster floated the idea that Tablet XII was appended to the preceding text to treat ‘relations between the living and the dead. It constitutes a paradigmatic pattern for life and death in which Gilgamesh has to take part . . . the intention is certainly to show that Gilgamesh does not stand outside the cycle.’ If such is the intention it is only very allusively expressed in Tablet XII. For evidence of a more immediate relevance of Enkidu’s answers to Gilgamesh’s personal circumstances Alster had to fall back on lines of the Sumerian poem that were not incorporated in the Akkadian translation. Abusch considers that the tablet was added to proclaim Gilgamesh’s role as king and judge in the Netherworld and to ‘communicate to him the rules of the netherworld’. There is, however, no explicit description of Gilgamesh’s chthonic functions detectable in Tablet XII, as there clearly is in the Sumerian Death of Bilgames, where divine status in the Netherworld is made a compensation for the hero’s doom. A knowledge of conditions in the afterlife is not the same thing as instruction in a formal role there. While maintaining that Tablet XII was an addition, Kieler considers it to be a ‘dramatic capstone whereby the twelve-tablet epic ends on one and the same theme.

that of “seeing” (= understanding, discovery, etc.) with which it began’. Her idea relies on an equation of nāqba (or nāqbu) in the epic’s incipit with the Netherworld of Tablet XII. The nāqbu, however, is nowhere a term for the realm of the dead. Nor did Gilgamesh ‘see the depths’ in Tablet XII ‘through a hole’. Enkidu’s ghost arose through a crevice and so Gilgamesh heard about the Netherworld at second hand.

Vulpe finds the twelfth tablet a ‘necessary and elegant conclusion’ that ‘suggests that Gilgamesh shares the fate of Everyman’. Here, again, I am skeptical that that is the true thrust of the heroes’ dialogue. Harris ‘would contend that Tablet XII is an integral part of the Gilgamesh epic’ on the grounds that ‘central to its theme is the importance of family, the necessity of offspring to mourn the deceased and provide the khispu offering’, but she has to admit that in Tablet XII Enkidu ‘voices this view implicitly, if not explicitly’. The existence of one common theme, among many, is not enough to prove textual ‘integrity’. Other more wild ideas have been rebutted by others and do not need further discussion here.

The modern scholar who rejects most strongly the notion that Tablet XII is an addition to the text of the epic is Parpola. In a controversial article on the symbolism of what he calls the ‘Assyrian Tree of Life’ he states that ‘in reality, nothing could be farther from the truth. Without the twelfth tablet, the Epic would be a torso because . . . it contains the ultimate wisdom that Gilgamesh brought back from his arduous search for life.’ I would counter that such wisdom was learned from Udā-napišti in Tablets X and XI. For Parpola this ‘ultimate wisdom’ is the ‘precious secret’ that reveals ‘the way to Heaven’. In this way the epic can be interpreted as a ‘mythical path of spiritual growth culminating in the acquisition of superior esoteric knowledge’. Parpola’s exegesis of the sacred tree alerts us to the need to be aware that much in ancient Mesopotamian religious and intellectual life went unrecorded. Babylonian scholarship makes repeated references to its secrets, and it is no bad thing to search for signs of indigenous mysticism.

This is not the place for a discussion of Parpola’s bold thesis on the symbolic significance of the sacred tree. However, his exegesis of the Epic of Gilgamesh calls for comment. The development of the narrative of the twelve-tablet series supposedly encodes symbolically the ten deities that according to his theory correspond in Kabbalistic fashion with the ‘nodes, volutes and circles’ of the tree. I find the attempt to make a literary text such as Gilgamesh fit a preconceived pattern most unconvincing. This is not to say that I reject any notion that the Epic of Gilgamesh had for some a symbolic or mystical significance; it may well have done. But if it did so, it was a secondary development. Whatever it may have
become, the poem itself has its origins in oral entertainment, not in any theological or intellectual pursuit. In a work of literature one cannot ignore as irrelevant the obstacles represented by the clear difference in style and separateness of plot observed between Tablets I-XI one the one hand and Tablet XII on the other. The poem makes sense as eleven tablets, not as twelve. Tablet XII is incontestably an addition. That must be the starting point of any discussion of it.

Before considering what Tablet XII was for, a caveat should be added as a gloss to the preceding discussion. The text of Gilgameṣ is not yet completely recovered. All the scholars mentioned in the preceding paragraphs base their proposals on the content of only part of Tablet XII, namely Gilgameṣ' dialogue with Enkidu's ghost. As will be noted below in the introduction to Tablet VII (Chapter 10), a similar passage reporting the conditions of individuals in the Netherworld was almost certainly included in the epic in the logical place, when the dying Enkidu tells Gilgameṣ how he was granted a vision of the Netherworld in a dream. All that remains of that passage is a single phrase, but it is a very suggestive one (§B VII 221): [āl]i[m]a[m] uru[ni] šum [ma] kal [a][ba̞]-

The duration of rites of mourning over nine days is corroborated by an Ur III tablet that documents the distribution over such a period of rations to professional mourners commemorating the king's name (ki.Ḫul lugal), and supported by references in a Standard Babylonian menology and, less certainly, in Lagale to a period of nine days during Abu, the month dedicated to Gilgameṣ, when young men wrestled in doorways, evidently to commemorate his name during a festival of ghosts. 131 The overriding emphasis on commemoration displayed in the conclusions of Bilgameṣ and the Netherworld and Tablet XII is surely important evidence for our investigation. Gilgameṣ was, from at least the latter part of the third millennium, a figure whose symbolic presence at rituals of burial and commemoration is well attested and may have been obligatory. What kind of invocation did people make to him at such times? Whatever the origins of the Sumerian and Babylonian compositions relating the dialogue with Enkidu—and they are literary, not sacred—it has to be asked whether one or both texts came in due course to be put to use in ways that were not originally intended. Put otherwise, 'because both language and cultural values change, we might imagine that the longer a non-cultic text remains in the stream of tradition, the less likely it is to have any function outside the scribal curriculum, and if it does, it will hardly be its original function.'

The function of the Standard Babylonian epic in the scribal curriculum has already been discussed. One may further wonder if Bilgameṣ and the Netherworld and later Tablet XII came to be used in rituals of commemoration. In this regard it is interesting to see that the court scholar Nabû-zuqqu-pênu apparently made his new copy of Tablet XII, our MS N, very soon after news reached him of the death on the battlefield of Sargön II; the Assyrian king and those many of his soldiers who must have perished with him are exactly the figures with which the end of Tablet XII is concerned. 133 Perhaps the learned scribe was prompted...
to prepare the new tablet less by private, philosophical reflection than by the practical requirement of familiarizing himself with a text that was about to be needed. There are many references in the late period to commemorative offerings made to appease unspecified and anonymous ghosts. Was there in the first millennium, as there was in Hammurapi’s time, a festival at which such offerings were made to the ghosts of dead soldiers and others whose bodies were never recovered for proper burial? Could it have been that Tablet XII—or maybe the entire series of twelve tablets—was put to ritual use, sung or recited, for example, at funerals and in memorial cults? Was it perhaps performed at the funerals of kings?

The epic’s central concern with death and its lesson that no man can live for ever, not even the greatest of heroes and wisest of kings, are eminently appropriate to occasions on which the living bury the dead, commemorate their names and succour their ghosts. If the epic came eventually to have a function in such a context, Tablet XII would still be an appendage, but not an idle one; as a postscript to the great poem it would form an eloquent reminder of the duties owed by men to their ancestral spirits.

All this is highly speculative. It may yet be that outside the world of scribal education the eleven-tablet epic itself served no practical purpose in the first millennium but was a literary fossil preserved for its own sake as a masterpiece of traditional literature. Tablet XII may have been added to the series of eleven tablets because, as a sermon on man’s doom, it reprinted emphatically the dominant theme of the eleven-tablet epic as reworked by Sin-leqi-unninni. On the other hand it may have been appended merely because, as a chance survivor of a largely forgotten literature, there was nowhere else to put it. Time, perhaps, will tell.

THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH OUTSIDE THE CUNEIFORM TRADITION

A last topic for discussion in this chapter is the question of the extent to which The Epic of Gilgamesh made a mark on later literature. In this respect I shall leave aside the question of identifying conceptual similarities with other great works of literature, a field that has provoked a rash of studies. It will be more pertinent to this chapter to concentrate instead on the issue of whether the poem itself was transmitted outside the cuneiform tradition. Such a literary masterpiece could not really have failed to escape the fetters of the old writing

system and find refuge in foreign parts—or could it? Two lines of enquiry need close examination. First is the relationship of the Homeric epics to The Epic of Gilgamesh, second the legacy of the latter to the literatures of the post-cuneiform Near East.

The question of ancient Near Eastern influence on the Iliad, Odyssey and other Greek literature has been the subject of considerable discussion; the relationship of The Epic of Gilgamesh to Homer began to be explored almost as soon as the contents of the Babylonian poem were presented in a reliable form. The positions taken vary between the two extremes of (a) dismissal of any resemblance as coincidental and (b) claims of direct influence east to west. Recent writers have tended towards position (b).

Literary influence is seen, correctly, as one of many types of foreign influence felt by the archaic Greeks—material goods, technology (including writing), intellectual ideas and cultural trends, the import of all these from the East to Greece made for what has been termed an ‘orientalizing revolution’. The fullest analysis of literary influence is Martin West’s exhaustive study of the legacy of eastern literatures to Greece, which includes a very detailed exposition of Gilgamesh motifs in Homer and other similarities between the two bodies of material. He adopts position (b), concluding that ‘both the Iliad and the Odyssey show, beyond all reasonable question, the influence of the Gilgamesh epic, and more especially the standard Babylonian version of that poem, including the supposititious Tablet XII.

In considering the date and route of transmission West has a specific suggestion, suspecting ‘some sort of “hot line” from Assyrian court literature of the first quarter of the seventh century’. Part of his argument for such a “hot line” rests on two points, (a) that Homer’s poems were inspired by a ‘version of the Gilgamesh epic similar to that current in seventh-century Nineveh, marked out by the addition of the incongruous Tablet XII’, and (b) that Tablet XII was itself the direct inspiration for the Nekya of the Odyssey, in which Odysseus encounters the shades of the dead. The first point is undermined by the probability that Tablet XII was appended to the poem much earlier than the seventh century, for, as already noted, it is now known from Babylonian manuscripts as well as Neo-Assyrian. The ‘window of opportunity’ was thus much larger than the first quarter of the seventh century. The second point must be tempered by the report of the dead shades that survives as a fragment of text in the body of the eleven-tablet epic, where it seems to have been the climax of Enkidu’s dream of the Netherworld in Tablet VII. This equally could be supposed the

136 As Frahm suggests, ibid., p. 79.
138 See already W. Lamberti, Journal of Biblical Literature 104 (1985), p. 116, who draws attention to series that embrace very disparate texts and notes trenchantly that ‘there is no more need to try to find precise relationships between the late Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic and the appended fragment than there is to interpret Jonah in the light of Obadiah’.
‘inspiration’ for the Odyssey’s Nekya. The suggestion of a ‘hot line’ further supposes that the written epic was put to use as an entertainment at the Neo-Assyrian court. This is an assumption that cannot be proved.143

Like others who have written on the subject, West is well aware that two major problems beset us in giving an account of how Homer’s poems and the Epic of Gilgamesh came to share motifs and have other points of narrative and articulation in common. First, we know nothing of the oral tradition of Mesopotamian popular literature that ran parallel with the scribal tradition, no doubt influencing it and being influenced by it from time to time. Gilgamesh was composed to be sung, and must have continued to be sung in some form even after the various versions of the poem became fixed in writing. In my view it is unwise to suppose that all the singers of the Babylonian Gilgamesh rendered the poem in a version that was faithful to the fossilized text passed down in the scribal tradition. Those that could read may have used the written text to refresh their memories, but others that could not probably knew by heart a version of the poem at some remove. Therefore we are not in a position to say for sure what version of the story could have been encountered by the bard of Homer’s poems or by those that influenced them.

Second, the Greeks may have encountered stories about Gilgamesh in translation rather than the epic in its original language. The almost total loss of Phoenician and early Aramaic literature means that we have no direct evidence in the eastern Mediterranean of the first millennium for the presence of Gilgamesh in those languages and literatures that acted as intermediaries between Mesopotamian culture and the Aegean. Whether there were stories about Gilgamesh in Phoenician and Aramaic and how close they might have been to the written epic we know are consequently unknown quantities.

There is a third consideration here. Textual composition in the ancient Near East was often a matter of adapting and stitching together well-known motifs and mythologies, sometimes reusing blocks of lines from already existing compositions and sometimes adapting more freely. This must have been so in oral composition as well as written. The implication is that ancient poets had, memorized or otherwise at their disposal, a fund of episodes and standard passages on which they might draw as they pleased. It is highly probable in a world where musicians, scholars and other experts are known to have travelled internationally that many staple motifs and patterns of narrative would have been held in common by poets composing in various different ancient Near Eastern languages.144 Mesopotamian cultural influence on the West was always strong, but most prominently in the period when Akkadian was lingua franca in the Levant and Anatolia, which saw the export to the eastern Mediterranean littoral of traditional Babylonian written texts, including Gilgamesh and the Flood myth. The influence of these texts on indigenous culture cannot accurately be gauged, but was certainly considerable enough to generate new versions and paraphrases in some of the languages written locally. A similar outcome was surely seen in oral literature, as Levantine poets assimilated the new forms and adapted them to their own purposes. Influence was also felt in the opposite direction and in other periods. Mythologies stemming from the Levant are already visible in Babylonia of the early second millennium.145 Some can be detected in the Gilgamesh epic.146

The undeniable similarities between Homer and Gilgamesh may accordingly not have arisen as a result of the influence of a contemporaneous version of the Babylonian epic (or a translated version) on archaic Greece, direct or indirect. More probably, Greek poetry imported from the eastern Mediterranean region motifs, episodes, imagery and modes of expression that were always traditional in the narrative poetry of the area or had been adopted into that poetry from Mesopotamia long before.147 This position would best explain, for example, the currency of the ‘fatal letter’ motif in Sumerian literature of the eighteenth century BC (where the intended victim is Sargon), and its presence after a thousand-year interval in the biblical book of Samuel (Uriah) and the Iliad (Bellerophon).148 Seen against such a pattern, Homer’s tale of the adventures of Odysseus, so reminiscent of the wanderings of Gilgamesh, his story of Achilles and Patroclus as two friends separated by death, so suggestive of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and Odysseus’s interview with his dead mother and other shades, so similar to Enkidu’s reports of the Netherworld—ancestral versions of all these, whether deriving ultimately from Mesopotamia or not, may have been present in Levantine poetry long before the time of the archaic Greeks. Similarly, shared imagery, such as when Gilgamesh and Achilles are both compared in their grief to lions bereft of their cubs, can be explained as dependence on traditional forms. For this reason, while I acknowledge the many parallels between Gilgamesh and Homer, I see the poems as much more distant relatives than those who argue for direct influence.

The second matter that calls for comment is the question of whether the Epic of Gilgamesh survived the death of cuneiform writing in Mesopotamia. It may be useful to pause here briefly to examine the evidence for general cultural continuity in the post-cuneiform age and then to consider the literature of Mesopotamia in the immediately preceding period. Here, too, there has been a good deal of recent research. With regard to the survival of Babylonian culture, what one finds is that in the early centuries AD there was considerable continuity in religion and in the traditional ‘sciences’ rooted in the old cuneiform learning.


144 See further Ch. 10, the introduction to SB Thélès V.

145 A similar point was made by N. Wasserstein in his review of West, East Face of Helikon, in Scripta Classica 19 (2001), p. 262: ‘Another possible reading of the evidence could suggest a Mediterranean “Kulturbündnis”, . . . a cultural conglomerate shared by the various societies located around the Mediterranean basin.’ Abūshās offers a similar escape route for the problem he made for himself (see above, fn. 140): ‘perhaps the Homeric works and the Epic of Gilgamesh initially developed independently, though they may have drawn upon a common narrative tradition’ (Mythology and Mythographers, p. 6). Lambert is more sure: ‘it seems certain that Homer did not read Gilgamesh, nor Herodotus or the Epic of Creation. Rather the literary works are products from intellectual cultures interrelated in more than one way. Common traditions going back to neolithic times may be suspected, while interaction both oral and written no doubt took place in some cases in historical times’ (W. G. Lambert, Classical Review 41/1 (1991), p. 114).

Long after the demise of cuneiform writing the worship of ancient Mesopotamian gods continued at such northern centres as Asûr, Harran, Edessa, Hatra and Palmyra. In Babylon itself we have the word of Rab (Rav), a famous authority of the Babylonian Talmud who flourished early in the third century AD, that the temples of Baal (Marduk) at Babylon and Nabiû at Borsippa, among other ‘appointed temples of idol-worship’, were still in his day centres of regular year-round worship. Pagan practices that represented corruptions of the old polytheism were still flourishing in rural Babylonia in the Sasanian period and continued until well after the arrival of Islam. Babylonian and Assyrian religious thought had been a powerful influence on the development of Judaism, and in Mesopotamia survived to play a part in shaping eastern Christianity, Mandaean Gnosticism and, later, Islam.

At the same time Babylonian intellectual achievements had an impact far and wide, in the East as well as the West. In this way practical expertise in traditional medicine, divination, astronomy and astrology survived the death of cuneiform writing. Native Babylonian accounts of creation and ancient history found their way into late Greek scholarship: the cosmogony of Ḥirmila elî appears in the accounts of Greek writers down to the Neo-Platonist philosopher Damascius in the fifth century AD, a history of Mesopotamia based on the Dynastic Chronicle, the Babylonian continuation of the Sumerian King List, was passed down by Berossus (third century BC) and those later Classical and Byzantine authors who quoted his Babylonica. In Iran, India and Central Asia the influence of the cuneiform ‘sciences’ on native culture can be detected. The question arises, where does literature fit in this pattern of survival and diffusion?

By the mid-first millennium BC much of the traditional scribal literature of ancient Mesopotamia was very old. However, the Standard Babylonian corpus of the late second millennium and early first was not the only literature to exist in Mesopotamia under the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian empires. Some new texts were composed, but aside from royal inscriptions in the traditional manner they were comparatively few and in a very different style. In anecdotal works that deal with historical subjects, like the Crimes of Nabû-šuma-ʾikûn, the King of Justice and the Verse Account of Nabûnîdus, an increasing interest is found in the nature of tyranny and oppression. Alongside these and other new compositions in Akkadian there was certainly a vital Mesopotamian Aramaic literature, now largely lost. Those works that survive, like the account of Šamaš-šuma-ukin’s revolt on a long papyrus scroll from Egypt formerly in the Amherst collection, the stories of Ahiqar and Tobit, and parts of the biblical book of Daniel, are set in imperial Assyrian and Babylonian contexts. They concern the deeds of historical personages and were probably composed soon after the lifetimes of the characters involved. They are not adaptations of any text in the cuneiform tradition. They bear witness to the new style of literature, anecdotal in form and moral in intent, but also much concerned with corrupt and tyrannical behaviour, especially of kings. Some of this literature was overely Jewish or was later Judaized. Some of it certainly found its way into other cultures. The legend of Sardanapalus related by Ctesias and other Greek writers is clearly related to the Aramaic account of Šamaš-šuma-ukin’s revolt. It may well be that other legends of Babylonian and Assyrian rulers transmitted by classical authors—for example the story of Semiramis in Herodotus—also derive from a lost Mesopotamian literature written in Aramaic.

As we have seen, some of the old works of the cuneiform scribal tradition, those that expounded practical knowledge about the physical and supernatural world and concrete information about the origin and history of the universe, were translated or adapted into other languages and continued to attract the interest of scholars after the demise of cuneiform writing. Simply put, what may be termed as Babylonian science was thought sufficiently valuable that it survived to live on in other cultures.
Another category of Mesopotamian culture that survived the end of cuneiform is the folk-tale. There is the well-known case of the story we know as the Poor Man of Nippur that reappears after a long interval, more or less faithfully adapted, as the History of the First Larriši in the Arabian Nights. But folk-tales are essentially oral and popular, and thus easily transmitted from culture to culture. The Poor Man of Nippur is almost without parallel in cuneiform literature and not a typical example of the written creative effort. Its survival in medieval Arabic certainly depended not on a translation of the written version from Akkadian into Aramaic or other languages but on its success as a piece of literature transmitted orally.

It is safe to assume that by the Parthian period many ancient and venerable texts of the cuneiform tradition were not living compositions in the sense that they were still part of court literature, handbooks of professional expertise, folk-tales or part of anyone’s cultural and intellectual experience in other contexts. These texts—the Babylonian belles-lettres—may have been memorized, recited and copied out in the course of scribal education, but once this education abandoned the old writing system these texts expired with the deaths of the last generation to learn them. We can expect them not to have made the transition to Aramaic and Greek. There is an analogy to be drawn with the Old Babylonian period, when the scribal curriculum was modernized and many old works in Sumerian fell by the wayside as a consequence. Something similar—but more radical—must have happened nearly two millennia later when cuneiform writing ceased to be taught. The great bulk of the written legacy of the ancient Mesopotamian creative effort disappeared with the abandonment of the old medium of writing. The question must then be asked, what became of the Epic of Gilgamesh, the masterpiece of this old literature?

Gilgamesh himself was not forgotten in the post-cuneiform period. In fragments of the Book of Giants from Qumran he surfaces as Gilgamel (gilgamšu, var. gilgames), one of the antediluvian race of evil giants that in Jewish mythology were spawned by the fallen angels to corrupt the world of men. Another of the giants, Hābūnšu (Qumran Aramaic ḫabūbb, var. ḫabbāb), is probably Humbaba. From about the third century AD the Jewish Book of Giants was adopted as scripture by the followers of Mani. Fragments of the Manichaean Book of Giants found at Turfan in Central Asia mention Hābūnšu and a figure who may be Utanapišti. Sections of the same scripture that are now lost preserved the memory of Gilgamesh and the other wicked giants into late medieval times, when some of them found their way into Arabic conjurations against evil spirits written down by Al-Suyūṭī in the fifteenth century. Thus Gilgamesḥ survives in Islamic magic as the malevolent demon Jīlāmīš (jilmass and jinmash). Humbaba’s name may survive in corrupted form in the same contexts.

Moving back to the ancient world one finds that the Greek rhetorician Aelian, writing On the Nature of Animals at the turn of the second century AD illustrates a point about the love of animals for mankind with a tale of Gilgamesḥ’s miraculous birth and survival. King Sceuchæros (i.e. Enmerkar) of Babylonia was warned that his daughter’s child would usurp his throne and, as a way of thwarting the prediction, had her locked up forthwith. Despite this precaution she became pregnant—by a ‘nobody’—and duly gave birth. The baby was thrown from the citadel but saved by an eagle. The eagle took the child to a gardener and he grew up to become Gilgamesḥ, who ‘ruled over the Babyloniens’, fulfilling his destiny. This legend is nowhere present in the extant Epic of Gilgamesḥ or elsewhere in the cuneiform scribal tradition, though it does hold three points in common with that tradition: (a) Gilgamesḥ was a successor of Enmerkar, (b) he was of uncertain parentage and (c) he was a king of Babylonia. These details show that the legend was informed by some genuinely Babylonian knowledge. Others are probably the result of contamination from other sources, both Babylonian (the flight of Eta) and foreign. Aelian himself noted that the Persian dynastic ancestor Achaemenes was traditionally nursed by an eagle.

Some six centuries after Aelian the Nestorian Christian writer Theodor bar Konai passed on a list of twelve postdiluvian kings that were to have reigned in the era between Peleg, a descendant of Noah’s son Shem, and the patriarch Abraham. Both the tenth, gmys or gmos, and the twelfth, gmys or gmos, who was king when Abraham was born, probably represent garbled spellings of Gilgamesḥ.

The post-cuneiform texts cited in the preceding paragraphs preserve the memory of Gilgamesḥ as one of the great kings of old, either as a legendary figure of remote antiquity (Aelian, Theodor bar Konai) or demonized as a figure of the old, pagan mythology and accordingly evil (the Book of Giants, and the Manichaean and Islamic traditions that derived from that source). The survival of Gilgamesḥ’s name in this way is not proof of the survival of the epic nor even of any dependence on the epic itself. The presence of Gilgamesḥ, Humbaba and, probably, Utanapišti as giants in the Book of Giants shows that this text was in some way related to the old literary traditions that told of the great Babylonian hero who cut cedar in Lebanon and wandered the world in search of life. The source of its information could perhaps have been the Babylonian epic poem in some written or spoken form, but this is not an unavoidable conclusion and may not be a safe assumption. As will be seen in Chapter 3, exactly these of Gilgamesḥ’s exploits were also much reported in other literature, particularly in the corpus of omen texts. Likewise, the names of Humbaba and Utanapišti are
not restricted to the epic. The figure of Gilgamesh, especially, is present in so much of the traditional cuneiform literature of the first millennium that it can be no surprise that his name lived on long after clay tablets ceased to be read and copied.

The recent resurgence of scholarly interest in the post-cuneiform culture of the Near East has brought a new crop of studies claiming to present evidence for the adaptation of the Epic of Gilgamesh into other Near Eastern languages and for the survival into the post-cuneiform period of episodes and themes drawn from the epic. These ideas will be examined in turn.

The full publication of the Qumran fragments of 4QEnGiaNids that mention Gilgamesh has prompted the following comment:

One chapter of the Book of Enoch, known as the Book of Watchers, contains a story about Gilgamesh and his monstrous opponent... Even more recently another episode has been placed together from Qumran which relates a dream of Gilgamesh about a divine court of judgement set in a heavenly garden with trees. The interpreter of the dream is Enoch, who takes the part that Enkidu played in the Akkadian Epic of Gilgamesh.

The facts are these: first, it is true that Gilgamesh and Humbaba (as Habbabis) occur in the Qumran fragments but as the text stands they seem to be incidental characters in a story that revolves around other giants and is unrelated to any known episode of the Gilgamesh Epic. This view is confirmed by abbreviations of the text in later sources, the Hebrew Midrash of Semihazai and Azael131 and the Manichaeen Book of Giants. The extant fragments do not justify in any way a claim that the Book of Enoch 'contains a story about Gilgamesh and his monstrous opponent'.

The second, the supposed dream of Gilgamesh about divine judgement in a garden. What the relevant part of the Qumran Book of Giants relates is this: the giants Ohiyah (Uhiya) and Hahayah (Hahia) reported their dreams to their father, Semihazai (Semisasa); Gilgamesh appears near the end of this passage but it is not clear how he was connected with the action. Some suppose that the three words certainly preserved on the line of scroll in question (4Q531 Frag. 22, 12: [ ... gilmesh bmr h/lm[bh ]...]) coincide exactly with a self-contained clause, and propose on this improbable assumption that Gilgamesh has had a dream and is asked to tell it. Others punctuate differently and refrain from placing such an interpretation on what is a very fragmentary passage. In the context it seems more likely that...

130 For fuller suggestions in this direction, largely disregarded, see the work of Peter Jensen, especially Das Gilgamesch-Epos der Weltliteratur (2 vols; Strasbourg 1906, Marburg 1929).
131 Dalley, Legacy of Mesopotamia, p. 43.

Šemihazai asked Ohiyah to tell his dream. Ohiyah's account of his dream falls in a lacuna; no doubt it was followed by Hahayah's. Two small fragments of dream episodes are sometimes placed here. One tells of a tree sending forth three shoots, the other of writing being washed from a stone tablet. According to the Midrash the dreams that Heyya (Ohiyah) and Hahayah (Hahayah) told their father concerned an angel erasing the writing on a great stone tablet, all save four words, and an angel cutting down all the trees in a garden, except one that had three branches. Both dreams very obviously symbolize the coming Flood, in which were to perish giants and men alike, all save Noah and his three sons.

To return to the Qumran text, Šemihazai's sons went next to the assembly of their fellow giants. There Ohiyah told the giants 'what Gilgamesh (gilmes) had said to him and Habbabis yelled' (4Q530 Frps 2 ii, 1-2: [w]u h[y]š h[š]v y[n]u n s [m] /[w][n] h[n] w[n] l[n] h[d][n] gilmes w[n] h[b][b][b][s] [p][s]. It is unclear what this message was that provoked Humbaba so, but it made the giants glad; it was not, therefore, a dream of apocalypse. Then the two brothers had more dreams, which they told the assembly on waking. The first (evidently Hahayah's) was about a garden being destroyed by fire; Ohiyah's was about the Almighty seated in judgement on the world. Both dreams can be supposed to predict the coming destruction of the world in the Flood. The text goes on to tell how the other giants were frightened and sent the messenger Mahawati to the ends of the earth in the furthest east to have the dreams interpreted by the wise Enoch.

In my view a close study of the sources of the Book of Giants shows no connection with any of the dreams of Gilgamesh in the epic, whether interpreted by Enkidu or by Ninus. If, as he appears in this episode, Enoch reminds us of any character in ancient Mesopotamian literature, it is Utanapishtim, not Enkidu, for they share great wisdom and geographical location.

A second suggestion is that motifs occurring in the Epic of Gilgamesh may inform the Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres, as it is known from Papyrus Chester Beatty XVI. This is a fragmentary Greek manuscript, probably written in the fourth century AD, that tells the legend of two brothers who were wicked magicians at the pharaonic court in Egypt and adversaries of Moses and Aaron. It has recently been proposed that 'two themes in the Apocryphon [of Jannes and Jambres] can be linked with the Epic of Gilgamesh: of the intruder who enters Paradise and cuts down a tree; and of the unrepentant wise man who has sinned and who curses the prostitute at the time of his death.' The motifs of the epic in question are clearly (a) Gilgamesh felling cedar in Humbaba's sacred forest and (b) Enkidu cursing Šamhat the prostitute on his deathbed. A closer examination of the text is instructive. With regard to the tree-felling theme, what the Apocryphon says is this: Jannes's mother dreamed that someone holding an iron saw cut down a cypress leaving 'three spans' standing; a second report tells of an angel of God sawing down a cypress, leaving three spans, after which Jannes built a wall around the 'paradise' to protect it. Mention of the prostitute comes at the end of the story, when Jambres conjures up the soul of his brother from Hell and Jannes tells him of the grim afterlife that sinners endure there. The prostitute is mentioned as the worst of these sinners.
The précis of these two passages quoted above are thus exposed as disingenuous. Is the story of an angel felling a tree in Jannes's ταφάδειοι (ταφάδειος), which means simply ‘garden’, but leaving part standing, really derived from the tale of Gilgamesh felling cedar in the forest of the gods? Not for me. The obvious precursor is the dream of the garden and the tree with three shoots that foretells the Deluge in the Book of Giants. The second fragment of the Apocryphon at issue holds no curses and is spoken by a ghost, not by a man on his deathbed. The common ground with the cursing of Šamhat in Tablet VII of the Babylonian epic is minimal. One would rather note that here is another instance of the epic motif of a man learning from a departed dear one the conditions that await him in the afterlife. Even if one accepts that the Apocryphon contains Gilgamesh motifs other than this, it is clear that the use to which they are put is independent of the story from which they came. The evidence does not speak for the survival of the epic as a coherent whole.

A third example of such a claim is the story of Combabos in the De Dea Syria attributed to Lucian (born c. AD 115). A new study of this story states that the Gilgamesh epic ‘provides a very plausible model for the Combabos story, and considering the many thematic and structural similarities of the two stories, it can hardly be doubted that the former indeed served as a model for the latter’. 178 The story of Combabos is briefly as follows: King Seleucos ordered his best friend, the handsome Combabos, to accompany Queen Stratonic to Hierapolis to build a new temple. In order to refute any future accusation of misconduct, the royal lady, Combabos castrated himself, sealed the severed organs in a jar and gave it to Seleucos for safekeeping in his absence. In Hierapolis, Stratonic duly fell for Combabos but he told her what he had done and she was thereafter content to love him platonicly. However, false rumours of a love affair reached Seleucos and Combabos was summoned to trial. Combabos asked for the jar, opened it and displayed its contents to his accusers. King Seleucos showered him with gifts. Combabos returned to Hierapolis, finished the temple and died. The king erected a statue in his honour.

The thematic parallels between Combabos’s story and the epic are claimed as follows: Seleucos and Combabos are friends, like Gilgamesh and Enkidu; Combabos goes on a building expedition, while Gilgamesh and Enkidu go to the Cedar Forest; Combabos is tempted by Stratonic as Gilgamesh is tempted by Ishtar; Combabos emasculates himself and Enkidu is claimed to do the same in Tablet VI; Combabos dies, like Enkidu; Seleucos makes a statue of him, as Gilgamesh does of Enkidu. Other parallels are the beauty of Gilgamesh and Combabos, the name Combabos, supposedly derived from Ḥumbaba, and the presence in the stories of cultic aetiologicals relating to the status of Combabos and Enkidu in cults of goddesses. Leaving aside (a) that Combabos is thus an impossibly amalgam of both Gilgamesh and Enkidu, (b) that there is no reason for supposing that Combabos is Ḥumbaba, apart from a coincidence of sound, (c) that Gilgamesh and Enkidu do not go to the Cedar Forest to visit a temple of Ishtar, even supposing that παραθρήσκευται in SB V 6 signifies such a thing (which it does not), and (d) that to match the stories structurally Combabos’s self-mutilation must be moved to a point after the failed seduction instead of before it—there is still the claim of Enkidu’s emasculation to substantiate.

The idea that Enkidu was a castrate is Simo Parpola’s. 179 He bases his argument on the passage of Tablet VI in which Enkidu tears off a haunch of the Bull of Heaven’s carcass and throws it at Ishtar. The evidence he brings forward to support this position is (i) that inniti, the word for ‘haunch’, is a homophone of inittu, ‘right hand’, and that the right hand, in turn, is a euphemism for ‘penis’ in Matthew 5:29, (ii) that Enkidu’s falling into a pit made by the Bull of Heaven’s snort earlier in the episode can be related to the pit that sheltered the man who castrated a bull in a ritual of the cult of Cybele, and (iii) that when Enkidu is apostrophized by Gilgamesh as kēdamu tāru, literally ‘a banished, refugee mule’, in his lament, this epithet refers to Enkidu’s emasculated status. Even without pointing up the difficulty raised by the fact that Enkidu tears off the bull’s inniti, not his own, the first two points are just too tenuous to stand. The third is misguided. Mules are infertile but have genitals, nevertheless. The dead Enkidu is a mule because he had no offspring. The mule is ‘banished’ not because Enkidu is ‘rejected’ (Parpola) but because death has removed him from the land of the living, so that he eludes Gilgamesh’s grasp.

Grottonelli’s conclusion is less fantastic:

The transition of the Gilgamesh tradition into the story of Combabos would seem to be paradigmatic of what happened to the Mesopotamian/ancient Near Eastern cultural heritage at the transition to the Hellenistic and Roman age. Old ideas were taken over and preserved, but reworked into a completely new literary form which better corresponded to the new social and political order but at the same time largely marked the origin of the inherited ideas. 180

I do not agree that the story of Combabos is an adaptation of any episode of the Gilgamesh epic, but the final sentence articulates an entirely plausible hypothesis.

Next, there is the tale of Bultuqiya. Bultuqiya’s story was incorporated in some versions of the Arabian Nights but also in at least one other composition. The hypothesis that this story was a ‘descendant of the Epic of Gilgamesh’ was advanced by Stephanie Dalley in 1991. 181 Later the relationship was modified to ‘distant descendant’. 182 The presence in the Bultuqiya narrative of motifs similar to those in Gilgamesh has long been known. An expert Arabist summarized scholarly opinion forty years ago as follows: 183

Baghdād is situated in the region of ancient Babylonia: it is probable, therefore, that ancient Babylonian ideas should have survived there until Islamic times and might be reflected in the Arabian Nights . . . Khādhr the Ever-Youthful has a Babylonian prototype; the journeys of Būlūkyyā and the water of life fetched by Prince Ahmad may reflect motifs of the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh. But Khādhr and the water of life were probably transmitted to the Arabs by the Romance of Alexander, and the journeys of Būlūkyyā became known to them through Jewish literature. 184


179 S. Parpola, Assyrian Prophecies (SAA IX; Helsinki, 1997), p. xvi, fn. 140.

180 Grottonelli in Whiting, Mythology and Mythologies, p. 27.


Dalley seems intent on pushing for a closer connection, putting forward three grounds in support of her hypothesis: 'overall story line, phonetic transmission or else translation of personal names, and certain close similarity in points of detail'. To take the second point first, of which the principal application is an equation of the names Buluqiya and Bilgames; there is no evidence that the old pronunciation Bilgames (as opposed to the spelling Bil-ga-mes) survived into the first millennium. All the evidence from cuneiform and alphabetic sources is that by that time the name was always pronounced with initial /g/ (see Chapter 2). As a name, Buluqiya is not a version of Gilgamesh. Nor are any other names in Buluqiya's story (Affan, Yamlika, Solomon, Gabriel, Sakhr, Al-Khithdr) obviously Mesopotamian in origin. They are Arabic and Hebrew. But that is not fatal to Dalley's hypothesis. When stories move from one language to another the names of the characters often change.

As regards overall story line, Dalley summarizes the quests of Gilgamesh and Buluqiya jointly as follows:

A king leaves his country and travels far abroad with one faithful companion, searching for immortality. As a result of bravery in a heroic but sacrilegious feat, the faithful companion dies, leaving the king to travel on alone, and to visit cosmic regions peopled by immortal individuals. A plant that confers rejuvenation is unsuccessfully proffered as an alternative to immortality. The hero finds that he cannot attain immortality, although he meets a sage-like figure who has made the transition from mortal to immortal.

It seems to me that this summary disguises the different order of episodes in the respective plots in order to make them appear more similar than they really are.

The story of Buluqiya survives in three versions. It can be told briefly as follows. On succeeding to the throne of Israel Buluqiya discovers a secret document and goes on a quest for the Ring of Solomon. In order to obtain it Buluqiya and his comrade, Affan, force the Queen of Serpents (otherwise Queen Yamlika) to surrender the juice of a magic plant, which enables them to walk on water. In doing so they ignore her offer of a plant of rejuvenation. They walk over the sea to Solomon's tomb, but fail to take the ring when Affan is incinerated by the dragon that guards the tomb (alternatively a drop of liquid diamond turns him to dust). Buluqiya travels on, meeting a giant who guards an island of apple trees. (In one version the episodes of tomb and giant are transposed.) Then he is taken beyond the mountain that encircles the world to the realm of the King Sakhr, who gained immortality by drinking from the Fountain of Life guarded by the wise Al-Khithdr. From King Sakhr Buluqiya learns why God made the world. He is transported home, and, in another version, tours the universe and finally himself meets Al-Khithdr, who sends him home.

It is clear from this that the 'overall story line' of Buluqiya is not very similar to the plot of the written Epic of Gilgamesh. Two big differences stand out. Gilgamesh's quest for immortality begins with the death of his friend, while Buluqiya's quest ends there. Buluqiya ignores a plant with rejuvenating properties in pursuit of a greater prize. Gilgamesh obtains such a plant as a consolation, having already failed in his quest, and then loses it through carelessness. What the two narratives have in common is not so much plot, beyond the fact that both compositions involve legendary kings going on impossible quests, as what Dalley called 'points of detail'. These details—the plant of rejuvenation, the death of the companion in danger, the magic realm of an immortal king beyond a cosmic mountain—cannot be denied. However, they are the stuff of fairy tales, the sorts of motifs that recur in many literatures. They may be distantly descended from the written Epic of Gilgamesh but other sources are also possible. The island of apple trees guarded by a giant, for example, to my mind recalls not Humba and his Cedar Mountain but Aslan and the Garden of the Hesperides. The tale of Buluqiya, like other folk-tales of the medieval Middle East, clearly exhibits the influence of Jewish and Greek literature. These, it is true, made use of narrative patterns and themes that were very old, and some of these elements may have been adapted from Gilgamesh or been adapted by it. But the tale of Buluqiya is so far removed from the period of cuneiform writing that speaking of the influence on it of compositions of the cuneiform scribal tradition is so speculative as to be almost meaningless. How much else there was that stood in between!

An attempt to bridge this gap is the aim of a subsequent article by the same scholar. The notion expounded there is the linear descent of the Tale of Buluqiya from the Gilgamesh Epic via the Odyssey and the various versions of the Alexander Romance set against a background of a continuity of tradition in Greek, Jewish and Islamic mysticism. In its exposition many contentious observations are made and taken as fact, so that the argument becomes less and less convincing. Dalley's conclusion is that the
ascetic milieu identified for remnants of the Epic of Gilgamesh, first at Qumran and later among the Manichaean, developed through Gnostic groups of late antiquity into new groups during the early Middle Ages. These new groups, Sufis on the one hand and Jewish mystics on the other, used modified versions of the Babylonian Epic [of Gilgamesh] in the Tale of Bulūqiyā. 168

For me, the connection of the poem of Gilgamesh with asceticism is not proven, nor is the story of Bulūqiya properly described as a modified version of the epic. There is more. Dalley goes on to observe that the pattern of construction in certain parts of the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Alexander Romance and the Tale of Bulūqiya seem to reflect the rituals and the stages through which initiates must pass, rather than giving rise to them through exegetical development. 169 Maintaining that ‘points of resemblance between the Odyssey and the Epic of Gilgamesh may be explained as the result of development from a similar background of mystical practices’, Dalley comes to the conclusion, it seems, that the Epic of Gilgamesh and the later works of literature she believes to be versions of it, were composed to be ‘mythical stories symbolizing the stages through which a mystic proceeded toward communion with God’, or, in Gilgamesh’s case, wisdom. As far as Gilgamesh is concerned, I do not believe that the evidence, when placed against the long history of Mesopotamian literature and intellectual culture, lends itself to such a conclusion. One may make a case for the last version of the poem as revealing a path to enlightenment, but the high profile it gives to the notion that wisdom is the prize of life is absent from the second millennium copies and is, in my view, the result of Sin-lēqi-uninnī’s reworking. I see nothing in the Old Babylonian epic that warrants its interpretation as a mystical story. So my final response to Dalley’s hypothesis is much the same as it was to Parpola’s exegesis of the twelve tablets of the series as a ‘mythical path to spiritual growth’. I do not reject outright any notion that the poem came to have for some a symbolic or mystical significance, but such a significance was not in the mind of its original creator.

Even more remote from the cuneiform tradition than the story of Buluqiya is the tale of Shamsun aj-Jabbar (the Mighty Samson), an Arabic folk-tale still current in Iraq in the twentieth century AD. A recent study of this tale in the light of ancient Mesopotamian literature finds several motifs common also to written texts of the cuneiform tradition. 170 At least two of these motifs are found in the Epic of Gilgamesh: (a) a wise man, apparently immor-

tal, who dwells in a land beyond the great sea, and (b) the death and burial of a beloved (in the folk-tale Shamshun’s son). Similarities with the epic are also seen in the type of story and the type of hero:

The story as we have it implies the survival of all these different motifs, of different origins, for thousands of years ... It also implies the persistence of the type of story with these characteristic features, and the type of hero who finally reaches wisdom and so is an example to us all, but also, by handing over the story to us, a teacher. 171

Set against the literary background examined above, this speaks of an intellectual approach to storytelling that persists over many millennia. Individual motifs and patterns of narrative, the building blocks of traditional stories about heroes of bygone days, combine with the typically Middle Eastern cultural preoccupation with learning and wisdom and the typically human preoccupation with death and immortality to produce works of literature in which resound the distant echoes of ancient Babylonian narrative poetry. That is all.

We have seen that the memory of Gilgamesh as a great king of early pagan history endured for centuries after the demise of cuneiform writing. Given the widespread distribution of copies of the written epic in time and space and the probable existence of a counterpart or counterparts in oral traditions, it would be a surprise if the poem had no effect on the literatures of neighbouring peoples and of immediately following cultures. However, from the point of view of the history of the epic it is important to note that none of the texts reviewed above presents real evidence for the wholesale adoption of the story into other languages, for any adaptation of the whole or for the continuing existence in the post-cuneiform periods of the epic that we know. The mention of Gilgamesh in texts of the post-cuneiform era reveal no certain knowledge of the Babylonian epic that celebrated him. They tell us only that Gilgamesh was known to later civilizations as (a) a great king of old and (b) a magic power. These are the very same traditions that are so often reported by the two principal bodies of Babylonian professional knowledge, the lore of the diviner and the lore of the exorcist. Against this background it seems likely that the survival of Gilgamesh’s name into later times owed more to the dissemination of Babylonian practical knowledge (‘science’) than to any influence of the epic itself.

In considering the Babylonian intellectual legacy one must always be aware of what has been lost. There may have been an account of Gilgamesh in Berossus’s third-century narrative of Mesopotamian history (the fragmentary Babylonica), and traditions relating to Gilgamesh may also have been handed down on Aramaic papyri and as oral tales, if not also by other means. The legend transmitted by Aelian may ultimately have stemmed from such a context. 172 And, as we have seen, it is a story very different from that of the cuneiform epic tradition. With regard to the proposed cases of literary continuity discussed above, all one can say is that individual themes and episodes of Gilgamesh, where they are suspected of

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168 Ibid., p. 263.
169 Ibid., p. 263-4.
170 Ibid., p. 244.
172 Ibid., p. 526.
173 It has been suggested that the source of Aelian’s story was Berossus himself. I doubt this, on the grounds that the Babylonica is demonstrably much more accurately informed by ancient Mesopotamian written traditions than Aelian’s passage.
surviving in later literatures, were transformed by a variety of intermediate stages, about which we can know almost nothing, into the very different tales of very different worlds.

To conclude, ancient Greek and medieval Jewish and Arabic literature undoubtedly bore at great remove at least some imprint of the literature that was the greatest achievement of the high civilization of ancient Mesopotamia. In any reconstruction of how the ancient corpus of Babylonian literature could inform the literary creativity of other civilizations it is necessary (a) to allow for the existence of common narrative patterns and motifs and (b) to postulate intermediate landing stages in Aramaic, Phoenician, Hellenistic Greek and probably other languages. It is therefore unfortunate that we know almost nothing of literature in the Levant in the period immediately after the Late Bronze Age, and so little of Aramaic literature in southern Mesopotamia between the era of cuneiform scholarship and the early Arabic writers. It was surely texts of this kind that expressed the concerns of the imperial era of Nineveh and Babylon, and it is texts of this kind that one might expect to have had relevance in the empires of Parthia and the Sasanians. But papyrus does not endure, and one can point to few instances of continuity of old Aramaic literature into the Arabic-speaking world.

A famous exception is the story of Ahiqar, which surfaces in medieval Arabic as the tale of Hayqar the Sage in the Arabian Nights. Perhaps this survival contains a lesson. The ancient version of the story is immediately recognizable in the Arabic. Plot and characters are essentially unchanged. Much the same is true of a much earlier story, the myth of the Flood. Because the Flood episode in Gen. 6–8 matches the older Babylonian myth so well in plot and, particularly, in details, few doubt that Noah’s story is descended from a Mesopotamian account. Had the Epic of Gilgamesh survived as a coherent poem in later periods we might expect it, too, to be as easy to recognize as the stories of Ahiqar and the Flood. If, for example, the Qurman Book of Giants could be shown to report a battle between Gilgamesh and Hūbīs in a cedar forest, if the tale of Buluqiyah told of the hero encountering scorpion-men, racing the sun, puniting to the Waters of Death or succumbing to sleep for six days and seven nights, then this section would have reached a different conclusion. But no such details are recognizable in the texts examined above. My conclusion is simple: the epic that we know died with the cuneiform writing system, along with the large proportion of the traditional scribal literature that was of no practical, scientific or religious use in a world without cuneiform.

The Name of Gilgameš and its History

The conventional rendering of the hero’s name as Gilgameš follows the equation "GIS.GIN.MAS = “gi-il-ga-zi mel" in a Late Babylonian commentary to which attention was first drawn by Pinches in 1890.1 Gilgameš is essentially a variant of the Sumerian Bilgameš (or Bilgameš). The oldest spelling of the name comes from Fara (ancient Šuruppak) in the mid-third millennium.

1. "GIS.BIL.PAP.GI.MES"  
   In the Fara god list: Deimel, Fara II 1 rev. iii 25

This spelling includes a complex of signs, GIS.BIL.PAP (a), that at Fara also occurs as an element of several personal names.2 Related sign-groups are PA.PAP; GIS.BIL (b) and PA.BIL; GA (c). "There is no doubt that sign-groups (b) and (c) signify the Sumerian compound noun pa-bilga, of which (c) is a phonetic spelling. This compound, which also occurs as pa-bilgi, denotes an older kinsman of one’s paternal family.3 The compound comprises (i) pa, 'senior, firstborn' (usually written PAP = PA), a term that often distinguishes the eldest brother from his juniors,4 and (ii) bilgi, 'offshoot, fruit'.5"

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2. Ed. M. Krebernik, “Die Geisterlisten aus Fara,” ZA 76 (1985), p. 182, 7. The signs are set down over two lines: AN GIS.BIL.PAP = GA.MES, where the symbol = denotes the switch from one line to the next.
3. Rarely abbreviated—i.e., note only GIS.PAP (Deimel, Fara III 15 vii 1), GIS.BIL (Jestin, JSJ 87 vii 3), PAP.BIL (Bid. 521 vi 5) and perhaps GIS (Jestin, NTSS 65 + xxx vii 10).
4. For Par/Pa Šes with GIS.PAP.BIL, PAP.BIL; GIS.BIL; and PAP.BIL see F. Pompejani, La prosopografia dei testi precassitici di Fara (Studia semitica 3; Rome, 1987), pp. 59–62 and 204–5, where the sign-group GIS.PAP.BIL is given a value "bil".
5. See the references collected by Å. W. Stiberg, "Zu einigen Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen im Sumerischen", HSJO I, pp. 713–19. For forms with Auslaut in -a note the spellings pa.bil.ta, in Proto-Lu 411 (MS G, MSL XII, p. 70) and pa.bil.ta = abu.bil, 'grandfather', in Lu 34 iv 74a (MSL XII, p. 127).
7. See ibid, pp. 212–19, and PND B, s.v. bil-ga 2.1, ‘(male) descendant’, = parum, sefarm, partum. 'The use of bilgi, 'offshoot, fruit', with reference to a forebear (ibid., s.v. bil-ga 2.2, ‘(male) ancestor’, = abu, bani) is very rare outside lexical texts and can be explained as abbreviation of the more common pa-bilga, 'senior kinsman'. As will become apparent, the syllable /ga/ or /g/ is not always expressed in writing. I leave aside the question of whether the word ended in a consonant cluster, i.e. bilgi. The question of whether the initial consonant of this word was always /b/ is taken up below.
If at Fara PAPGIŠ.BIL. (b) and PAP.BIL.GA (c) spell the compound pa-bilga, what does GIS.BIL.PAP (a) signify? To answer this question one must look at still older sources. On the archaic tablets from Ur, which are several centuries before the Fara documents, there occurs a name written once PAPPAP.GIŠ.BIL.GA (d),

\[ \text{once PAPPAP.BIL.GA (e), but frequently PAPPAP.BIL.GA (f), where x resembles a flattened du (UET II sign list no. 377, hereafter identified as GIS).} \]

This name is undoubtedly Pabilga, presumably an abbreviation of one or more names compounded with this kinship term. Several compound personal names include related sign-groups without PA, namely PAPG.BIL.GA (e) and, omitting GA, the group PAPG.BIL.GA (g). The signs PAP.GIŠ.GIŠ.BIL are often (but not always) written one over the other in a ligature, with a small PA squeezed between BIL above, and GIŠ, or GIŠ, below; thus it seems they were a recognized complex and it would not be misleading often to transliterate BIL + PAP + GIŠ.GIŠ. The variation between GIŠ and GIŠ.GIŠ suggests that the Ur tablets date from a time when sign no. 377 = GIŠ, began to lose its distinctive identity and was being replaced by GIŠ.GIŠ, so that some tablets exhibit the old sign and some the replacement.

13 Provisionally one may conclude that names which contain as one of two or more elements the sign-groups PAPG.BIL.GA (e) and PAP.GIŠ.BIL.GA (g) are compounds of Pabilga. Together with the spelling (e) for Pabilga on its own, these spellings establish that the sign PA was expendable. If so, the sign PAP renders the first element of the compound pa-bilga and should be read pa. It is, in short, a logogram,\n
\[ \text{one that endures in Old Babylonian spellings (fn. 5). Accordingly the Fara spelling 'GIŠ.BIL.PAP.GA.mes represents a name compounded with pa-bilga, namely Pabilga-mes.} \]

This conclusion conflicts with the conventional view that in the sign-group PAPG.BIL.GA (a) the sign PAP signifies what are elsewhere the extra wedges that turn BIL = NAB into BIL (later NE-NAB).\n
The notion that at Fara and Ur PAPG.BIL.GA = GIŠ.BIL = BIL and PAP.GIŠ.BIL.GA = PA.GIŠ.BIL = PA.BIL has been accepted and applied to the transliteration of proper names generally. Further evidence can be brought to bear on this issue:

1) In the earliest scripts, as found on tablets from Urkuk, Jemdet Nasr and Ur, the wedges that distinguish BIL from BIL are not PA, as that sign is known from the same tablets. They appear in a single or double pair of crossed oblique wedges, while PA is a horizontal wedge crossed by an oblique. This is not therefore a case of an infixed sign that could be written independently, like EA X NINDA = GUG; in short, originally BIL was not BIL X PAP, even though it came later to look like such a compound at Fara and Abu Salabikh.

2) Neither in Urkuk nor in Jemdet Nasr writing does BIL become separated into BAP and BIL.\n
14 The same can be said of the later script in use at Early Dynastic Lagas.

3) On the archaic tablets from Ur BIL is written as earlier at Urkuk and Jemdet Nasr, with the additional wedges firmly inside BIL (UET II sign nos. 103c-f); the combination BAP.BIL occurs on them only in the presence of GIS and GIŠ = sign no. 377.\n
15 This functional distinction between BIL and BAP.BIL speaks against their equation.

4) An important variant of the sign-group PAPG.BIL.GA occurs at Ur in the name AMAR-E.PAP.GIŠ.BIL, in which BIL has its usual form, BIL = 'KASKAL.'\n
16 The existence of a sign-group PAP.GIŠ.BIL (b), containing both PAP and the extra wedges that distinguish BIL from BIL, again undermines the conventional view.

5) When the sign-groups in question are first encountered, at Ur, PAP can be written remote from the BIL.\n
17 A search of the very many attestations of Fara personal names containing the sign-group PAPG.BIL.GA brought to light many other instances when PAP and BIL are not adjacent; often they are separated by the GIS,\n
18 but on several occasions by other elements of the name.\n
19 In the Fara spelling of the divine name Pabilsg, PA.BIL.GIŠ.PAP, we find the same phenomenon: the PAP is remote from BIL. Although the placing of signs in Early Dynastic writing is arbitrary it is not expected that individual components of compound signs be set down much apart. Accordingly PAP cannot stand for the extra wedges that distinguish BIL from BIL.
variously as pa₄, pa and pa₄. The sign GI₄ expresses part of the second element phonetically. The sign GISK, originally an entirely different sign that is here transliterated GIS₄, also expresses the second element of the compound. Since it has no value/structure it can only be a logogram for bilga, although one that was evidently restricted to the sign-groups encountered above. Accordingly it is possible to draw up the following list of transliterations of these sign-groups:

(a) GISBI4: PA₄  
(b) PA₄: GISBI4  
(c) PABILGA  
(d) PA₄: GIBILGA  
(e) PA₄: GISBI4  
(f) PA₄: GIBILGA  
(g) PA₄: GIBILGA  
(h) PA₄: GISBI4

In this way the name spelled GISBI4: PA₄: GA₄: MES at Farra is correctly rendered "pa₄: bilga (GIS₄)". MES = Pabigla-Mes. This is a good archaic Sumerian personal name. As already seen, the first element of the name was common in Sumerian names of the middle centuries of the third millennium, and occurs also in the divine name Pabigla, which very plausibly means "Chief senior kinsman". The whole is exactly paralleled by Lugal-mes in the later Sumerian onomasticon. Pabigla-Mes means "the forebear (was) a hero". As a royal name it can be compared with the names of two early rulers of Umma, Pabigla-gi(?) and Pabil-gil-tuk. As will become apparent, the first element of the compound pa₄: bilga was dropped after the Farra period, so that the name became Bilgamas, which might, alternatively, mean "the offspring (is) a hero". Both translations are appropriate for the heroic king of old par excellence but in view of the name's history and the parallel name Lugal-mes, in which the first element clearly refers not to the child but to a figure of honour, I find the

former more convincing. Falkenstein rendered the hero's name with a slightly different nuance of mes, as 'der "Alte" ist ein junger Mann'. A dissenting view, that Bilgamas means "offshoot of the mes-tree", can be rejected on the grounds that nowhere is the name identifiably a genitive compound.

Another spelling of the mid-third millennium occurs in texts from the Lagaš area in the twenty-fourth century BC:

2. GISBI4: GI₄: MES (or "GISBI4: GIM: MES"

At Early Dynastic Girgam as a god in offering lists, topographical names and the personal name Ur-Bilgamas: see G. Soltész, Götternamen, pp. 105-6.

Here the PA₄ is no longer present, signifying that the compound PA₄: BILGA has been abbreviated to BILGA, as also happens in the lexical lists. In the light of the preceding discussion the sign-group GISBI4 is again a combination of logogram and phonetic complement, strictly GIS₄. Later in the third millennium this sign-group and its variant, GISBI₄, could be employed to render the syllable BIL (also BIL₂) outside contexts where the use of the logogram GIS₄ was appropriate—the words BILGA, PA₄: BILGA and the names formed with them, Bilgamas and Pabigla₄—so that one might posit a value for GIS₄ and transliterate the sign groups GISBI₄ and GISBI₄ as GIS₄:MES. This development was limited, however, for the two sign-groups soon lost their place in the syllabic repertoire. It would be as pedantic to insist on such a style of transliteration as to render the sign gis₄ as 'p₄:mes or 'g₄:mes', and just as fussy to look at, and from here on I adopt the conventional transliterations for the sign-group GISBI₄ and BIL, for GISBI₄.

The penultimate sign of spelling no. 2 has been explained variously. Falkenstein read BIL:GIM₁ in his Grammatik und Einleitung but used the transliteration BIL:GIM₁ when he wrote his article on Bilgamas in RLA. Some recent writers have canonized the latter reading as BIL:GIM₁. However, the presence of alternative forms BIL and BIL₁ in some

24 A. Goetze, JCS 1947, p. 254, was thinking similarly when he wrote concerning later spellings of the name that, 'it may well be that GIS₄: MES is ultimately another example [in. compare GIS₄:MES] of an ideogram accompanied by its phonetic spelling, i.e. GIS₄:MES. However, he identified GIS₄ as a logogram and GIS₄ as a phonetic element, GIS₄ otherwise unattested.

25 Note that the equation GIS₄ = MA₂R was reported by Delitzsch, ILI, 2:508; no. 296: 13, is based on a miscopy and must be discounted (Y R 21 no. 4, 39 = STIC II pl. 52).

26 For this name in the Ur III period see Littman, Lexikonkomm., pp. 168 and 316; 'Le roi est un héros'.

27 Essentially as elucidated by S. N. Kramer, The Epic of Gilgamesh and its Sumerian sources, JCS 64 (1944), p. 11, fn. 15: 'his father, the hero.' Others have translated the name similarly, e.g. A. Goetze, JCS 1947, p. 254: 'the heroic ancestor'; E. Sollberger, Problematik des gis₄ (AO 16 (1953), p. 230); 'the origin of the name is, in Beal, *V d. 4. 1. 1. 1. 1. (1960), p. 7: 'the ancestor (or ancient kinsman) in a hero'. Earlier J. A. Jacobson has presented a typologically original etymological interpretation of the name as "man (mes) who is born of a new tree", i.e., "a man who is to become originator of a family" (JS 61, p. 189, fn. 48).

28 Falkenstein quickly dismissed this idea as based on false assumptions (Grammatik, p. 9, fn. 1).

29 Pabigla-gi(ê), king of Umma (or Gilia), dedicated a statue to Enlil: LIGIL₄: PA₄: GIM₁: GESBILGA₁ (AN IN ILI L 1 GI, Steible, JCS 38, p. 265); Pabil-gil-tuk, son of Umma, was defied as Ur-Nanshe of Lagaš: BIL₄: GESBILGA₁ (J. S. Cooper, Studies in Sumerian lapidary inscriptions, ILI, 64-74 (1983), p. 107, iv. 2). The palaeography presides an equation of the two rulers (Cooper, loc. cit.).
Old Babylonian lexical texts (fn. 5) commend Falkenstein’s original reading:38 Either way, the sign GIN is interpreted phonetically, like GA in the Fara spelling (no. 1). Spelling no. 2 from Early Dynastic Lagaš denotes the name Gilgames or Gilgames.

The Lagaš spelling is the first so far recorded that dispenses with the sign PAP in the complex of signs that expresses the name’s first syllable. What we may call the standard Sumerian spelling of the name first appears shortly afterwards. It is essentially the Fara spelling without PAP, and occurs as two variants, with additional wedges on the Bâl (3a) and without (3b). This spelling remained current throughout the long history of cuneiform writing, very occasionally with the third and fourth signs transposed. It occurs in Ur III inscriptions and documents, in the Ur III personal name Ur-Bilgâm and in Old Babylonian copies of Sumerian literary and scholarly texts. After the demise of much of Sumerian literature in the mid-second millennium the old spelling and its variants survived particularly, but not exclusively, in scholarly texts, lexical lists and other bilingual contexts. The following notes mainly report early and late attestations and variants in the Sumerian poems of Gilgames:

3a. 3bîl[gis].BIL].GA.MES, properly 3bîl[gis]53-ga-mes
   A god in pre-Sargonic and later dedicatory inscriptions;39 in the toponymnu du₃-Bilgâm in a pre-Sargonic administrative document from Adab;40 the hero’s name in an Ur III Gilgames text,41 in the majority of manuscripts of the Sumerian poems of Gilgames, perhaps also in Gudea’s cylinders;42 in a Middle Babylonian exorcistic ritual written in a north Mesopotamian (Assyro-Mittannian) script but found at Bogazköy;43 in the fragments of the Babylon epic (MB Emar,44) and in the Weidner god list from Ras Shamra;45 in a Middle Assyrian copy of the great Babylonian god list,46 in later copies of Babylonian scholarly texts.

3b. 3bîl[gis].BIL].GA.MES, properly 3bîl[gis]6-ga-mes
   The hero’s name in a minority of manuscripts of the Sumerian poems, especially those from elsewhere than Nippur;47 in the Old Babylonian personal name 3bîl[ga].mes-ga-mil (Rûfin

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35, 4); in an excerpt of the Babylonian epic on a Middle Babylonian school tablet (MB Nippur); in Middle Assyrian copies of Babylonian scholarly texts;48 in first-millennium copies of such texts.49

Less common variants of the standard spelling also occur, with third and fourth signs transposed:

4a. 3bîl[gis].BIL].MES:ga
   The deified hero in an Ur III account of offerings, BIN III 607 obv. 10

4b. 3bîl[ga].BIL].MES:ga
   The hero’s name in Bilgâm and Huwawa A 66a, MS UrF (Ur)

With GIS omitted:

4c. 3bîl.ga.mes
   On a mace-head of Ur III date, SC 4577,50 and in the colophon of a fragment of Hurrian Gilgames from Bogazköy, KUB VIII 60

4d. 3bîl.ga.mes
   The hero’s name in Bilgâm and Huwawa A 47, MS Sîd (Sippar) and in an unpublished source of Bilgâm and the Bull of Heaven (SC 2652/2 rev. 19)

4e. 3bîl.ga.mi:8
   Entry in the Nippur god list, SLT 125 rev. ii 6' (124 viii 5: [?3bîl].ga.mi[8])

With GA omitted:

4f. 3bîl.mes
   Short spelling in the personal name Ur-Bilgâm in a Sargonic-period legal document BIN VIII 175, 38,51 occurs also on a Middle Babylonian school tablet (MB Nippur); the GA is omitted as in many personal names at Fara and the spelling can properly be rendered 3bîl[ga].mes

4g. 3bîl.mes
   In a Late Babylonian copy of the Standard Babylonian version of the Weidner god list,52 where it may be a mistake for spelling no. 26c

There are also other abbreviated forms of the standard spelling:

'Tel', ZA 80 (1990), pp. 165–205; id. /Tel II/, ZA 81 (1991), pp. 165–233). Note that, for all the difficulties they present, the tablets from Mes-Turan, far from Nippur in the Diyala basin, exhibit only the spelling 3gis.BIL.gua. mes. The single published Ur III manuscript of Gilgames provides no conclusive evidence for the spelling current in pre-OB copies of the Sumerian poems, for the name of the hero is damaged at the point it occurs: Bilgâm and the Bull of Heaven MS Na obv. 81: 3gis.T[x].ga. mes (cf. A. Cagniavus, KAT 87 (1993), p. 102).

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38 Bilingual menology: KAR 218 ii 8 (Sumerian line): omens: KAR 434 rev. 5; both passages are quoted below, in Ch. 3, the sections on sanctuaries and cult and omens mentioning Gilgames.

39 God list: CT 25 28, 8 769, 2–4', passage quoted below, in Ch. 3, the section on Gilgames the god.

40 Edited below, Ch. 3, the section on Gilgames the god.


42 Ash. Mus. 1924–478 ii 2 (coll.). The published copy, OCTET IV 141, is profoundly misleading, having telescoped ll. 1–3 into two. At the beginning of the right-hand column read [?3gis.T[x].ga.L]:3gis.BIL.mes [?l=er ]2-ma-nu. Lines 15–16 of the same column read, against the copy: "hugal. edin.an [a ] /hugal.girla. There is text on the reverse that van der Meer did not copy.
10. gi-il-ga-m[...-87]

Syllabically written Sumerian incantation of the Ea-Marduk type found at Boğazköy but most probably written in Babylonia, KBo XXXVI 13 if 15'

11. 'gal-ga-mi-il, with Hurrian ending 'gal-ga-mi-tu-un'

The hero's name in Hurrian fragments KUB VIII 60 rev. 17', 144:21, KBo VI 33 = KUB VIII 61 i 8'

The spread of cuneiform and the literatures written in it took the Sumerian and Akkadian languages outside the Mesopotamian heartland. Scribes in faraway places, such as Susa in Elam, Hattusa in Anatolia and Ugarit and Emar in Syria, gained some mastery of Akkadian but their understanding of Sumerian was often poor. Though traditional spellings could be used (cf. spelling no. 3a at Hattusa, Emar and Ugarit), there was a tendency to write Sumerian words and names syllabically (nos. 6, 10–11, later nos. 18–20). The abbreviated Gelga (no. 7) shows that syllabic writings were also current in Babylonia itself.

All these phonetic renderings of the name show that the form of the name familiar to the Late Babylonian commentary (no. 24, gi-il-ga-mes) and to post-cuneiform scholars (no. 27, gilgams etc.) was already established by the early second millennium. The several phonetic differences exhibited by these spellings in transliteration need comment. Two are mirages. First, the apparent difference in the final consonants of the names normalized as Bilgames and Gilgameš is generated by modern orthographic traditions and very probably reflects no ancient reality. Second, the vowel /a/ in the first syllable of Hurrian spelling no. 11 can best be explained by reference to a western orthographic tradition whereby signs CnC can have the value C̣ (and vice versa). The sign ṣa can thereby be given the value gil.<br>

The change in the initial consonant from bilabilial /b/ to velar /g/ is real, however. It is explainable in terms of Sumerian phonology, where the two plosives /b/ and /g/ occur as variants. In Ablaut this variation occurs in a limited environment, usually where the consonant is followed by /ar/ or /an/. However, one example of /bi-/ /gir/ is known and a certain case of the variation /bi-/ /gir/ is attested by a phonetic spelling in an Ur III legal document, where nam.gi,la is written for nam.iba, 'position of heir'. On these grounds it is fully maš at contemporaneous Susa, it seems wise to discount the different writings of the PN Tasišpēlimamu as evidence for a pronunciation of the name of Gilgameš.

62 For a transition of this text see A. Caviglia, RAE 87 (1993), pp. 110, fn. 22.

63 MDP XVIII 230 = XXII 41, 2; XXII 62, 21. The Elamite name ar-as-po-ge-maš, ar-il-ge-im-maš, ar-ge-qi-im-maš, qe-ge-qi-im-maš, ar-il-ge-la-qim-maš, to which references were first collected by V. Scheil, MDP XXII, 85, has been understood to mean 'Pêginam is the father', in which 'Pêginam' was identified as a phonetic rendering of Gilgames. However, at least two Elamite scholars have rejected this analysis in favour of different etymologies. W. Hinrichs understands the name to mean: 'Be gladness the father' (Zd 58 (1967), p. 77: 'Den Vater begrüsst er?'); R. Zadok breaks the name into ana, 'father', pri, 'possibly = pki—maintain, restore' and kimi for the geographical name Kimi (The Elamite Onomasticon (Naples, 1984), nos. 18, 190 and 181). For this reason, and because we already have the very different spelling gi-il-ga-
conceivable that the word written giš-bil-ši, conventionally understood as bīlga, may have existed as gīlgas in an alternative or dialect form, thus allowing a form Gīlgas alongside Bilgūmes even in the third millennium.\(^{46}\)

Spelling no. 8, newly identified by Cavigneaux in an Emarian context but unfortunately incomplete, looks as if it might contain a phonetic complement, i.e. *gīl-ga*-gīl. It supports the notion of an alternative pronunciation of the name in Sumerian. However, it is also possible that it should be explained as an error arising from confusion of *gīl-bil-ši, etc.* with *gīl-ši* = Gīl-biš, the fire god.

Gīlgas is the form of the name adopted by speakers of Akkadian, as revealed by the phonetic spellings in the oldest Akkadian contexts, which exhibit an initial velar (nos. 6–7). Names, in particular, often undergo phonetic change when transferred from one language to another (cf. Ulysses–Ulysses). In this view Gīlgas was, in the late third millennium, the literary pronunciation of the name, current in curricular and scribal circles, and Gīlgas the form heard on the street. Accordingly Gīlgas is the form expected in the Old Babylonian Akkadian epic texts of the eighteenth century, for these are certainly closer to their popular, oral roots than the traditional Sumerian poems copied out in the same period.

Spelling no. 9 is the oldest of the many spellings that write the first syllable with gīš and no bil or bit. and also end in *māš.* These become common later in the second millennium, as can be seen from the variety of writings of the name first attested on tablets of the Late Bronze Age:

12. *gīš-gim-maš*
   Defined in a mid-second-millennium copy of *azī ... pād* incantation, BM 54716 rev. 14,\(^{43}\) the common spelling of the hero's name at Hattusa: MB Boğut, the majority of Hittite Gīlgas fragments, and Hurrian fragment KB 129 XIX 124

Variants of this spelling are:\(^{42}\)

12a. *gīš-gim*
   The hero's name in Hittite fragment KB 147 X 47d iv 1, presumably in error for spelling no. 12

\(^{46}\) In this regard note the well-known ambivalence of the signs bit and ne-šišig, which have values bit : gīš bit, and bit : gīš bit (cf. Wilcke, op. cit., p. 37). By analogy with doubts such as sumun : sun, nimin : nimū-tekar : sun one might propose gūl and gīš, for bit and bit. There is in fact no explicit evidence that the word for 'offshoot' written giš-bil.ša was pronounced gīšga not gīlgas. Proto-Dārīs gives *gīš* : giš bit, *gīš-giš* : giš giš bit, *gīš-giš-ši* : giš giš giš bit, *gīš-giš-ša* : giš giš giš; in *gīš-giš-ša,* 'offshoot, young (tree), ... fruit,' where the vital gloss is conventionally restored bit-ša (e.g. CAD II, p. 144; PSSD, p. 153). Other evidence comes from LuVA(7) 1-3 (MSL VII.13, p. 140); *gīš* : giš bit, *gīš-giš* : giš giš bit, *gīš-giš-ša* : giš giš giš bit, *gīš-giš-ša* : giš giš giš bit, *gīš-giš-ša* : giš giš giš in the meaning 'offshoot'. This *gīš* would then be a variant spelling of *gīš-ga-giš.*

\(^{43}\) Ed. W. G. Lambert, 'A rare exorcistic fragment', in T. Atuesch (ed.), Jacobson Mem. (H.) (Greveningen, 2002); I thank Lambert for making this article available to me in manuscript. Lambert writes, 'it would appear that this is a late Old Babylonian or early Cassite-period tablet, and favours the later date on grounds of palaeography. However, the fragment is too small to offer much palaeographic evidence, and there are too few North Babylonian tablets certainly from the early Cassite period that comparison cannot yield definite results. The piece looks typically Old Babylonian (cf. Leichty, Cassite VI, p. 154): Those other second-millennium literary tablets that have been identified in this collection (82-22) hold texts typical of the Old Babylonian scribal curriculum.

\(^{42}\) The intriguing *gīš-giš-giš* listed by Deimel, SL IV, p. 58, no. 562-61: is a mirage.

12b. *gīš-pān-maš*
   The hero's name in a minority of Hittite Gīlgas fragments and in Hittite birth-omen tablet KB 129 XII 34 iii 13.

12c. *pān-maš*
   The hero's name in MB Megiddo.

   The hero's name in MB Ur, early Neo-Assyrian MS *x* (Aššur) and in all first-millennium copies of the Standard Babylonian epic. Outside the epic it occurs first in Middle Assyrian copies of Babylonian scholarly texts,\(^{43}\) and is found *passim* in first-millennium copies of such texts.

14. *gīš-lim-bar-ru*
   In the Sumerian column of *Hb* XX–XXII Ras Shamra A iv 35, opposite no. 18 (passage quoted in Chapter 3, the sub-section on Digging wells).

15. *gīš-tuk-maš*
   In the Sumerian column of *Hb* XXII Emar 124 (coll.), opposite no. 20; in the conventionally written Sumerian column of the Poem of Early Rulers from Emar, opposite nos. 16 and 19 (Arnaud, Emar VI/4 767, 13).\(^{44}\)

16. *māš-giš-giš-maš-sū*
   The phonetic rendering of no. 15 in the syllabic Sumerian column of the same text.

17. *gīš-tuk*
   An abbreviation of no. 15 found in early Neo-Assyrian sources of the epic, Assyrian MSS *y* (Aššur) and *z* (Nimrud).

18. *gūl-ga-meš* (or *gūl-ga-meš*)
   In the Akkadian column of *Hb* XX–XXII Ras Shamra A iv 35, opposite no. 14.

19. *hi-il-ga-meš*
   In the Akkadian column of the Poem of Early Rulers from Emar, opposite nos. 15–16

20. *hi-il-ga-meš*
   In the Akkadian column of *Hb* XXII Emar 124, opposite no. 15

The syllabic spellings nos. 18–20 bear witness to the pronunciation of the name already seen in the early Proto-Sinaitic period, but with the omission of an unvoiced initial consonant, Kīlgān. This variant may have already occurred much earlier in the second millennium at Kanīn (no. 6) and is perhaps a north-western phenomenon. Nevertheless, the Babylonians often pronounced Sumerian *gūl* as *kīl* and it would be no surprise if the name could be pronounced Kīlgān in Babylonia, too.

Alongside these syllabic spellings other writings were used that are less obviously exact renderings of the name. These are the spellings that, like no. 9, display initial *gūl* and final
INTRODUCTION

The name Gilgamesh and its history

The diversity of spelling in the Neo-Sumerian documents has recently been studied by Wülcker, *BAW* 2000/VI, pp. 34-49.

63 Though the sign Munas has no accepted value in any cuneiform writing, a vestige of such a pronunciation may survive in the lexical list A, in which the words mas and mal have an area of meaning in common. **mwm* = *mi-* 'young man'; *na-tu-* 'prince', *ma-ram* 'tun' (MSL XIV, p. 344, II 3, 15-19) and **mm* = *ma-ri-te-du* 'leader', *ma-ram* 'tun'. (ibid., p. 227, IV 46 93, 97). Others interpret the Sumerian part of the equation mal = *ma-ram* 'tun' differently, as a variant of *mar* 'call', or *ma-ri* 'goat' (CAD M1, p. 308: 'young (of goat or sheep'). This seems an explanation born of desperation.

64 A clear example in the Fara PNs that are compounded with *bilga* is *pal-gula-um* once spelled *gism-kirinnu* (Dessau, *Fara* III 15 vii 1).

various spellings of Gilgamesh with *gi* and no *bi* or *bi* fit the same pattern. In the mid-second millennium they are most typical of the peripheral regions (gi-im-ma, gi-*pan-*ma, gi-isa-tuk-ma, gi-ki-ba-ra, gi-gim-ma) but appear also in Babylonia (gi-im-ma and gi-gim-ma). Older evidence for such spellings comes from Susa (gi-ga-ma), not from Babylonia proper, but in what are essentially well-written Babylonian texts there is no reason why this has to be a local coinage. However, like en-ki-du, gi-im-ma is not a spelling that conforms with the Old Babylonian syllabary. Probably we should reckon with the idea that it is an old-fashioned spelling of late third-millennium origin.

We have seen that the late Old Babylonian or Kassite-period spelling gi-im-ma (no. 9) looks like a simple variant of gi-ga-ma. The spelling gi-im-ga-ma (no. 13), which surfaces in Middle Babylonian, now comes into the picture. We have already met phonetic use of the sign *gim* in the pre-Sargonic spelling bi-ge-gim-ma (no. 2). Previous commentators thought it unlikely that the spelling gi-im-ma had any direct connection with this ancient writing. However, both of them considered it a first-millennium phenomenon. We now know that this writing is attested in a Middle Assyrian copy of a Babylonian scholarly text. The gap is thus narrowed; it is worth seeking evidence that undermines their objections further.

Though a phonetic use of the *gim* sign for the syllable *gal* is indeed unknown in the second millennium, glosses in Old Babylonian lexical texts show that the sign was known to have a pronunciation *gi/iz/m*. Here a new piece of evidence can be adduced. The old Nippur month name Addar was conventionally written *i-se.ki.nu*. A variant writing is now known to have been in use in south Mesopotamia in the Isin-Larsa period, namely *i-se.gi.nu*. *The* use of the sign *gim* for the sound *ki* in a Sumerian word shows that a pronunciation of *gim* as *gim/iz/mi/*, etc. existed outside scholarly contexts. Accordingly, the sign *gim* in the spelling gi-im-ma is phonetic and the whole is a variant of gi-im-ma that uses a rare value. It may have arisen as an Old or early Middle Babylonian coinage, but one cannot exclude a connection with the Lagaš orthography. Scribes were often exposed to old documents and some must have tried to learn from them and imitate them.

This brings us to the spellings gi-tuk-ma (no. 15) and gi-ki-ba-ra (no. 14), so far found in Syrian tablets of the Late Bronze Age. The spelling gi-tuk-ma at Emar, previously emended to gi-kit-ma, has to be taken at face value now that we have early Neo-Assyrian manuscripts of Gilgamesh that use the sign group gi-tuk to write the hero’s name, for it is obvious that this sign group is an abbreviation of gi-tuk-ma. Where the
as handed down at Emar, that the name in the Sumerian version of the line was not to be pronounced as in the Akkadian version. If the scribe is to be believed it was instead pronounced Ki'masu (spelling no. 16). 

I have earlier proposed that the Syrian writings GIS-TUK-maš and GIS-KIN-bar-ru are derived from a putative spelling *GIS-KIN-maš, to be read *GIS-QI-maš or *GIS-KIN-maš. In my view the Emar scribe who wrote ki-il-mas-su as an aid to reading GIS-TUK-maš is guilty of haplography; what he meant to write was ki-il-ki-mas-su. Whether or not the emendation is accepted, his spelling of the first syllable as ḫiš indicates that in the late second millennium, in Syria if not elsewhere, spellings with GIS and no BIŠ or BIŠ were understood to use the sign GIS for its common phonetic value, geš. Clearly, somewhere in the long history of transmission the original logographic function of GIS had been forgotten and scribes had made the assumption that this sign, like those that followed it, was syllabic. The implication is that, alongside Bilgamas and Gilgamish, there arose as a result of this false understanding of the written name a pronunciation Gilgamaš, Gilgimmāš (unvoiced Kīkilmaš, Kīkilmaš). It is quite conceivable that the first syllable of Gilgammel was pronounced igIš (or kIšIš) not only at Emar but, at some time, somewhere, also in south Mesopotamia. On the evidence currently available it would be unwise to come to a dogmatic conclusion on this question. In this book I transliterate GIS-gin-maš etc., but admit that the evidence from Emar may not bear witness to an isolated phenomenon.

The mid- to late second millennium is remarkable for the abundance of different spellings of the name of Gilgames that are attested in texts written then. As we shall see in Chapter 4, the same can be said in relation to Enkidu’s name. This phenomenon may well stem from the climate of orthographic variety that characterized scribal culture of the mid-second millennium. It is clear that some scribes of the period enjoyed employing cryptic and unusual orthographies. The Sumerian used in Kassite-period seal inscriptions and in royal inscriptions from the Kassite and Second Isin dynasties is notable for rechewed words and spellings. From such a climate of scribal virtuosity arose, for example, the spelling “nin.ezu. na for Ninisima” and, with each component of the name of Marduk’s temple at Babylon carefully substituted by a synonym, ḫIš.gIš for ṭa.sc. Il. Another possible feature of this period is the “back-translation” of Akkadian names into a kind of erudite and artificial Sumerian, as exemplified by entries in the “linguistic” list of scribal ancestors (V R 44 ii–iii) and by the tale of Ninurta-paṣ-qadu’s Dog-Bite. Unusual spelling is not confined to Babylonia, for royal scribes of a twelfth-century Assyrian vassal state use the writing KU₂₄ for a mār Mari, ‘the land of Mari’.

85 As an incidental observation one may remark that many early twenty-century scholars supposed that the hero’s name could take the form Gilgimmal, including A. Ungnad, Das Gilgamesch-Epos (Göttingen, 1911), p. 76; Friedrich, ZA 39 (1930), p. 33; and Jastrow and Clay, YOR IV 3, p. 36.
Such a scribal culture produces a delight in rare and archaic phonetic values (cf. gīn = gīn), but it also throws up more peculiar orthographies. There is now the odd spelling gis-gal-tuk to consider. As matters now stand this spelling of Gilgamesh’s name first appears in a twelfth-century Assyria, though in a good Babylonian text:

21. [gis-gal-tuk, etc.]

In An = Aaum VI 285, copy Liike, God-List, pl. 40, 124; the restoration follows the name of Gilgamesh’s boat in Il IV 341–2: *mā.gis.kal.tuk, *mā.gis.tuk, *mā *gis.gal.tuk (full passages quoted below, Chapter 3, the section on Gilgamesh the god)

Related spellings occur in first-millennium texts:

22. [g(ī)š] k.Tuk

In An = Aaum VI 284a, copy CT 25 28, K 7659, 3’ (full passage quoted below, Chapter 3, the section on Gilgamesh the god)

23. kal.ga.imın = *bīl.ga.mes, muqaddū, āliš ṣūna

In CT 18 30 iv 6–8, a group vocabulary commenting on names in the Gilgamesh legends (full passage quoted below, Chapter 3, the section on Crossing the ocean)

Spellings nos. 21–2 can hardly be dissociated from the spelling gis-tuk-maš (no. 15) and the abbreviated gis-tuk (no. 17). The existence of further compounds of GIS and TUK suggests deliberate manipulation of the spelling. In ancient cuneiform scholarship the writing of a name can be adapted to impart information about the nature and function of its bearer. In this way spellings that include the signs GIS and TUK might have been favoured (if not coined) as a scholarly exercise in revealing a characteristic of the hero Gilgamesh for which he became celebrated in the Babylonian epic tradition: he was a man of extraordinary wisdom.41 The spelling gis-kal-tuk (no. 21) offers the possibility of an additional exegesis that makes allusion to the hero’s strength as well as his wisdom.42 It remains possible, however, that these spellings have other origins. Since GIS = bīla, the sequence of signs GIS+kal.tuk can be understood as a name Bīla-kaltuk, a close parallel to Pabil-gal-tuk, the Early Dynastic ruler of Umma whose existence is recorded in an inscription of Ur-Nanše of Lagas.43 On the other hand, the sign kal in GIS-kal-tuk recalls the western spellings gal-ga-mi-il (no. 11) and gal-ga-meš (no. 18); perhaps it glosses GIS.

The spelling kal.gi.ima.in (no. 23) is a writing even more recherché than GIS-kal-tuk (no. 21). Though both may incorporate phonetic elements from the repertoire of second-millennium spellings, they are so speculative in intent as to reflect an actual pronunciation no longer. It is better to consider them not as spellings of the name Gilgamesh but as independent names of the hero. The name kal.gi.ima.in probably signifies ‘strong of all’, where imın ‘seven’, is a symbolic number. The group vocabulary in which the name is equated with Gilgamesh has this to say about imın:

41 The signs GIS-tuk evoke the Sumerian word galag, written gis-tuk, etc., meaning ‘ear; understanding, wisdom’ (azwa, šeratu) and also ‘wise, perceptive’ (ašzur); cf. also Sumerian GIS—tuku, ‘to hear’.
42 Sumerian kal(es), ‘strong’ (dānum) and tuk(e), ‘have, acquire’ (šas, naš).
43 See above, fn. 28. I owe this observation to W. G. Lambert.

Accordingly, one might also render kal.gi.ima.in as ‘mighty one of Uruk’, but a geographical qualification does not suit the name’s simultaneous equation with muqaddaš, ‘warrior’, and āliš pūna, ‘leader’, and should probably be discounted. Whatever the interpretation of imın, it is Gilgamesh’s physical prowess that is at issue.

The principle noted above, that the written components of a name imparted knowledge about the nature of its holder, perhaps explains why the spelling gis-gim-maš, with its rare phonetic use of the sign GIS, became the standard first-millennium writing. Here again it is instructive to consider the writing of Enkidu’s name. An old phonetic spelling, en-ki-dū, became standard probably because it was susceptible to an interpretation that could not be derived from the traditional, logographic spelling en.ki.dug (see Chapter 4). Maybe it was felt that Gilgamesh’s name was best open to etymological exegesis when it was spelled GIS-gim-MAŠ (TUN–maš). Enquiries have already been made in this direction. Because the sign tūn (GIS) means ‘axe’, some have seen in this spelling an allusion to the dream in which Gilgamesh saw an axe symbolizing Enkidu.44 Two recent discussions have sought to find other meanings in it. Saporetti draws attention to the Sumerian expression gis-tūn bar, ‘to cleave wood with an axe’, which he sees as lying behind the entire spelling.45 Parpola looks for a deeper meaning. In his view the spelling hides an ‘encoded message’ identifying the hero with the sacred tree, viz. the one who matched [MAŠ] the tree [GIS] of balance [GIS].46 Certainly it is not wrong to scan ancient writing for different levels of meaning, obvious and cryptic. It has already been remarked that Babylonian scholars themselves were fond of the speculative interpretation of names in particular. This was not a trivial pursuit but a means of revealing profound truth about the nature and function of deities and their attributes. Some of their esoteric scholarly lore was committed to writing, but it may be that much of it will always remain hidden from us because it was passed down orally as secret knowledge. In the absence of ancient corroborative such imaginative hypotheses as Saporetti’s and, especially, Parpola’s are as difficult to disprove as prove. But I cannot allow that the spelling GIS-gim-maš was deliberately coined for speculative purpose. Placed in the company of the several other spellings that share one or other of its features (initial GIS, second syllable representing /gal/, /gim/ or /kūn/, third syllable maš instead of maš), the writing GIS-gim-maš has

44 e.g., Bühl, RLA III, p. 370. His further comment, ‘die mögliche Bedeutung der jüngeren Schreibung: gis-gim-maš (= GIS-tūn-maš) als die “Zwillingsskat” oder “Doppelakt” (Labrys): ein Bild unverrücklicher Freundschaft’, is even more speculative and unconvincing.
its origin in old traditions of spelling. If it was subject to speculative etymology and cryptography, that was a secondary development.

Spelling no. 15 was very common in the first millennium. Less common writings of the name on tablets of first-millennium date have been noted above as spellings nos. 3a–b, 4g, 17 and 22–3. Note also nos. 24–6. 87

24. "gi-il-gaš' mes\(^3\)
   In the Late Babylonian commentary, CT 41 43, 54595 obv. 48

25a. gaš.sag.[m]es\(^2\)
   In a schoolboy's copy of the SB Weidner god list from Babylon: Cavignaux, Textes scolaires, pp. 96 and 183, 201: 79.B.1/207 + 1598

25b. gül.sag[.m]es
   SB Weidner god list: ibid., 79.B.1/221

26a. biš.sag[.m]es
   SB Weidner god list: ibid., 79.B.1/221

The form Bilsamges is attested in first-millennium copies of other texts, as well as in archival documents from seventh-century Uruk and Ashur:

26b. bil(giš.giš), sag.mes
   Ubdalag: V: CT 16 13 ii 42; as a personal name in Neo-Assyrian, SAA XIV 70 rev. 1, 71 rev. 4 (where it is missread as "gül-giš-šak-šid"

26c. bil[.gül].sag[.m]es
   Omen apedoses, K 6539, 4 and 10; NA MS of the litany Urnamma-rabbi X, 49 NB land register from Uruk, Pohl, Rechtskunsten II no. 2, 22

26d. bil[.gül].sag.gi.mes

26e. bil(giš.giš), gaš.sag[.m]es

Spelling no. 24 is the writing that established the common pronunciation of the hero's name. The two variants collected under no. 25 and at least four of the five collected under

87 The supposed presence of Gilgames' name in a Neo-Assyrian source of Nabûtu XXIII (CT 12 50 i 17'), as read by e.g. Falkenstein, RLA III, p. 358, has proved to be a phantom (see now MSL XVI, p. 213, 54: gis.min.bar [i] = *giš-šu-nam). Also to be discounted is Esel's emendation of PBS 52 112, 68 (Gatting III) to read "biš-gaš-[m]-šid ([ArOr 21, p. 396). The name has been collated by W. G. Lambert as "gul-giš" (Jubeh Mem. 86, p. 207, 76), and recollated by me with the same result.

88 See above, fn. 1.

89 The 79.B.1 tablets, from the temple of Nabû šarîb in Babylon and now in the Iraq Museum, were not available for collation at the time of asking.

90 K 3327 = 46555 14; copy by L. Finkel in M. Cavignaux, Atra Or 1 (1983), p. 46. A.L. B. fragment of the Weidner god list from Kal may have meant to use this spelling rather than no. 4g, p.s.

91 Last sign collated by P. A. Beaulieu, 'A land grant on a cylinder seal and Assurbanipal's Babylonian policy', in S. Graziani (ed.), Studi sul vicino oriente antico dedicati alla memoria di Luigi Cagni (Naples, 2000), p. 32. Beaulieu's emendation of the whole to "gül-bal-šu(m).gis is unnecessary in the light of the several other first-millennium spellings with 500 added here. An older false codition is "spa-bal-sag-mes, as given by Falkenstein, Topographie, p. 48, and repeated by Coquellekeš, Paléolinguae, p. 212.

no. 26 have in common the old final element mes. In preferring bil, giš, and 500, bil to giš, spelling no. 26 also harks back to an older way of writing the name. This spelling is already traditional, for where there are duplicate manuscripts of the texts in question they all use one or other version of it. These points show that new writings of the name continued to be coined in the first millennium, but they were self-consciously archaic, inspired less by the conventions of the second millennium than by those of the third. The presence of sag as the middle element of spellings nos. 25–6 is an innovation, however, that seeks to associate Gilgamesh with the god Pabilsag. 89

Traditions relating to Gilgamesh spread into other literatures and after the death of cuneiform writing were kept alive in various languages (see chapter 1, the section on the Epic of Gilgamesh outside the cuneiform tradition). The spellings of the name so far attested in the post-cuneiform traditions are as follows:

27. gilmūs, var. gilmūs
   In the Aramaic version of the Book of Giants (c. 50 BC, Qumran) 89

28. Flīyamōs
   In Aelian, De natūra animalium xii 21 (fl. AD 200)

29a. gnmw, var. gnmgw

29b. gnmw, var. gmnw
   Syriac spellings of two post-Hiluvian kings in the writings of the Nestorian Theodor bar Konai (fl. eighth century AD); 89 all are probably corruptions of an original *gilmus

30. Jīmūs, var. Jīmīs
   Arabic spellings in incantations of Manichaean inspiration collected by Al-Suyūti, Kitāb al-Rahma fī l-tibb wa-l-bīmn (fifteenth century AD) 89

These spellings all report, more or less faithfully but with some corruption or phonetic adjustment according to language, the pronunciation Gilgamesh.

It has been maintained that the Buluqīya of the Arabian Nights is a version of the name Gilgamesh in its Sumerian form as Bilsagme. 89 The fact that all the post-cuneiform spellings of the name are uniform in rendering the opening consonant as [g'] (Arabic [j]) shows that the form Bilsagme was not current in the spoken language of the late first millennium BC, and makes such a view improbable.

According to the rules that govern the placing of stress in Babylonian Akkadian—we know nothing of Sumerian and should be wary of imposing a Babylonian accent on the Assyrians—the name Gilgamesh will be stressed on the middle syllable, Gilgamesh, for it often
appears at the end of lines of poetry and should therefore fit the metrical pattern known to conclude the poetic line, in which the penultimate syllable bears stress. Accordingly, forms of the name with an open middle syllable should be rendered with a long middle vowel, Gilgāmeš, Kilgāmeš, Kiškimaš. Forms with closed middle syllables, such as Gilgimmal and putative Gilgimmal, will naturally take stress on the penultimate syllable.

Von Soden formerly maintained that proper nouns were exempt from this rule but later changed his mind and proposed the stress Gilgāmeš (ZA 71 (1981), p. 170). Hecker included Gilgamel in a selected list of proper nouns that he believed to break the rule of penultimate stress (Untersuchungen, pp. 102–3). However, he does not substantiate the implication of his list that, for example, Enkidu is stressed Enkidū or Enkidū but not Enkidu. In this book I have assumed that proper nouns do fit the pattern of penultimate stress when they appear at the line's end, but I recognize that further study is needed.

Note that CAD now routinely normalizes the name as Gilgāmeš. In my experience native speakers of Arabic invariably pronounce the middle syllable as long, but in the West the pronunciation Gilgamel is so entrenched that it probably cannot be shifted. A similar fate has been suffered by Ulysses, which the English like to pronounce Yool-ee-sees.

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3

Literary, Historical and Religious Traditions about GILGAMESH

It is obvious from the data collected in the previous chapter that the poems that relate the epic deeds of Gilgamiš in Sumerian and Akkadian are far from the only sources of knowledge about this hero. As a mighty king of old and a god of the Netherworld, Gilgamiš appears in a wide variety of ancient Mesopotamian texts and in some Babylonian and Assyrian art. Some account of the traditions that relate to him in the long history of ancient Mesopotamian civilization will be given in this chapter.

The ancient documents that record the supposed existence in history of an early king called Gilgamesh are not contemporaneous. They belong to later scribal tradition and are inseparable from it. The only exception is the monumental inscription of an Old Babylonian ruler that cites Gilgamesh as a former builder of the wall of Uruk. Though this text, too, probably relies for that information on literary tradition rather than hard evidence, it will be discussed first. There is no doubt, however, that literary texts can contain historical truths, and not only the epic narratives of early kings do so. Literature and history are interwoven in our sources and so it is desirable, as well as practical, next to treat together the traditions relating to Gilgamesh as hero and king. Finally, this chapter will consider the deified Gilgamesh and the role he was given in Netherworld theology.

GILGAMESH AND THE WALL OF URUK

The literary frame of the Standard Babylonian epic is the famous exhortation to climb on to Uruk’s walls, voiced in the poem’s prologue by the narrator to his audience and at its conclusion by the hero to his companion, Ur šanabi. In the prologue the poet claims the walls as Gilgamesh’s handiwork, while at the same time relating that its foundations were laid by the Seven Sages, primeval beings who brought to man the arts of civilization. This view reflects an old tradition in which Uruk was considered (rightly) the cradle of early civilization. Its

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The prologue of the Standard Babylonian epic extols the hero as one who travelled far and wide and summarizes his heroic career as a great feat of exploration. It mentions three achievements especially: that he opened passages over the mountains, that he dug wells in the uplands, and that he crossed the oceans in search of Utu-napišti (SB I 37-44). These exploits, amply recorded in the later epic, have left their mark elsewhere in the literary traditions of Babylonia.

2 See Ch. 10, the introduction to SB Tablet I.

INTRODUCTION

Syrian city-states. That one source of the Akkadian kings’ cedar was Mount Amanus is stated in another inscription of Narām-Sin and confirmed by the newly published Old Assyrian text about Sargon. A year-name of Narām-Sin reports his felling of cedar in Lebanon, too. Gudea’s temple of Ningirsu was roofed with beams rafted to Sumer both from Makkαn and Meluḫiya in the east and from ‘Amanus, the Cedar Mountain’, in the west. In the second millennium Yaḥdun-Lim of Mari felled cedar near the Mediterranean shore, either on Amanus or on Lebanon. Šamši-Adad I of Assyria reports a visit to Lebanon, following which he was able to roof the temple of Enlil at Assur with cedar. Several later Assyrian kings report fetching timber from Lebanon more explicitly, beginning with Tiglath-pileser I at the end of the second millennium, and Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon repeatedly mentions the exploitation of the forests of both mountains. An important new detail provided by one of the Old Babylonian tablets now in Norway is that, on their journey to the Cedar Forest, Gilgamesh and Enkidu travel the road to the ‘land of Ebla’, a location that the later text alters to ‘Mount Lebanon’. Mention of Ebla recalls the landscape made part of heroic narrative by Sargon and Narām-Sin and suggests very strongly that the tale of the heroes’ expedition to the mountains of the far north-west was informed by the memory of historical events in the reigns of those kings.

Digging wells

Gilgamesh’s association with wells and digging them is most explicitly seen in the late account of the journey to the Cedar Forest, when at each camping place he digs a well, as the text puts it, ‘facing the sun’. The Old Babylonian Yale tablet reveals that in doing so Gilgamesh is carrying out the instructions of the elders of Urbuk, and that the purpose of this well is to provide water to fill his drinking bottles and to pour in libation to his guardians, the Sun God Šamaš and the deified Lugalbanda. Another Old Babylonian tablet records that, in order to survive while wandering in the wilderness, Gilgamesh dug wells ‘that never existed before’. In these passages ‘well’ means only a hole that reaches as far as the groundwater, not an elaborate construction.

The association between the hero and wells found expression outside the epic in the geographical lists of Ḫh XXII, in which the ‘well of Gilgamesh’ routinely follows the ‘well of Sargon’. The late version of this text is preceded by three forerunners:

11 Sargon inscription no. 11, ed. Frayne, RIME 2, pp. 28–9; Narām-Sin inscription 5, ed. Frayne, RIME 2, p. 133.
15 Yaḥdun-Lim brick inscription 52–9, ed. Frayne, RIME 4, p. 606.
16 Šamši-Adad inscription 1, ed. Grayson, RIME 41, pp. 48–51.
18 OB SChayen, 26, SB IV 4 etc.
19 Sc already Westenholz, OStP 2, p. 41.
20 SB IV 38–9 and parallels.
21 OB III 268–71.
22 OB VA + BM (3) 3’, 4’.

ID pū lugal-gi- na
ID (pū) gū[š].šu-ga. mes?


[pū b]u-gal-gi- na = šar-ru-ub-ki
[pū gū][š].šu-ga. meš = gū.šu-ga. meš

Ras Shamra Ḫh XX-XXII, Recension A: MSL XI, p. 49, iv 34–5

[pū ]lugal-gi.(na) = bu-ur-ti šar-ru-ki
[pū gū][š].šu-ga. meš = bu-ur-ti ki-il-ga- meš

Emar Ḫh XXII 133–4’ (coll.); cf. D. Arnaud, Emar VI 1 (1973), 559

[pū lugal-gi- na = min [Šarru-ka-
[pū gū][š].šu-ga. meš = min [Gilgames]

SB Ḫh XXII (LB XXIII): von Weiher, Urk. III 114A iv 17–18

The wells dug on the way to the Cedar Forest were not the only candidates for this ‘well of Gilgamesh’. Another possibility is that the entry refers to the legendary pool where Gilgamesh famously lost the magic plant of rejuvenation as he returned to Urbuk. Though he did not dig it himself, there was certainly reason to associate it with him. Alternatively it might refer to something outside the epic traditions.

Just such an association of Gilgamesh with wells is found in a Standard Babylonian ritual that includes the instruction bērūnibū (pū šul ga. mes, tāqabbū [dugš], ‘you say “Well of Gilgamesh”’). This invocation is the last item of preparation in opening up a new well before the actual digging starts, and signifies either that the well-digger simply says these two words aloud or, less probably, that he recites an incantation beginning with this phrase. Either way, the invocation of Gilgamesh in this context indicates that the hero’s association with wells was traditional. As the archetype of all successful well-diggers, mention of his name would bring good luck to the enterprise. There is another connection: before the first water to issue from the new well is drunk, some must be poured in libation to Šamaš, to the Anunnaki and to the ghosts of one’s kith and kin. The well is a point of contact with the Netherworld, whose authorities and mortal inhabitants must be appeased lest they resent the intrusion. The well itself belongs to Gilgamesh in his capacity as ruler of the Netherworld.

Crossing the ocean

In the epic the crossing of the ocean at the end of the world is Gilgamesh’s final exploit, for it led to his meeting with Utu-napišti and the end of his quest. According to the old prologue

23 Read from the fragments Arnaud, Emar VI/2 Mak 74187 ii 20’ + VI/1 74120a ii 14’ and VI/2 Mak 74199v, 5; Arnaud read the second line of first column as pū-šu-gūššu-gi-[š].[š]u-ba-šū [š], which I have corrected as pū-šu-gūššu-gi-[š].[š]u-ba-šū [š].
25 As Lambert noted in Garelli, Gilg., p. 43.
26 Cf. the remarks of Bottéro, CBRS 24, p. 47, 102; the ‘Pairs de Gilgamesh’ (Pš Gilgames) invoqué dans Ṣumma šalu, désignait-il une cétie particulièrement impressionnante ou famouse, ou constituait-il la dénomination d’un accès à Enlil? For Gilgamesh in the Netherworld see further below, the section on Gilgamesh the god.
embedded in the Standard Babylonian version he returned to restore to their former glory the temples and cults swept away by the flood. Gilgames's encounter with Utanapišti is attested outside the epic in omen apodoses in Middle Assyrian and first-millennium copies (see below). It also informs a group vocabulary that contains a section commenting on the names of persons associated with Gilgames. The text is known from a Neo-Assyrian copy:

| kal.ga.imin | = | ₂bil.ga.mes | Gilgames
| kal.ga.imin | = | muq-tab-ti | warrior
| kal.ga.imin | = | a-li₃₃ pa-na | leader
| zi.sud.da | = | ut-na-pu₃-te | Utanapišti
| a.ru.imin | = | en-gi-₃₃-da | Enkidu

CT 18 30 iv 6-10

However, the earliest extant witnesses to this tradition are two Sumerian compositions extant in Old Babylonian copies, the Death of Bilgamos and the Poem of the Early Rulers. Both of them identify Gilgames's most memorable achievements as the journey to the Cedar Forest and the even longer journey to find the Flood hero. In the Death of Bilgamos the stricken hero's exploits are summed up for him by the gods in the proceedings of a divine assembly revealed in a deathbed dream:

[... ] ḫurr.uru.ni₂₃ di.dub₂₃ du₂₃ a₂₃ na.me.a₂₃ bi₂₃
[³erin gi₃₃ di.lī₂₃ ku₂₃ ].bi₂₃ mu₂₃ u₂₃ ,e₂₃ ,da₂₃
[³u₂₃ wa₂₃ wa₂₃ tir₂₃ ].bi₂₃ ta₂₃ sa₂₃ gi₃₃ ra₂₃ ,da₂₃
[na₂₃.ru₂₃ a₂₃ mu₂₃.gi₂₃ ] bu₂₃.num₂₃ ,da₂₃ u₂₃,ul₂₃.li₂₃,a₃ ē₂₃ ē₂₃ dingir₂₃,ne₂₃ ki₂₃ gar₂₃,gar₂₃,ra₂₃,
[zi₂₃, ,u₂₃, sud₂₃, ra₂₃, a₃ ] sa₂₃ mi₂₃, in₂₃, du₂₃, ,ga₂₃,
[me₂₃ ke₂₃ en₂₃, gi₂₃, ra₂₃] ba₂₃, lam₂₃, ma₂₃ lib₃₃, ra₂₃, u₂₃,ul₂₃, li₂₃
[ā₂₃,a₂₃ gi₃₃, bi₂₃, lu₂₃, du₂₃, kal₂₃, am₂₃, a₃, ] ē₂₃, im₂₃, ta₂₃, an₂₃, ,da₂₃
[lu₂₃, lu₂₃, ka₂₃, lu₂₃, ] bi₂₃, si₂₃, sā₂₃, sā₂₃,
[... ] ,ma₂₃ ru₂₃, gu₂₃, kī₂₃ kal₂₃, am₂₃, me₂₃, mu₂₃, un₂₃, zu₂₃, a₂₃,

SEM 24 'obv. '1'–'10', ed. Cavignaux, Gilgamesh and the Mort, p. 15, restored from:
inim, zu₂₃ ḫurr.uru.ni₂₃ di.dib₂₃, di.dib₂₃ a₂₃, na, a₂₃, ē₂₃, a₂₃, me, a₂₃, bi₂₃
³erin gi₃₃, di.lī₂₃ kū₂₃, ku₂₃, ].bi₂₃, ga₂₃, an₂₃, ,lē₂₃, ē₂₃, ē₂₃ dingir₂₃, ne₂₃, ki₂₃, gar₂₃, gar₂₃, ra₂₃,
na₂₃, ru₂₃, a₂₃, ul₂₃, li₂₃, ē₂₃, me₂₃, gub₂₃, gub₂₃, bu₂₃, us₂₃, me₂₃, da₂₃, u₂₃, li₂₃, ē₂₃, ē₂₃ dingir₂₃, ne₂₃, ki₂₃, gar₂₃, gar₂₃, ra₂₃,
zi₂₃, ,u₂₃, sud₂₃, ra₂₃, a₃, sa₂₃, mi₂₃, in₂₃, du₂₃, ,ga₂₃,
me₂₃ ke₂₃, en₂₃, gi₂₃, ra₂₃, ba₂₃, lam₂₃, ma₂₃, lib₃₃, ra₂₃, u₂₃, ul₂₃, li₂₃,
[ā₂₃, a₂₃, gi₃₃, bi₂₃, lu₂₃, du₂₃, kal₂₃, am₂₃, a₃, ] ē₂₃, im₂₃, ta₂₃, an₂₃, ,da₂₃,
[lu₂₃, lu₂₃, ka₂₃, lu₂₃, x] si₂₃, mu₂₃, un₂₃, ,sī₂₃, sā₂₃, ,e₂₃,
a₂₃, ,lu₂₃, x] [... ] a₃, a₂₃, ru₂₃, gu₂₃, kī₂₃, kal₂₃, am₂₃, x] [... ]

Composite text, M 52-61 // 143-52, after Cavignaux, op. cit., pp. 27 and 30

Your matter—having travelled each and every road, having fetched that unique cedar down from its mountain, having smitten Ḫuwawā in his forest, having set up inscribed monuments for future days, having founded temples of the gods, you reached Ziusudra in his abode.
The rites of Sumer, ... forgotten since days of old, the rituals and customs, you brought them down to the land. Its rites of hand-washing and mouth-washing, you put them in good order.

[From before the] Deluge it was you who made known all the duties of the land.

This synopsis of Gilgamesh's accomplishments casts him in the role of a great explorer, whose journeying far and wide brought him to Ḫumbaba's cedar mountain and to the realm of Ziusudra. The wording of the passage—and perhaps also of lines of Śūlgī O quoted below—implies that these two exploits were in one tradition held to have been achieved in succession, even as part of the same expedition to the furthest east. The opening lines of Bilgamos and Ḫuwawā A can be re-examined in this light. The text that follows tells of the hero's expedition to the Cedar Forest and his return with the severed head of its guardian. The incipit, however, raises expectations of a different quest:

en₂₃, e₂₃ kur₂₃, lū₂₃, ti₂₃, la₂₃, šē₂₃, Ḫug₃₂₃, ga₂₃, ni₂₃, na₂₃, ,gub₂₃
en₂₃, šē₂₃, ₂₃, bu₂₃, ga₂₃, , an₂₃, ,gub₂₃

The lord did turn his mind to the Living One's land (or mountain),
the lord Bilgamos did turn his mind to the Living One's land (or mountain).

Though some have supposed that the Living One is Ḫuwawā,27 nothing we learn of him corroborates or explains why he might bear such an epiteth. Who can the one so styled be if not the survivor of the great Deluge, the only man to achieve immortality? In pointing out that the Sumerian Cedar Forest lay to the east, in the same direction as the place where Ziusudra was settled after the Deluge, Kramer already thought it "not impossible that lū₃₃-₃₃-la₂₃ is a descriptive epithet of Ziusudra".28 As already noted in Chapter 1, in one tradition the poem of Bilgamos and Ḫuwawā A was turned into a sequel of Bilgamos and the Netherworld, so that the motive for Gilgamesh's journey to the 'Living One's land' is a bid to escape man's mortal doom. The parallel with the Babylonian epic, in which Gilgames is driven to seek Utanapišti after Enkidu's death has aroused in him an all-consuming fear of death, is unmistakable. The 'Living One' is the immortal survivor of the mythical flood.29 Thus understood, the incipit means that the tale we know as Bilgamos and Ḫuwawā must once

28 Kramer, JAS 28 (1945), p. 13, fn. 48; cf. ibid., p. 18, fn. 82, a view retracted in id., TCS 1 (1947), p. 4 with fn. 2.
29 See A. Cavignaux, Iraq 62 (2000), pp. 5-6 and fn. 33: "Il me semble clair que le "Vivant", c'est à dire l'"Immortel" auquel il fait allusion dans ce vers, n'est autre que Ziusudra : même s'il l'histoire de GH (au contraire de la version akkadienne) ne content pas la moindre allusion à la quête de Ziusudra, la référence implicite à cette thème (ou peut-être même à un récit qui ne nous est pas parvenu) devait être évidente pour tous les auditeurs mésopotamiens."
have included a narrative of Gilgamesh’s journey Ziusudra. The mismatch between opening lines and plot in the poem as handed down in Old Babylonian schools can most easily be explained as having arisen as a result of the abridgement of a much longer text by expunging the episode concerning Ziusudra.

To return to the passage of the Death of Gilgamesh quoted previously, the poet also credits Gilgamesh with bringing back from Ziusudra proper knowledge of the antediluvian cultic ideals, evidently forgotten since the time of the Deluge. This view agrees with the late epic’s prologue, which celebrates the hero as one who refounded the temples and reintroduced the rituals that had been destroyed and interrupted by the great cataclysm (SB 1 142–4). The tradition here reported is consistent with one ancient notion that, following the Flood, an interval of barbarity elapsed before kingship was again established in the land, an era in which the lack of government was detrimental to human society. Even after the reintroduction of kingship, only the greatest of kings was able in time to restore the antediluvian order and then only because he had been instructed in these matters by the Flood hero himself.

This notion of human history casts Gilgamesh as a kind of cultural hero. There are other reflections of this aspect of his that deserve mention before I go on to examine the Poem of Early Rulers. These relate to the achievements of exploration already discussed. The discovery of the various wells or caves that opened a passage across the desert from the middle Euphrates to Lebanon must have revolutionized long-distance travel in upper Mesopotamia. If Gilgamesh was traditionally the first to make this journey, on his expedition to the Cedar Forest, it would be logical for him to be given the credit for the discovery of the techniques of survival that made desert travel possible. Other feats reported in the epic as if done for the first time in human history by the great hero are sailing over the ocean, diving to the seabed and, with Enkidu, bull-slaying. On each occasion it seems that Gilgamesh’s inventiveness enabled him to develop a new technology to perform a previously impossible task. These passages speak for a tendency to attribute the discovery of new knowledge (and the rediscovery of old) to a great hero of the distant past, and are probably examples of etiological folklore. They compare with the famous episodes of Sumerian legend in which Lugalbanda improvises the art of making fire with flint and En millennia invents the technique of recording the spoken word by writing on clay.

The Poem of Early Rulers is a wisdom composition that teaches the transience of human existence and achievement. It forms part of a collection of related texts that survives on Old Babylonian tablets from Sippar and Nippur, as well as on a fragment from Kuyunjik, but at present it is best preserved on its own in a bilingual version current at Ugarit and Emara in the twelfth century. The lines that relate traditions pertaining to Gilgamesh occur in the course of a passage which points out that even the most famed and glorious of ancient kings came to nothing:

\[\text{(see text of manuscript presented by B. Alster, 'The Sumerian Poems of Early Rulers and related poems', OLP 21 (1990), pp. 6–7; add. SELN 131, rev. 3, 7'f. (see M. Civil, Ar 63 (1969), p. 179, fn. 1), Msk 7419sn (see M. Civil, Arda Or 7 (1989), p. 7) and K 6917 + 13679 (see W. G. Lambert, 'Some new Sumerian wisdom literature', Essays Emaranm, p. 35).}


37 Wacke, 'Nachdem ein gehuldigt und er geschwungen ward'; Alster, 'who was caught having bit the grass', reading kil ba.an.zu.zu.
The hero in art

Both Gilgamesh’s heroic monster-slaying exploits are recorded in art from the early second millennium and later.54 Two different scenes depicting the slaying of Humbaba are found on Old Babylonian clay plaques from Larsa and elsewhere, and the same scenes also occur on cylinder seals from Mari, Nuzi, and later Assur and Babylon, and on an early first-millennium Uruk-type bronze statuette perhaps from Babylonia.55 The motif passed into the art of neighboring regions—Syria, Anatolia, and Iran—but one cannot be certain that after this transition the image still recorded the contest between the two heroes and Humbaba. Gilgamesh’s victory in the Cedar Forest is perhaps also commemorated by an Old Babylonian figurine in the Louvre that depicts a bearded hero standing on a head of the kind usually identified as Humbaba’s.56

Bull-wrestling is an occasional motif in ancient Mesopotamian art from the Early Dynastic II period onwards. A related scene of bull-slaying, so far not found before the early second millennium, typically involves two men, one anchoring the bull by holding its tail and stepping on its hind leg and the other preparing to despatch it. This scene, depicted on clay plaques as well as cylinder seals,57 exactly illustrates the technique Enkidu uses in the epic to tackle the mythical Bull of Heaven, but it may not be confined to that particular episode and thus one cannot be sure of a bull-slaying scene’s relevance to Gilgamesh unless there is some distinguishing feature that speaks in favour. When the bull is winged, for example, it seems very likely that the scene depicts Gilgamesh and Enkidu in combat with the celestial bull, for the Bull of Heaven’s mythical home was in the sky. Examples of bull-slaying scenes with winged bulls occur on second-millennium cylinder seals from Nuzi and Assur and on later seals from Babylon and Assyria. Another exemplar, of Neo-Assyrian origin, is made available for the first time in this book (Fig. 1).58

The existence of both motifs in Mesopotamian art, and their endurance through the centuries, speak for the circulation of the stories of Gilgamesh’s monster-slaying outside the narrow circles of courtly entertainment and the scribal community. Other scenes and motifs


55 See Lambrichs, Papers on Assyria, pl. 8-10, 1-18.

56 Dusin: T. Assur in Garelli, Gilg., pp. 70, 84, photograph: M.-T. Baron, Rép. sur le dessin syriaque fait à Tell el-Agrab, “Fouilles de Mari“ en complexion épicéolatique, Iraq 56 (1994), pl. 7, A, is another R. Opicki, Deco abdalbaha: Brockschweif (Berlin, 1973), p. 221, Note Lambert’s caution, however, that not all the figures that bear a “Humbaba” face in Old Babylonian terracottas can be considered representations of this divine (Papers on Assyria, p. 51, fn. 45). Accordingly he rejects the Louvre figurine as a hero. Given the popularity in art and literature of the story of Gilgamesh and Humbaba in the period in question I am inclined nevertheless to give this figure the benefit of the doubt.

57 For the plaque first published by R. Opicki, Das abdadabha: Brockschweif (Berlin, 1961) nos. 496 and pp. 154-156; see also discussion of seal impressions depicting this scene given by Lambert, Papers on Assyria, pl. 11, 23-7.

58 SC 1969, photographed and published by kind permission of Mr Martin Scheyer.

تراثات عن جيلامش

القصة التي يذكرها الراعي الأول ك سبيلًا على راحية من القادة القديميين، كفي المحاربين الذين يحكمون على الخير، وهم النجوم في السماء.

GILGAMESH THE KING

The Poem of Early Rulers holds Gilgamesh up as an example of a great king of old whose achievements, like those of every mortal, counted eventually for naught. In other Sumerian texts the most celebrated attestations of Gilgamesh as an important ruler of long ago are found in the Sumerian King List and the Tummal chronicle. These compositions, along with Assur’s building inscriptions, preserve a memory of Gilgamesh as an early ruler of Uruk and are thus witness to an ancient tradition that Gilgamesh was an historical figure. Though there is still no proof of the historicity of Gilgamesh as a ruler of Uruk, there have been recent developments that shed further light on the period. The evidence can be presented as follows.

The Sumerian King List

The great list of kings of Sumer and Akkad was, in the form that we know it, compiled early in the second millennium, from sources already current, to legitimize the kings of Isin as the successors of the Ur III dynasty.59 The redactor’s aim was to show, wrongly, that throughout

59 A recent case in point is D. Fox’s adventurous article on ‘The birth of Gilgamesh in ancient Mesopotamian art‘, Biblical CSR 34 (1999), pp. 39-49.

The first rulers after the Flood belonged, according to the Sumerian King List, to a ‘dynasty’ of Kish—in fact, a succession of short dynasties and individuals of no stated dynastic connections. Among these rulers is, eleventh in the list, Enna, famous in mythology for his flight to heaven on an eagle’s back and accredited with a reign of 1,560 years. Nine kings later is Enmebaragesi, who has left inscriptions that prove him to be an historical personage, even though the list records a reign of 900 years. This sequence of kings thus progresses from prehistoric legend to historical fact. According to the list, Enmebaragesi’s son, Akka (625 years), was the last king of this sequence of rulers at Kish, for the city was defeated in battle and ‘kingship was carried off to Eanna’, i.e. Uruk. In the list of rulers of Uruk that follows, Gilgames is in sixth place, and is the last king of the sequence with an obviously inflated length of reign. His entry reads as follows:

*bil.ga.mes (var. *bîl.gam. *mes) ab.ba.ni li.la an kal.uk ba.ka.ka (var. kül.la ba.ka.ka) mu 2,61.uk

Sumerian King List iii 17–20, ed. Jacobsen, AG 11, pp. 89–90

Bilgames—his father was a phantom—was lord of Kullab, he reigned 126 years.

The title borne by Gilgames in this entry recurs in the Sumerian poems of Bilgames and in hymns of Šulgi. In the Sumerian poems Gilgames is also often called en tür, ‘young lord’. The royal title en was especially associated with Kullab and Uruk, where it effectively signified ‘king’.

According to the king list, Gilgames’s son, Ur-Nungal (var. Ur-ťalug, the name by which he is known in the Tummal text), reigned after him for thirty years, followed in turn by his son, Udul-kalamun, for fifteen years. As round figures in the sexagesimal system, these lengths of reign are suspect but there is no reason to doubt the record that Gilgames founded a short-lived dynasty. From this one can judge that, in the tradition extant at the time the list was compiled, Gilgames lived on the threshold of history: This is borne out by his association elsewhere in Sumerian literature with Enmebaragesi, a figure of proved historicity, and his son, Akka. The principal evidence for this association is (a) a tradition that Gilgames defeated Enmebaragesi, witnessed in Šulgi Hymn O (quoted below), and (b) a tradition that, after a siege of Uruk, Gilgames defeated Akka, as celebrated in the poem of Bilgames and Akka. A new factor is reported in a newly recovered source of the Sumerian King List: (c) a tradition that Dumuzi, Gilgames’s predecessor (according to the list),
defeated Enmebaraggis in single combat. As Klein notes, these three traditions are less likely memories of the same historical event, by which Uruk threw off the suzerainty of Kiš in one mighty coup and took over its position as chief power in Sumer, than evidence that the final conquest of Kiš was only achieved after an extended period of intermittent warfare in which the fortunes of both sides were mixed and the power of Kiš eroded gradually. The final victor was evidently Gilgames, for the ‘dynasty’ of Kiš ends with Akka and defeat by Uruk. This decisive moment at the dawn of history in Early Dynastic Sumer is surely an important reason for Gilgames’ reputation in later times as a ‘mighty king’ and his adoption by the kings of Ur as a symbol of southern hegemony.

The Tummal text

The Tummal text is a repetitive literary composition, much used as an exercise in Old Babylonian schools for its paradigmatic qualities, that purports to chronicle the building activities of various rulers in relation to different shrines in the temple of Enlil at Nippur, and their sons’ restorations of the sanctuary of Ninlil in nearby Tummal. The first five sections of the text culminate in Ur-Nammu’s rebuilding of E-kur, i.e. the entire temple, a well-known historical event, and Šulgi’s restoration of Tummal. They run in the following pattern:

RN₁ (lugal.e) TN₁ (ē ouné bāra) 4en.lil.lā.ē in.dū RN₂ dumu RN₁ tum.ma.alē.e pa bi.(i), e 4nin.lil.tum.ma.alē.ē 4in.tum (sar. in.tum) a rā w.kam.(a) tum.ma.alē 4ba.šub RN₁ (lugal.e) TN₁ in.dū RN₂ dumu RN₂ tum.ma.alē.e pa bi.(i) e etc.


These five sections relate the activities of Ur-Nammu and Šulgi to the deeds of much earlier kings. The sixth section contends that the pious treatment of Enlil and Ninlil observed in early times and under the first two kings of Ur continued under the dynasty’s other three kings, from early in Aman-Suen’s reign to the coronation of Ibi-Sin. Perhaps the text was composed to mark that event. A seventh section, not always present, falls after the subcaption on some manuscripts and is clearly a later addition made to promote a view that matters continued undisturbed into the reign of the notorious usurper Ibi-Erīa, founder of the Isin dynasty. The sixth section, subscript and seventh section read:

mu (*j)amar 4suen.kat en.ēna (*j)bi 4diniz.lugal.e en.am.gal.en.na en 4nin.na.unug 4ga mâkē e in.pā.ē 4nin.lil.tum.ma.alē 4shi nu.ru

82 Klein, Asia Or 9, pp. 125–6.
83 For a different view, though one formed without knowledge of tradition (c), see D. Katz, Gilgamesh and Akka (Groningen, 1993), pp. 14–15.
85 For Ur-Nammu’s work on the E-kur see Frayne, RIME 3(1), p. 17. Šulgi built a new barge for Ninlil’s procession to Tummal (yr 8, cf. ibid., pp. 97–8) and made a new bed for the same goddess (yr 14), which may have been furniture for her shrine at Tummal.

86 Most manuscripts transpose the second and third paragraphs (see Sollberger, JCS 16, pp. 40–1).
87 This is thought to be by some to be Aannepadda, son of Mesanepadda of Ur; see E. L. Gordon, BASOR 132 (1953), p. 29. Ninlil’s work on the temple of E-lil is also recorded in a long Accadian translation incorporated in Proverb Collection 3 (Abt, Proverbs, pp. 86, 3:31). The same literature also records, more briefly, that he destroyed a temple built by Mslān or Mesanepadda (ibid., p. 318, 14, 16, bilingual). Recent scholars are sceptical of the identification with Aannepadda. Abt also notes the difference between Ninlil (whom he doubts ‘as the son of Ur’), and Guzzi (presumably a fictitious ruler who never succeeded in compiling any undertaking) (Abt, Proverbs, p. 88). Michalowski calls Ninlil ‘a pre-Sargonic ruler known only from later literary compositions’ (JNES 37 (1978), p. 347).
88 Some manuscripts transpose the last two sentences, others omit the last sentence.
89 See George, House Most High, gazetteer no. 190.

ka₄ li₅ inanna aṣgah.gal 4en.lil.lā.ē šar.re
4li-bi₅ e₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁ ḫur.(a), agl.ā.ē ḫu₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁ ḫur.(a) šar.(a) ḫu₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁ ḫu₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁ ḫu₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁ ḫu₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁ in.dū


No modern translation of the whole in English is available in print, so one is given here:

King Enmebaraggis built uru.na.nam, ‘The Very City’, the house of Enlil; Akka, son of Enmebaraggis, made Tummal resplendent, he brought Ninlil to Tummal. Tummal was abandoned for the first time.

King Mesanepadda built br śiti₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁, ‘Covered Jars’, the house of Enlil; Meskigìanna, son of Mesanepadda, made Tummal resplendent, he brought Ninlil to Tummal. Tummal was abandoned for the second time.

Bilgames (bilga, me₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁, sar. bi₅₄₅₅₅₅₅₁, me₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁ built du₅₅₁₅₅₄₅₁, nēmum, br ur, ‘Mound of Rushes’, the throne-travels of Enlil; U₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁, agl, Sarilgames, made Tummal resplendent, he brought Ninlil to Tummal. Tummal was abandoned for the third time.

Nanne₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁ built ḫīr₅₅₁₅₅₄₅₁, ma₅₅₁₅₅₄₅₁, ‘Sublime Garden’, the house of Enlil; Méška₅₅₁₅₅₄₅₁, Šulgi, son of Nanne, made Tummal resplendent, he brought Ninlil to Tummal. Tummal was abandoned for the fourth time.

Ur-Nammu built ĕ₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁, ‘House, Mountain’; Šulgi, son of Ur-Nammu, made Tummal resplendent, he brought Ninlil to Tummal. Tummal was abandoned for the fifth time.

From the year Aman-Suen’s (became) king (AS yr 1) until (the year) King Ibi-Sin chose by divination Enamgalanna as en-priest of Inanna at Ur (US yr 2), Ninlil went repeatedly to Tummal.

Written down at the dictation of Lu₅₄₁₅₅₄₅₁, chief scribe of Enlil; Ibi-Erīa built el₅₅₁₅₅₄₅₁, ‘House, Mountain Endowed with Sight’, the storehouse of Enlil.

Much of this text, perhaps all the first four sections, may be apocryphal. There was a shrine called Du₅₅₁₅₅₄₅₁-nun-burra at Nippur, but the connection with Gilgames is not confirmed by other evidence. The Tummal text is important, nevertheless, because it places Gilgames in the company of Enmebaraggis, Mesanepadda, Meskigìanna and, perhaps, Aannepadda, men who are attested as historical figures by their own inscriptions, and because it reiterates the tradition that his son followed him on the throne of Uruk.
Another association of Gilgameš and Enmebaragesi occurs in the Sumerian poem of Bilgames and Huvawa A, in which the hero offers to bring Huvawa his sisters Enmebaragesi and Peštur as wife and concubine respectively. This is a parody of the royal marriages arranged for diplomatic purposes in Ur III times, as in other eras, and a topical one, for the name Peštur, 'Little Fig', is very close in sound to that of one of Šulgí's daughters.44 The name of Peštur's sister is identical with Gilgameš's adversary, Enmebaragesi of Kiš. Because Enmebaragesi is acceptable as the name of a high priestess as well as a king, this fact has provoked two responses: (a) Enmebaragesi of Kiš really was Gilgameš's sister and thus indeed a woman,45 and (b) Enmebaragesi of Kiš was a man and his name was used in the episode of Bilgames and Huvawa for comic effect.46 It is not possible at present to know which response is right. But the passage provides a further instance of the association of Gilgameš and Enmebaragesi in the literary traditions of early second-millennium Mesopotamia.

On the evidence presented above it seems likely that there was once a King Bilgames in Ur, just as there may have been in Britain a real King Arthur. But the Gilgameš of the epic traditions is a literary character, to whom any number of originally disparate traditions have accrued. It is a vain hope to find in history such a hero of legend.

Family connections

The Sumerian King List and the Tummal text depict Gilgameš as a man of uncertain origin who rose to power and founded a short-lived dynasty at Ur. That a phantom was Gilgameš's father in the king list is a good example of a well-known motif in folklore that legendary figures in very ancient history often spring from obscure, if not mythical backgrounds.47 In the Hitite Gilgameš the hero is said to have arrived in Uruk from elsewhere, implying that he was not brought up there.48 The tradition of Gilgameš's uncertain parentage endured beyond the end of Mesopotamian civilization, for in the second century AD Aelian recorded that Gilgameš's mother, a princess, became pregnant by a 'nobody'.49

Another tradition of Gilgameš's parentage existed. In Old Babylonian tablets of the epic his mother is always identified as the goddess Ninlurs,50 while the Standard Babylonian text records in addition that he was a native of Ur and implies that his father was Lugalbanda.46 Elsewhere in texts of the Babylonian epic Lugalbanda is Gilgameš's personal god,51 but his traditional pairing with Ninlurs at Ur makes him a kind of father or stepfather of Gilgameš.52 This filial relationship is also attested in an oath exclaimed on different occasions by the hero in the Sumerian poems of Bilgames and Huvawa and in the Death of Bilgames: a.a.mu (var.: a.a wag.giga) kù lugal.bánu.da,53 (by my mother Ninlurs who bore me,) by my father holy Lugalbanda (var. adâa: who sired me)!54 In the Sumerian King List Lugalbanda follows Enmerkar as one of Gilgameš's predecessors on the throne of Ur, and he and Gilgameš are separated by Dumuzi. No family relationships are recorded there, however.

Ninlurs is also found as Gilgameš's mother in two further texts. The first is the Poem of the Mattock. This composition, dense with allusion, has been thought in the following passage to make several references to themes associated with Gilgameš:

en.e 6a:al a ni gud.gin ur im ša
eri, gal 6a:al sag ki a tum ma am
idim lú 6a:al.e kí.ta tum ma am
šul idim an na šesh. bána 6a:erí, 6a:gal (ka)
ur sag 6bal, ga mes (e) (var. ra) 6a:al e sa pár ra am
dumu 6nin, šun, ka 6gisal e dub sag, gal (am)
6a:al e id, da kúnda gal, la am
Poem of the Mattock 73-9, ed. M. Civil, JNES 28 (1969), p. 70, fn. 1; Edzard, Studies Lambert, p. 132

The lord: his mattock bellowes like a bull,
the grave: the mattock it is that bears a person into the earth,
the depths: man was brought forth from the earth by the mattock.
The noble hero of heaven, little brother of Nergal,
warrior Bilgames: at the mattock he is a catch-net
Ninlurs's son: at the ear he is foremost!
At the mattock he is the river's chief barber!

Civil expounds this passage as follows:

[Line] 73 plays with the name of the hoe (a.l) and the Bull of Heaven (adâa). Puns based on Akkadian words are found elsewhere in the poem. Line 74 refers to the burial of Enkidu or the tomb of Gilgameš in Ur. For line 75, cf. Akk. Gilgameš XII 78 ff. [i.e., the raising of Enkidu's ghost from the netherworld, now XII 8 ff.] ... line 78 is of course a reference to the punning poles of Gilgameš X.

Still more pertinent, Gigameš uses the 6gisal in a damaged episode at the beginning of the Sumerian poem of Bilgames and the Bull of Heaven. However, I am not convinced that any but ll. 76-8 (and perhaps 79) refer to Gilgameš. The likening of the hero's prowess with the mattock to a hunting net (77) is not an allusion to anything in the epic tradition but refers instead to his chthonic functions. The mattock is the tool of bural (as in l. 74) and the net is a metaphor for the shades' captivity in the Netherworld, over which Gilgameš presides. How the ear (78) fits this context is a mystery in a text that abounds in them. For our
purposes the most intriguing detail of the passage quoted is the formalization of the relationship between Gilgameš and Nergal as one of brotherhood. This is without parallel but clearly expresses a close link between the two as gods of the Netherworld (on which see further below, the section on Gilgameš the god).

A second text, Old Babylonian ērimma no. 171, describes the goddess Gula as ú.tu.da (ni sup raz.) en *bili, ga. mes, ‘the one who gave birth to the lord Bilgames’. If this is not a different tradition, it expresses Gilgameš’s relationship to Ninsum syncretistically, for by some theologians Ninsum and Gula were equated, as too were their consorts, Lugabandana and Ninurta. Curiously, no ancient source yet discovered makes anything of this connection between Gilgameš and the hero-god Ninurta.

The tradition by which Gilgameš’s parents were Ninsum and Lugabandana is fully developed in mythology. It is an early example of the divine parentage of kings, a metaphor that is a very common element of royal ideology from the earliest historical periods. The first two kings of the Ur III dynasty, Ur-Nammu and especially Šulgī, professed in several of their hymns and other inscriptions exactly the same divine parentage, maintaining that Ninsum was their ‘mother’ and that, for Šulgī at least, Lugabandana was their ‘father’ too. In doing so they also claimed a family relationship with Gilgameš. The fraternal connection between Ur-Nammu and Gilgameš is recorded in the Death of Ur-Nammu and made explicit in one of the hymns of self-praise, Ur-Nammu C:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{su.dug, ga e *nanna.a me.en} \\
\text{šeš *bili, ga. mes gu. la me.en} \\
[\text{dumu}] \text{tu. da} \text{ *nin.súm. ka me.en nunum nam.en. na me.en} \\
\text{TCL XV 12, 111–113, ed. Flückiger-Hawker, Urnamme, p. 218}
\end{align*}
\]

I am the one made by the hand of Nanna, I am the brother of Bilgames the Great, I am [the child] born of Ninsum, I am the seed of lordship.

Šulgī records his brotherhood with Gilgameš in Šulgī O 50 etc. (quoted below); in Šulgī D 292 Šeš ku.lu.ni.en *bili, ga. mes, ‘his brother-friend, lord Bilgames’; in Šulgī C, MSF obv. II, Šeš ku.lu.ni.m baudik, ga. mes, ‘for my brother-friend, Bilgames’; and, with allusion to shared sagacity, in Šulgī C 102–5:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ša.mu *sítaran(ka.dit) kur.kur.ra me.en} \\
\text{bili gi sippa.zi ke.en.gi. ra me.en}
\end{align*}
\]

The mention of the divine judge Šurān in the last passage makes it very clear that here Šulgī refers to Gilgameš’s qualities as a fair arbiter of justice, a facer of his nature which alludes to one of his underworld functions (see below).

The language of kinship employed in these and other passages has led many to believe that the dynasty of Ur originally hailed from Ur. There is evidence that Ur-Nammu and Šulgī were related by blood or marriage to Utu-ḫengal, the ruler of Ur who expelled the Gutians from Sumer. In his reign Ur-Nammu held the post of provincial governor in Ur. Through a purported kinship with the ancient kings of Ur who were Utu-ḫengal’s distant predecessors, Ur-Nammu and his successor sought to legitimize their own kingship in Ur, evidently seeing a reflection of their own family’s history and accomplishments in the tales of Sumer’s heroic age. It was conventional for a Babylonian king to view his predecessors, even those unrelated to him, as ancestors, but Ur-Nammu’s and Šulgī’s description of their relationship with expressions of brotherhood, especially šeš ku.lí, ‘brother-friend’, is of a different order. Gilgameš seems, indeed, to have been the patron deity of these kings. On this account the Sumerian poems of Gilgameš were no doubt popular entertainments at the royal court of Ur, and very probably they found at the same time their final form as written texts in the scribal tradition established by Šulgī.

The association of Gilgameš with this family was perhaps begun by Utu-ḫengal. In the famous text reporting his victory over Tiri-qi of Gutium the composer describes how the gods came to Utu-ḫengal’s aid and joined his campaign. Among them was ‘Bilgames, son of Ninsum’. Utu-ḫengal’s selection of him in this text can be seen as already reflecting some kind of special relationship between Gilgameš and Utu-ḫengal’s kin.

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73 See the passage of the Weidner god list cited in Ch. 13, the commentary on SB III 15.
76 Ur-Namnām 1:43, quoted below in the section on Gilgameš in the Netherworld.
77 Ed. Klein, Šulgī, p. 82.
INTRODUCTION

The principal witness to the traditions about Gilgamesh that were current in the time of Šulgi is his hymn O." This is still in a fragmentary state, but enough survives to show that the text begins with a hymnic prologue extolling the king of the divine Gilgamesh. There follows the long dialogue in which they engaged. The speeches of Gilgamesh, in particular, are almost entirely missing. The three of which anything certain remains all end with an identical affirmation of Šulgi's preeminence in the land, lugal ke.en.gi.ra gir mu.un.gub.me.eip, "you are the king who "sets the foot" on Sumer." This endorsement of Šulgi's rule by the greatest king of legend is surely the point of the composition. Šulgi addresses Gilgamesh at least four times. Each time his words are prefaced by the same four lines of narrative:

Šulgi, the steadfast shepherd of Sumer,
praised in his might
his brother-friend, the lord Gilgamesh,
invoking him in his warriorhood.

The first speech extols Gilgamesh's supremacy in war, his victory over Enmebaragesi and the consequent transfer of kingship from Kish to Ur:

kala.gi mēa ārū gul., gul
šem.še, na sag.ā, šu ra, ra, bi
zę.na bàd.kù, ga.la.a.gi, ge kin.gā
é. [k]iše, še tukul, zu ba.ta.a.e
ur.[s]ag, in.min, bi beš, ili (copy: 1.0 × BAD), a mi, ni, dab, 
[lugal ki]ša en.me.bàra, ge, e,sī
[muš.gīn?], šal.gi, na gir mu, na, ni, ûs
nam, lagul kiše (a unug6 (cor. šat.unug3), še (x) šam, mi, nūm
kul, abā, ārû (ku) u, tu, da pa im, ma, ni, ē
Šulgi O 53-61, after Klein, Kramer AV, p. 278
Mighty in battle, destroyer of cities,
in combat most murderous,


* See the edition by J. Klein, Sulgi and Gilgamesh: two brother pairs (Šulgi O), Kramer AV, pp. 271-92. Additional fragments are UM 29-13-990 (unpublished, II. 3-13) and ISUT II 1 Ni 4535 (II. 27-34); see Attinger, Eléments de linguistique sumérienne, p. 58.

* Šulgi O 84 // 137 // CBS 10900 b 4.


* Or, with PND A/2, p. 98, 'a devastating flood'.

TRADITIONS ABOUT GILGAMESH

siege-engine of the holy wall," one skilled with the slingstone,
you despatched your weapons against the house of Kiš
You took captive(!) there its seven heroes.
Enmebaragesi, [king of Kiš],
you crushed his head underfoot [like a snake's.]
You brought kingship from Kiš to Umur (var. Ur),
you made resplendent Kullab, the city of Sîn's birth.

The variant Ur, if not a modern misreading of Kullab, suggests that Šulgi considered the royal houses of Ur and Ur to be one and the same and thus that Gilgamesh's establishment of a ruling dynasty in Ur was a precedent for Ur-Nammu's founding of the Ur III dynasty at Ur. Šulgi's second address to his divine patron is much more, apparently recalls Gilgamesh's capture of Huwawa, his subsequent presentation of his victim to Enlil, and his triumph over foreign lands. He then asks for his protection:

a.bu za.gin, kaskal ku[...], ār. ra, an x[...].
ak.gi, e.ti, ru[...]
tir.[mà][...]
ă.x[...]
ša.wa, wa[...]
ni in.min, [ma, ni, ...]
ki [t]ur, tür x x x x...
ki [ki]gar, ra, ni, ti [ma, ...]
"[en.]ū, ra še, e nib[ru,] a...[a] zē mu, na, ni, [x (x) x]
ur, sāg, ba, zu, ū, x x x
ama [lú, tu] ra dumu, ur, ra, mu, na, ni, tūm
ū dug, ka, ba, zu, kur, šur, ra, ma, ra, an, ti
šu, ga, me, ra, ši, ne, gū, an, gū, bi, e? x
ki, šal, šal, gi, ga, sa gis, x, gin, x, x
nam, ma, še, gil, gal, zu, pa bi, e, ša, ma, mu, [ē, du,?]
Šulgi O 91-106 (coll.), ed. Klein, Kramer AV, p. 280
Who, like you, [has taken] the road to the 'Living One's' land (or mountain), the journey to [Ziusudra ...]
[has cut down] the mighty cedar in the mountains,
[...] the lofty forest,
[and has transported the timber ...] by boat?
Huwawa [you ...]
[his] seven terror [you ...]
the little [...]
from his well-founded abode [you brought him down,]
to Enlil in his house [at] Nippur [... you ...].

* See the edition by J. Klein, Sulgi and Gilgamesh: two brother pairs (Šulgi O), Kramer AV, pp. 271-92. Additional fragments are UM 29-13-990 (unpublished, II. 3-13) and ISUT II 1 Ni 4535 (II. 27-34); see Attinger, Eléments de linguistique sumérienne, p. 58.

* Šulgi O 84 // 137 // CBS 10900 b 4.


* Or, with PND A/2, p. 98, 'a devastating flood'.

* Compare Šulgi C 52: zē na bàd. da gin, ... like a siege-engine at a wall.

* I.e. kul,abā; see Wilcke, Studien Siibel, p. 562. The tablet, in Istanbul, needs collation.

* Restore perhaps ku(r ša. lu, tí) ār. ra, an zē (lu, tí) saad ra ... and cf. the incipit of Bilgamesh and Hwuawa A.
The warrior that you captured . . . . . .
the mother of a sick (baby) put the child on his (sc. your?) lap.\(^{55}\)
Your roaring sheriff afflicted the foreign lands for you,
O Gilgâmeš, on whom Urkû relied,\(^{61}\)
storm of retribution whose oppression . . .
. . . the evil rebel land like the head of a . .
Your great and glorious deeds were resplendent, may you
[extend over me] an outstretched arm!

The king’s third speech survives only in its opening line, which reads “Ištar-an di.ku₄₅
kalam.ta til.ta (Šuli 142), perhaps Ištar-an, judge who gives life in the land.” How this
relates to Gilgâmeš remains uncertain. Ištar-an and Gilgâmeš have two attributes in com-
mon. Both are divine judges, Ištar-an among men and Gilgâmeš in the Netherworld, and
both have an association with Anu, for Ištar-an is ‘great Anu’ and Gilgâmeš hails from Anu’s
terrestrial abode.\(^{65}\) In addition, Gilgâmeš seems to have enjoyed some special significance in
Dûr, the city where Ištar-an was worshipped. A Late Babylonian tablet from Uruk, copied
out from an older tablet from Dûr, lists a \(^{66}\)kîrî(cirîu), \(^{67}\)gi-i₄₅-gim-ma₄₅, “garden of Gilgâmeš”
as one of eighteen ‘gardens’ (perhaps date-groves) at Dûr.\(^{69}\)

A fourth speech of Šuli occurs on a Middle Babylonian manuscript of Šuli 142, but is too
fragmentary to add anything to the present discussion.\(^{70}\)

Šuli’s hymnists, then, held Gilgâmeš responsible for ending the hegemony of Kiš and
knew the story of his expedition against Huwawa, perhaps also the tale of his journey to
Ziusudra. They also credit him with defeat of the ‘rebel lands’. In this they anticipate more
explicit statements of his dominion over all the kings of the world, a tradition amply record-
ed in the copious Babylonian literature concerned with divination.

Omen mentioning Gilgâmeš

In the omen tradition an observed arrangement of the entrails can sometimes be identified
as amûm PN, ‘omen (lit. liver) of So-and-so’, where the person is a famous king of old.
Gilgâmeš occurs as one of these ancient rulers. A single example of a Gilgâmeš omen is
known from the Old Babylonian period:

[MAŠ li₄₅-bu e-pi₄₅-ih a-mu₄₅-as₄₅-ge-el-ga | [la ma₄₅-h]i-ra-am la i-la-ti
YOS X 42 i 2–3

[If the] heart is massive, it is an omen of Gilgâmeš, [who] had no equal.

\(^{55}\) This line also occurs in L. 89 of the Sumerian hymn to Ningal (ed. Behrens, Ningal, p. 32), where it evidently
refers to a custom of bringing the goddess sick children in the hope of healing (see ibid., p. 119). In the present context
the line is a symbolic metaphor alluding to Gilgâmeš’s merciful treatment of the captured Huwawa, whom he may have
spared in one version of the tale (see above, Ch. 1, fn. 32).

\(^{56}\) Or, ‘prince of Uruk’.

\(^{57}\) On Ištar-an see W. G. Lambert, RLA V, p. 211.

\(^{58}\) Von Wehrer, Urkî IV 185 rev. 7ª, alongside a ‘garden’ of Gatum, the traditional founder of the Kassite dynasty.

\(^{59}\) CBO 10990 b 9–13, ed. Klein, Kramer AT 4, p. 264. Croll: the word di.ku₄₅ in L. 10 is doubtful; the gloss in the
same line in x [x] x la₂.
INTRODUCTION

B 3'–4' [...] qa amītu(ba) "anš-gim-[maš ša ...] ... māt(a) (or kibriṯ erettī) t-ri-[lu ...]

C 9' [...] amītu knš-g(m)-maš šarr(lugal) da[n-ni ...]

8 A 12'–13' [...] (be 2-ta marriša(zē) ɪkjiya[u(m)(a)](u) ... e[ri] lu-g(u-gu) ši-na rakbat(u) "ā mē(k) "iš-ni ... 13 ... i larrāni(lugal) \(a-gi-ba\) ... parakkih(ba)mē sīl(qa)šši ...]

B 5'–6' [...] mē(k) "iš-ni uššadinnu(su)\(m\)ē ... 6 ... para \(k\) \(k\) \(k\) bāra)mē qāšši(-su)-nu inšidudum(kur) \(m\) ...]

C 10'–11' [...] uššadinnu(su)\(m\)ē amītu(ba) "anš-gim-[maš ša ...] ... u ina \(d\)lam(uru) ...]

9 AB The continuations of A (ll. 14’–20’) and B (ll. 7’–10’) contain no surviving traces of apodoses mentioning Gilgameš. Perhaps the manuscripts diverge from this point.

C 12’–14’ [...] amītu \(k\) \(n\) \(š\) \(g\) \(i\) \(m\) \(a\)sh-maš šar)ru du-nu \(m\) ... \(a\)-a-an \(m\) ... \(a\)-a-an \(m\) ... \(a\)-a-an \(m\).

1 Extrinsic portents that were not written on a tablet but [copied down] from the oral exposition of a master-scholar:

2 If in the liver there are nine ‘stations’, it is an omen of Gilgameš, [who had no equal ...] ... wawilardu ...]

3 If in the liver the top and the middle parts of the ‘station’ are ‘effaced’ and its base is like [...] it is an omen of Gilgameš, [who] sought life like Ziusdru and [made] the journey to Ziusdru [...] to his land [...]

4 If the top] of the ‘well-being’-mark extends from the neck of the gall-bladder and its base turns back to the ‘weapon’-mark and faces downwards, it is an omen of Gilgameš, [who ...] Humbaba [...]

5 If the ... goes round to the top] of the gall-bladder, it is an omen of Gilgameš, the mighty king who cut down the forest of cedar [...]

6 If there are two gall-bladders with a single cystic duct and so they mingle their fluid, it is an omen of Gilgameš, the mighty king [who ...] the forest of cedar [...]

7 If there are two gall-bladders and the] normal one has grown long so their fluids mix together, it is an omen of Gilgameš, the mighty king [who ...] ruled [the land \(or\) world] ( [...] ...]

8 If there are two gall-bladders and the] normal one is riding on top of them and they mingle their fluid, it is an omen of Gilgameš, the mighty king who ... conquered \(all\) the kings who sat on thrones [...] in the city [...] [...]

9 If ... it is an omen of Gilgameš, the] mighty king [...]

Two identical apodoses of Gilgameš appear on an unpublished fragment cited by CAD A/2, p. 97:

TRACTIONS ABOUT GILGAMEŠ

[... a]nš(g)me[ ...] aššu ša lu-dāt-erabil(u) da(limmu) ba ḫe[l]lu-e[ni] [...]
K 8639, 4 and 10, coll.

[(protesis lost): it] is an omen of Gilgameš, who ruled the four quarters of the world.

Isolated Gilgameš omens occur on several other fragments from Aššurbanipal’s libraries at Nineveh. Some are well preserved. Among these are variants of KAR 434 rev. 5’ that occur together as alternatives in Mansāzatu commentary no. 2:

BE manāzinu(na) 9 (var. 6) amītu(ba) "anš-gim-maš šarr(lugal) dan-nu ša māḫ[a]ma (gaba) ri ṣa[l]u(nuk)² šarr(lugal) dan-nu(gal) īna māḫ[a]ma bāṭal[(gā)]³ B 3'–4' [...]
BE šarr(mat) "inna amītu(ba) manāzinu(na) 9 (var. 5) amītu(ba) "anš-gim-maš šarr(lugal) dan-nu ša māḫ[a]ma(gaba) ri ṣa[l]u(nuk)² K 7149, 12'–14' and dupl., ed. Koch-Westenholz, Liver Omens, p. 162, 73–4, var. from 83–1–18, 452+²

If there are nine (var. six) ‘stations’, it is an omen of Gilgameš, the mighty king who had no equal: there will be a mighty king in the land.

If, alternative (ly), in the liver there are nine (var. five) ‘stations’, it is an omen of Gilgameš, the mighty king who had no equal.

Another complete omen is the following, from Pān tākalti commentary no. 4:

BE šimmu(šilim) kūma(gim) ru-ḫi-ṣu bu-ri amītu(ba) "anš-gim-maš šarr(lugal) dan-nu ša māḫ[a]ma(gaba) ri ṣa[l]u(nuk)² K 4063, ed. Koch-Westenholz, Liver Omens, p. 414, 29²

If the šumma is like bullcock’s dung it is an omen of Gilgameš, the mighty king who had no equal.

The same apodosis, with or without additional phrases, occurs in other more fragmentary omen tablets from Aššurbanipal’s libraries:²⁸

BE martu(zē) kūma(gim) li-pī-ši x[( ...) ... amītu "anš-gim-maš šarr du-nu] ša māḫ[a]ma (gaba) ri ḫe[l]lu(nuk)² kūma(gim) e x[( ...)]
CT 30 12, Rm 480 obv. 14'–15' // 41, K 3946+ obv. 9'–10'²⁸
[... amītu \(k\) \(n\) \(š\) \(g\) \(i\) \(m\) \(a\)sh-maš šar)ru (lugal) dan-nu ša māḫ[a]ma (gaba) ri ḫe[l]lu(nuk)² ša iḫḫ̡u(du)ji² tīg x[( ...]
K 6058, catch-line (copy Bezold, Catalogue, p. 759)

²⁸ I. Starr observes that ‘protesis and apodosis are related here by means of an association of ideas,’ the bullcock calling Gilgameš to mind through the bovine imagery used of him in literature (JCS 29 (1977), pp. 157–8). In the epic the hero is often ṣemu but bēnu only in MB Boğ, a circumstance that undermines Starr’s idea. A detailed study of protases and apodoses in the extant omen literature would show whether such a conscious connection was really intended by the ancients, as opposed to being inherited by modern minds.
²⁹ See Lambert in Garle, Gilgameš, p. 45.
Omen apodoses that refer to the exploits of ancient kings such as Naram-Sin and Amar-Suen are conventionally called ‘historical omens’. This present consensus is that information found in them has little or no historical value. 104 Much of it should be treated as literature rather than historiography. This is certainly true of the apodoses that mention Gilgamesh, for most of them pass on clichés also present in the Babylonian epic texts. They depict him as a mighty king without equal, 105 lord of all the princes of the earth, 106 who journeyed to the Cedar Forest, vanquished Humbaba and felled his cedar, 107 and, roaming the wilderness, 108 sought out the Flood hero in a quest for immortal life, 109 before returning home to Uruk. 110 This is much the same information as that provided by the Death of Gilgamesh and, in particular, the Poem of Early Rulers and it is most significant that, like those Sumerian compositions, the omen knows the Flood hero by the name of Šuma-iddina and not by the names given him in the epic. This is an indication that the omen apodoses allude not to the Old Babylonian epic texts but to the more traditional Sumerian literature of the early second millennium.

One apodosis certainly deviates from these clichés and another may. The tradition in which Gilgamesh ‘gored the great mountains’ does not find explicit expression in the epic poems, and sounds like a hymnic expression of the hero’s dominion over the foreign lands. 111 The broken word 1-a-a-an in Rm 907, 13’, might be restored as 1-da-a-a-an, ‘judge’, 112 perhaps with reference to Gilgamesh’s position post mortem as ruler of the dead (on which see below). This is by no means certain, however, for it would be the only reference in the omen literature to the chthonic Gilgamesh. The signs in question might equally well be part of a prothesis, in which case the common term ka-k-a-a-an, ‘normal’, is as feasible a restoration.

The Letter of Gilgamesh

Gilgamesh’s dominion over the world finds another late expression in the Babylonian text known as the Letter of Gilgamesh. This fictional composition was formerly known only from two duplicate tablets found at Šatantupe. 113 Now that these are joined by a Late

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105 Succinctly expressed in the epic at SB 145–6.
106 KAR 434 rev. 13’ // Rm 535, 6’; K 8569, 4 and 10; the OB incipit lātu-šarruš 1 i-an šum-er 1 SB 149 implies this exactly, and possibly the broken line SB 15 reported the same tradition.
107 KAR 434 rev. 9’ // Rm 335, 2’ // Rm 907, 5–6’; 8’.
108 Rm 907, 17’.
109 KAR 434 rev. 5’; Rm 907, 2’, 7’.
110 Rm 907, 3’, perhaps also 11’.
111 Starr, JCS 29, p. 157, refers to imagery in the Babylonian epic describing the hero as a goring bull and to passages outside the epic in which military action against a foreign land is described as ‘goring’, but in the extant texts the two metaphors are not combined with reference to Gilgamesh.
112 So Lambert in Gazellii, Qalq., pp. 44–5.
Babylonian exemplar, probably from Sippar,111 the Letter of Gilgameš must no longer be considered an Assyrian oddity but part of the traditional scribal literature of Babylonia. Indeed, it belongs to a growing corpus of bogus royal missives.112 These letters were popular in first-millennium intellectual circles, for copies of at least three of them were kept in the priestsy library found in the temple of Šamaš at Sippar in 1986. If any of them had an origin and purpose outside the pedagogical environment, it was perhaps to legitimize received ideology. The composers of the letters of the king of Isin and of Samsuiluna both sought to establish a prerogative or right by taking a document proving the existence of an ancient precedent: the former shows dutiful patronage of Marduk's temple at Babylon to be a condition of successful kingship, the latter speaks of submission to royal power as the proper conduct of the priestly classes.113

The Letter of Gilgameš is concerned with foreign relations. As its sender, King Gilgameš makes enormous demands of tribute from his correspondent, a foreign king otherwise unknown, ostensibly to provide precious materials for 'my friend Enkidu' and perhaps for other purposes. The demands are made under threat of devastating military action. The letter certainly promotes the ideology that the kings of Babylonia were owed by right the submission and tribute of foreign lands, but one cannot imagine that it was ever used as an instrument of diplomacy. The letter of Kurigalzu, which also includes a long list of booty, may have had a similar purpose.

The traditions relating to Gilgameš that are preserved in the Letter of Gilgameš are partly represented in the epic and partly not. The hero is described as 'favourite of Šamaš', a position implicitly his in the epic, but at the same time 'beloved of Marduk'. His god is Lugalbanda, as in the epic, but only in the company of Šin, Šamaš, Pulli or Nergal, Lugalirra and Meslammea, Zababa and 'the god my lord'. The occasion for the correspondence purports to be a lack of response to Gilgameš's earlier request for precious materials—obsidian, lapis lazuli and gold—and also demanded in connection with his 'friend Enkidu'.114 These materials were probably needed for the fashioning and decoration of the lavish funerary statute reported in Tablet VIII of the Standard Babylonian epic. The new demand is for, among other things, a huge quantity of gold for fixing on Enkidu's chest—a detail which fits exactly with Gilgameš's stated intention in the epic that the statute's 'chest shall be of gold'115—and thousands of semi-precious stones with which to make takhrus, necklaces strung with beads (presumably also to adorn the statue).116 The subscript of the letter

111 N 2869, identified by M. J. Geller, who kindly made available to me his unpublished hand copy. The fragment is suspected of being a stray from Schaefer's Sippar tablets (50).

112 On this corpus see Westenholtz, *Legenda*, pp. 141–2. To the other examples known to her, namely two letters of Sargon, the letter of a king of Isin previously known as the Weidner Chronicler and a letter of Samsuiluna, add a letter of Kurigalzu (Wistenhoft, *RSAS* 1967, pp. 495–504 // Dalley, *Edinburgh* 77 // unpublished tablet from the Sippar library now in the Iraq Museum).


114 STT 40 /41 // 42, 10: [ama-]ra\(a\) 'amaš\(a\) iš-\(a\)-ša-la-ra ra-za-zi, 'things to bond on [to the] chest of my friend Enkidu'.

115 ST Tablet VIII 7: išmaš ša šiprš. For this passage of the letter and the golden chest of the deceased see below, Ch. 13, the commentary ad loc.

116 Kraus interprets *šiprš* as 'Gebinde', following his article on this word in *Re* 64 (1970), pp. 59–60. There, in medical contexts the object so designated often occurs as a prophylactic, he maintains that Gilgameš required the

repeats the common epithet of the omen apodosis: ši-pi-ir-ša\(a\)ši-gim-maš\(a\) šarr\(a\)-lugal danu il\(a\) mā\(h\)ira\(a\) [gaba\(a\)\(ri\)] la i-sū-ū, 'message of Gilgameš, the mighty king who had no equal'.117

A full expression of the tradition of Gilgameš's dominion over the entire world comes in the introduction to the letter:

um-ma ʾši-gim-maš lāširim² māṣr\(a\)-dumu ku-[l]a[ḥ]a²-ma bi-nu-ur-a-nu² [ʾen-ši-lu] u-še-mi-gir ʾša-maš na-[ši] la-marduk\(a\)-amar\(a\)-tuš lā ki-ma qe-e [x x x x x u]-tu šē-iš šan\(a\)-šan\(a\)-pa a-di šašiš\(a\)-šan\(a\)-pa] māššiš\(a\)-kur\(a\)-kur

raḫuš \(a\)-niš našu-lašu lā šarri²(lugal)² [ša-ni-su-la] parakšiš\(a\)-bar² \(a\)-niš na-ašša-qe šeššiš\(a\)-gim\(a\)-maš² šarri²(lugal)² ū šu-lišu ša ši šašiš\(a\)-ša-dži e-reš šan\(a\)-šan\(a\)-uš māššiš\(a\)-kur\(a\)-kur

raḫuš \(a\)-niš našu-lašu lā šarri²(lugal)² ša-ni-su-lašu lašu-lašu aššu [šašiš\(a\)-ša-dži] 1-tuššu 1-tuššu [šašiš\(a\)-ša-dži] 1-tuššu 1-tuššu

STT 40 // 42, 2–6

Thus (says) Gilgameš, king of Ur, son of Kullab, creature of Anu, [Enlil] and Ea, favourite of Šamaš, beloved of Marduk, who like a cord [ . . . ], who rules all lands from horizon to zenith, and whose feet all kings [that sit on] thrones do kiss, the king who from [east] to west has made all lands . . . like a cord.

The most remarkable feature of the letter is encountered in the very first line of this passage: Gilgameš was considered by the composer of the letter to have been a king of Ur, though one who hailed from Kullab in Uruk. This is no mistake, for Ur occurs repeatedly in the text as the city of Gilgameš. This association with Ur as well as Uruk must be a distant legacy of the efforts of Ur-Namru and Šulgi of Ur to identify themselves in their considerable literary output as brothers of the great hero.

The tradition of Gilgameš's worldwide dominion observed in the omen apodoses and other texts of the second and first millennium is a reflection of several historical truths. The cultural hegemony of Urak at the end of the fourth millennium, the political and military success of the same city under King Gilgames in the early third millennium and the unprecedented foreign conquests of the kings of Akkad about four hundred years later—all these achievements are united in the figure of Gilgameš of Urak, 'the mighty king who had no equal'.

**GILGAMEŠ THE GOD**

The deity Gilgameš is first found in the Early Dynastic god list from Šuruppak (Fara), 4pa-ši₂-gi₂-lil₂-ga₂-mes₂.118 The accommodation of the hero as a minor figure in the pantheon of Sumer and Babylonia is given formal expression in other god lists, too. His presence in the

117 STT 40 // 42, 45, coll. Gurney, *AHS* 8 (1958), p. 245. For šemipati STT 40 may read [ama]-ra\(a\) 'word'.

example from Abu Salabikh has been suspected, but the entry is severely damaged and the decipherment remains uncertain. In the Old Babylonian period the deified Gilgameš appears in single-column god lists from Nippur and Isin, respectively. 

The early Old Babylonian version of the Weidner list breaks off at the point where comparison with the later versions leads us to expect Gilgameš's entry. He is entirely absent from the Louvre list (TCL XV 10). However, he is given full treatment in An = Anum, the Middle Babylonian list that ultimately developed from the Louvre list, where he follows ^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum. A Middle Assyrian copy holds three entries for Gilgameš:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</th>
<th>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Neo-Assyrian excerpt tablet of the same list has four entries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</th>
<th>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another traditional list, recording the names of boats of the gods, is clearly related:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</th>
<th>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The different names of Gilgameš witnessed in these three passages are discussed above, in Chapter 2.

Gilgameš also occurs in versions of the Weidner god list from twelfth-century Ugarit and first-millennium Babylonia, where he falls between Ninhedru and Ieru. An Old Babylonian fragment from Susa contains lines from a god list whose second column, of the three preserved, reads as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. ^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</th>
<th>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The deity sandwiched between Gilgameš and Huvawaw is unknown to me. I wonder whether this is not, in fact, a mis抄写 error. The section would then be dependent on the literary tradition of the epic texts. The god that follows Huvawaw might be ^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum. It appears in the Old Babylonian Yale tablet of the epic in connection with Huvawaw (OB III 131–3) but also follows Gilgameš in the Weidner god list, so the grounds for his inclusion at this point in the list, if he is correctly restored, would be twofold.

In the hierarchical lists Gilgameš finds no fixed place in the ranks of the gods. In An = Anum Ereškigal and the chthonic deities occupy the latter part of Tablet V and Nergal opens Tablet VI. Gilgameš appears near the end of Tablet VI but he is separated from Nergal by various demons, who have solid connections with the Netherworld, and by Amuru and his spouse Ašarrum, who are less obviously chthonic. There he is identified by none of the Netherworld functions attributed to him in literary texts (see the next two sections of this chapter). After Gilgameš come very minor deities of uncertain identity before the tablet closes with collective terms for dead and chthonic deities. Thus the list declines to give the deified hero a role in the courts of Ereškigal and Nergal, but recognizes his place generally among the gods of the Netherworld. We should ask even this attachment. Gilgameš, it seems, was for some a minor figure. However, in the Ur III period, when Ur-Namru and Suša professed a special devotion to him, he was acknowledged as an important member of the pantheon, for he is included in a short theological composition of that date, that specifies the different places or functions of ten deities in the cosmic scheme. Gilgameš is here in elevated company:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</th>
<th>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>^[4a-ia]-na-um = Anum</td>
<td>4a-ia-na-um = Anum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enlil occupies Nippur,
Mother Ninhedru occupies E-kur,
Nanna-Suen occupies the sky,
Inanna occupies all lands,
Enki occupies the carp-waters, (E)-unni (i.e., the Apsu),
Nergal occupies the great Netherworld,
Hero Ninurta occupies battles,

120 J. Nougayrol, Ugaritica V 119, 187: 4a-ia-na-um. The LB tablets have been collated; see Ch. 2, spellings nos. 4g, 25ab and 26a.
The significance of the verb is, "to fill," in construction with the locative-terminative seems to be "to reside (on)." It is here with connotations of "prevailing over." The backdrop for Gilgamesh's control of ninsu, "lordship," is presumably his place in the literary tradition, already noted, as the en of Kullab par excellence. All the other duties listed in this composition are major figures of the Sumerian pantheon and the author clearly considered Gilgamesh a significant power.

Mace-heads dedicated as votive objects to Gilgamesh (usually written "bil.ga.mes") by private individuals in the middle and late third millennium confirm the evidence of the Para list, that Gilgamesh entered the ranks of the gods early, and show that he was soon the object of religious devotion. An addition to their number is a fine example now in the Schøyen Collection and published here for the first time by permission of Mr Martin Schøyen. The inscription reads as follows:

*bil.ga.mes.ru* To Gilgamesh

ur-nu.mul.da Ur-Nanumida

sag-da the officer

s a mun.ru dedicated (this).

SC 4577, photograph in Fig. 2

The Sumerian personal name Ur-Bilgamas, "creature of Bilgamas," also bears witness to the deified hero's place in the affections of the common people. It is first recorded in the mid-third millennium and becomes relatively popular in the Ur III period.\(^{108}\) Akkadian personal names that attest to the deified hero are the Old Babylonian *"bil.ga.mes-gu-mul*, 'Gilgamesh is merciful,' the name of the active party in a hire contract, perhaps from Larsa, dated in the reign of Samsuiluna, and Puzur-Gilgamesh, 'Protected by Gilgamesh', and Gilgamesh-[, . . .], known from documents of similar date from Susa.\(^{109}\)

\(^{108}\) Cf. the names Enerbobarri and Lagasaggi, and see A. Fullstonen, ZA 49 (1910), p. 136, and Sjöberg, Or Su 23-4, p. 176, who there translated "period". For more recent interpretations see PYS II, p. 139, "bāru-ge-ari,'to endure on a date," string 1.8, and PYS-50, p. 66, translation of i. 5: "bil has filled the . . . sumu-ari with cap-piled names." Neither of these new translations works for the whole composition.


\(^{108}\) NNVIII 175, 38 (Sargonic period); for bearers of the name in Ur III documents see Linné, Casopisnyh, p. 138.

\(^{109}\) RIIWA 35-4, MDP X 21, 42, 62, 72. The Assyrarian personal name Gilgamesh is perhaps an abbreviation of one of these Akkadian names (see Ch. 3 sub-spellings nos. 6 and 26).

Sanctuaries and cult

A place *du=*, "bil.ga.mes", evidently located in central Sumer, occurs in an administrative document from Early Dynastic Adab. It is not clear whether this place, literally the 'mound of Gilgamesh', takes its name from a sacred location dedicated to the deified hero ("du=", "cult-platform, shrine") or from an ancient ruin-mound associated by legend with the greatest king of antiquity ("du=", "tell").

\(^{108}\) Yang, ADSA, A 603, 6. The text concerns the administration of date groves. Other locations mentioned are Nippur ("du=", 1.3) and Uruk ("du=", 7.0).
Documents from pre-Sargonic Lagās record that Gilgamesh received offerings during the ‘courtyard festival’ of the goddess Baba and the festival of the god Lugalburbar. These offerings were presented at a cultic location known as gā [bil](g)11, mes, ka, ‘the river-bank of Gilgamesh’. This place was outside Girsu on the procession road to and from Bad-tibira and Uruk, probably on the waterfront id.nun. The business of the Lugalburbar festival was the ritual commemoration of the shades of dead rulers of Lagās, members of their families and other important figures. The ceremony evidently took place in the presence of a representation of Gilgamesh. Such rituals also took place at the river-bank of Gilgamesh in the month of Baba’s festival and it is therefore likely that the offering made to Gilgamesh at this time was also part of the ceremonies attached to the ancestor cult. The nature of these festivals in honour of the departed suggests that Gilgamesh’s function in them was as ruler of the shades of the dead, not as a local deity or deity ancestor. Gilgamesh’s dominion over the dead is documented below. It was by his leave that the deceased ancestors could participate in the offerings made to them. There was also a tradition that Gilgamesh himself was responsible for instituting proper rites of commemoration, having learned from Enkidu’s ghost how to maintain an existence was led in the Netherworld by those shades who lacked for water. Other locations associated by name with Gilgamesh in the Lagās area, possibly also on the id.nun, were the e.bar [bil](g)11, mes, ‘outside house of Gilgamesh’, and what was probably its gate, kā [bil](g)11, mes, ‘gate of Gilgamesh’. A building or buildings attached to (Sum. du,a, literally ‘built at’) both locations appear in documents recording the delivery and storage of fish, vegetables and cereal. Thus there appears to have been a whole complex of buildings associated with Gilgamesh at this time; but it is not known whether any part of it had a cultic purpose.

At Ur, later in the third millennium, Ur-Nammu presented a vase, according to its base dedicated to [bil]ga.(en).mes en.dilm.gi,g, ‘Gilgamesh of Enmeggi’, when he rebuilt the temple of Nanna at Ur. It was found in the Ur III ‘mausoleum’, where it may have been used in rites conducted as part of a funerary cult. Gilgamesh’s association with Enmeggi is unsurprising, for this town was known as the ‘Cutha of Sumer’, a place where the cults of Ninazu and other chthonic deities were celebrated. The cult of Gilgamesh at Ur is also implied by the hymn Šulgi 4, which relates how Šulgi visited Gilgamesh in E-kii-nu-bur, Nanna’s cult-centre there (see the passages quoted above, the sub-section on Family connections). An account dated in the reign of Šu-Sin perhaps records an allotment of wool for the clothing of a cult-statue of Gilgamesh at Ur.

Another vase-base inscribed with a dedication to Gilgamesh is AO 185b, which comes from Girsu and attests to the continuing cult of Gilgamesh there. Its date is uncertain, but the spelling of the name as Gilgames instead of Gilgamez (i.e. with GA not GIN) makes it unlikely that it is pre-Sargonic and we may assume provisionally that it is Neo-Sumerian. Administrative documents of the Ur III period from Telloh, Drehem and Umma report Gilgamesh receiving offerings at Girsu, Uruk and Nippur. In this last Gilgamesh is listed among the divine residents of the temple of Nincuma. At least two administrative officials of Gilgamesh occur in connection with the provision of the cult at Nippur: one in a delivery note from Drehem (Šulgi yr 45) and another in a list of disbursements from Nippur dating to the reign of Ibbi-Sin. In documents of the Old Babylonian period there are several references to land cultivated to provide offerings for Gilgamesh at Nippur.

In texts from later times we hear nothing of offerings made to cults of Gilgamesh. Given the context it is unlikely that the traditional ‘garden of Gilgamesh’ at Dēr, encountered above in the sub-section on Family connections, is to be understood as a date-plantation supplying a cult. Similar doubts apply to a like-named location attested at Ur in the time of Amorbanipal. A register of landholdings of the temple E-anu includes the following entry: napbar(pap) 7 šarr[šarr(kirki;)]eše1 lim 8 me mi-li-šu-ti qaqq-qas-ru 1 šarr(kirki;1) 4 bišag; 5 mes, ‘total: seven date-plantations, 1800 (cubits) the measurement of the plot, the Garden of Gilgamesh’. Comparison with other entries in the register shows that kir[š] Gilgames is a toponymic name cited to determine the location of the seven plantations at issue. It was probably located immediately east of the city. As a toponym of Uruk the Garden of Gilgamesh no doubt arose from the local connection with the legendary king; probably the same was true at Dēr.

Nevertheless there is one reference to Gilgamesh in a cult context in post-Old Babylonian times. In the bilingual menology of Astrolabe B we find him honoured at a
regular festival in the month of Abu. This Middle Babylonian text holds Abu, the fifth month of the Babylonian year, sacred to Gilgamesh, adding commentary of a ritual nature:

guru gēšta lirum.mă ina biša ga.mes ud.ka nam.ka ne a da min
anck-iš-gin-mal ti-tu-.a u-mi et-tu-tu ina bāšīti(sā)ma-ntu-nu (mif) a-ma-đi
(0) bā-ra ul-te-pu-i


The month of Gilgamesh: for nine days the young men fight in their doorways in wrestling matches and trials of strength. (Akk.; Sum. in disorder.)

These rites presumably imitate the legendary struggle of the two heroes Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the doorway of the wedding house. They are held to honour Gilgamesh’s memory, nine days being the conventional duration of commemorative rituals honouring the dead.149

The connection between Abu and physical contest is maintained by a menology embedded in the Late Babylonian Nippur Compendium: a-bu = ūgdāshu (ti[kulli] mit-tur-ti ū-ma-ti a-ba-ri; ‘Abu: warfare, contest of wrestling and trials of strength’.150 The Sumerian poem of the Death of Gilgamesh makes reference to the same activity. In the dream that precedes his death Gilgamesh hears the following description of rites conducted by torchlight in the month of the festival of lights (u-tam.NEG.gar = Abu):

nam.lū.ulu ni.g a.na sa.a.b a
ala.na bi u, ul.la₃a₃.a ba da.an dim.mal (tablet: KID)
šul guruš u a kiša giš giš-zu šu mu ta.an ak ei
igi bi a.gēšta lirum.m a si a ba da ab.sā
iš.NEG.gar en eš dibin ma ku ne
e ne da nu me ma a gi bi a u num ba an gāl gā

Death of Gilgamesh N 1 // N 1 6–11, ed. Cavigneaux, Gilgamesh et la Mort, p. 16; cf. J. van Dijk, HSÜ 1, p. 249

Men, as many as are given names,
when their stations are foreseen for future days,
the warriors, the young men and the onlookers shall make a semi-circle around a
doorway (lit. form a doorway like a crescent),
and in front of it (or them) wrestling matches and trials of strength will be conducted.
In the Month of Torches, the festival of the gods,
without him being present light shall not be provided before them.

This passage appears to be an aetiology, hidden in the guise of a forecast, of age–old rites of Abu that commemorate and care for the dead through rituals conducted in the presence of funerary figurines.151 In addition to the wrestling bouts it appears that the festival included a torchlit ceremony for the shades of the dead. It seems a representation of Gilgamesh had to be present on this occasion, much as at the festivals honouring the dead ancestors of rulers of pre–Sargonic Lagaš. A further allusion to the rites of Abu may be found in Lagaš, when Ninsutu blesses the kurgarrānum–stone and other minerals:

[ezu? gidi]n ma kē, še em ma ša ge
[... u],[11] guruš u, sašak ra zagi du[u] /[... ( )] šu mu ra an ak

Lagaš 646–6 from van Dijk, Lagaš II, pl. 28, MS U 12; cf. p. 168 and L. p. 136

May you be made beautiful at [the festival] of ghosts (i.e. in Abu),
[... for] nine [days] may the young men in a semi-circle make for you a doorway.

The stone’s role in the festival was evidently that it furnished raw material for funerary figurines of the deceased. In a damaged passage that characterizes the festival of Abu as a festival of Dumuzi, the late version of the cultic lament Uramašarrābi singles out for mention, among the gods of the chthonic assembly, Dumuzi, Gilgamesh and Ningishzida. Gilgamesh is accorded high rank:

biša ga.mes (var. biša sag.mes) umun ki.t[a (...]
be-er-e-se-t [ ... ]

Langdon, BL no. 8 rev. 3–4, variant from K 33274.[152]

Gilgamesh, lord of the Netherworld [...]

Gilgamesh’s involvement with the realm of the dead, clearly observed in the passages cited and already noticed in his association with ancestor cults at Lagaš and Ur, is given formal expression in the many texts that attribute to him various chthonic functions. These will be discussed next.

Judge and ruler of the shades in the Netherworld

Gilgamesh’s Netherworld connections are explicitly mentioned in the Standard Babylonian epic when Ninsum, commending Gilgamesh to the care of Šamaš, displays foreknowledge of her son’s doom. He will ‘rule the black–headed race with Irrinu’ and will ‘dwell in the Land–of–No–Return with Ningishzida’.153 The notion of Gilgamesh as one of the rulers of the Netherworld has a long history. We have already encountered a passage of the Poem of the Mattlock in which Gilgamesh is described as ‘Nergal’s little brother’. An Old Babylonian copy of a Sumerian hymn to Utu that pays special attention to the sun god’s role as supreme judge of the dead calls Gilgamesh the ‘ruler of the Netherworld’ [:biša ga.mes en₃₃imize ur ru ka ke₃₃],154 In the Death of Ur–Namimu Gilgamesh is a senior chthonic deity, ‘king of the Netherworld’ (l. 95; biša ga.mes lagal ku ru ka ke₃₃), who receives as part of the funeral proceedings a gift of weapons (l. 92–4).155 In the list of gods to whom gifts are made in that text Gilgamesh falls
between Nergal and Ereshkigal, another indication that in some circles he enjoyed a very high rank among the chthonic deities. The same text reports that he sits in judgement in the Netherworld:

\[
\text{šēki.īg.gā.ni } \text{ṭīl.gi[a.mes.da]}
\]
\[
e.nē di kur.ai.ku, dē ka.āl kur ra.i.bar.re
\]
\[
	ext{Ur-Nammu A 143–4} \text{ (coll.), Flückiger-Hawker, Ur-namna, p. 126}
\]
\[
\text{Ur-Nammu} \text{ (alongside) his beloved brother Bilgames,}
\]
\[
himself passes judgement in the Netherworld, hands down verdicts in the Netherworld.
\]

The Sumerian poem we know as the Death of Bilgames explains that the hero was promised exactly this function in a deathbed dream, as compensation for having to die. Bilgames, born of a goddess and famously "two-thirds god and one-third human," presents the gods with a dilemma as to whether his final destiny should be divine or human. Enki, as always, has the solution: the hero shall be a god but only in death. The passage survives twice over in the newly published tablets from Mē-Turan, written in partly syllabic Sumerian:147

\[
e.nē šē tīl.ga.mes iga bi na.ī, ib, tu
\]
\[
šu nam ama. a ni nu mu.un da, kar kar(varr. TE, TE), ed. nam
\]
\[
tīl.ga.mes gidim.bi.ta ki. tu u,g, ga
\]
\[
gi.ni.ta kur ra šē. ak[e]1 i. gu. du gidim.(bi) šē.nam
\]
\[
di da mu.un, ku, da ka.āl.bar ba? bar, re
\]
\[
du,ga ga.a zu imi̇t min giš (zi.da) (3) dumu1 zi.da.gin1 (varr. ke) ba.e. dugu
\]

Death of Bilgames M 78–83 // 168–73, ed. Cavigneaux, *Gilgamesh and the Mort*, pp. 28 and 31

And now one looks on Bilgames:

*despite his mother we cannot show him mercy!*

Bilgames, in the form of his ghost, dead in the underworld, shall act as governor of the Netherworld, shall be indeed chief of its shades!

He will pass judgement, he will hand down verbs, what he says (text: you say!) will carry the same weight as the word of Ningishzida and Dumuzi.

The resulting triad of gods, Gilgamesh, Ningishzida and Dumuzi, clearly had some special function in the Netherworld, for we have already met them grouped together in the cultic lament *Urannamairrabi*, as quoted at the end of the preceding section. The tradition of the chthonic Gilgamesh is well attested in other literature. 'Mighty Gilgamesh' occurs among other gods of the Netherworld—Nergal, Ningishzida, Bidu and Enana—in a Sumerian elegy known from Old Babylonian copies. An *erēmmu* of the same period mentions Gilgamesh as in some way related to Nergal but evidently not as his brother, as in the Poem of the Mattuck (see above). The context is a lament for the dead Nergal; *erēmmu* tīl.gi[a.mes], 'the poplar tree (of?) Bilgames', appears to be enjoined to comfort the mourner.150

In Sumerian and bilingual zī . . . pād incantations in first-millennium copies Gilgamesh routinely appears among the gods of the Netherworld. In Gattu II he occurs near the end of a long list of such deities. First come the twins Lugalirra and Meslamtaea, then the pairs of spouses Nergal and Ereshkigal, Ninazu and Ningishzida, the trio Ningishzida, Azizuma and Ningēšina, the couple Namtar and Ḫūšīša, their daughter Ḫēdimuk, Divine Punishment (ḫur.da), the gatekeeper Bidu, and other minor officers, Šarrābīd(a) and Enana. Then comes Gilgamesh:

\[
2\text{tīl.giš}1, ga. mes]1 gi nि. ti kur ra. ke, šē.(pād)
\]
\[
nū3, min šak-ha-nab-ka er-ti tī li-ú ta-mat
\]
\[
Ebeling, ArOr 21 (1953), p. 388, 79–80a//
\]
\[
2\text{tīl.giš}1, ga. mes]1 gi nि. ti kur ra. ke, šē.(pād)
\]
\[
STT 210 rev. 19'
\]

Be you adjoined by the life of Gilgamesh, the governor of the Netherworld!

He is followed by Lugalalmaša and Uqur. In the zī . . . pād section of *Uduqšul V* Gilgamesh occurs at the head of a list of minor Netherworld deities, namely Ningishzida, the Seven Divine Doors and the Seven Divine Bolts of the Netherworld, Bidu, Ḫūšīša and Ḫēdimuk:

\[
2\text{tīl.giš}1, ga. mes]1 gi nि. ti kur ra. ke, šē.(pād)
\]
\[
nū3, min šak-ha-nab-ka er-ti(t)4, 4, min (= lā tamata)
\]
\[
CT 161 13 i 42–3
\]

Be you adjoined by the life of Gilgamesh, the governor of the Netherworld!

Gilgamesh's place as a leading deity of the Netherworld is enshrined in a Late Babylonian cultic explanatory text which comments on a kettle-drum ritual. Among the deities represented at the ritual are the divine twins, Lugalirra and Meslamtaea. This pair is sometimes explained in terms of more important deities, Sin and Nergal. The commentator makes this assertion but first explains Meslamtaea as Gilgamesh:

\[
6\text{lugal-in-ra šénti,30 mār(u) (dumu) re-lu-ú Ši}1, zī.lī 1, iš.ni-ti šes-ta-ē-a 'giš-gim-maš }\]
\[
'giš-gim-maš nergal(u) gurī[ ] dib dúr er-te(ni) ke'm}
\]

F. Thureau-Dangin, *RD* 16 (1919), p. 145, obv. 8–9

147 The list of gods is tabulated below, in Ch. 10, the introduction to SB Tables VIII.

148 "The twofold presence of the long sequence of lines reporting the dream is to be explained as (a) the gods' communication to the dying Bilgames of his ultimate destiny (M 49–125) and (b) the hero's verbatim repetition of it to his advisors (M 140–216) (N 11). As a literary strategy the repetition serves two purposes: it emphasizes the importance of the secret knowledge imparted to the hero and introduces an element of suspense by delaying the progression of the narrative.


150 CT 15 14, 35 and 27, ed. Cohen, *Erimon*, p. 94.

151 Note also later in Gattu II, in broken context following Ningishzida (Ebeling, *ArOr* 21, p. 392, 63–44†; zī 'gūš-gim-maš [ . . . ]; see 'šē-ni ti-[ . . . ]

INTRODUCTION

Lugalzaggis is Sin, the first-born son of Enlil. Meslamtaea is Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh is Nergal, who dwells in the Netherworld.

Nergal's position as king of the realm of the dead is also Gilgamesh's, according to the incipit of an otherwise lost incantation prayer. This incipit occurs as the catch-line of an Ulter-ruda incantation against curse and witchcraft known from a Late Babylonian copy: en 4u-se-gim-mal-ta eret(i)tu 120 apalatu(daga)tu 360 dayu-nin(di.kus)tu la ta-im, 'O Gilgamesh, king of the teeming Netherworld, inimitable judge'.144 Further attestations of Gilgamesh as king and judge of the dead appear in the exorcistic rituals discussed after the following section.

Ferryman of the dead

Gilgamesh performed another duty in the Netherworld. A mid-second-millennium zi ... pa'd incantation that lists the deities of the Netherworld and their chthonic duties reports that Gilgamesh acts as the ferryman of the dead, a Babylonian Charon:

zi-te.e-er[i]; gal 4en.lila kur-ra-ke ehe-pa'd
zi-te.e-er[i]; gal la ra nin er[i]; gal an.na-ra ke ehe-pa'd
[zi] 11en.nam.tar.re su.ta.sul kur-ra.x(es) ehe-pa'd
[zi] 10b.du; la du; kur-ra ke ehe-pa'd
[zi] 9u-se-gim-mal-ta 6ta.mal; 5ab(um) 9[kur-ra Ke ehe-pa'd]

Be adjured by the life of Nergal, the supreme ruler of the Netherworld, be adjured by the life of Ereshkigal, the mistress of lofty Hades,145 be adjured by the life of Lord Namtar, the vizier of the Netherworld, be adjured by the life of Bidu, the gatekeeper of the Netherworld, be adjured by the life of Gilgamesh, the boatman of the Netherworld!

Another incantation based in this tradition is preserved in a Late Babylonian fragment, excavated at Uruk and now in Baghdad, that tells how Gilgamesh controlled the shades' departure from the Hubur and perhaps, like Charon, received from them:

[en] 4u-se-gim-mal a-lih er-ka-li 8i ... (undeciphered gloss: ma'ib la x), ...
[mu-i] es-bi-x 4u-ba.an ur-a-li-ik ...?
[a] 4lal-la ku a-e-x 8i-lu 8i 8a-a ...?
[a] 8r-ri lu es-e(i)tu 194 qu-tuk-[a]...
[x] 115 ina ne-bi-xa ta-ma-ba ...[...
[x] 116 ina ne-bi-xa tu-[...[...
von Weidner, Uruk V 251, 2'-7', coll. 117

TRADITIONS ABOUT GILGAMESH

[Incantation.] O Gilgamesh, who dwells in Hades, [... [the ferryman of the Houbur, who ... [the ferryman to Hades you [... [he that] descends into the Netherworld is under your control [... you receive [the...] at the ferry crossing [... you [... at the ferry crossing [...

In discussing the first of these passages Lambert notes the existence, in the list of cultic barges in Hi V, of two boats of Gilgamesh among those of other deities.146 However, as he observes, we cannot be sure that either of them was the mythical ferry of the dead and not a vehicle for ritual procession. Elsewhere the shades' boatman was not Gilgamesh but Humurtabal, and it is also possible that Ur-sanabi had this function.147 Less certain in its allusion to the ferry of the dead is the much older Emešal cult song that perhaps describes Gilgamesh travelling on water.148

Given Gilgamesh's manifold functions in the Netherworld, and especially his responsibility for conveying the dead safely into its custody, it is not surprising to find him represented at rites of burial. His presence at funerary cults in pre-Sargonic Lagash and, probably, Ur has already been noted. An Assyrian funerary ritual maintains the tradition, more than 1,500 years later, when it mentions the setting up of ritual trays (paššāru) before 'great Antu', 'Gil-gim-mal' and the 'sailors', and the placing of vessels of beer and wine before the same two deities.149 The sailors are presumably the crew of Gilgamesh's infernal ferry. Another Assyrian source for ritual of burial is one that describes the grave-goods an Assyrian king, either Asshuraddon or Assurbanipal, placed in his father's tomb. Among the offerings interred with the deceased were some horses, which occur in a passage where some have seen the name Gilgamesh. However, this turns out to be a mirage: the reference is in fact to Šamšallātu.150

The 'gate of Gilgamesh', attested in two first-millennium medical prescriptions as the source of a magic ingredient, namely old oil,151 is perhaps a euphemism for the mouth of the...
funnel or other opening through which periodic offerings were made to one's ancestors. 171 The usual liquid poured in such libations was cold water, but oil was among the other liquids that could also be offered. 172

**Gilgamesh in exorcistic rituals**

As judge and ruler of the shades Gilgamesh wielded a special authority in the realm of the dead; as the ferryman of the River Hubur he played an important part in the removal of shades to the secure confines of the infernal regions. Accordingly, Gilgamesh's role as a Netherworld deity is much attested in the exorcistic literature of the post-Old Babylonian periods, where a common response to the perceived malign influence of trouble-making demons, witches and ghosts was their banishment to the Netherworld. Gilgamesh was naturally one of the authorities whose consent was needed to effect such removal. His earliest attestation in this role in exorcism comes in a fragmentary Middle Babylonian copy of a Sumerian Marduk-Ea incantation, found at Hattusa. The Netherworld context is assured by mention of other chthonic deities and the thrust of the incantation seems to be protection against sorcery. 173

A Standard Babylonian incantation against witchcraft reports at length the magical practices by which a practitioner of the black arts typically seeks to harm a person. Among the many ways of symbolizing the victim's death by destroying an image of him is to conduct a ritual dispatching it across the infernal river; [MIN ana giRD-gin-na(š) id-di-nu-na 4hu-bur ta-an-nu]-ra, [They have made images of me,] handed them over to Gilgamesh and sent them across the River Hubur.' Here the reference is again to Gilgamesh as the Babylonian Charon.

The Babylonian exorcist's principal weapon against sorcery was the *Maqlu* ritual, typically performed at the end of the month. The end of Abu, already noted for its funerary rites, was the Babylonian All Souls' night, when the spirits of the dead were considered especially prone to return to the land of the living. The gates of hell were briefly open as the ghosts came and went, a circumstance that afforded a particularly good opportunity for dispatching all kinds of malign forces down to the Land of No Return. 174 As already seen in the bilingual monologue quoted above, in the sub-section on Sanctuaries and cult, Gilgamesh was especially honoured during this time of *Maqlu*, which effects the banishment of sorcerous powers to the Netherworld, often calls on his authority. Gilgamesh's involvement in the rituals of *Maqlu* is attested by the incantations themselves and by other sources. 175

The short incantation en *erētu erētu erētu-sūmnuna* (Netherworld, Netherworld, O Netherworld), from early in the ritual, begins by invoking Gilgamesh as a dominant power in the struggle against sorcery: *giš-gin-na(š) māl di-di-na-nu, 'Gilgamesh is the controller of your (the witches') curse.' 176 Later he appears in the context of an ill-wisher handing over some symbol of his victim to the control of the Netherworld, of which Gilgamesh is the representative. 177 This is also the background to a fragmentary therapeutic prescription for a man suffering from a whole range of symptoms ('Universal-Symptombeschreibung'), which mentions Gilgamesh and the month Abu. The aetiology of the sufferer's symptoms is witchcraft:

- [amētu(10) jša(bi) 4ha-ni mēs(ms) zikurruttum[t(zi.ki.ru.[d][a]-]ša 4he-bi-ši-[ši]]
- [sarrat(sig)?] zu[murri(zi) dšu a-na 4giš-gin-ma(s)al id-di-di-di-nu ( . . . ])
- ina erētu(zi) 4mētu na(m) nu(m)eš-ta 4ib-di-[n]u ( . . . ]

*an=an 3.kam u.10.kam u-za-bal-nu ka[ššu] 4lu-[ši] 4ساب(šur) 4BAM 231 i 16–18 // 332 i 1–2* 178

That [man] is bewitched, the waters of the cutting-off of his life are drawn [for him, hair from his body] they handed over to Gilgamesh, at the beginning of Abu they fashioned figurines of him. [ . . . ] He will languish for one hundred days and then [the spell that afflicts him] will be undone.

According to this passage the delivery of symbols of the victim to Gilgamesh can best be effected early in Abu. Perhaps already some representation of Gilgamesh was set up in preparation for the rituals that took place later in the month, concerning which a letter of Nabû-nādin-šumi, chief exorcist at the Assyrian court, to King Esarhaddon or Assurbanipal reports that a figure of Gilgamesh (zalum[nu] 4giš-gin-maš) symbolized the god’s presence during the performance of *Maqlu*. 179 The letter prescribes a performance of the ritual for the king's mother during the month Abu, probably on the twenty-eighth day. Gilgamesh's participation in the rites pertaining to the care and appeasement of the dead brought with it a sym-

171 On this secondary function of the festivals of the dead see Scourlock, 'Magical uses of Mesopotamian festivals' (fn. 151).


173 *Maqlu* I 88. The witches' curse is the penalty they have incurred by their nefarious activities.


176 *SAA* X 374 = *ABV* 56 rev. 5; ed. Parpola, *LAI* no. 208.
bolic access to the Netherworld and so afforded an illicit opportunity for ill-wishers to work witchcraft on an unsuspecting victim.

Another occasion on which a figurine of Gilgameš appears is a Middle Babylonian ritual against ghosts known from a Boğazköy tablet. The making of a figurine of Gilgameš (šalam [alum] šil.g.i.mes) is prescribed in a fragmentary context, but certainly as part of an exorcism.

The classic example of the exorcism of ghosts by removal to Gilgameš’s custody in the Netherworld survives in first-millennium copies, KAR 227 and its duplicates. It is not known where the ritual was performed, but it is unlikely to have been in a temple or other cultic building. More probably the location was chosen by the exorcist to suit the needs of the individual case. The sequence of ritual acts is well preserved. After various preparations, the exorcist prostrates himself before Šamaš, Gilgameš and the Anunnaki. These are, respectively, the supreme judge of the Netherworld, the ruler of the shades and the chthonic deities collectively. Their presence at the ritual would have been denoted symbolically by figurines or more abstract representations. The prostration is followed by a prayer to Šamaš, in which the exorcist forces the troublesome ghost to vow by Šamaš and Gilgameš that he will return to the Netherworld. Then comes the famous prayer to Gilgameš as judge of the Netherworld, which begins as follows:

The prayer, spoken by the sufferer not by the exorcist, continues over many more lines in standard fashion, relating the offerings and gifts the sufferer presents to win the attention of the power invoked, and in return asking again for the banishment to the Netherworld of the unseen forces responsible for his plight. The end of the prayer to Gilgameš is followed by an instruction that the sufferer prostrate himself before the deified hero in the most reverent way possible, after which the exorcist will present him to the Anunnaki. After the sufferer’s prayer to the Anunnaki come two further prayers in which the sufferer addresses, first, the ghosts of his ancestors and, second, an unknown shade. In each Gilgameš is again cited as one of the authorities of the Netherworld, alongside Šamaš alone and then in the company of Šamaš and the Anunnaki.

Gilgameš’s function as ruler of the shades in the Netherworld meant that the banishment there of malign influences emanating from the black arts and troublesome ghosts necessarily took place under his authority and with his consent. The triad of powers invoked in KAR 227—Šamaš, Gilgameš, the Anunnaki—takes account of the source of Gilgameš’s authority over the dead, which is delegated to him by the supreme judge, Šamaš, and exercised on behalf of the community of Netherworld deities, the Anunnaki.

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OTHER ATTESTATIONS OF GILGAMESH

The small Neo- or Late Babylonian fragment BM 34314 (Sp 426), published as *CT* 46:31, was described in the summary catalogue of that book as ‘almost certainly a piece of the Gilgamesh Epic’. It remains unplaced, but Lambert’s copy is reprinted in Pl. 115. In the left-hand column the only meaningful traces are those of Gilgamesh’s name, which can be restored in l. 5: unità-gim-maṣ. The right-hand column contains a succession of six lines, each commencing with a second-person verb (1: ‘iš-‘a [. . .]; 2: ‘iš-la-[u]. . .; 3: ‘iš-la-[u]. . .; 4: ‘iš-la-[u]. . .; 5: ‘iš-la-[u]. . .; 6: ‘iš-la-[u]. . .), and then (l. 7) enity-kī or ‘iš-kī-₃-dī. It may be that this is not a piece of the epic at all, but a fragment of an incantation.

An unplaced Kuyunjik fragment that names Gilgamesh is K 13880, first published by Thompson (*Gilgamesh*, pl. 8). It comes from the middle of a tablet of uncertain format (new copy in Pl. 35).

1' [. . .] x [. . .]
2' [. . .] ki ud ‘iš-la-[u]. . .
3' [. . .] ‘iš-la-[u]. . .
4' [. . .] ‘iš-la-[u]. . .
5' [. . .] ‘iš-la-[u]. . .
6' [. . .] ‘iš-la-[u]. . .
7' [. . .] ‘iš-la-[u]. . .
8' [. . .] ‘iš-la-[u]. . .
9' [. . .] ‘iš-la-[u]. . .
10' [. . .] ‘iš-la-[u]. . .

The more text of the Standard Babylonian epic is discovered, the less likely it is that this fragment belongs to it.

A larger fragment of interest that is certainly no part of the epic is a Neo- or Late Babylonian piece, BM 78108, that may mention Gilgamesh in col. iii, ll. 2 (‘iš-gi-im-maṣ) and 5 (‘iš-gi-im-maṣ). The text concerns the mar-bānūtu, boats and the River Ulā. Its publication is expected from I. L. Finkel, who is thanked for making available to me his hand copy.

An Assyrian ritual in which Gilgamesh may be associated with Šamaš is known from an early Neo-Assyrian fragment found at Aššur, VAT 10398, 6': [. . .] uṣu-lā bi-gâ-mes x[. . .].”¹³⁰ Not enough of this piece survives to place the ritual in proper context; it may or may not have to do with exorcism.

Another Neo-Assyrian ritual fragment that mentions Gilgamesh is Rm 908 from Kuyunjik, previously thought to refer to the Series of Gilgamesh (*išum Gilgamesh*). Collation reveals that what is probably at issue in the two lines in which Gilgamesh occurs is a bed:¹³¹

¹³⁰ I thank Stefan Mau for showing me his photograph of this unpublished fragment and allowing its quotation here.
¹³¹ The sign in question is not an exact replica of the okš in l. 4.
Enkidu and Others

Sumerian poems of Bilgames, OB II–III, OB UM, OB Schayen1, OB Ishchali, OB VA + BM, MB Ur; also OB lullaby OECT XI 2, 16

Bilgames and the Bull of Heaven Ma 116, 119 (Me-Turna), MB Boğ, MB Nippur, SB Bilgames, also MB Poem of Early Rulers (Emar syllabic Sumerian line, Ugarit)3

1 Deimel, Para II 28 ii 12. At this point collapses Dossin's often stated view that the name was originally "En-iddu, ... à interpreter "le seigneur de la cannicie"); as last expressed in his article "Eniddou dans l'"Épopée de Gilgames"", Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres, Series 5, 42 (1956), p. 591.

2 So already Lambert, Papers Parida, p. 38, with fn. 4, Kramer, MSOS 64 (1944), p. 11, fn. 15, supposed that the Sumerian poems' spelling of the name plus agitative postposition, where marked, with -e- not -ge- meant that the name ended in a vowel not a consonant and thus that the use of the sign ĕunu was 'an orthographic phenomenon ... not to be taken as the Sumerian word ěunu "good", etc.', This position disintegrates in the face of many variant spellings, especially in the Gudea corpus, e.g. Staatse B v 56 ṣ[i]-nāmut-di- and Cyl A 42 ṣ[i]-nāmu-di. Gadd understood such vacillation on the phonological level, as the occasional omission of consonants in Akušk even before vocalic suffixes (A. Falkenstein, Grammatik der Sprache Gudea von Lagas, §18 2b). It is more likely a matter of spelling style rather than phonetics.

3 On personal names of pre Sargonic time and of the Ur iii period that follow the pattern s kiludi see Albrecht and Pormpuno, UET 2 Supplement, pp. 49–50, Limet, Eponymography, p. 262, and the discussion by W. G. Lambert, "The names of Urnammu", JNES 49 (1990), p. 79. The variable element is usually a town, temple or other location, e.g. šum-kiludi, "The Aped is a pleasant place", but, as Albrecht and Pormpuno note, "the first element also includes some common words". Enkidu falls into this group.

Note that Römer's reading en-kī-dū in Bilgames and Akka 42, MS B (AEAT 2099, p. 29), disagrees with the copy's en-kī-du (TCMRF IV 5).

4 Arnaud, Emar V/4 767, 15, quoted in full in Ch. 3, the sub-section on Crossing the ocean.

5 Caviglia, RSV 93 (1997), p. 107, 126: "en-ki-di-du, if the traces are not fully legible on the published photograph (ibid., p. 129)."

6 Bilgames and Hurwawa A 175–6, 179, MSS KIA (K1) and Uba (no provenance; the same manuscripts also give Hurwawa the determinative), Bilgames and the Netherworld M 11, 21, Death of Bilgames M, 201 (Mē-Turna).
further spellings, commonly "en-ki-du", but also "en-gi-du", and "en-ki-ta+ case ending. Another phonetic writing of the west may be "en-ki-tu" at Amur. In early Neo-Assyrian tablets one finds further phonetic orthographies, "en-kid" and "en-ki-di.

As with the spelling of the name of Gilgamesh, it must be asked why the spelling of Enkidu's name in the late epic uses a sign, GAG, with a phonetic value not normal in this period, ḫu. This spelling led early commentators to read the name as "Eu(en.ki)-bānī (dūg)." Though they were subsequently proved wrong, at least two modern scholars consider that the spelling with ḫu is intended to make exactly that point, that Enkidu was the creature of Ea. So indeed he seems to have been, for if the Mother Goddess was responsible for Enkidu's birth, it was using Eu's know-how, and probably at his instigation, however, now that we know that the spelling en-ki-du was already in use in the Diynl in the early Old Babylonian period, it is no longer possible to suppose that it arose against a background of orthographic experimentation by Middle Babylonian scribes. More probably its presence at Mé-Turan represents a provincial attachment to an old phonetic spelling of the name, for the sign GAG had the phonetic value ḫu in late third-millennium writing but not afterwards. If so, the writing "en-ki-ďa" was not originally coined as a vehicle for a meaning, 'Eu created him'. Nevertheless, it may eventually have found favour in the latter part of the second millennium exactly because of the opportunity it offered for the speculative etymology that became in vogue at that time. In this way an old, syllabic spelling was adopted because it could be interpreted to add a pertinent fact to what was known of its bearer, something that could not be articulated by the Sumerian spelling en.ki.dug or by any plain writing such as "en-ki-ďa."

In Babylonian poetry Enkidu's name most probably exhibited a long middle syllable, Enkidu, for it falls on occasion at the line's end where a trochaic stress pattern is expected. Two conflicting traditions relating to Enkidu are visible in the Sumerian and Babylonian epic texts. More prominent in the Sumerian material is the tradition that Enkidu was the servant of Gilgamesh. The terms used are ir (var. iri), "da.ni, "his servant", and, less commonly, šubur a.ni, "an archaic, literary word that means much the same. The relationship is also defined when Gilgamesh is referred to as Enkidu's "lugal, "king." The other tradition, which so powerfully informs all the Babylonian epic texts, is that Enkidu was Gilgamesh's bosom friend and companion (ibru). Something of this tradition has long been visible in the Sumerian poem of Gilgamesh and the Netherworld, in which the reunion of Gilgamesh with the shade of his dead servant is described with some warmth:

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Note:

1. Bottero, p. 69, fn. 1; S. Parpola, SÁK IX, p. xcvii; id., CRED 43, p. 318.

2. See Ch. 5, the introduction to MB Nippur.

3. Von Soden's assertion that Enkidu's name 'in den allmin. Gilg.-Dichtungen an Versende nicht bezeugt ist' (ZA 171 (1981), p. 170) is refuted by clear examples in the Pennsylvania, Yale and Chicago tablets (OB II 52, 95, 148, OB III 70 lámmaged, 78, 90, 118, 139 lámmaged, OB Irakchi 10), and now also by OB Schabbel, 65 and 77.


5. Gilgamesh and Akka 42 MSS B, Gilgamesh and the Netherworld 241, 243, Ms. 11.


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The use of the word ku.li, the Sumerian equivalent of ibru, indicates an informal relationship bordering on equality. The recent recovery of versions of the Sumerian poems from Mé-Turan has revealed that the tradition of an intimate friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu informs the Sumerian literature more than previously thought. A passage of Gilgamesh and the Netherworld omitted by the Nippur manuscripts, where it would fall after l.221, records Gilgamesh's grief at the failure of Enkidu to return from his mission to retrieve his master's playthings from the realm of the dead:

u₃₈ ū₃₈ g₂₈ d₃₈ a₃₈ n₃₈ ū₃₈ l₃₈ i₃₈ n₃₈ a₃₈ šu₃₈ b₂₈ r₃₈ a₃₈ n₃₈ t₄₈ b₂₈ a₃₈ r₃₈ t₄₈ u₃₈ n₃₈ a₃₈ l₃₈ n₃₈ a₃₈ šu₃₈ g₂₈ d₃₈ u₃₈ a₃₈ l₃₈ n₃₈ a₃₈ šu₃₈ a₃₈ n₃₈ a₃₈ n₃₈ a₃₈ šu₃₈ d₃₈ k₃₈ r₄₈ a₃₈ l₃₈ n₃₈ a₃₈ šu₃₈


From (that) evil day to the seventh day thence,
his servant Enkidu came not forth from the Netherworld. The king uttered a wail, he wept bitter tears,
'Vemy faithful servant, [my] steadfast companion, the one who counselled me—the Netherworld has [seized him']

The final line of this quotation recurs later in the Mé-Turan manuscript, when Gilgamesh seeks help from Enli (l. 22); it is again absent from the Nippur sources.

The most poignant expression of Gilgamesh's love for Enkidu in the Sumerian poems is found in the Death of Gilgamesh, whose content is now properly revealed thanks to the finds at Mé-Turan. As the great king lies stricken on his bed, Enli appears to him in a dream and tells him that death at last has caught up with him. The time has come for him to make the journey to the land of the dead, the place where his ancestors lie. There, too, his loved ones await him:

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Notes:

10. C. states that 'nu-um (from *nu-ba*) is used to form rhetorical questions' and translates nu.uk ma.ab.bé.en in this line as 'are you not going to tell me?' (M. Civi, Asas Or 1 (1983), p. 51). However, earlier in the same poem the verb nu.uk ma da.gal.(la) am (ll. 172–4) is not susceptible to such an interpretation, and accordingly I have here adhered to the conventional rendering of the prefix nu- (on which see W. H. Ph. Römer, Kramer AV, pp. 371–8).
two opposing facets of Enkidu's character in one line perhaps expresses exactly that paradox. The preservation of the tradition of the counsellor Enkidu in the Babylonian epic texts deserves comment. Enkidu's coming is eagerly anticipated by Gilgamesh, who yearns for a friend to counsel him. His wish comes true: Enkidu acts as counsellor throughout the episode of the Cedar Forest, beginning with his warnings of the danger. The quoted phrase and its variants appear when Enkidu explains his friend's nightmares, when he advises Gilgamesh to despatch Humbaba and when he urges him to find a fine cedar to provide timber for Enlil's door. In the literature of ancient Mesopotamia the explanation of dreams is a task often performed by an intimate female—for example, Ninsun in the Pennsylvania tablet and Gilgamesh in Dumuzi's Dream—and this is perhaps the key to Enkidu's filling of the role. As Gilgamesh's most intimate companion he was naturally also his confidant. A more thought-provoking (but anachronistic) view is that 'Enkidu, sent by the gods to match and reform Gilgamesh, is the partner of Gilgamesh in the Manichaean sense of a spiritual counterpart, a divine twin sent by God to convey noble counsel'. However that may be, in Enkidu's role as Gilgamesh's counsellor lies the probable solution to the strange equation a.rain = Enkidu in the group vocabulary quoted in Chapter 3. The word a.rain = Enkidu in the version is more likely to mean 'counsellor', 'advice', 'can have overtones of 'good counsel', to the extent that it was sometimes interpreted by Babylonian scholars as midaktu, 'counsellor'. Perhaps then, a.rain was meant by the list's composer to convey the notion 'counsellor par excellence'.

Outside the Sumerian and Babylonian epic poems Enkidu had almost no existence. The entry  Mister (Śā) in the god list Amuš VI 287 is restored to read  Mister by Litke but this is far from certain, since Enkidu appears in no other god list, and seems not to have been assimilated into the pantheon in any capacity. Elsewhere he occurs in an Old Babylonian incantation to quiet a baby whose cries keep the household awake, where he is understood to be a potential source of the problem's resolution:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ma}^1 & \text{an-na-an}^16 \text{a}-\text{zu}-\text{pu}-\text{ur}-\text{a}-\text{n}^1 \text{a}-\text{en}-\text{ki}-\text{du}; \\
\text{a}-\text{ki}-\text{in} & \text{ka}-\text{la}-\text{a}-\text{at}-\text{i}^23 \text{a}-\text{nu} \text{ma}-\text{a}-\text{ga}-\text{ra}-\text{ru}-\text{tam} \\
\text{li}-\text{ci}-\text{hu}-\text{ur}-\text{ru}-\text{um} & \text{ma}^22 \text{la}-\text{gi}-\text{bu}-\text{u} \text{sibbinam} (\text{mašša}.) \\
\text{[i]-} & \text{ka}-\text{a}-\text{ci}-\text{ci}^2 \text{ma}^3 \text{mu}^2 \text{ma}^2 \text{a}-\text{ku}-\text{ra}-\text{si}-\text{a} \text{ar}-\text{ar}-\text{am} \\
\text{OECD XVII} & 2, 15-22, \text{ed. ibid.}, pp. 19-21 \text{11} \\
\text{Who should I send to (summon) Enkidu, him that set the number three for the watches, (saying) 'Let him catch him, who caught the female gazelle, let him bind him, who bound the male gazelle'}}
\end{align*}
\]

16. The translation 'sibling' is a guess from the context; Cavigneaux translates 'neveu?'. Parallel passages in other texts pair ari, 'sister', with šeš, 'brother': see TCL XV 37 rev. 22-3, ed. Cavigneaux, Gilgamesh and the Mort p. 66; ninu, la ... šešu; and, with reference to the passage of the Death of Gilgamesh quoted immediately after the present one, the bilingual text W 220-23.7, 23-77, ed. Cavigneaux, op. cit., p. 68: itt ni-ri-si nis im me-ku-ud-u-ud: (itt ni-bi-il a-ba-ša-la a-ba-ša-la [i]-ru-ku-ru-ku-ru), from the sister's house the sister comes to you, from the brother's house the brother comes to you' (so Suma, Abd. has minor differences); finally a prayer to Lú, Cohen, ZA 67 (1977), p. 10, 47-8, ed. Cavigneaux, op. cit., p. 71: itt ninu, ninu, ninu; mešša šeš šeš šeš šeš šeš šeš šeš šešu, from the sisters' house the sister will come to you, from the brothers' house the brother will come to you'.

HUMBABA

Humbaba was the guardian of the Cedar Forest, placed there by Enlil to deter would-be intruders seeking the valuable timber. He is essentially anthropomorphic in the Sumerian and Babylonian texts that relate his encounter with Gilgamesh, but at the same time represents the terrifyingly numinous power of the remote and ancient forest and has tree-like characteristics.24 The old form of Humbaba's name is conventionally rendered ḫuwawa; it first occurs as a personal name in UR III documents, spelled variously ṣu-ṣa-a-ta, ṣu-a-ta and ṣu-a-t-tü (ṣu-ḥa-a-ta, or ṣu-ṣa-a-ta).25 It belongs to a common pattern of name with reduplicated second syllable; such names, of no obvious linguistic affiliation, are often styled 'Banana'-names.26 The spelling ṣu-ṣa-a-ta, sometimes with divine determinative, is usual in the Sumerian poems of Bilgames and in the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh texts, except for OB Schayen 177, which abbreviates it to ṣu-ṣa and ḫu-ṣa, and OB Harmal 8, which writes ṣu-bi-bi. This last variant also occurs at Mari, where ornamental 'heads of ḫuwawa' occur several times in administrative documents, written rēš (ṣag) ṣu-bi-bi.27 The evidence from Mari and Tell Harmal speaks for a normalization ḫappāpi—the first syllable is closed, as is explicit in later spellings—as a variant of ḫuwawa in what may be called the Diyaša tradition.28

24 OB II 118: Enkidu masqataruna aušum Trim; SB II 62: Enkidu naḫkāsusu [ni-su aḫḫaš]. See already Forber, TIN 49, p. 303, who also mentions the possibility of an allusion to the dream sequence in SB II 41a, where Enkidu is shown awake while Gilgamesh sleeps. It is not yet clear that Enkidu does indeed stay awake on those nights; all we know is that he takes up a position in the doorway.

25 According to the Sumerian poem Bilgames and ḫuwawa, the auras that emanated from him were cut up like lumber; see further G. Steiner, ḫuwawa und sein 'Bergsaat' in der sumerischen Tradition' Acta Som 18 (1996), pp. 208–12; N. Forsyth, 'Ḫuwawa and his trees: a narrative and cultural analysis', Acta Som 3 (1981), pp. 13–29.

26 Limet, Lachnopennymia, pp. 111 and 410–1; C. Wölke, 'Ḫuwawa/Humbaba', RAL IV, p. 530.


29 A close relationship existed between the Akkadian of the Diyaša and that of the Middle Euphrates. It arose as a result of the scribal culture of Eanna being the chief influence on the reform of writing practices at Mari; see D. Charpin, Other western texts use the southern spelling ḫu-ṣa-a-ta: an inventory of jewellery from Qarna that lists a 'face of ḫu'29, the Hittite and Hurrian paraphrases of the epic, and the Middle Babylonian version of the Poem of Early Rulers (quoted above in Chapter 3, the sub-section on Crossing the ocean). In Hittite and Hurrian the inflected endings fit an Anuilaut in /l/ rather than /l/, and suggest therefore that in Anatolia ḫu-wa-wa might be read ḫu-pi-pi or ḫu-wa-ri.30 At Alalah the eponymous gemstone is spelled **ḫub.bē.ē.31 From this it seems that the Diyaša tradition’s Ḫappāpi was also the usual pronunciation in north Mesopotamia and Syria. One cannot, however, let these peripheral spellings dictate that we read ḫu-ṣa-a-ta as ḫu-pi-pi everywhere.32 Writings of the reduplicated syllable as /ba/ are long established, coming from the first millennium as well as the third. Early Neo-Assyrian fragments of the epic from Assur write both ḫu-be-be and ḫu-ba-ba (Assyrian MS y). There the name is apparently subject to the Assyrian rule of vowel harmony, so Ḫubububu, Ḫubububu, Ḫubububu. The spelling in Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian manuscripts of the epic is uniformly ḫum-ba-ba. This evidence proves a continuity of vocalization with /a/ and shows that ḫu-wa-wa is a valid pronunciation for the Ur III and Old Babylonian periods. It is not surprising that variant pronunciations existed. A similar phonetic variety can be observed in the spellings of the lizard and the stone bear that bear Ḫuwawa’s name: ḫuwa-wa-tum or ḫuwa-pi-tum in Old Babylonian, ḫu-wa-tum, ḫu-a-tum, ḫu-ba-tum and even ḫu-ba-ba-tum.33 The name often occurs at the end of the poetic line, so that despite the apparent vowel harmony in Assyrian MS y, we expect nevertheless a stressed penultimate syllable, Ḫuwa-wa, Ḫuwa-ba.

Humbaba was famous for his unusual physiognomy. Several omens record the observation of Humbaba’s visage in the faces of human adults and newborn humans and lambs. Commentaries explain that a bulbous nose and big eyes are the characteristic features:

nīs pān (igī) ḫu-ṣa-a-ta lakīn (gat) it-tā-rē 
ūm (igī) u appu (u kīr) [. . .]

Böck, Morphoskopie, p. 250, 7

If his face looks like Ḫuwawa, he will grow rich.
(Commentary:) eyes and nose [. . .]

Ṣumma (mu) sinnušu (munus) lī-kīn ḫu-ṣa-a-ta alūd (i.tā) ṣarru (lugal) u mārū (dumu) šē aia (ātu) uguš (ē)₆₅

Ṣumma izbu (78), ed. Leichty, Izbu, p. 39

If a woman gives birth to (something with) the shape of Ḫuwawa, the king and his sons will depart from the city.


31 See Guichard, NABU 1994/74.
32 MSL X, p. 39, 57; RS recension of Hk XVI.
33 Contra Guichard, NABU 1994/74.
34 See Wölke, RAL IV, p. 530; CAD B, p. 234.
Since Jensen first suggested the identification some have supposed that Humbaba was none other than the Elamite deity Hum/ba. Given that, in the form Huwawa, it was a common personal name in the third millennium this is highly improbable. It is nevertheless true that one late editor may have confused the guardian of the Cedar Forest and the god of Elam. The case in point is an incantation prayer to Dumuzi which calls for that god to hand over the sufferer’s torments to dam-ni (*hum-ba-ba* (Ashur MS) // *hum-ba* (Bab. MS) *gal*/*gal*, *la ba-ba pa-mi*, ‘mighty Humbaba, the merciless demon’). It may be, however, that neither Humbaba nor Hum/ba was meant, but Lunnin.

The figure of Humbaba lived on after the death of cuneiform in the Book of Giants, where he appears with Gilgames and other giants as Houbab, Houbab or Houbab (Qumran Aramaic *habab*, Manichaean Middle Persian *hwb bly*). It seems that the name percolated through to later Arab writers in at least two forms, Hummimah, the Manichaean ‘spirit of darkness’, which occurs in an Islamic polemic, and *hwb bly*, apparently corrupt for *hwb bly* (Houbab), in fifteenth-century Arabic versions of Manichaean-inspired incantations. A connection with Lucian’s self-castrato Comoblos is unlikely, however.

### NINSUN

The name of Gilgamesh’s mother combines the Sumerian words ‘mistress, lady’ and ‘wild cow’. The word ‘wild cow’ exists in two forms, a long variant sumunu (ott. = sumunu) and a contracted variant sumu (ott. = sunu). This explains why the goddess’s name is both Nunsun-nu, as in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 236–7): ritsum ₃₄ sum-nu, and also Nunsumunu, as in one of the tablets from Tell Harmal (OB Harmal 42): litem ₃₄ sum-nu, ritsum ₃₄ sum-nu. The long spelling also occurs in the Enuma elish form *Gasan-sumunu* in a Sumerian cult-song, ka.san.smu.mu.na (VAS II 31 9). Two things are clear from the references in Old Babylonian Gilgamesh: (a) the name, though perhaps originally ‘lady wild-cow’, was understood as a genitive compound, ‘lady of the wild cows’, and

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43 See Wilcke, *RL IV*, p. 531, and further the section of Ch. 1 on the Epic of Gilgamesh outside the cuneiform tradition.
44 See ASL XIV, p. 55, Proto Эр 588: *sumun*, *sumu*.
(b) Ninsun was herself conceptualized as a 'cow of the fold(s)'. In the Standard Babylonian epic the same metaphor is pervasive, for Gilgamesh's mother is there apostrophized as an 'exalted cow' (SB I 36: aratu šitu) and regularly referred to as Rihat-Ninsun, 'Wild-Cow Ninsun' (SB I 260 etc.).

**SAMHAT**

Šamhat is the name given to the prostitute (harimitu) in the Standard Babylonian epic, first occurring (restored) in SB I 140. In the Old Babylonian Pennsylvania tablet the name appears as Šamkatum. The name is feminine of the adjective šamitu, itself deriving from the verb šamēšu, which denotes superlative beauty of the flesh combined with lush growth and physical wellbeing. The adjective occurs in both genders as a personal name. However, there is an obvious allusion to the common noun šamhatu, which is a synonym of harimitu and so marks Šamhat out as the prostitute par excellence. The etymology of the word suggests that šamhatu carries overtones of vivacity and voluptuousness, both considerable advantages in the profession. As a name it was borne by at least one such woman outside the epic.

Šamhat's position in Uruk is not revealed in the epic, for it is not material to the story, but one should note that, as the cult centre of Ishtar, goddess of sexual love, Uruk was a city well known for the number and beauty of its prostitutes (cf. SB I 230–1). Many of these women were cultic prostitutes employed in the temples of Ninsun (cf. SB III 42) and Ishtar (cf. SB VI 158–9), others perhaps servants of other of the city's sanctuaries. After seducing E.mkidu in the wild Šamhat is very keen to take him back to Uruk, specifically to the temple of Anu and Ishtar, and I suggest on this account that she is to be imagined as a prostitute belonging to that establishment. In translating harimitu I have used the old-fashioned word 'harlot' to help convey the alien nature of this kind of institutional prostitution.

**ŚIDURI**

The name of the ale-wife is not preserved in the Old Babylonian texts. In the Standard Babylonian epic she bears the name Śiduri only in the line that introduces her: 'ši-du-ri'. Thereafter she is known by her occupation, sâlhu. Probably the Old Babylonian epic texts used the same device. The Hitite Gilgamesh writes this name as 'zi-du-ri'. In transcription the name is usually rendered Sîdurî but, as will be evident from the following, whatever its origin it is more accurately transcribed as Śiduri. The present orthography thus represents the petrified survival in the literary tradition of another third-millennium spelling, where the sign št represents the sound ši (the Bogazkoy orthography is of no consequence for the nature of the opening sibilant).

The name is discussed most recently by W. G. Lambert in connection with the hymn to Ishtar as the Queen of Nippur, the ancient title of which was Uliš Śiduri, 'Exalt the goddess Śiduri'. In Lambert's view 'the goddess in the Gilgamesh Epic, living on the edge of the world, is clearly not Ishtar, but she was assimilated by Middle Babylonian times', when the god lists that identify the two were compiled. In these lists Śiduri is written ši-dzu-ru, but once ši-du-ri, using archaic orthography, as in the Standard Babylonian epic. According to Šurpu the field of this goddess is wisdom. This ties in with the ale-wife's function in the Gilgamesh epic, in which she gives the hero sage advice. Lambert interprets the name of this goddess, which is also attested as a personal name in an Ur III document, as Akkadian Sī-ṣūrur Teaching the field of this goddess is wisdom. This ties in with the ale-wife's function in the Gilgamesh epic, in which she gives the hero sage advice. Lambert interprets the name of this goddess, which is also attested as a personal name in an Ur III document, as Akkadian Sī-ṣūrur, meaning 'She is my wall (i.e. protection)'. As he notes, the situation is complicated by the existence of a Hurrian word ši-dur, which is glossed 'young woman' in the synonym list Explicit Malik I. Lambert was uncertain whether the divine name had any relation to this word. It, too, has a divine application, being an epithet particular to the young goddess Allanu, who is the f. of Ḫebat.

Since Ishtar is typically a young woman too, an alternative position is to view the name of the Babylonian goddess and the Hurrian epithet as one and the same word, rather than as a matter of coincidence. In this analysis the Hurrian word would have been taken into use as a personal name by speakers of Akkadian in the third millennium; just such a name often occurs in north Mesopotamia of the early second millennium. A folk etymology in which the name was interpreted after the Akkadian pattern šî + predicate, common in the third millennium, would then be secondary. Further evidence may help decide one way or the other.

**UR-ŠANABI AND SURSUNABU**

Sursunabu, the name of the ferryman in the Old Babylonian tablet probably from Sippar (OB VA + BM), is a name of uncertain origin. In the later epic it is replaced by Ur-šanabi, written ur-šanabi in tablets from Kuyunjik and Babylinia ("ur-šanabi in MS W") but ur-ša-na-be in Assyrian MS Z from Nimrud. The old theory that Sumerian personal names...
read Ur-DN might have to be read Sur-DN, for which the two names of Ūna-napistī's ferryman were adduced as evidence, is no longer tenable.68

On account of its unusual second element, Ur-šanabi is itself not a typical Sumerian name. It is interpreted in a bilingual list of personal names as 'man of Ea'; *ur-šanabiš = "amāli-ša-a.*7 Like other names in the Sumerian column of that list, Ur-šanabi is probably an artificial back-translation from Akkadian.8 Whether one reads it in Sumerian or Akkadian, the name is appropriate to a boatman, particularly one who crosses a cosmic waterway such as the ocean at the edge of the world, for Ea's watery domain lies at the edge of that ocean. The equation made in the list relies on the tradition in which the sign 40, which in sexagesimal notation signifies both the fraction two-thirds and the integer forty, is the mystical number of the god Ea, as recorded most eloquently in A III 4:

\[\text{ni-mi-in} \ 40 = 2^4 \cdot a\]
\[4^3 \cdot a \ 40 = 2^5 \cdot a\]
\[ša-na-bi \ 40 = 2^4 \cdot a\]

MSLV XIV, p. 285, 195–7

The equation 40 = Ea is also found in the esoteric explanatory text INAM.GIŠ.HUR.AN.KI.A and in a metrological commentary.89 This equivalence belongs to a system of notation in which certain numbers became orthographies for certain gods.9 The system is not in evidence in its full form before the later second millennium, when it is best known from Middle Assyrian personal names.92 Nevertheless, the number 30 is commonly used for Sin in the Old Babylonian period and 50 is a writing of Enlil in an inscription of Ḥammurapi.93 The usage of 30 for Sin was once thought to occur in the Ur III period, in the personal name Nūr-Sin, but collation has demolished the single attestation proposed.94 However, a sure example of numerical notation occurred at about this time on a cylinder seal on which the common name Ur-Lugalbanda is written ur-20-bān-da.95

Other early evidence has been proposed for numbers 40 and 50. First is the suggestion of another occurrence of the name Ur-šanabi, in an inscription of Ur-Nanše of Lagaš. In Ur-Nanše's inscription a man whose name is written ur-40 is appointed the human consort of the goddess Nanše.96 According to Sollberger this name is to be understood as 'Man of Ea' by reference to the equation 40 = Ea, who as Nanše's father is seen as appropriate.97 As such this name might be read as either Ur-šanabi or Ur-nimim. In either case the second element of the name, as written, would not be typical of traditional Sumerian anthropony. On this account it is wise to reject Sollberger's 'Man of Ea' and view the orthography instead as a phonetic rendering of the common Sumerian name Ur-nin-gi (cf. /nīn-gi/ > ES /nimin/). A second candidate for numerical notation in the third millennium is Ningirsu's temple at Giršu, the famous e-ninnu, which can be interpreted according to the same system to signify the temple's divine owner (50 = Enlil and Ninurta).98 This would take the system of numerical notation back to the Early Dynastic period, for Ningirsu's temple is so named by Enannatum I.99 However, at least one other temple of Ningirsu has a name that is unintelligible,100 and it may yet be that the 50 in Eninnu is a rebus writing for something we do not understand. Accordingly, the antiquity of the numerical system of notation is not established before the Ur III period.

The newly discovered spelling "ur-ta-nu-be" exhibits the same internal vocalization as the Old Babylonian Sursunabu, and this makes it more likely that the latter name was a corruption of Ur-sunabu, and already a pseudo-Sumerian name. The name Ur-šanabi was coined early enough to be taken over into the Hitite Gilgameš, where it is written "(u)-ur-ta-na-bi and "(u)-ša-na-bi." These spellings confirm the reading of 40 as šanabi.

In the epic Ur-šanabi's job was to captain the ferry that crossed the cosmic ocean between the end of the world and Ūna-napistī's realm. If we are to believe Berosus's report that Xisuthros's pilot accompanied him and his family when they joined the company of the gods, Ur-šanabi was also master of the great ark at the time of the flood. Since, in crossing the world ocean, he had to pass through the waters of death, it may well be that he was also considered a kind of Babylonian Charon, the ferryman of the Styx.12

68 The names Sursunabu and Ur-šanabi were seen as identical by T. G. Pinches, who was the first to put forward this theory (JSAT 25 (1960), p. 200). A. Poebel based his reading sur, (H) in such names on the same evidence (JAOS 57 (1937), p. 54, fn. 22). The phrase sur-šanabis in the Lagash inscription En 1 v 1, which was adduced as further evidence for the value sur, (H) by B. Sollier (JCS 10 (1956), p. 11, fn. 4), is not convincingly a personal name (T. Jacobsen, ZA 52 (1957), p. 124, fn. 72). It is more acceptable as a toponymic name (see H. Steidel, PROS VIII, p. 106; cf. Cooper, Prosaic Geographies, pp. 63–4, fn. 5), and thus does not support the proposed identity. The question of Ur and Sur in Sumerian names has been re-examined by Lambert and Steiner (L. Steinaker, 'Ur-ša-da = hillumen', RA 74 (1980), pp. 176–79; W. G. Lambert, 'Ur or Sur-?', RA 75 (1981), pp. 61–21; id., 'Ur or Sur again', RA 76 (1982), pp. 93–4).
70 For this feature of the list see George, Iraq 55 (1953), pp. 63–4.
71 Livingstone, Mycenaean Works, p. 30, 8.
72 CT 22 49 i 9, 11–17, ed. George, Topog. Texts, p. 134.
74 This has provoked one scholar wrongly to contend that the practice of writing divine names with numbers emerged under the Middle Assyrian Empire and represents a genuinely Assyrian innovation; previously only the name of the Moon God had been written in this way’ (S. Parpola, JNES 52 (1993), p. 182, fn. 88). Even ignoring the evidence presented below, the presence of the system already in the god list As = Anuans makes it likely that, even if the Assyrians made the greater use of it as an orthographic convention, nevertheless they borrowed it, along with so much else in the field of intellectual endeavor, from Babylonians.
75 LHI 59, ed. Frayne, RIME 4, p. 337.
77 A. Parrot, Glynis Mesoopotamienne, flosiles de Lagaš (Telé) et de Larsa (Sennacherib) (1931–1933) (Paris, 1954) no. 188; I owe this reference to W. G. Lambert. Parrot placed the seal in the Isin-Larsa period; Dominique Collon informs me privately that an Ur III date is more probable.
78 Steidel, SFOS 55, UN 24 iii 3.
80 A. Falkenstein, Inschriften Oudain, II, 117, fn. 1, writes ‘Ein Eininnu möchte Ich keinen Hinweis auf Enlil, dem die Zahl 50 eigentümlich ist, als die Zahl, 100, als das einzigste Sonnengottes deutsches Heiligtum’. However, he was ignorant of the evidence that shows the system to be much older than then thought.
81 See George, Near Men High, p. 134, where, however, I translated e-ninnu with reference to the fuller form of the name, 'House of the Fifty White Aura Birds'. This breaks the rule that normally governs noun and noun syntax in Sumerian, but names often preserve invented word order.
82 I.e. ča-gāš at Lagaš.
84 See Ch. 10, the introduction to SB Tablet X.
INTRODUCTION

ULTA-NAPITSI, SON OF UBA R-TUTU

The name of the Flood hero, written "^\text{ulta-napiti}z\text{ti}^\text{13}" in late Gilgamesh, is well known to be an interpretation in Akkadian of the Flood hero’s Sumerian name, Ziusudra. The latter name, later Ziusudra, properly means ‘Life of distant days’. In the Akkadian version zi yields napišu, ‘life’, u, remains U, and sû-dist equals răgū, ‘far-away’, which in Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh is the Flood hero’s epithet. An Old Babylonian Gilgamesh text preserves a variant form nā-ta-na-as-tim (OB VA + BM), a version of the name that is the only attestation of a word nā tumu or nū tumu, ‘life’.  

Outside the Gilgamesh epic the name is preserved in the Middle Assyrian copy of the Babylonian Instructions of Šuruppak, where "^\text{ulta-nā-pu-ul[t-e?]i}\text{24}" is the Akkadian version of Ziusudra; 25 in the group vocabulary quoted above, in the sub-section of Chapter 3 on Crossing the ocean, where zi.sū-su = u-ka-pi-ta-zi and in the text that accompanies the Babylonian map of the world, where it is written [???]ud-zi-zi.26 The last text is more revealing, for there ud-napiti appears in broken context along with Sargon of Akkad and Nūr-Dagān of Buriššanda. In his commentary on this text Horowitz was content to remark that ‘the line lists three famous figures from the third millennium who are associated with far-away places’.27 However, there is a closer connection. Nūr-Dagān is indeed, as Horowitz notes, Sargon’s opponent in the Middle Babylonian epic known as King of Battle. 28 However, in an Old Babylonian legend of Sargon one destination of this king is the land of a certain U-ka-na-as-tim.29 Nougayrol went so far as to propose an identity between Nūr-Dagān and this Uta-rapeštim.30 However that may be, the mention of ud-napiti in the map fragment certainly ties in with Uta-rapeštim in the Old Babylonian Sargon legend. Whether this is a case of mistaken identity on the part of the map fragment, or whether Uta-rapeštim is a third version of the name of the Flood hero, cannot be determined with any certainty.

In all versions the name presents the same problem of parsing. If the element U in the old version of the name and u-za in the old version are taken to signify the transitive verb iza, then according to the usual laws of grammar the following noun ought to be in the accusative case. Previous commentators, such as Heidel and Speiser, recognized this difficulty but still wished the name ud-napiti to mean, appropriately, ‘He found life’. An alternative solution, put forward by von Soden, has been to view the names as constructed after the pattern

\[\text{damqam }\text{šum}, \text{but no sense can yet be obtained from the first element if it is to be an adjecti} \text{ve }\text{s}^{\text{11}1}\text{ve}^\text{9}.31\]

A dissenting opinion which has found less support is that of Clay and Ravn, who ignored the Old Babylonian evidence and read the name in the Standard Babylonian epic as nun-šum, ‘day of life’. Komoróczy also took this view, supposing that such a reading ‘must be regarded as the translation of the Sumerian Ziusudra’.32 The recently discovered spelling \text{în}î in Manichaean Middle Persian decisively refutes this idea (see below). Moreover, a translation of zi u, sū-ra into Akkadian would not invert regens and rectum. It is also hard to understand what the phrase ‘day of life’ would signify. Nevertheless, a similar position was adopted by Durand, who in commenting on the word u-at-ka in a Mari letter posited a noun u-tidum, emprunt savant au sumérien ul, signifiant ‘le jour’, and translated the Flood hero’s name as ‘Jours-de-vie (longs)’, en parallèl avec le sumérien zi u,sū-ra.33 The problems here are (a) that the construct of a word tīnum ought not to be uted and (b) that the ‘parallel’ again assumes an inversion, for zi u,sū-ra means ‘Vie-de-jours-longs’. Durand does not exclude the possibility that the word in his letter is tēnum, ‘threat, menace; evil portent’. I take the view that it is exactly that and reject a loanword ‘day’.

There are Old Akkadian names with the verb naitum that shed light on the problem. The name of Nin-šin’s daughter, Uta-napšUM (tu-ta-na-ap-šUM), shows a similar disregard for the rules of normal grammar but must mean ‘She has found life’, i.e. the baby survived birth and the crucial perinatal period. Also relevant, because it confirms this analysis of tu-ta, is the name of Šar-kallā-šarrī’s queen, Uta-šar-lībēš (tu-ta-šar-lī-ti-ti), ‘She has found the king of her heart’, a name presumably taken on betrothal. 34 If the second elements of Uta-našUM, Uta-rapeštim and ud-napiti are genitive, as the presence of imimation makes unavoidable in the OB names at least, then they are still no harder to explain as the objects of uted than the nominative napišu in the first of the Old Akkadian names. Thus there can be little doubt that the Akkadian name extracted from Sumerian Ziusudra was understood to mean either ‘He found life’ or ‘I found life’ and that should therefore be formalized Uta-napiti.

It should be noted, in any case, that in the sources in which the name actually appears in the form ud-napiti, i.e. copies from the first millennium, there is no reason why zi should not be read as accusative napiti, yielding a name Uta-napiti, ‘I found my life’ (cf. the comparable Old Akkadian names All-Uta, Uta-abī, Uta-ahī, Uta-bēl).

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13 SB I 40, IX 6 and X-XI passim. The phonetic complement can be omitted.
14 See, e.g., Tiggay, \\text{Evolution}, pp. 229–30; Bottéro, \text{66}, fn. 3.
15 Since there is an appropriate root \text{WL} in Akkadian (\text{nafū}, ‘to live’; \text{nafrī}, ‘life’; etc.), I see no reason to insist on nāštum being an error or—correction of—na-pi-ti-tim. It could be either a broken orthography of a word *nāšum or *nāšum, which would be the feminine verbal adjective in use as an abstract noun, or a defective writing of an archaic, uncontracted form of the same adjective, *našum.
18 \text{Iraq} 50, p. 161; \text{Cosmic Geography}, p. 36.
19 \text{Westenholz}, \\text{Legends}, pp. 102–3.
20 Ibid., p. 69, 38.
23 Clay, \text{VOR} 13, p. 23; G. E. Ravn, \text{Astra Or 22} (1955), p. 49.
26 For these ladies, first brought to my attention by A. Westenholz, see P. Michalowski, \text{TudanapšUM, Naram-Sin and Nimrī}, \text{PRA} 75 (1981), pp. 173–6, P. Steinkeller, ‘Commentaries on the seal of Amur-Rašu’, \text{NABU} 1993; further bibliography in D. Frayne, \text{MARWE} 2, pp. 175 and 198–9, to which I have added a unpublished stone item, probably a cosmetics container, reported seen in London late in 2001, bearing the inscription \text{šar-ak-kur-ta-lī šar-ak-kur-ta-šUM šu-ta-šar-lī-ti-ti na-ru-ma-at šarrī-tu-ja}, ‘Šar-kallā-šarrī, king of Akkad: Uta-šar-lī-ti-ti, the king’s beloved’ (cf. Frayne’s \text{E2} 1.5.2003). L. J. Geib’s reluctance to place these names under natišum in \text{LAD III}, p. 82, seems overly cautious.

The name given to the father of Ūta-napišti in SB IX 6 and XI 23 is Ubār-Tutu. There it is written "ubār (EzEn kAskāl) -tu-tu (MSS from Kuyunjik and Babylon) and "[u]-bar-[u]-ta (Assyrian MS z ii 13', from Nimrud). As is well known, this person appears in one version of the Sumerian King List as the last king before the Deluge, where the name is written ubur.tu.ti and ubur.tu.tu. 86 In the Dynastic Chronicle the dynasty of Šuruppak (properly Šurupag in Sumerian contexts) 84 comprises both Ubār-Tutu, written ubur.[tu.tu], and his son, who in this text, under his Sumerian name Ziusudra, himself immediately precedes the Deluge. 89 The same tradition survives in the Babylonica of Berosus, according to which Ubār-Tutu (Ortiares) reigned (at Larat not Šuruppak) for eight sarai and was succeeded by his son Ziusudra (Xisouthros, Sisouthros), who reigned for a further eighteen sarai. 90 In one list of anediluvian kings, however, this twosome is accidentally developed into a family of three generations:

"Šuruppak dumu ubur.tu.tu mu šarrar šar-šar šarrar šar-šar [2 lugal šuruppak] 
OECTII, pl. 6, W-B 62, 9–11
Šuruppak, son of Ubār-Tutu: 28,800 years; 
Ziusudra, son of Šuruppak: 36,000 years; 
two kings (in) Šuruppak.

This same development is found in the standard version of the Instructions of Šuruppak:

šuruppak 65 dumu ubur.tu.tu.ki.e, 
zi.u.sud.rra dumu n:i.na ra na.mu.un.ri.
B. Alster, Instructions of Šuruppak, p. 34, 7–8
Šuruppak, son of Ubār-Tutu, 
gave advice to his son Ziusudra.

The Akkadian translation of this couplet can be restored as follows:

"tu.ru-ú[p-pa-ku-ú mār "ubur-tu-tu"
"um-nu-pà[p-ul-li] šarr̃u šarr

Cf. Lambert, BWZ, p. 95 = Alster, op. cit., p. 121, obv. 1–2

86 T. Jacobsen, AS 11, p. 74, 32.
89 F. Jacoby, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker III C 1 (Leiden, 1958), p. 377. Note that the Greek spellings of the name, Ziusuros in Berosus and Sisyphus in Lucian's De Dea Syria, render not old-fashioned Ziusudra but Zissadra (Zinuddu), a version of the name found in cuneiform texts of the late second and the first millennium (see e.g. the Poem of Early Rulers and the omen texts quoted in Ch. 3).
Part Two

THE OLDER VERSIONS
OF THE EPIC
Old Babylonian Tablets and Fragments

Eleven tablets of the Babylonian Gilgameš epic are currently known to date from the early centuries of the second millennium. This represents a considerable improvement on the situation that existed when the sources for the epic were last collected in a single volume. At that time, in 1930, Campbell Thompson already had at his disposal the two largest pieces, the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets, and the larger part of a third tablet originally published by Bruno Meissner. Over the intervening seven decades a further seven pieces have become available, including a fragment that joins Meissner’s piece. Another two tablets are published in this book for the first time. The place of these eleven tablets in the history of the epic has been discussed in Chapter 1. This chapter presents editions of them. In the absence of other meaningful criteria for ordering them they are given in a sequence that loosely follows the plot of the epic.

THE PENNSYLVANIA AND YALE TABLETS
(OB TABLETS II AND III)

The two famous Old Babylonian tablets of Gilgameš housed in the University Museum in Philadelphia and the Yale Babylonian Collection in New Haven are commonly known respectively as the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets, or ‘P’ and ‘Y’. They were purchased at about the same time from the same dealer and form a pair. Very similar in clay, size and general appearance, they exhibit the same format of three columns on each side, the same orthographic conventions and, most importantly, they are inscribed in hands that are indistinguishable. In addition, the two tablets have in common the presence on their edges of rounded lumps of clay of irregular size. The function of these knobs, which were fixed on after the tablets were inscribed, is uncertain. As far as I know they are a unique feature, and they may have been an idiosyncrasy of the scribe who wrote these particular tablets.

1 The scholars who first edited the tablets themselves disagreed: Stephen Langdon suggested they were to aid the holding of the tablet, Morris Jastrow that they were to protect the edges when the tablets were in store (for bibliography see the tables of previous publication below).
that reproduce third-millennium practice. Double consonants are so written more often than not, at least until towards the end of the Yale tablet, at which point space is short and defective spellings eventually predominate. Final minimation is often lacking, which may speak for a date later in the Old Babylonian period, rather than earlier, as also may the nasalization of /CC/ rendered orthographically as /nt/ or /mt/.

Here other factors must be taken into account. The dearth of late Old Babylonian archival documents from the far south of Babylonia following the reign of Samsuiluna indicates that after the catastrophes of the mid- to late eighteenth century BC the main centres were depopulated. Since the spelling conventions employed by the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets speak for a southern origin, their date will be eighteenth-century at the latest. Nevertheless, the script they exhibit is more cursive than copies of Sumerian literary compositions from the eighteenth-century houses at Nippur and Ur and thus gives the impression of being later. This problem can be solved by supposing that schoolboys were using, when writing the old corpus of Sumerian texts, a script that was more old-fashioned than that in current use, and that the more cursive hand of the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (and others not part of the traditional repertoire) is an everyday script. Among the eleven Old Babylonian tablets copied for this book, only three tablets display more old-fashioned hands. One of these is certainly the work of a Nippur student (OB Nippur), another probably (OB Umm); the third, from Išchali, may also be a school tablet. Further

The orthography of the tablets is certainly southern. For example, the syllabic (or half-syllabic) /pi/ is written with the sign /pi/ rather than /p/; and the spelling observes the rigorous distinction, first noted by Goetze, between the double consonant /ss/ and /šš/ of pronominal suffix and the double consonant /šš/ of dental + š. The former is written with a sign from the /šš/ range followed by a sign from the /š/ range, e.g. /šišš-tašš/, and the latter is written with signs from the /š/ range, e.g. /šišš-stušš/. Elsewhere in these tablets the syllable /šš/ is consistently written with the /šš/ range, i.e. šš, šš, šš. There are occasional inconsistencies in the inventory of signs that are probably to be explained as old-fashioned spellings.

The colophon of the Yale tablet is lost; it may not have occupied all or part of the missing third sub-column on the tablet’s left edge.

1 As first noticed by A. Shaffer apud D.J. Wiseman, Iraq 27 (1965), p. 158, fn. 22.


3 šišš-tašš-ma (II 9), šu-šišš-tašš (II 70), šišš-tašš-tašš (II 144), na-šišš-tašš (II 112), defective na-šišš-tašš (II 198); in other cases such spellings are archaemas (see fn. 8). The same convention is used for šu-tušš < šu-tušš in forms of the verb tašš-ma: šišš-tašš-tašš (III 147); šu-šišš-tašš (III 173, 222); that the second sibilant of this verb was not heard as a conventional š in is identified by the orthography šišš-tašš (III 143) instead of št-tašš.

4 a-na-šš-tašš (II 56), ašš-tušš (II 73), šu-šašš-tašš (II 164), šu-šašš-tašš (II 230), [ašš-gal]-šišš-tašš (III 102), šišš-tašš (III 241), šu-šašš-tašš (III 275); defective šišš-tašš (III 231), šu-šašš-tašš (III 184), šu-šašš-tašš (III 236), probably also šišš-tašš (III 231).

5 šišš-tašš (II 27, 179), šišš-tašš (II 97), šišš-tašš (II 102), šišš-tašš (II 142), šišš-tašš (II 165), šišš-tašš (II 220, 225), šišš-tašš (II 236), šišš-tašš (II 159), šu-šašš-tašš (III 187), šu-šašš-tašš (III 190), šu-šašš-tašš (III 201), šu-šašš-tašš (III 202), šu-šašš-tašš (III 260), šu-šašš-tašš (III 261), šišš-tašš (III 267); šu-šašš-tašš (II 271). It is, of course, very likely that the combinations of signs conventionally transcribed šišš-tašš and šišš-tašš express sibilants that were still differentiated in the OB period; see Goetze, Rég 52, p. 140, who identifies the former sibilant as šš. Note that šš < šš seems to be rendered inconsistently in these tablets: šišš-tašš (II 2, 16 and passim), šu-šašš-tašš (II 114), šu-šašš-tašš (II 121); the verb šašš-tašš is, however, a special case (see below, fn. 133).
work on the palaeography of Old Babylonian tablets will bring this question of scripts into sharper focus.

The language of the two tablets is distinguished from prose by metre, word order and vocabulary, but few of the devices of the high poetic Old Babylonian style are to be found here. Occasionally one encounters the terminative ending,\(^{13}\) the construct state in -u,\(^ {14}\) and other features characteristic of the 'hymno-epic' style,\(^ {15}\) but usually the poet avoids such things.

The text of the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets I have followed the lead of von Soden in assuming that many lines of poetry extend over more than one single line of script on the tablet.\(^ {16}\) In these tablets a line of poetry will always start at the beginning of a line of tablet and close at the end of a line of tablet (with the exception of OB III 262–5, where there is disorder), but it can extend over either one or two such lines. There is one occasion where a line of poetry apparently occupies three lines of the tablet (OB II 222–4). This a case of parallel couplets, where a previous line (OB II 218–19) is repeated in expanded form with explicit subjects, and on this account it may represent a special case. Among the other Old Babylonian tablets, the second Philadelphia piece (OB UM) is similar to the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets in the arrangement of poetic lines. Most other tablets of this period normally set down one poetic line on one line of tablet, with some doubling up of two lines on one (OB Schayan,\(^ {20}\) OB Nippur, OB Harmaši, OB Ichshali, OB IM, OB VA+BM). Poetic lines that on the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets extend over two lines of tablet occupy only one line of tablet when they recur in these and later manuscripts.\(^ {17}\) The principle of one line of poetry per line of tablet, with occasional doubling up, became standard practice in committing Babylonian poetry to writing down to the end of the first millennium. Among manuscripts of the Gilgamesh epic the exceptions are the second tablet from Tell Harmal (OB Harmaši), tables from the West (MB Boš,\(^ {21}\) MB Emar,\(^ {22}\) MB Megiddo) and a few late manuscripts of Middle Babylonian recensions (Assyrian MSS e, x and z); on these tablets the beginning and ends of poetic lines sometimes do not coincide with the division of lines on the tablet.\(^ {18}\)

I have kept to a traditional analysis of the metrical system, which recognizes a pattern of lines comprising either four units of stress ('beats') separated midway by a pause or caesura, or three units of stress without a caesura.\(^ {19}\) Successive four-beat lines will quickly

\(^{13}\) Three times only: anētā (II 109), bitu (149), qatālaši (III 239).

\(^{14}\) Five times: ādād (I 146), ābelu (214), šeššušu (I 136), šē šām (343) (140), dānu (garrāšuq) (145).

\(^{15}\) Declared form of the determinative-relational pronoun: šā (II 3); epenthetic vowels in irregular positions: šunāšu (III 1) for šutum, ēlahum (I 103) for habīhum, ūrīm (III 110) // 197 for rīgīm; apocopated prepositions: ša (III 103), and possibly ūr (I 119); archaic lack of connection: šarānu (II 8, III 140), ṣāme (II 15) against midā (III 37); note also hypercorrect šutu (III 261) for šādu (šādu)\(^ {19}\)


\(^{17}\) OB II 104–5 recurs as OB Schayan 24. Many lines that are split on OB II and III recur as single lines in SB I–II.

\(^{18}\) See further the discussion of this phenomenon in Ch. 7.

\(^{19}\) This metrical pattern was first discussed by H. Zimmer, see especially his articles 'Ein verloßtes Werk über babylonische Metrik', Z 8 (1893), pp. 121–4, and 'Über Rhymen im Babylonischen', Z 12 (1897), pp. 385–92.

\(^{20}\) The recent examination of G. Buccellati, 'The Akkadian metrical system: constitutive units', Studia Semitica, pp. 109–14,


\(^{22}\) Or with elision, an-ummušu, an-ēbūtu.

\(^{23}\) Or with apocopation, ātā, ātē; šēššu, ap-ērātu, ap-Gilgamesh, etc.

\(^{24}\) Or insynditic The pronunciation of circumflexed vowels at the end of a line of poetry is uncertain.

\(^{25}\) Or ēbušu?
Analysed in this way, the poetry of the three editions of Old Babylonian Gilgamesh represented by the four tablets quoted here is of very similar construction. This is not to say that differences between the samples cannot be detected. On a superficial level, it might be remarked that the tablet in Norway (OB Scheyen I) is rather prone to the three-beat line, with only six four-beat lines occurring in the twenty-eight lines of the sample. The fragment divided between Berlin and London (OB VA+BM) is exceptional in another way, having two half-lines of two beats each in the twenty-eight lines quoted: ul additiša | anu aqerima | lā ubbubarī | subjāka. Slower lines and half-lines are both devices that alter the tempo of poetry and might thus be used for poetic effect. Each device might then be characteristic of a particular passage. It is equally possible that these features might be hallmarks of their respective editions generally, With such small samples it is not possible to determine which of these possibilities is the correct one. More text is needed—as well as a modern study of Old Babylonian poetry in general.

Recognition of the divisions of poetry is an important tool in the correct translation of a passage. The pause that divides a four-beat line which holds two clauses will decide the proper placement of an indirect object or other prepositional phrase. Thus in OB II 33 aurišam | kina aštātim | abādāpu | alū the simile belongs to the first clause, not the second—though naturally it is appropriate to both. The end of a couplet coincides with a pause in the syntax, one that in English will most often be marked with a full stop. For this reason it is clear, for example, that ulūtu ētim in OB II 120 is not parallel with, or an expansion of, avētim ēram in OB II 119, as has often been assumed. The two phrases refer to different characters. Many further instances could be adduced where proper recognition of the units of poetry results in a correct division of syntactical units. The further elucidation of the constituent units of the various types of Babylonian poetry and the application of the results to the extant corpus of texts is a task too large to be undertaken here.
The Pennsylvania tablet (OB Tablet II)

The Pennsylvania or P'-tablet was bought in 1914 from a dealer in New York.24 According to its first editor, Stephen Langdon, the tablet was 'said to have been found at Senkereh, ancient Larsa near Warka'.25 The colophon tells us the overall line-count, 240 lines, so that it is possible to judge the extent of the break at the tablet's bottom edge and thus to present the text with a consecutive numbering of lines.26

The text of the Pennsylvania tablet opens with Gilgamesh telling his mother a dream (ll. 1–14). In this dream he had been walking about in fine fettle and high spirits. The sky was full of stars, so it was night-time. Suddenly what was apparently a meteorite had fallen to the ground in front of him. He had tried to pick it up but it was so heavy that he had difficulty in lifting it. A crowd had gathered around and the men of fighting age were kissing it. With their aid Gilgamesh had finally moved the object and carried it away to his mother. In the next passage Gilgamesh's mother explains the dream to him (15–23); it meant that someone like Gilgamesh had been born out in the wild hill-country, beyond the fringes of civilization. When Gilgamesh saw him he would be glad and, while the young men kissed him, he would hug him and lead him to her. Oddly she does not comment on the struggle Gilgamesh had to move the meteorite, which is obviously symbolic of the wrestling match that constitutes his first encounter with Enkidu in reality.27

Gilgamesh then has another dream and tells it to his mother on waking (24–36). This time he had come across a strange-looking axe lying in the street. When he saw it he fell in love with it, treating it like a wife and placing it by his side. His mother replies, but more briefly than before, so that most of what she says is lost in the break at the bottom of column i (37–43). No doubt she tells Gilgamesh that he is about to find a friend, as she does, at greater length, in the later epic (SB I 288–93). Her speech ends with the prophecy that she will make the new-comer the equal of Gilgamesh.

The scene then changes from Uruk to the country, where the prostitute Šamkatum has seduced the wild man Enkidu and they are making love (44–9). After his appetite is exhausted the prostitute professes astonishment that such a fine fellow should live rough with the animals and suggests to Enkidu that he should go back to Uruk with her, specifically to the temple E-ananna, 'the home of Anu' (50–60). In the city and the great temple at its heart, men's energies are engaged in the higher activities of civilization; the implication of these damaged lines for Enkidu seems to be that, like any civilized man, he will discover in Uruk a proper place in human society that is not to be found in the wilderness (61–5). Her words find favour; she dresses him in half her clothing and leads him by the hand 'like a god' to a camp of shepherds (66–70).28 Renger, who correctly argued for this reading of the simile in OB II 74, supposed that the point of the image was that Šamkatum led Enkidu like an introducing deity leading a human worshipper, as in the scenes of 'presentation' commonly depicted on cylinder seals.29 The objection is that the introducing deities in such presentations are always goddesses;30 since Šamkatum is also female we would expect a simile that compared her to such a divine intercessor to read kišna ittim (or ilturrum), 'like a goddess', not kišna itim. In my view there is instead an allusion to cultic events at which divine statues were 'taken by the hand'. This phrase famously applied at the New Year festival in Babylon, in which the god Marduk, represented by his statue, was led in procession by the king. The lesser-known rituals of mib pšsh show that it is standard on occasions when human participants accompany divine statues on procession.31 This regard it is significant that Enkidu has already been compared to a god (OB II 53).

With the simile thus understood, Enkidu does not 'follow timidly' (Renger) after Šamkatum but cuts a magnificent figure, almost god-like. The shepherds gather around the imposing newcomer admiringly, comparing him with Gilgamesh and identifying him as the legendary wild man of the hills (77–86). The comparison with Gilgamesh presents the picture of an archetypal heroic pair of mythology, the dominant partner tall and slim, his helpmate not quite so tall, but stockier; kišna šapī erēmtum pakkhu. The shepherds then offer Enkidu bread and beer, hospitality which Enkidu, brought up by the animals in the wild, is not equipped to accept (87–92). Šamkatum comes to his rescue, explaining that the bread is for eating and the beer for drinking, and Enkidu duly sets about his new diet (93–102). This first stage of his conversion into a civilized being ends with him drunk on beer, laughing and singing (103–5). The completion of his metamorphosis is achieved when he adopts the external trappings of civilized man: his shaggy body is shaved, he is anointed with perfumed oil and dressed in a proper garment (106–8). Now a man, he does battle with the animals, keeping watch at night over the shepherds' flocks and chasing away wolves and lions (109–19). Thus the episode of Enkidu's taming closes with him taking mankind's side in the perpetual struggle to order and control the wilderness from which he came.

The focus of the narrative then switches to an unnamed man (l. 120: itišn ešlim), but the text is interrupted by the considerable break at the bottom of column iii and the top of column iv, which accounts for the loss or mutilation of fourteen lines (121–34). When the text resumes, Enkidu is found enjoying himself in the prostitute's company, no doubt still in the shepherds' camp. Catching sight of a passer-by (who, if the present interpretation is correct, is the mysterious unnamed man) and wanting to know his business, he sends

24 The dispute as to the reading of the simile is settled by MB Boğ., Fragment a, 7: ittim ittim (cf. also SB II 36: kišna ittim).
26 I thank Dominique Colton for confirmation of this point, made in a private communication.
27 See BM 45749, 5, 59, 60 (ed. Walker and Dick, Ml. Pl., pp. 70–3); gīr (ba) ittim (dānā) šaphār (tab), 'you take the god's hand'.
28 The old dispute as to the reading of the simile is settled by MB Boğ., Fragment a, 7: ittim ittim (cf. also SB II 36: kišna ittim).
30 I thank Dominique Colton for confirmation of this point, made in a private communication.
31 See BM 45749, 5, 59, 60 (ed. Walker and Dick, Ml. Pl., pp. 70–3); gīr (ba) ittim (dānā) šaphār (tab), 'you take the god's hand'.
SAMKUR.TUM to fetch him (135–44). When questioned the stranger reveals that he has been invited to a wedding and is on his way there now with a gift of food.93 He goes on to explain that, in polite society, people do get married, and that in Uruk a special custom prevails, which allows King Gilgamesh the right to take any bride on her wedding night, 'he first of all, the bridegroom afterwards' (145–63). Enkidu is shocked by this revelation. The man's words evidently prompt him to turn his thoughts from the rural life of the shepherds to the great city of Uruk, for, after the interruption of the break at the top of column vi, the text finds him already on the way there (164–75). When Enkidu enters the city the people gather around him, comparing him with Gilgamesh in a repetition of the phrases already used by the shepherds (177–89). There then follows a section in which, as I understand it, the poet paints in a little background, describing how Uruk was the scene of regular festivals, at which the young men made merry and a champion was appointed to rule the king (190–5). The text does not say so explicitly but it becomes clear that Enkidu has arrived by chance during just such a festival and that he, the very 'image of Gilgamesh', exactly fits the part of Gilgamesh's rival. The poet next directs our attention to Gilgamesh's customary role in weddings: when the preparations have been made—'for Šīharā (the goddess of weddings) the bed was laid out'—he joins the bridal procession at night (196–9).94

The focus then returns to the narration of the plot. As Gilgamesh nears the house of the wedding ceremony, Enkidu comes forward and blocks his progress down the street (200–3). The crowd starts chattering excitedly (204), but the break at the top of column vi intervenes. When the text resumes, Gilgamesh is in a rage and Enkidu is still in his path (208–14). The confrontation is resolved by the famous wrestling match, with Enkidu taking up a position blocking the doorway of the house where the wedding is to take place (215–26). This context was firmly established in the traditions of Babylonian folklore, being also mentioned in the bilingual menology of Astrolabe B.95 Wrestling in doorways is also implied by a passage of Šulgī hymn C, which utilizes the same imagery as our passage in the context of young men's games:

dub.la mu.â KAKA µ mu.da.a1 šab.dug, gu.du.gis, šî.bî.ta mu.[g]i,es

At my door-jamb I fought with them, I turned them back by their horns like bulls.

Šulgī C 136–7, ed. J. Klein, Studies Hallo, p. 128

Gilgamesh and Enkidu's conflict also calls to mind the practice of mock combat at weddings attested in other cultures, and may be a literary echo of contests of strength held at early

93 For the Old Babylonian custom of taking food on trays to the wedding banquet see S. Greengus, 'Old Babylonian marriage ceremonies and rites', JCS 20 (1966), pp. 59–61, where this passage is adduced as evidence. Greengus, considers it possible that the stranger accosted by Enkidu was 'a bridesman or paranymph of the groom'.

94 The couplet, like the two that precede it, describes an habitual custom not yet the specific event when Enkidu appears on the scene; see below, the notes on ll. 196–9.

95 The passage of the menology is quoted in Chapter 3, the sub-section on Gilgamesh's sanctuaries and cult. According to van Dijk, Studies Lambert, p. 129, the opening section of LUGA 76, on which students of Nippur block the gate of their city's temple, also recalls the confrontation between the two heroes; without further context, however, the parallel is not compelling.

Mesopotamian marriage ceremonies.95 The fight comes to an end with Gilgamesh the victor, for, as the text of the tablet closes, Enkidu concedes publicly that Gilgamesh is truly the rightful king (227–40). The closing couplet might be seen as a standard expression of homage, with which a defeated enemy acknowledged that his bid for hegemony had not gained divine approval.

Two topics raised in the text of the Pennsylvania tablet are of particular interest because of their extraordinary implications. The first, and more discussed, is the custom of ius primae noctis or droit de seigneur, which seems to be inescapably attested in the description of the wedding festivities, especially ll. 159–60. Although this custom is attested at various times in cultures all over the world, there is, outside this passage, no definite evidence for it from ancient Mesopotamia in the historical periods.96 Von Soden has tried to play down the significance of the passage, arguing that the situation it describes is bound up with the rites of sacred marriage and doubting whether it evinces the existence in Babylonia of a privilege of which kings availed themselves at will.97 The identification of the wedding as a sacred marriage is, however, highly debatable,98 and the language insists that Gilgamesh, in this passage specifically identified as larrum ša Urub, 'king of Uruk', is acting in his capacity as the ruler of his subjects, not in any priestly function as consort of the goddess of Uruk.

The second exceptional matter is that of the nature of the festival in which, as I see it, Enkidu found himself taking part as the 'rival' of Gilgamesh. As with the custom of ius primae noctis, there does not seem to be any historical evidence for a festival, at Uruk or elsewhere in Sumer or Babylonia, during which the king defended his position in a physical contest with a champion's擁有. Wrestling matches between men of fighting age are known to have taken place at times of festival99 and it is not inconceivable that kings might once have taken part, for Šulgī boasts of his pre-eminence in both wrestling and armed combat on the practice field.100 Serious single combat involving ancient kings was not unknown and loss of the throne by violence can be found in mythology, notably those stories in which
successive generations of gods kill their forebears. It seems that this is exactly the allusion that the poet makes in comparing Gilgamesh, when faced with this challenge, to a god.43 The best preserved of these stories in Mesopotamia is the late and untypical Theogony of Dunnu, but traces of myths in which better-known gods topple their king by violence are abundant.44 The theme of violent removal of those in power informs such compositions as the Myth of Anzu, in which Ninurta, the young champion of the gods, kills Anzu to dismiss him of the instruments of supreme power (the Tablet of Destinies) and thereby earns elevation to a more senior position. The story of Marduk and Tiamat is later but offers a nearer parallel: the younger generations of gods choose a champion to defeat their ancestral mother (or in some traditions her consort Qingu), and his success is rewarded with the kingship. The ritual expression of this myth as the procession to the Akkadian temple and the symbolic battle there, the central event of each New Year festival at Babylon, attests to the existence of a belief that the king of the gods had to confirm his position by a display of physical supremacy at regular intervals. Since the behaviour and social practices of gods as described in mythology are likely to have had their origin in the behaviour and social practices of the culture that generated the mythology, it is legitimate to propose that in Mesopotamian periodic challenges to the king, and the wrestling from him of the kingship by the successful challenger, were once, in some early, prehistoric period, within the bounds of human experience. In the New Year festival at Babylon, the slapping of Marduk's earthly counterpart, which happens before he is reinstated as king, may be seen as a symbolic vestige of just such a violent conflict.

If the festival described in this tablet is a literary echo of an ancient ritual long since discontinued,45 the same can hold true for the description of the privilege Gilgamesh enjoyed, as king, at weddings. In this regard it is significant that the poet describes both customs with some care, the one in the words of the passing stranger enlightening Enkidu, the other in the words of the narrator. These passages are designed to inform the listener as well as Enkidu, and they signal that the practices they describe were strange also to the poet's Old Babylonian audience.

A third case of the preservation in this tablet of very old material is probably to be observed in the description of E-anna, the principal temple of Uruk, as the 'home of the god Anu' (Il. 58, 60: māšāb la Anû). The temple E-anna is the principal sanctuary of Uruk.46 As Charpin has demonstrated, Istar took precedence over Anu in Uruk and E-anna in the Old Babylonian period and was not eclipsed by Anu until the Persian and, especially, the Seleucid eras.47 The pairing of the two deities in the SB version of this passage, māšāb Anû u Istar (SB I 210), is comparable with their pairing, in the same order, in the Code of Hammurapi and other Old Babylonian inscriptions mentioned by Charpin (Sin-kāšid, Anam). From this point of view it is most strange that the OB Pennsylvania tablet mentions as resident in E-anna only Anu, ignoring Istar completely. The answer to this problem lies in the temple's history. That Anu had originally taken precedence over Istar in E-anna can be inferred from three pieces of evidence: (a) the temple's name, 'House of Heaven (= An)'; (b) the existence of a tradition that Inanna stole E-anna from An,48 and (c) the conventional order of the pairing Anu and Istar even in the Old Babylonian period, when the cultic reality was that Istar was the chief deity of Uruk and E-anna. The high profile of Anu in the present passage is symptomatic of his evident seniority over Istar in the epic generally (which is expressed as a father–daughter relationship in SB Tablet VI and in the Sumerian tale of Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven). This seniority is presumably a relic of the former theological status quo. In short, the lack of reference in OB II 58 and 60 to the goddess Istar, the deity who, in the Old Babylonian period, took precedence in Uruk and E-anna, suggests the text is informed by a theological ranking that obtained in a much earlier period, some time before Inanna's exaltation in the Sargonic period.

The new copy of the tablet that accompanies this edition was prepared from the original tablet, from the cast, which is a better witness to the text in those places where the surface of the tablet subsequently sustained damage, and from new prints of the photographs published by Langdon.49

43 The key line is ana Gilgameš Enta tăm iltum šaktum mešmurum (194–5); see further the notes on Il. 192–5.
44 See Livingstone, Mystical Words, pp. 151–6.
45 J. Bottero considers that the festival described in this passage may have been particularly instituted to allow the challenge to Gilgamesh's dominion that Enkidu's arrival affords: 'on dirait qu'afin de célébrer l'arrivée d'un individu, non seulement exceptionné en soi, mais que la population pressent capable de se mesurer avec son souverain—selon le plan des dieux . . .—pour abstraire sa superbe et stopper ses excès, on célèbre, dans la ville, déjà en proie à des cérémonies linguiques sans nombre, une fête particulière' (Bottero, p. 229, fn. 1). In drawing attention to the place of festivities in ritualized customs of hospitality, J. J. Glaeser has proposed that the function of the festival was specifically to celebrate Enkidu's arrival ('L'hospitalité en Mésopotamie ancienne. Aspect de la question de l'étranger', ZA 80 (1990), pp. 66–71). However, the two couples that describe the festival begin with the statement that they were 'regular' (kapsamā), and the hypothesis put forward here is that the festival was a regularly occurring event rather than an isolated one.
46 See in general George, House Most High, gazetteer entry no. 75.
49 These prints were supplied to me through the kindness of Erle Leichty.
The Pennsylvania tablet (OB II)

Previous publication

1917 S. Langdon, The Epic of Gilgamesh (PBS X/3) CPT'Tr
1930 R. C. Thompson, Gilgamesh, pp. 26-4 T
1997 J. Huehnergard, A Grammar of Akkadian (HSS 45), pp. 475-84 T
2000 A. Westenholz, Studies Lambert, pp. 446-8 C

Text

col. i
1 it-bē-e-ma 4atš ša-na-tam i-pa-al-šar // SB1 245
2 is-sā-gar-am a-na um-mi-šu // SB1 245
3 um-mi i-na ša-a-at mu-ši-ti-ša // SB1 246
4 ša-am-ba-ta ma-at-na-ša-lak 51i-nu3 bi-ri-šu eš-la-tim // SB1 247
5 eš-bu-šim3 ma-kā-bu ša-ma-i // SB1 247
6 x (x)-rum ša a-šim3 im-qü-tam a-na še-ri-ia // SB1 248
7 es-li-sha ma ik-la-bi-šu e-li-ša // SB1 249
8 ša-li ša-ta ma na-ša-lu ša-ul-ul el-ti-ši // SB1 250
9 ur dangers ma-tam pa-ši-fr e-li-šu // SB1 251
10 eš-la-tum ni-la-ša qi-ti-šu cf. SB1 254-5
11 ša-un-mi-id-da pa-ti 13 i-mi-šu ta-ti // SB1 257
12 aš-li-ša ma at-la-at ša-ta a-na še-ri-ki // SB1 259
13 um-mi 4atš mu-de-a-at ka-la ma // SB1 260
14 ti-sā-gar-am a-na 4atš // SB1 260
15 mi-ir-de 4atš ša bi-ma ka-ši // SB1 263
16 i-na še-ti-ta-ti-id-shi 18 ū-ra-ab-bi ša-da-ša // SB1 263
17 ta-mar šu ma ta-la-ad a-at ū // SB1 273
18 eš-la-tum ni-la-ša-qü ši-pi-šu // SB1 273
19 ra-ad-la 4atš i-ta-ti-qü-ši-šu // SB1 273
20 [i] ti-ti-šum ma-i-ta-mar ša-mi-tam // SB1 273a
21 [i] ti-bi-ta-re-a-ni a-na um-mi-šu // SB1 274
22 [um] mi a-ta-mar ša-mi-tam // SB1 276
23 [X X] me-he U.L.A i-na šu-qü-im 28 [ša ura] 29 ri-bi-tim // SB1 277

Translation

1 Gilgamesh arose to reveal a dream,
2 saying to his mother:
3 'O mother, during the course of this night
4 I was walking about hastily (9) in the company of young men.
5 The stars of the sky hid from me,*
6 a . . . of Amu fell down before me.
7 I picked it up but it was too heavy for me,
8 I pushed at it but I could not move it.
9 The land of Uruk was gathered about it,
10 the young men kissing its feet.
11 I braced my forehead and (13) they supported me,
12 I picked it up and carried it off to you.'
13 The mother of Gilgamesh, well versed in everything,
14 said to Gilgamesh:
15 'For sure, Gilgamesh, one like yourself
16 was born in the wild and (19) the upland reared him.
17 You will see him and you will rejoice,
18 the young men will kiss his feet.
19 You will hug him and (20) bring him to me.'
20 He lay down and saw another dream.
21 He arose to talk to his mother:
22 'O mother, I have seen another.
23 . . . in the street (28) of Uruk-Main-Street,

* Or, reading 6i-bi-ta-re-a-ni, 'The stars of heaven were passing over my head.'
29 an axe was lying and (30) (people) were gathered around it.
31 The axe itself, its appearance was strange;
32 I saw it and became glad.
33 I loved it like a wife, (34) caressing and embracing it,
34 I took it up and put it (50) at my side. (9)
35 The mother of Gilgamesh, well versed in everything,
36 [said] to [Gilgamesh].

Lacuna

col. ii
43 '... so that I shall make him your equal.'
44 As Gilgamesh was relating the dream,
45 Enkidu was sitting before the harlot.
46 The two of them were making love together,
47 he forgot the wild where he was born.
48 For seven days and seven nights
49 Enkidu was erect and (50) coupled with Šamkatum.
50 The harlot opened her mouth,
51 saying to Enkidu:
52 'I look at you, Enkidu, you are like a god,
53 why with the animals (55) do you range through the wild?
54 Come, I will lead you (57) to Uruk-Main-Street,
55 to the sacred temple, the home of Anu.
56 Enkidu, arise, I will take you
57 to E-anna, the home of Anu.
58 Where [men] are engaged in labours of skill,
59 you, too, [like a] true man, (63) will [make a place for] yourself.
60 You are familiar (enough) with the territory (65) where the shepherd dwells.'
61 He heard her words, he consented to what she said:
62 a woman's counsel (46) struck home in his heart.
63 She stripped off her clothing, (70) dressed him in one part,
64 the other part (72) she put on herself.
65 Holding his hand, (78) she was leading him like a god,
66 to the shepherds' camp, (58) the site of the sheep-pen.
67 The shepherds gathered about him,
68 like (55) (56).
69 ['In build he is the equal of Gilgamesh,]
70 [but] shorter in stature, (62) sturdier of bone.
71 [For sure it is he who was born (54) in the upland,]
85  the milk of the animals (98) he used to suck.
87  They put bread before him,
88  he watched intently, gazing (99) and staring.
90  Enkidu did not know (91) how to eat bread,
92  how to drink ale (93) he had never been shown.
94  The harlot opened her mouth,
95  saying to Enkidu:
96  'Eat the bread, Enkidu, (97) the thing proper to life;
98  drink the ale, the lot of the land.'
99  Enkidu ate the bread (100) until he was sated,
101  he drank the ale, (102) seven jugs (full).
103  His mood became free, he was singing,
104  his heart became merry and (103) his face shone bright.
106  The barber treated (107) his body so hairly,
108  he anointed himself with oil and (109) became a man.
110  He put on a garment, (111) becoming like a warrior,
112  he took up his weapon (113) to do battle with the lions.
114  (When) the shepherds lay down at night,
115  he massacred all the wolves, (116) he chased off all the lions.
117  The senior herdsmen slept:
118  Enkidu was their watchman, (119) a man wide awake.
120  A certain fellow (121) had been invited to the wedding house,
122  in . . . [ . . . ]

Lacuna

123–7 lost

128–34 lost

135  With Šamkatum (128) he was pleasing himself.
137  He lifted his eyes, (138) he saw the man,
139  he said to the harlot:
140  'Šamkatum, bring the man over:
141  why he came here, (142) I would hear his reason.'
143  The harlot hailed the man,
144  she went up to him and talked to him:
145  'Where do you hurry to, fellow?
146  what is your toilsome journey?'
147  The fellow opened his mouth,
148  saying to Enkidu:
174 bi-ti-iš e-me-tim iš-ru-ni-ni
175 ša-ma-a-at ni-si-i-ma 116 bi-ta-ar kal-ti-tim
176 a-na paššir (banšar) sa-khi-ši-e j-še-en
177 uk-la-at bi-ti-e mi ša-a-a-ta-tim
178 a-na šarrim (lugal) ša uruk 2 ri-bi-tim
179 pe-ti pu-ug ni-si a-na ha-a-ri
180 a-na aš šarrim (lugal) ša uruk 2 ri-bi-tim
182 aš ša-at ši-ša-tim i-na-aj 2 šti
183 šu-ši pa-na-ma-ma 161 ma-šum sa-ar-ka-ma
184 i-na mi-il-ši ša ilim (dingir) qa-bi-ma
185 i-na bi-ti-iq a-šu-un-ša-ni-ti š186 ši-ma-as-tim
186 a-na si-iq-ri et-li-im 166 i-ri-qu pa-nu-šu

col. v

167–73 lost

174 x [š]uššuš 1 [. . .]
175 i-il-la-ak 4 [en-ki-din] 176 ša-am-ka-ti-[um] 1 [ta-ar-kiš]-ša
177 i-ru-ub-ma a-na lábiš(s) uruk 2 ri-bi-tim
178 iš-šur ma-na-ma 1 śu-ši n-na še-riš 1 śu
179 iš-zi-ša-am-ma 2 2 2 ša ši-tem-im 180 ša uruk 2 ri-bi-tim
180 pa-ab-na-ma ni-ša 182 i-ta-wa-a i-na še-riš 1 śu
181 a-na mi-kiššišša 1 ši-il pa-da-li(id)-tam
182 lu-nam [i]-a-pi-il 183 e-te-en-tam 1 [pu]-uk k-kut
183 m[i-in-de ša] 1 [i]-ta-ša-di 185 i-n[a š]a-di-iš-im
184 ši-te-ša ša na-ma-a-[š]-tem 186 i-te-en 2 ni-liq
185 ko-a-na ni-na uruk 2 ni-qi-a-tum
186 et-ti-tum 2 2 2 te-te-li-pi 192 ša-ki-ši lu-la-nu
187 a-na eššin (guruk) ša i-sa-ra si-nu-ša
188 a-na kišša mi-ša-ni-la-im 191 ša-ki-ši-lam me-er-rum
190 a-na iš-ša-ra ma-a-a-šum 197 naššišša 1 ša
191 kišša šu a-[a]-r-[a]-ša-[i] im 199 i-na mu-tiš-[ma]-ši-[mi]-ša
192 i-ta-akša ša-am-ma 201 it-ta-ši-in 2 2 2 ša ši-šiq (silal)
193 ši-[a]-na-a-a [a a]-a-kam 203 ša taššuš
194 [x x] x ul-ša-an-da-ni-ni-liš

// SB II 100
// SB II 104
// SB II 100
// SB II 109
// SB II 110
// SB II 102

Lacuna

175 There goes Enkidu, [176] with Šamkatum following him.
177 He entered Uruk-Main-Street,
178 a crowd gathered around him.
179 He stood there in the street [180] of Uruk-Main-Street,
180 the people, gathered together, [182] talked about him:
181 'In build he is the equal of Gilgamesh,
182 (but) shorter in stature, [185] sturdier of bone.
183 For [sure it is he] who was born [187] in the upland,
184 the milk of the animals [189] he used to suck.'
185 Sacrifices were held regularly in Uruk:
186 the young men disported themselves, [192] a champion was appointed.
187 For the followers whose features were fair,
188 for Gilgamesh, like a god, [193] a rival was appointed.
189 For Ilêara the bed [197] was laid out,
190 Gilgamesh would meet [199] with the young woman 3 by night.
191 He came forward and [201] stood in the street,
192 he blocked the path [203] of Gilgamesh.
193 [...] they were discussing him.

Lacuna

[. . .]

116 lit. 'they invited me'; 118 Probably a term for the bridal veil; see the notes ad loc.
119 Or, 'young women'.
Notes
1. A switch in tenses from past (tiḫḫa) to present (iṭašar) in Akkadian narrative is conventionally construed as an indication of adversative relation, the present clause denoting consecutive, final or simultaneous action (cf. GAQ §5186, 159a). Recently, however, Streck has rightly called attention to the fact that verbs introducing direct speech generally use the present tense and that this usage is an idiomatic peculiarity found in other ancient Near Eastern languages, especially Sumerian, which uses marû forms (M. P. Strick, Zahl und Zeit, pp. 109–11; id., Or xv 64 (1995), pp. 51–3). Jacobsen had already commented briefly on this peculiarity in Sumerian and Akkadian and provided the explanation: in these formulae the present tense denotes unfinished action, for the speech is yet to be heard (T. Jacobsen, ZA 78 (1988), p. 191). Since iṭašar in this line introduces direct speech it might be set in the present for that reason only, but it cannot easily be settled whether (a) Gilgamesh rose in order to tell his dream or (b) he rose and, having risen, told it. For comparable problems see the syntactically parallel II. 25 and 51–2, and the notes ad loc.; later examples: SB IV 120: Enkidū isšušma ištânam šumu, IV 95 etc.: tiḫḫa isšušma ana šumma. Trisyllabic isšušma instead of šuttam is an example of the intrusion before the feminine -i- of

Colophon: Tablet II, 'Surpassing all other kings'. 240 (lines)

28 Or, 'as first (in rank)'.
38 Or, 'folds'.

what in common language would be an unnecessary epenthetic vowel. This is a mark of literary style of the sort found in texts in 'hymno-epic' style, e.g. ištu-umur for šumu in Enûma eššì (for other examples see W. von Soden, ZA 40 (1931), pp. 225–6). It is also found occasionally in later Gilgamesh; see Ch. 9, the section on Some features of language and style.

6. The first word is problematic on account of the difficult second and third signs. The readings so far proposed are: ab-bu-nî-nu-ma (Langdon, coll.), J. S. Cooper, Pritchard Mem. Vol., p. 41; Tiggay, Evolution, p. 270; B. Foster, Essays Peps, p. 25; Hecker, TÜAT III/4, p. 649), and, based on the collation of E. Chiera, iš-paššu-nu-ma (T. Jacobsen, Acta Or 8 (1930), p. 65, fn. 3), also iš-paššu-lu-nu-ma (W. von Soden, OLZ 50 (1955), 514; ZA 53 (1959), p. 210; CCAK K, p. 47) and iš-paššu-lu-nu-ma (von Soden, ZA 69 (1979), p. 156; Tournay and Shaffer). None of them is wholly convincing to my eyes: the two signs in question most resemble ma, as (cf. 1.179) or bi' (cf. 1.1: certainly not ba) and na (bi less likely). There is no root vbāšma or vyām and consequently one is left with paššum or ābēm. Neither is free from difficulties. The former is not hitherto attested in the I/1 stem, except as an infinitive cited in a commentary on Šuruppak II 84, in which it is an abstraction extrapolated from the transitive I/1 stem (be-ta-ni-pa-za-ri-ia-nu-ma bi-pa-za-ri-ia. "to conceal"
20. Like Cooper and von Soden I do not believe that the indistinct traces after me, which Langdon argued about with Jastrow and Clay, are actually to be read as a sign.

22. I could not see enough room for Foster’s te-ud-di-ra-as-[tu] ‘mi-šu-um-ma, ‘the people will embrace him and . . . ’ (RA 77 (1983), p. 92); such a reading is also unlikely on grammatical grounds, for in verbal conjugation this tablet, like other OB Gilgamesh, uses not the archaic 3rd fem. sg. prefix it- but regular OB i-, and in any case ni₂šu is so rarely singular that one would expect iddi-nu₂ša or iddi-nu₂ša. In fact, there does not seem to be enough missing in the middle of the line to give two good words, so it is difficult to avoid resolving the difficulty in the traditional way by ignoring as a mistake or an erase the traces of wedges that fall before ša (cf. von Soden, OLZ 50, 514; ZA 69, p. 156).

25. For the sequence of tenses see the notes on l. 1, above.

27. Neither Langdon’s e₂-i₂-a (also Jastrow and Clay, Tigay), nor Chiera’s e₂-i₂-e (Jacobsen, Acta Or 8, p. 66) also A. Schloss, ZA 42 (1934), p. 102; Speiser; von Soden, ZA 53, p. 210; ZA 69, p. 156), nor Tournay and Shaffer’s [el] pi-e-mi-a (I'lippé, p. 63, fn. 5: ‘sur mes cuisses’) agrees exactly with the tablet, on which the third preserved sign is to my eyes clearly different from mi₁₄, being in fact ul. What has escaped attention until now is that this entire line of poetry appears again in the Yale tablet, where, inappropriately, the beginning of the line is also lost: S x S² x i₂-en₂a inaz-siqim i₄₄a Uruk ribbitim (OB III 174). There the context seems to be the conveying of the assembly, but the decipherment of what precedes inaz-siqim defies me (most emend to lu₂i₂a, ‘exuberance’). The late text, perhaps baffled also, omits the phrase entirely (SB I 277).

28. ‘Main-Street’ is an epithet signifying that Uruk was famous for its ribbitim, the public public thoroughfare of a city. It is also used of Akkade, once in an Old Assyrian pseudo-autobiography of Sargon (C. Gisberta, Archivum, Ahišulum 3 (1997), p. 133, 1-2: šar a₂₄-u₂₄-te a₂₄-te-tim) and once by Hammurapi (CH IV 50-2: ‘zer-ru₂₄-te a₂₄-te-tim’).

On ka₂₄ba₂₄ see Ch. 13, the commentary on SB I 156.

35-6. As already seen by Schott and K. Hecker (see Tigay, Evolutions, p. 83, fn. 36), the phrase ālu₂u₂₄ i₄₄a a₂₄-u₂₄ is ambiguous, no doubt intentionally. Note that the symbolism of this dream is re-pressed in Gilgamesh’s lament for Enkidu, in which he refers to him as k duas a₂₄-u₂₄ (SB VIII 46; so already Cooper, Finkelstein Mem. Vol., p. 40, fn. 6).

43. In the later text the ‘making equal’ of Enkidu (SB I 258, etc.) refers to his adoption by Ninurta. Whether this is already so in the OB epic cannot yet be proved. The present line could also be translated ‘because so that he will set himself up as your rival’; which is of course exactly what Enkidu does. However, the dream is clearly a prediction of love and brotherly behaviour, not of conflict.

46. The restoration goes back to von Soden, OLZ 50, 514, and is now supported by the LB manuscripts of SB I 194. For hilalilum instead of hilalilum in OB (and MA) Akkadian see GDA 569 i.

48. It is conventional to restore ‘six days and seven nights’ in this line, following the example of SB I 194. However, the evidence now suggests that where the late text has this formulation the OB text had ‘seven days and seven nights’ (undamaged in OB VA BM II 8; see Ch. 13, the commentary on SB XI 128), and so the broken numeral is here read 7 instead of 6. A stray wedge after this numeral, seen by previous copyists, is not convincingly the remains of a kam (cf. l. 56), and is ignored as an error.

49. I read ša₂₄-[am-ka-ša₂₄] rather than ša₂₄-[am-ka-a₂₄] (cf. von Soden, ZA 53, p. 210) because elsewhere in the tablet the name appears with a case ending (l. 135, 175), except where vocative (l. 140).

51-2. This is the first example extant in OB Gilgamesh of the longest of the common literary
formule in Gilgameš and other poetic narratives for introducing direct speech (see E. Sonneck, ZA 46 (1940), pp. 225–35). The verb ṣipu or ṣiplam (pretense), often with enclitic -ma, is followed by ıṣaqarrum or SB ıṣakka(na) (both present), sometimes in the SB epic with qabbi (also present) sandwiched between them. Sequences of pretense and present are often construed as signifying adversarial relationships (see above, on I. 1). In this formula final and simultaneous action are both appropriate and I have usually rendered qabbi (where included) with a final clause and ıṣaqarrum with a participle. However, in dealing with this formula in his study of the present tense Strick maintains that because verbs introducing direct speech use the present tense as a matter of course, even in isolation, the sequence ṣipu (pretense)—qabbi/ıṣakka(na) (present) is not a matter of circumstance, intention or result but a temporal one (M. P. Strick, Orns 64 (1995), pp. 51–3). I do not see that this is necessarily so. With an ambiguous case like piša ṣiplam ıṣaqarrum it is impossible to know for sure whether to translate with a participle (as I have chosen to do), with a final clause ‘he opened his mouth in order to speak’ or with a succession of events, ‘he opened his mouth (and) spoke’. However, so where the formula has both qabbi and ıṣakka(na) it is in any case reasonable to place these two verbs in a simultaneous relationship.

63.1. The restorations put forward for this couplet by Jastrow and Clay (also Jacobson, Acta Or. 8, p. 71; Tournus and Shaffer; cf. Heidel, Speiser, Labat), are not wholly sustained by the traces or grammar. Though the later text has a couplet beginning ṣipu, it is otherwise quite different: altar Gilgameš girmi it šamā[T] / su kī rim gidaššarru er šalitu (SB I 211–12). The last word of I. 61 is certainly nippiddam (contra von Soden, ZA 53, p. 210), which refers to the skilled work of craftsmen, divers, excisors and other professions learned through a long apprenticeship. As I read the traces, the word before it must be [x]-ti-niš-ma, and accordingly the L2 variant šeladda recommends itself. Here it has an imperative 3rd pl. subject, but in l. 63, where attention turns to the specific case of Enkidu (raimimā), the same verb begins to be restored in the active, šaladu. The restorations of I. 62–3 remain provisional, however, not least because they produce text that does not yield a satisfactory quatrains. Like II. 56–60 and 66–72, I. 61–5 should yield four full lines of poetry.

64. The first sign is clearly it, if compared with other examples of the sign in which the horizontal wedges in the latter part of the sign are written one over the other (cf. OB III 200, 202, 230). Langdon, Jastrow and Clay is most translators read ala ti-ta for alašum šumā in šiṭam, i.e. ‘come, arise’, but the orthography is too defective to be compelling. The alternative reading of the fourth sign, adopted here, is open to two different interpretations: either alak-ta, ‘it is his behaviour’ (cf. von Soden, ZA 59, p. 210: ‘mein Wandel ist ...’) or 2nd masc. sg. stativ akāta (cf. OB III 252: akal harrāsin; for sanskrit governed by a masculine subject see below, the note on šešrit in OB III 191). For me the latter reading yields better sense than the former.

65. Unless one emends to ma-aa-a, ‘bed’, there seems little option but to follow von Soden in taking ma-aa-aa as ‘St. constr. eines unbekannten nomon loci von niššum, “cöözieren”’ (OLZ 50, 514), i.e. *maysak re'im, where the shepherd beds his women. Dalley’s ‘no more sex’ (i.e. māk re'im, lit. ‘abscence of coupling’) is discounted on grounds of meaning and idiom.

66. The stem of the nomon loci with prefixed ti listed as *tapas in GAQ §56k. There tarasgam is a paradase example of the stem, but it is well known that in Assyrian dialect the second syllable of this word must be long because it is not subject to vowel harmony (sar-ba-the. KAT 20, 9; 175, 5; KAV 96, 14; S.A 47 XIII 92, 9; sar-ba-the. S.A 47 VII, 4; VIII 71, 5). Dialectal variation of this kind is known as Akkadian (e.g. Bab. asma-ta Y W, Ass. absu) and the entry in AHlu is accordingly ambivalent: tarbasgam (m). However, it is interesting to note that here the metrical requirement of the line-end requires a penultimate stress: ala tarbasgarm. The implication is that the word was pronounced tarbasgarm in Babylonian, too.

80–4. These lines are restored from the later parallel, II. 183–7.

88. The first word is difficult. It is commonly parsed as from ṣṭšum, ‘to become narrow’. One idea is that it has to do with narrowing of the eyes: von Soden, AHlu s.v. (‘ellipt. das Auge zuknäufen (um genauen zu sehen)’; cf. Reclam’s ‘er sah genau hin’). The same word may appear in Ėlilmu E 65: 7 (see note on p. 234). Ideas that rely on narrowness differently understood are Speiser’s ‘he gagged’ and von Soden’s earlier rendering ‘es wurde ihm eng, er wurde bekloven’ (OLZ 50, 51; cf. Reclam). Others translate ad sensum and see the verb as indicating embarrassment or distrust. The solution adopted here is that ṣṭšum is an isolated example of a 1L5 stem of intensive paqu, ‘to pay attention, concentrate’. The late text reads ṣṭ-e-gi, which may or may not be 1st stem.

93. Or, ‘not yet been shown’: So Stol, OB History, p. 53, fn. 30, who cited this line as an example of the emphatic 1L in a main clause meaning ‘not yet’ as well as ‘not at all’, ‘never’. For another possible instance of this usage in this book see SB I 108: 11 še ša nīl (var. 1d) and the commentary ad loc.

98. The alteration in this line beautifully conveys the prostitute’s amused tittering.

99. The incompletely erased a before ak-ak-ak suggests that the scribe was going to write a-ak-ak-lam (as in I.87) or even a-ak-ak, but changed his mind. There may have been metrical reasons for preferring akšum to akšalam but as yet this remains speculation.

103. The form habbatum, for regular habbatum, was listed by von Soden in his study of hymno-epic idioms as an example of the fem. sg. noun in -at instead of -i, comparable with samatam for lattum (W. von Soden, ZA 40 (1931), p. 225), and is viewed by both dictionaries as a literary alternative to habbatum. The present attestation appears to be the only instance so far of habbatum in status rectus. All other examples of the stem habat- known to me have pronominal suffixes attached, and are thus examples of literary napšaša for common napšaša (ibid., pp. 222–3; GAQ §605).

104–5. The line recurs in OB Schayen, 24, describing Gilgameš’s reaction to the favourable interpretation of his first dream en route to the Cedar Forest.

106. The penultimate sign has caused problems. The reading ṣeš in I. was first proposed by Jastrow and Clay, after the suggestion of H. F. Lutz (the unpublished collation of E. Chiera agrees).

115–16. The verbs usatpiš and ukaššid are examples of use of the L3 stem to report action repeated on a series of objects (see GAQ §917).

117. The phrase nāqāt šubatim, lit. ‘great herdsman’, is strange. Von Soden translates nābatiam (ZA 71, p. 181) and translates ‘die alten Huter’ (Reclam’), but the italics indicate his doubt whether the word can have such a meaning outside certain set usages. Foster suggested that this is a reference to the imagery found in prayers to the gods of the night, in which the going to bed of the Great Ones symbolizes the still quiet of the night (Essays Pep, p. 30; cf. SB 1232). I think von Soden was nearer the mark.

120. Most translators, if not all, have taken the phrase ṣṭšum eššum to describe Enlīdā, but recognition of how the lines of tablet divide into lines and couples of poetry makes it clear that this phrase begins a new poetic line (so too in the late text, SB II 63; cf. already von Soden, ZA 71, p. 181). Thus
it need not be in apposition to anānu ērum. The word ērum is often mistranslated in this kind of context; sometimes functions as little more than an indefinite article, as in the tale of the Poor Man of Nippur, where ērum(1) ("mayın"(gigir) li-di-nu-nam-ma means simply 'let them give me a chariot' (SCT 38, 76; also 80). In this way the phrase ērum ērum serves to introduce a new character, for the moment anonymous. Compare its use in introducing figures seen in dreams (OB Schevyn, 9; MB Boğaz, obv. 15; MB Ur 65; SBVII 168; LdII/III 9, 23; SM III 32 rev. 10; Kumm: Dream; L. Messerschmidt, MVAG XII (1896), p. 76, vi 6: Nbn), and, as here, anonymous persons encountered in waking life, like a character in the Poor Man of Nippur (SCT 38, 142: i-iš-ra-nam-l-ma ērum(1) "sud(gurū), 'spying a certain fellow') and Aššurbanipal's dream interpreter (Stereck, Ash. pp. 32, iii 118, 190-1, 25: ērum(1) "знах-ru-so-ru"). The usage is not restricted to human subjects (BM 248 ii 10: ērum(1) "aršur-tu(du) ša šin(30) gëme-suen na šum-fa, 'there was (once) a cow of Sīn, her name was Misseditary of the Moon'. The equivalent usage occurs in Sumerian, though often mistranslated: gurud.šilám, 'there was a man', in Gudea's dream (Cyl. A iv 14), lú ki šišiš-dilám, 'there was a young woman', in Sargon's (J. S. Cooper and W. Heimpel, JASOS 103 (1983), p. 75, 22). In the present line the person described as ērum ērum is likely to be the man first seen by Enkidu in ll. 137-8.

121. What follows ērum ērum is difficult. Von Soden has suggested various restorations: most recently reading a-na [si-ni-tu] li-sa-aq-gi-ir, with the comment 'den Hirten gegenüber erscheint Enkidu doppelt so groß' (ZA 71, p. 181, fn. 26; otherwise see ZA 59, p. 210; ALHS, p. 131). The traces I saw do not sustain this, or any earlier idea. The verb iṣṣarqin, which may be intransitive or transitive, seems in any case a one in the context: it would either be the man as protractitudinal standing proud in some way, or he is himself piling something high. Unfortunately the last text is also difficult at this point but seems to mention the wedding ceremony (SB II 63: bi emul) to which it later transpires the man is going. I have restored the middle of the line accordingly. The verb at the end should be pretetive, which makes a reading ērum(1) li-sa-aq-gi-ir unlikely, and so I assume a II/2 stem of saqarum with the meaning 'to be summoned by name'.

122. The later text probably has [ina lēkiši] Urnu supāri ana ... (SB II 64), but i-ana [ša] urudu ni-bi-su(1) does not look possible in our line, so it would appear that the two versions diverge. In the lacuna that follows, the narrator may have described how or why the stranger's journey brought him to the shepherds' camp, but while ll. 121-2 remain incompletely deciphered we cannot know.

136. The expression usum epăluum is found elsewhere in the myth of Erra, where it describes his enjoyment of his wife in their bed-chamber (ll. 20). Here too the subject is a man having a good time with a woman in private, so that the expression would seem to have sexual overtones. In this regard the occasional coupling of usum with kusu and its equation with Sumerian ma.ez are revealing; see especially the pairing in OBGT XIII 6-7:

hēziwa = ku-uq.ez-du-a(m) allure
ma.ez = û a-li-šu-un and pleasure

PUN V 149; cf. MSH IV, p. 120, where R. Hallock and B. Landsberger translated usum as 'lust'.

140. The verb ukkāšum usually means 'to drive away' but here must refer to motion in the opposite direction, towards the speaker, since Enkidu wants to know the man's business and to do that he will need to speak to him (against Reclam, 'laf den Menschen fortgehen', and others). Mimation is optional in this text so may be that this nuance is expressed by a veritive, ukkāšu < ukkāšum.

142. The last word of the poetic line is still a problem. To my eyes the signs are li-ši-ši(1) (maybe also
im gleichen Raum Schlaufenden‘ (ZA 59, p. 211). Labat refined this idea, identifying pāq nīṭī as ‘un filet qui, dans la maison des parents, pouvait isoler la par de la demeure et la couche réservées aux nouveaux mariés, et derrière lequel, le jour des noces, la jeune épouse attendait sans doute son mari’, and drawing attention to the existence of such an item among the Marsh Arab of modern Iraq (Labat, Religion, p. 169, fn. 3). Such a screen would be needed especially if the newly wedded couple were expected to consummate their marriage in the ỉb antū during the course of the festivities. The word nīṭī would then refer to the family, a term which includes the guests at the wedding, rather than the population in general. However, I am not convinced that any kind of net would make an effective screen. The usual word for a curtain is well known, šidām.

Another view is that the word in question is a part of the body with gynaecological connotations, as originally proposed by Jastrow and Clay: ‘hymen?’. The lexical evidence available suggests pāqūm is the bottom or backside (MSL XIV, p. 140, 13: šu-ūmā = pu-ūm-ūm). On the evidence of diagnostic omens D.A. Foxvoog argues that pāqūm is ‘a paired body part below the crotch (ṣimā) and belly (rēbbō), and below or at the level of the knees (birdū), but above the feet (ṭābād)’ (Studien Sörgel, p. 171). As a further guide he adduces an image which occurs in an OB divination prayer, where a lamb is described as ša-i-na pu-qi (var. pu-pi-qi) ša-ar-ti ša-ta-ep-qi (J. Nougarolet, KD 38 (1941), p. 87, obs. 4, 1 YOS XI 23, 3). He renders this as ‘preserved out of the pāqūm of a ewe’, and in the light of it translates the passage comment as ‘the loin(s) of the people are open to (both) lovers’. However, this position fails to convince for three reasons: (a) the passage of divination prayer is better rendered as ‘(a lamb) who (when newborn) flopped about unsteadily at the hindquarters of a ewe’, and consequently is not evidence for an especially close connection between pāqūm and the birth-canal; (b) the loins of the people is implausible as a reference to the maidenhead of brides, and (c) all human beings, not just females, have a pair of pāqūm (Labat, TDP 142, 61; reading pu-qi-sa with Foxvoog). Clearly the word is not another term for the female genitals or the birth-canal. One finds a close correspondence with the Sumerian dūr, ‘bottom’. Acknowledging the probable etymology of ṣimā, pāqūm is likely to be the cleft of the bottom; when paired presumably it refers to the buttocks (as, indeed, it was translated in our passage by Dalley, Myths, p. 152). The pāqūm may well open, but not, one hopes, at the consummation of a marriage. Accordingly I reject the anatomical pāqūm of this passage.

A third possibility involves common sense. It is known that in Assyrian respectable married women went veiled in public places (MAL §40) and the likelihood is that Babylonian women also took the veil at their weddings (see SB VIII 59 and C. Wilcke, ‘Familienbildung im Alten Babylonien’, in E. W. Müller (ed.), Geschlechterstreit und Legitimation zur Zeitung (Münster, 1985), pp. 282–3). The only person entitled to unveil a new bride is her bridgroom. The verb īrbīm seems eminently suited to such an action. Accordingly, I strongly suspect that the expression pāq nīṭī, ‘people’s net’ or ‘family’s net’, is a term for the veil itself, and that this line refers to the initiation of intimacy by the act of parting the bride’s veil.

The person who parts the veil should be the bridgroom but in Uruk this was not the case, for Gilgamesh exercised the right of ỉs primas noctis. The word written ỉs-a-a-ra cannot be, as it is sometimes taken, the infinitive, which in OB is of course ḫīrām or ḫāyūm (as in L 151). Instead it is to be understood in the light of the lexical equation ỉs-a-a-ru = hu-ša-ra, ‘ỉs, bridegroom’ (II R 36 no. 2 ii 40), but it is not simply a variant spelling of the latter, for in OB this is ḫāyūm rather than ḫīrām. The word is thus ḫāyūm, using the parrāḫi stem of habitual practice, and singular (without mutation), referring to Gilgamesh, because as ll. 159–61 reveal, he does not partake of the bridal dance once in his life but many times. This word is understandably rare, since men normally take a ḫīrām only once, and neither dictionary allows it an entry of its own (note, however, the transcription ḫājīrī by von Soden, ZA 71, p. 182, and the translation ‘Erschwerer’ in Reclam’s). Outside this passage and the lexical list it appears only in Boer, Esarh. §49 Ann., where it is a literary variant of ḫāru. It is not impossible that the entry in the synonym list was derived from scholarly exegesis of this very passage.

162. Von Soden, ZA 71, p. 182, fn. 27, preferred to read DINGIR as Anûm (‘sicher besser’) rather than śûm, but elsewhere in this text Anûm’s name is spelled syllabically a-nûm (L II, 38, 60).

165. It is simplest to analyse the genitive noun ỉs-ep-qi as a regular OB plural construct state but that is not the only possible parsing. In his study of ‘hymno-epic’ style von Soden added this spelling as a rare example of genitive singular construct in -i (ZA 40 (1931), p. 211). The genitive construct in -i (i.e. retaining the case vowel) is standard grammar in Old Akkadian and such formations in literary Babylonian can be explained as archaisms (another instance can be found in OB IM 27). In the present case an alternative solution for those that require šûm to be singular would be to posit čitis, ỉs-ep-qi-še-šu-anni *< šûm-še-šu.

166. The half-line ỉu-tiši pāšišu also occurs in OB Schuyten, 63 // 66 // 75.

179. The verb ỉnāz”um in the venim seems to express location; cf. SB IV 161 nizazu (var. nizzazu) eli gētēs (LB manuscripts); IV 192 nizzarum (impv.); VII 167 azzas? (az-az-az, var. az-az-az).

186–7. The restoration of the end of the line relies on MB Boğ, Fragment a, 11: i-na ša-di-i (see already G. Wilhelm, ZA 78 (1988), p. 109). There is not enough room for Tournay and Shaffer’s i-k[u-ul tām-mi ša-ši-ši-im (Ueberes, p. 71, fn. 32). The beginning of the line is restored after SB II 42: mindūm aššu ina šadi, var. mindūm Enkidū taššašu šidūmum, the point being that Enkidu’s reputation has gone before him and the crowd has no difficulty in identifying him. A restoration m[i-in-da-a-ta] has also been suggested, by J. C. C. Kammenga, Akkadica 36 (1984), p. 18.

190. This line introduces two couples of commentary by the narrator, in which he reminds his audience that Enkidu is famous for its festivals. The word ni-q[a-a-tum] was first so read by von Soden, ZA 59, p. 212; earlier scholars had read ỉa-khi-a-tum. Von Soden’s reading is supported by the fact that on this tablet the upright wedges of ni are not always visible (as in II 9 and 157).

191. Most recent scholars read the second word as ỉte-el-li-lu, with Langdon (cf. von Soden, ZA 59, p. 212; ld., ZA 71, p. 182; Tigay, Evolution, p. 279, etc.; Tournay and Shaffer opt for the same reading, but derive it from ỉdal, ‘se réjouir’, ‘an otherwise unattested verb). However, the last sign is zu, not lu. This compels us to resurrect an older view, represented by the translations of Heidel, Speiser (both: ’rejoiced’) and Finkelstein (JAOS 90, p. 252: ‘were celebrating’), that this word is part of šēlēm. It seems improbable that the rarely attested derived stem uṣilulum (II 2 or II 3) means exactly the same as simple šēlēm (U 1), ‘to become merry’. The evidence of the lexical texts is not conclusive:

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<th>zigug, zugubu</th>
<th>ỉte-el-lu-qa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zigug, zugu, ulul</td>
<td>KIMIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nilul</td>
<td>MIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>nililllu</td>
<td>KININ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSL XVI, pp. 302–3, Nabnûtu R 202–5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ỉ-ulti-lu-qa</td>
<td>nar-[u-u?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT 18 31 obv. 12 = Malku VIII 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have taken ỉ-te-el-li-qum as II 2, factitive and reflexive.
192–5. There is no consensus as to the second word of l. 192. It is clearly lu-sa-nu on the tablet (so also Tigay, Evolution, p. 279), but Langdon reads ḫu-sa-nu and translated 'project', Jastrow and Clay ur-la-nu, 'leader'. Von Soden suggested mar-lī-sa-nu, 'Kupferfoli' (ZA 59, p. 212; Reclam: 'Schale'). Finkelstein followed Landesberger's lead in reading lu-la-nu with the tablet and took it as the musical instrument (or part of a musical instrument) usually attested as lušša (JAOS 90, p. 252). This interpretation is now adopted by von Soden also (AHw, p. 1572; Reclam), and has found favour with other recent translators.

The key to the meaning of the word, in my view, lies with the correct understanding of the context, and the best guide to this is the phrase šakššum mešarum in l. 195. This clause is exactly parallel with latam lu-la-nu in function (both round off their respective couplets). The word mešarum means 'counterpart, rival'. Ensidu has arrived in Uruk at a time of festival when someone is set up as the 'rival' of Gilgamesh (cf. the more suggestive rendering in CAD M2, p. 57: 'warrior of equal rank'). This rivalry attracts the simile 'like a god', an allusion to the single combat of the gods in mythology, when a divine champion defeats a threatening rival (Ningirsu/Ninhursag and the Anakku, Azīdī, and the Slain Heroes; later Marduk and Tīmānu, etc.). The comments made about Enkidu by first the shepherds (IL 80–2) and then the townsmen of Uruk (IL 183–5), stressing how like Gilgamesh he is in build and strength, have already intentionally prepared the minds of the audience for his selection as this 'rival'. Gilgamesh had, until Enkidu's arrival, been without equal in the city (see SB I 63–72). As soon as the poet describes the special rites that were conducted at Uruk, the listener guesses that the mighty Enkidu, fitted by the young men in Gilgamesh's dream, has to be the one they choose to make the challenge, i.e. the lu-la-nu and the mešarum. In the light of the context of a challenge to Gilgamesh, Jastrow and Clay's uršušum, 'warrior', is attractive, even though it necessitates emendation of the first sign. Rather than emanu, however, it seems preferable to propose a comparable word laššum, derived from putative Sum. šu sag just as uršušum is borrowed from ur-sag. The meaning of šu sag, lit. 'foremost man', would fit exactly a champion chosen from among the menfolk of the city to challenge the supremacy of their chief.

In l. 193 šarrum, usually 'straight, just', is assumed to have a meaning which is not customary, but which finds a semantic parallel in English. The word has been proposed as a double entendre with šarrum, 'pens' (Dalley, Myths, p. 152), ostensibly anticipating Gilgamesh's role in the ensuing episode, i.e., the wedding. Such a double entendre is not compelling, for it produces no sense.

196–9. With this couplet the poet moves on to the custom that motivated Enkidu to leave the shepherd's camp and come to Uruk, namely Gilgamesh's supplanting of the bridegroom at weddings. Some have seen the mention of the goddess Ištar as an allusion to a sacred marriage. Von Soden has proposed that the apparent rite of išu primus noctis described in ll. 159–61 is not a generalized practice but a sacred marriage ceremony in which a newly wedded bride impersonates the goddess, i.e., Ištar (ZA 71, p. 104). As the end of Kullab Gilgamesh can be expected to have taken part in such a ceremony with Inanna, but the place of Ištar in the cults of Uruk is uncertain. Since in the religious traditions of the OB period Ištar is Inanna in the particular function of divine patron of the nuptial period (see OB Atram-bašīt 1299–304), I am more inclined to understand 'bed of Ištar' as simply a literary expression for the bed on which the marriage is to be consummated (so also J.-J. Glassner, ZA 80 (1990), p. 67: 'le nom d'Ištar n'est autre qu'une allusion à une banale nuit de noces'; cf. earlier J.J. Finkelstein, RA 61 (1967), p. 133; id., JAOS 90, p. 252).

It is uncertain whether Gilgamesh met the 'girl' (quardašum) in the street, or the 'girl' (quardašum). Either way, what is meant is that Gilgamesh used to join the procession of the bride's family as it accompanied her and the groom from her father's house to the house of the bridegroom's family, the bit eminn (on this custom see S. Greengus, JCS 20 (1966), pp. 71–2). The implication is that he takes the groom's place here as well as in the bridal bed. The tense of the verb, for metrical reasons normalized inšinnûd māt inšinnûd, is present of habitual action. The phrase inša mišu(m) confirms the significance of the tense, that the line does not describe a specific occasion but an habitual event, for mišum refers to night and night-time in general, while a specific night is regularly mišûm; see M. Stol, WZKM 86 (1996), p. 417; fn. 12, and N. Wasserman's discussion of the two words as an example of nomen unitatis (mišûm) v. nomen generis (mišum), to appear in the chapter on Merismus in his Style and Form in Old Babylonian Literary Texts (Leiden, forthcoming).

200–3. The subject of the verbs of this couplet is obviously Enkidu, suddenly emerging from the crowd. The poet does not mention his name, a device which perhaps signifies the fact that Gilgamesh does not know who this imposing stranger is.

204. If the only surviving word of this line is correctly restored, the crowd exchanges thoughts on who the man might be. Neither the old reading do-na-ni-ti-tu nor Oppenheim's [an]-na-na-ni-ki-tu (OrNs 17, p. 29) is supported by the tablet. Tournay and Shaffer emend to do-da-ni-li-tu and translate 'il empoigna sa nuque', but if by this is meant the terminative dâdâhêd-tu then the spelling is against it ('-ti would be expected: see fn. 8 of this chapter).

208 and 211. The reading šakššum < anšum follows von Soden, AHw, p. 320.

212. Since Enkidu is already standing (L 200), the force of šešum here is to move into action.

214. The phrase rîbitu māt is perhaps the name of a street of Uruk, just as it is the name of a street in an OB house deed from Hana (TCCL 237, 6: ri-bi-ú mātû). In another Old Babylonian tablet it is an epithet of the city of Uruk as a whole (OB Scierny, obv. 5: 'Uruk rîbitu mātû').

219 // 224. On the verb lăšum, 'to crouch low, go down on one's knees', see von Soden, OLZ 50, p. 514. Especially instructive is the use of the verb to describe a date palm bending under its burden of fruit (CT41 29 obv. 19; Summaša'). Here, however, the image evoked by the poet is of an ox (Il 218 // 224: lišum) with head lowered and forelegs bent for fighting (see also OB Harmal, 6). Others propose a derivation of lišum from lišum, literally 'expert', sc. in wrestling (e.g. Labat: 'le lutteur exercé'; also CAD L, p. 36; etc.). The word may be intentionally ambiguous (cf. J. Renger in F. Oinas (ed.), Epic and Saga, pp. 40–1). But, on the other hand, it seems a little too obvious for men engaged in wrestling to be compared to wrestlers. The simile of the ox is especially apt, for in any kind of wrestling it is essential to maintain as low a centre of gravity as possible.

220 // 226. I prefer ūrītu, with pentactile stress (regular 'trochaic' ending) to išluš (final stress), against von Soden, ZA 59, p. 212; so already Tigay, Evolution, p. 281.

227–8. The ambiguous language of this poetic line—ambiguous at least to us—has generated conflicting interpretations, that Gilgamesh is the victor (which suits the plot) and that Enkidu is the victor (which does not). In my opinion the line is best explained by Oppenheim, according to whom the kind of wrestling that Gilgamesh and Enkidu engage in is that depicted on cylinder seals (OrNs 17, pp. 29–30). He proposes that 'this last verse describes exactly ... the position of the victorious wrestler, who has succeeded in lifting his opponent from the ground, holding him by his girdle over his head while bending his own knee' (cf. similarly Glassner, ZA 80, pp. 69–70). That the fight should be settled this way has already been predicted in the dream of the meteorite, in which, after a great struggle, Gilgamesh succeeded in lifting it (Il 8–14). More recent interpretations of the line are less convincing. D. Charpin, NABU 1992/2, considers it unlikely that hamātum can describe attitudes of submission and victory, and proposes that bitûm refers to the manner in which Gilgamesh, having succeeded in getting past Enkidu, took his place at the wedding feast: 'accroupi par terre'. Finer supposes that hamātum is the attitude of the defeated not the victor and proposes to solve the difficulty consequent on this interpretation by imposing on the text a sequence of
changes of subject to that me seems most improbable (A. Finet, 'La lutte entre Gilgamesh et Enkidu', *Milange Limat*, pp. 45–50).

234–7. A similar expression occurs in OB Harma); šakka littum ia supāris (or supāri) Ninsunanna (I. 42). On Ninsun’s name see the relevant section of Ch. 4.

**The Yale tablet (OB Tablet III)**

The Yale tablet is considerably longer than the Pennsylvania tablet but much less well preserved, especially on the obverse. As already stated, it was purchased by Yale University at about the same time as the University Museum acquired the Pennsylvania tablet from the same dealer and was most probably written by the same man. Accordingly, the remarks made earlier concerning the provenance of OB Tablet II hold good for OB Tablet III.

Enkidu having acknowledged the suzerainty of Gilgamesh at the end of Tablet II, the first episode preserved in Tablet III describes how the pair become firm friends. It is evident that this episode includes direct speech (II. 10–17) but it is not clear who is speaking to whom, though the suspicion is that Enkidu is talking to Gilgamesh. The subject matter is a proposal, presumably by Gilgamesh, that provokes in Enkidu the same horror and disbelief as the expedition to the Cedar Forest will later, but beyond that no more can be said. Following the direct speech is the kiss that seals their friendship (18–19) and then a succession of heavily damaged lines interrupted by a lacuna (20–41). Part of this section is to be restored from another Old Babylonian tablet, where the text describes how Enkidu proposes to reward the prostitute for bringing him into Uruk and friendship with Gilgamesh (OB Schayen, I, obv.).

When the text of the Yale tablet resumes at the bottom of column ii we learn that the prostitute is still involved in the story. The identity of those who address her is not preserved but probably it is Gilgamesh and Enkidu (42–3).

The upper part of column iii contains the fragmentary remains of a speech, presumably by Gilgamesh, to his mother, the goddess Ninsun, her reply, and the unhappiness that her words provoke in Enkidu (56–76). This episode is the forerunner of that given in SB II 162–ff., also rather fragmentary. Both are presumably concerned with Gilgamesh’s introduction of Enkidu to his mother, as foretold in her explanation of his second dream (OB II 43).

The text of the Yale tablet becomes better preserved nearer the bottom of column ii and at the top of column iii. Here Gilgamesh asks the cause of Enkidu’s sadness (77–81). In reply Enkidu lamens his loss of strength, an enfeeblement that is evidently the result of the immediately preceding narrative or, in hindsight, of his seduction earlier in the story (82–8). Despite the lacuna that intrudes between these lines and the next section of text, it is clear that Gilgamesh attempts to brighten Enkidu’s mood by proposing an expedition to the Cedar Forest to kill the ogre that lives there, the savage Huwawa (89–103). A slightly different version of this episode is preserved in an Old Babylonian fragment probably from Nippur (OB UM). The whole passage is the equivalent of SB II 193–215; the lacuna at the beginning of Gilgamesh’s speech (between II. 90 and 97) can very probably be filled with SB II 194–201, while the material missing in the lacuna SB II 202–12 probably developed from a version of II. 97–103.

Enkidu’s reaction to Gilgamesh’s idea is to warn his new friend of the terrors that such an adventure would hold (104–16). He has met Huwawa and knows him and his forest to be a lethal adversary. Gilgamesh’s answer is largely lost in the lacuna that intervenes half-way down column iii, but enough remains to indicate that he is not at all intimidated by Enkidu’s warning and intends, in the full knowledge that the mountain of the Cedar Forest is the home of the gods, nevertheless to fell cedar there (117–26). The notion that the pantheon dwelt on the Cedar Mountain is a western one, imported into Babylonia from the Levant. In a speech that runs over on to column iv Enkidu again warns Gilgamesh against the expedition, adding that the guardian of the forest is a god called Wêr, and that the ogre Huwawa has at his disposal seven ‘terrors’ to keep the trees safe from the depredations of mortal men (127–37). In the later text Enkidu’s two speeches are reworked as SB II 216–29 and Gilgamesh’s first reply is omitted. Gilgamesh’s second reply is full of youthful bravado. He spouts some old maxims about the brevity of a man’s life on earth (138–43) and taunts Enkidu for his feeble lack of bravery, suggesting that his friend follow in the safety of his shadow (144–7). He looks forward to the glory that battle with Huwawa will bring him, contrasts Enkidu’s fearsome reputation with his present cowardice and announces his wish to achieve everlasting fame by felling the sacred cedars (148–62). This speech survives, with some alterations, in Assyrian MS y1 (Chapter 7 below) but is otherwise recast into SB II 230–41. The theme of making one’s name, which is so central to the first half of the Babylonian epic, is taken over from the Sumerian story of Gilgamesh and Huwawa, but the motivation for it here is not, as there, the fear of dying. That is reserved for the second half of the epic.

Gilgamesh and Enkidu then begin preparations for the journey. Though damaged in part by the tapering off of the tablet at the bottom of column iv, this section is nearly complete. First the two heroes make their way to the forge of the blacksmiths and come away equipped with weaponry on an heroic scale (163–71; cf. SB II 242–53). Then Gilgamesh secures the gates of Uruk and convenes the city’s assembly (172–7). The short lacuna between columns iv and v intervenes but it is clear that Gilgamesh announces to the elders his intention of making an expedition against Huwawa, to cut down cedar and make a name (179–88); the speech is also present in Assyrian MS y2 (obv. 1–5) but worded very differently in the late text (SB II 261–71). The elders give their response in a speech that warns

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67 Wêr is the Babylonian name for the god Mêr, a storm god known principally in Syria-Mesopotamian context, especially at Mari (as Išîr-Mêr), but also found in Babylonia, where he was identified with Adad (see G. Dossin, *Inscriptions de fondation provenant de Mari*, Syria 21 [1940], pp. 156–71; W. G. Lambert, 'The pantheon of Mari', *MARI* 1985, pp. 534–5); M. Kurzbanai, 'Mêrû', *RLA* VIII, p. 75. His western provenance fits the present context, of course, for the Cedar Forest of the Babylonian epic was situated in Levant.

68 The reference to the word *palatalium* is to Huwawa’s seven deadly auras, which in the Sumerian story of Gilgamesh and Huwawa are known as râz, or as 3-lâm (A 192–200) and which elsewhere in the Old Babylonian material are called *makāni* and *namāri* (OB Ischāli 12–13, 16).

69 Oppenheim saw in these lines a mocking inversion of the custom following which the loyal friend and servant has to take the lead in danger and battle (A. L. Oppenheim, *Mesopotamian mythology II*, O-IS 17 [1948], pp. 31–2).
Gilgamesh against letting his enthusiasm run away with him and thereafter is mostly a reappearance of Enkidu's first warning (189–200). In the Standard Babylonian text, but not in Assyrian MS y, a speech of Enkidu to the elders is interpolated before the elders' reply; taken together, both speeches comprise a considerable expansion of the older text (SB II 272–99). Gilgamesh can only laugh and scorn their fears; the speech is largely lost both here (201 ff.) and in the late text (SB II 300 ff.) but survives in fragmentary form on Assyrian MS y, (obv. 16‘–22’).

When the text of the Yale tablet resumes after the lacuna that intervenes half-way down column v, Gilgamesh is being wished well for his journey (211–15). The identity of the speaker is lost in the lacuna, but comparison with the later text indicates that he is the elders' spokesman (as in Assyrian MS y, obv. 23’ and SB III 1–12). There follow the fragmentary lines that conclude column v, in which Gilgamesh prays to the sun god, Šamaš, traditionally the guardian of travellers. Gilgamesh asks his protection in the coming adventure (216–21).

The top of column vi finds Gilgamesh in tears and beseeching the favour of his personal god, who is later revealed as Lugalbanda, his defied predecessor and, in one tradition, his father. As read here, he promises to reward Lugalbanda's aid with a new temple fitted out with thrones and other splendid furnishings (229–36). Gilgamesh and Enkidu then kit themselves out with their weaponry and are ready to depart (237–44). At this point, presumably

YBC 2178

The Yale tablet (OB III) Copy: Pls. 4–6

Previous publication

1920 M. Jastrow and A.T. Clay, An Old Babylonian Version of the Gilgamesh Epic (YOR IV/3) CT Tr

1930 R. C. Thompson, The Epic of Gilgamesh, pp. 25–9 T

1992 J. Bottéro, L’épopée de Gilgamesh, pp. 84 ff., fig. 3 (rev. only) P

Text

col. i

1–9 lost

10 [x (x)] x [i]-łım? ša-[a]-bi-[j]-[iš]-[r]-ni 11 \frown [r] a ś-ak-ku-ud pa-ag-rum

12 a[mi-ni-ni] m ta-ah-di-[k] 13 a[n-ni]-a-am 14 e-p[š]-a-an

14 [x (x)] x mi-im-ma [(x) x]-a[m] ma-di-[i] 15 [š]-a-ah-li-[k]

16 iš-[a]-ši-[a]-a-[i]-šu-[u] [x (x)] 1-x-tin

17 ši-ip-ra-[š]-ša-[(a) b] 1-[a]-š-šu-[u] i-na mātin(kalam)

Translation

col. i

1–9 lost

10 ‘[... ] is gripped, my friend, (10) the body palpitates.

12 Why do you desire (13) to do this thing?

14 [... ] anything [...] (15) do you desire so much?

16 Let me [... ]

17 a feat that does not (yet) exist in the land.'
18 They kissed each other and (19) formed a friendship,
20 [.....] they discussed.
21 [.........] they sat down,
22 [.........] ...
23 [.........] ...
24 I have acquired a friend, a counsellor,
25 [the one that I kept seeing in] dreams.

Lacuna

40 [.........] friend
41 [.....] they extolled[44] [.....]
42 They gave answer (43) (to) the harlot:
44 [.....] go into the house [of the] elders.'

Lacuna

55 [.....] (36) in [your] presence.
57 a rival [.........]
58 Establish for him [.........]
59 mourners [.........]
60 The mother of [Gilgamesh] .........
61 'In [his] gate [.........]
62 which [.........]
63 In the main [street] .........
64 you [.........]
65 Bitterly [.....]
66 [Enkidu possesses] no [.....]
67 [.........]
68 [..... great] thickly.'
69 [.........]
70 [.........] Enkidu.
71 [His] eyes [brimmed with] tears,
72 his heart grew vexed and (73) he sighed heavily.
74 Enkidu's [eyes] brimmed with tears,
75 his heart [grew vexed] and (76) he sighed [heavily.]
77 [Gilgamesh] showed pity,
78 [saying] to Enkidu:
79 [Why], my [friend, did] your eyes (86) [brim with] tears,
81 your [mood turn sad, (82) (why) did you] sigh (heavily)?'

44 Or, 'they informed'.
83 Enkidu opened [his mouth],
84 saying to Gilgamesh:
85 ‘Sobs, my friend, have knotted the sinews of my neck,
87 my arms have gone limp and my strength ebbed away.’
89 Gilgamesh opened his mouth,
90 saying to Enkidu:

**col. iii**

Lacuna

97 ‘[... ] ferocious Huwawa,
98 [... let us] slay him, [his power] is no more!
100 [In the Forest] of Cedar, [where Huwawa] dwell,
102 [let us] startle him, [in his lair!]
104 Enkidu opened his mouth,
105 saying to Gilgamesh:
106 ‘I knew (him), my friend, in the uplands,
108 when I roamed here and there with the herd.
110 For sixty leagues in each direction the forest is a wilderness,
112 who is there to venture into it?
114 Huwawa, his voice is the Deluge,
116 his speech is fire and [thus] his breath is death.
118 Why do you desire to do this thing?
120 An unwinnable battle [is the ambush of Huwawa.]
117 Gilgamesh opened his mouth,
118 saying to Enkidu:
119 ‘I would climb, my friend, [the forest’s] slopes,
120 [...] [...].
121 [...] [...].
122 [...] [...].
123 The home of the [Anunnaki] gods,
124 an axe [...].
125 May you [be ...].
126 let me [be ...].’
127 Enkidu opened his mouth,
128 saying to [Gilgamesh]:
129 ‘How can we go, my friend, to the Forest of [Cedar]?
131 The one who guards it is Wēr, he is mighty, never sleeping.
133 Huwawa [was appointed by] Wēr,
134 Adad is the first, he [the second!]}
A summary of the text from the page:

In order to safeguard [the cedar,]

who is there, my friend, that can climb to the sky?

What purpose is the strength of your valour?

I will walk in front of you,

you can call to me, "Go to, do not fear!"

If I fall, I should have made my name:

(men will say) "Gilgamesh joined battle with ferocious Huwawa!"

You were born and grew up in the wild,

a lion attacked you and you experienced all.

Grown men fled from your presence,

the evening [star] even . . . you.

But (now) you speak like a weakening,

with your] feeble [talk]62 you have vexed my heart.

Let me start work63 and 150 chop down the cedar!

[A name that is eternal] I will establish for ever!

[Come,] my friend, I will betake myself to the forge,

[let] them cast [hatchets] in our presence!

They took [each other (by the hand)] and betook themselves to the forge,

(where) the craftsmen were sitting down in discussion.

Great hatchets they cast,

they cast axes of three talents each.

Great daggers they cast:

the blades were two talents each,

half a talent were the crests of their handles,

the daggers' gold mountings were half a talent each.

Gilgamesh and Enkidu had a load of ten talents each.

He bolted the seven city gates of Uruk,

he convened [the assembly] and the crowd gathered around.

[. . .] . . . in the street of Uruk-Main-Street,

Gilgamesh [sat down on] his throne.

[In the street of Uruk]-Main-Street,

the crowd was sitting before him.
THE OLDER VERSIONS OF THE EPIC

178 [Thu] Gilgameš spoke
179 [to the elders of Uruk]-Main-Street:
180 [Hear me, O elders of Uruk]-Main-Street!
181 [--------]

col. v

I will see the god of whom they speak,
whose name the lands do constantly repeat.\(^{64}\)
I will conquer him in the Forest of Cedar,
that Uruk’s offshoot is mighty \(^{186}\) I will have the land learn.
Let me start work\(^{64}\) and chop down the ceder,
a name that is eternal I will establish for ever!\(^{64}\)
The elders of Uruk-Main-Street

gave answer to Gilgameš:
‘You are young, Gilgameš, and carried away by enthusiasm,’
whatever you do, you cannot understand.
We hear of Huwawa, (that) he is strange of visage:
who is there can withstand his weapons?
For sixty [leagues in each] direction the forest is a wilderness;
who is there can venture inside it?
Huwawa, his voice is the Deluge.
his speech is fire and his breath is death.
Why do you desire to do this thing?
An unwinnable battle is the ambush of Huwawa.’
Gilgameš heard the speech of his advisers,
he looked at his friend and laughed:
‘Now, my friend, how [I am frightened]!”
Shall I fear him (so much) that I cannot [--------]?
[Shall I] not [--------]?
Lacuna. When the text resumes someone is blessing Gilgameš on his journey.

182 i-am\(^{64}\) ti-dugir\(^{64}\) it-ta-bu-um lu-mu-ur
183 it-ta-ab-bi mu-um-ba-la mu-ta-tam
184 lu-uk-sa\(^{64}\) it-ta-bu-um it-ta-bi-tam
185 ki-ma da-an-nu pe-er-ku-um it-ta-bi-tam
186 it-ta-ta-um lu-uk-sa-ma it-ta-ab-bi
187 it-ta-ta-um it-ta-ab-bi
188 it-ta-ta-ab-bi
189 it-ta-bi-tam it-ta-bi-tam
190 si-iq-ra u-te-er-ru a-na it-ta
191 se-ez-te-za ma it-ta-um ki-ma
192 it-ta-ab-bi
193 ni-it-em-me-ma u-te-za-ra u-te-za-ra
194 ma-an-nu-ab ki-ma it-ta-um da-er-ku ka-ab-ki-ru
195 a-na l sa-ti-ta kari-damma it-ma-at gudum(tir)
196 ma-an-nu-za it-ta-um da-er-ku ki-ma it-ta-um
197 lu-te-za-ra u-te-za-ra
198 lu-te-za-ra
199 ni-it-em-me-ma
200 u-te-za-ra
201 it-ta-ab-bi
202 it-ma-at gudum(tir)
203 it-ma-at gudum(tir)
204 ni-it-em-me-ma
205 i-te-za-ra

* Lit. ‘the lands keep bringing’.  
* Lit. ‘let me set my hand’.  
* Lit. ‘your heart is carrying you’.
Bring me back to the quay of [Uruk-Main-Street]

Place (your) protection [over me!]

Gilgames summoned the [ 

his instruction* [ 

'The palace [ 

Traces of 3 more lines

In [ 

Tears were streaming [down the] sides of his face:**

'[I will go,] my god, on a journey I have never made,

its [...], my god, I never knew.

Let me return] home in safety,

[let me look on] your face with happy heart!

[I will build] you the house of your desire,

on thrones [I will set you]!*

[ 

[ 

[ great [daggers].

[ 

[ 

[ 

[ were placed] into their hands.

[ 

[ 

[ 

[ ] took up the hatchets,

[ ] his quiver [242] [and the] bow of Anšan.

[He placed] his dagger in his belt,

[ ] equipped they started the journey.

'[the young men] hailed Gilgames:

'[... you (shall?) have sent back inside the city.'

The elders blessed Gilgames, [248] giving him advice for the journey:

'[Do not] rely, O Gilgames, on your strength (alone)!

Keep your eyes peeled,** and watch out for yourself!

[Let] Enkidú go before you,

he is experienced in [the] path, well travelled in the road.

[He knows] the ways into the forest,

all the tricks of Ḫuwa-wa.

'The one who went in front kept his comrade safe;

the one whose eyes were peeled** [protected] himself!'

May Šamaš permit you achieve your ambition,

may your eyes show (you) what you have talked of!

May he open for you the paths that are shut,

** Lit. 'wall of his nose'.
** Lit. 'let your eyes be gleaming'.
* Lit. 'his oracle'.
260 ḫarrānum (kaskal) li-ē-ta-sī-iq a-na ki-il-si-ka
261 ša-dā-li li-ē-ta-sī-iq a-na šepi (gur) -ka
262 mu-ši-ta-ka a-wa-at ta-ša-du-ā 263 li-il-la-ku
264 lugal-bān-da li-is-zi-is-ka 264 li-na er-ni-ti-ka
265 bi-ma še-ē-ri er-ni-ta-ka ku-us-da
266 i-na-na ša[.[[[.]]] jum-ša-va-va ša tu-ša-ma-ru
267 mi-si ši-pi-ka
268 i-na nu-ba-ti-ka hi-ri bu-ur-sam
269 lu ka-a-nu maššu (šikil) i-na na-dī-ka
270 [k]a-pi-tum me-e-a-na šišamšum (utu) ta-na-qi
271 [i l-k]a ta-ša-sa-as 265 lugal-bān-da
272 [em ki-d]u10 pišu i-pu-ša-am is-sa-qar a-na ṣuš
273 [(x x) a-ṣar ta-as-tāh-nu e-pa-šu ā-la-kam
274 [a a-p] (la-ia) šib hušt ša-ta-šu-ia-ni
275 [i-na šišim (uṣur) i-de-a-am šu-pa-as-sū
276 [u ḫarrānum (kaskal)] Ša a 265 jum-ša-va-va it-ta-la-ku
277 [. . . ] x qi-bi-ma te-er-šu-me-ti

Left edge

278 [. . . . . ] x x x ba la
279 [. . . ] a-a-t ṣu-ši-ku it-il-ia
280 [. . . . . ] i-ša-mu-nu ši-ši-im
281 [. . . . . ] um-ma-nu i-na šu-ud li-ib-bi
282 [. . . . . ] šu a-su-aš-aš-aš-aš-aš-aš-[. . . . . . ]
283 šešum (šuš) aš-te-[. . . . . . .]
284 a-liš šuš lu x [. . . . . . .]
285 ši-liš ši-šu a-i-na pa-ni-ka?
286 ši-ša-ak-ši-[i k-ka er-ni-ta-ka šišamšum (utu)] 265
287 [ušuš ušuš [n hi-ši 265 0 . . . . . . .]
288 mu-šu-še ni-x [. . . . . . .]
289 bi-ti-[i?] 263 [. . . . . . .]

Remainder, perhaps 6 lines, lost

Notes

10. In his transliteration of the opening lines of the tablet in Essays P composed, p. 31, Foster reads the end of the line as ša-ba-ri but without translating. There seem to be too many wedges present to read nger (so Tournay and Shaffer, L'opé, p. 80, fn. 1) and I have kept to the original reading of Jastrow and Clay.

11. Tournay and Shaffer read [im-ta]-aš-qi-ut (L'opé, p. 80, fn. 2). The trace at the beginning of the line precludes this, but [i] aš-qi-ut is possible. They also sustain the old reading of the following word as ša-ṣu-ram but to my eyes the antepenultimate sign is pa, not aš. As I understand it, Enkiu is describing his intense physical reaction to whatever terrifying and impossible undertaking (see l. 17) Gilgameš has proposed in the facade.

12-13. The line reappears later in this tablet, l. 113-14 and 199.

14. Tournay and Shaffer’s reading of the beginning of the line as [ni]-ša-mi]-in]-ma, ‘nous entendons’ (L'opé, p. 80, fn. 3), does not convince on orthographic and contextual grounds.
Although the idiom ana māḏī is not yet found before the Eras Epic (V 25), it is very tempting to read after minna simply annāmāḏī (Foster).

16. The first word was read lu-ū-su-ū by Foster, who left it untranslated, and the whole line as lu-ū-su-ū (ā-lam e-pil-tim), ‘le voudrais m’informer au sujet de l’entreprise’, by Tournay and Shaffer (Léopold, p. 80, fn. 4). From làšūšūm one would expect lu-ū-su-ū, however, and the sign before tim is hardly lu. Other possibilities are lu-ū-su-ū, ‘let me summon’, and lu-ū-su-ū, ‘let me fly away’, but while the next word or words are undeciphered and the syntax in conjunction with šipatum in I 17 uncertain, it is best to speculate no further.

17. The line recurs in OB Harmal 17.

20. The traces do not support the restorations [ir-ā-ta-ā-bu] (Foster, Essays Pope, p. 31) or [na-ā-tu] (Tournay and Shaffer, Léopold, p. 80, fn. 7).

24–5. These two traces of tablet are related to OB Scheyen obv. 2: Enkiūdu māḏīkām ša anāku šimūmarūta ša ša[ndur]u. However, I. 24 is squeezed in such a way that one suspects the presence of an additional word at the beginning of the line. I have restored accordingly (cf. OB Scheyen, obv. 1).

26–7. The traces of these lines do not quite coincide with the expected continuation as it appears on OB Scheyen obv. 3: Enkiūdu anā šakānu ina qaqqarram anā šarāmitum, or with any obvious variation of this.

Here one might read [al-ki-im ha-ri-im-im] with OB Scheyen obv. 4, were it not for the problem reported in the preceding note.

40. Foster’s restoration [ar-ri] (Essays Pope, p. 32, fn. 35) and Tournay and Shaffer’s [ka-ri] (Léopold, p. 81, fn. 8) are both disallowed by the trace after uš-imu.

44. At the beginning Foster restores [ir-ā-ta-ā-bu] (though room is a little short), and Tournay and Shaffer [ar-ri]-bu, ‘is entrérent’ (Léopold, p. 81, fn. 10). However, this is as likely direct speech as narrative, so [lu-ri]-bu-umu, ‘let them go in’, also comes to mind. The reading bēt šāšītu is Foster’s. CAD S, p. 10 (s.v. šaṣṣūta), offers bēt [ir-ri]-im-u, citing OB Atram-šaṣṣūta 1249, but, as Foster notes, the sign bu is clear. Any reading sa-[sa]-bēt-um is ruled out on orthographic grounds, as not being a value used by this scribe (see above, fn. 7 of this chapter).

60–6. These lines are an earlier version of SB II 165–75, from which some restorations are taken.

68. The restoration relies on SB II 176, where the subject is Enkiūdu’s shaggy hair, and on the use of the verb ṣutumnumu to describe flowing locks in SB II 65 and 107. Others have assumed Nin-su’s point to be that not only Enkiūdu’s hair was thick but that in the wild it was never cut.

77–8. The verb of I. 77 has often been read uš-ṣa-ṣa-ap-pil, following von Soden, OLZ 50 (1955), 514 (-pil in Aflah, p. 1169). However, to my eyes the last sign is not pil, nor even di, but lam, cursive as often in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 87, 137, 140, 143). The same couplet occurs in OB Scheyen, 65: Gilgamēn šīlam pānītu, ṣaṣṣuqaranna anā Enkiūdu.

86. The derivation of uš-ša-li-su is unclear. CAD identifies the form as a III/1 perf. of ṣullāpum, ‘to be tanged, crossed’, but generally one may have expected uššalāṭā. Ahi enters it under a verb alāṭum, ʾṣūm (machen unbeweglich (?)). I have translated ad hoc in the spirit of CAD and Aflah. A less likely possibility is to read uššalāṭā < šalāṭum II/1 perf., ‘to unsheath, pull out’. In the following line Enkiūdu complains of limps and general weakness and it is not out of the question that this encephalitis has affected his neck; ‘sobs, my friend, have extracted the sinews from my neck’, i.e. he cannot hold his head up any more.

98–100. The restorations proposed for these lines by Schott, ZA 42 (1934), p. 108, and followed by most translators, are too elaborate for the space available.

102. To my eyes the conventional reading [ba]-li-su-ša is not supported by the traces. As I. 116’s šapit shows, the noun šabum appears in this text in the variant form šapitum, common in OB.

105. The erased sign is the first sign of an abortive e-ni-ba-ša.

108 / 195. For bēt see the study of the construction and writing of metrological units in the distribution by M. A. Powell, ‘The adverbial suffix -ē and the morphology of multiples of ten in Akkadian’, ZA 72 (1982), pp. 89–98. As noted by Landsberger (RA 62 (1968), p. 113), the sign before dina is not igi-gēni (i.e., 10,000) but an abbreviated ligature of ša-di. The SB text has 60-tu bēt and would hardly be guilty of a revision downwards. The penultimate word has been read in several different ways: Jastrow and Clay proposed nu-ma-at, which Langdon connected nu-ma-at with ‘Arabic nāw’ (JARAS 1929, p. 346). Thompson read bat-ba-at u bābattāb, though this word is not found outside Assyria. Then Landsberger proposed til-ma-at, ‘is unbound’ (loc. cit.), which he derived from the root ʿālam, supposing an exceptional metathesis tilmāt < ʾālamāt. In support of this decipherment he cited ni-ma-at in SB II 293, which he read as ʾai-ma-at (‘Überlieferungsfehler für ʾilmāt oder Phural von taballtāt’). However, now that the SB word is securely deciphered as rimma, after the parallels elsewhere in SB II (223 and 280), and now that Assyrian MS ša 13 supplies another word again (šandušu), the reading til-ma-at has lost all foundation and looks very implausible on orthographic and lexical grounds (see already C. Wicke, RIA IV, p. 533). The way out of the difficulty is to accept that the OB word is not related to its later counterparts and to assume that later editors, to whom nu-ma-at was obscure, replaced it and otherwise altered the line—in SB II by interpolating šimūmarūta—to produce a satisfactory meaning. Schott’s original comment that nu-ma-at must be a stative governed by šullum holds good (ZA 42, p. 108), and the only possible verb in our present knowledge of Akkadian is nāwum. Though often translated as ‘to lie in ruins, to be laid waste’, the sense of this verb seems to be as much to do with a lack of human presence as to do with ruined buildings (cf. the cognate noun nāwum, which refers to the uninhabited regions beyond the arable land, the great tracts of largely empty country where sheep were pastured). The absence of human occupation is a conception which suits every occurrence and exactly fits the inaccessible and unvisited Cedar Forest (cf. von Soden, ‘ligt unverbügbar’, Reclam 9). Consequently I take the verb to mean ‘to be (come) a desolation, wilderness’. The substantive of the II/1 adjective will be an elative of the simple stem. The fact that we have nemūmāt rather than nemūt is no objection to the light in the existence in good OB contexts of comparable attestations of the cognate noun (MSL XII, p. 158, OB Lu 4 263: na-me-e III, p. 239, Kugal I ii 62: na-me-[u]-i, late OB). The three couples that begin with this line are repeated as II 195–200.

109 / 196. The verb uššamūdā is the standard verb for entering in Gilgamesh, even when the forest in question is known to be situated, like the Cedar Forest, on uplands (OB Ishchali 37: ʿārāmmā ʿištirīgīlim, SB II 224 // 281 // 295: marmu la arrada ana qitūla, II 229 // 296: ʾārid qitūla). Neither dictionary accords J. V. Kinnear Wilson’s bold contention that uššamad can refer to upward motion as well as downward (in Garelli, Gilg., p. 106, fn. 1).

110–12 // 197–8. This couplet is taken over unchanged into the late text (SB II 221–2 // 278–9 // 291–2). The second line also appears in OB Nippur 14 // rev. 3, describing an Anzū-bird, and, with a minor alteration, in Assyrian MS š 12 // obv. 12. The wording is reminiscent of the description of Hūwawa in the Sumerian tale:

ur.sag su.zu.ni zu ūšumgal.la.kam
igi.ni igi pirig.gā.kam
GIS.gan.la iga, du, du, dam
ṣag.ki, ni giš.gi bit.šu. a łu nu mu ma.še.tešu.e dam
The warrior’s teeth are the teeth of a dragon, his eye is the eye of a lion, his breastbone is a surging flood-wave, his forehead is (fire) that consumes a reed-bed: no man is to go near him!

In ll. 110–117 we note the construction of the phrase 

In the next ll. 118–120, there is a repetition of the phrase 

In our recension of the text, this repetition is not found. However, in the older versions of the epic, this phrase is used to reinforce the idea of the warrior’s power and strength.

The text ends with a reference to the warrior’s journey, symbolizing his journey through the challenges of life.
157. Restored after SB II 233 and V 101. I take the expression plim rāmanī to be an idiom for lack of boldness. It can be rendered more literally, as by Tourney and Shaffer: ‘ta bouche marmonne’. 

158–60. Restored from the parallel couplet, ll. 187–8. In l. 160 the verb lānutsūm is 1/2 of permanence (AHw, p. 1137) but the force of the ventive is less certain; it is usually rendered as 1st sg. dative, e.g. ‘for myself’, but this is not a way of expressing the reflexive in conventional grammar. Instead the affix may have been added for metrical reasons, to avoid ending the line with the dactyl lānutsūm.

161. The beginning of the line is restored after SB II 241. At the end and in l. 163 the verb remains a curiosity, translated ad hoc (see AHw, s.v. måhāth and p. 1572). Tourney and Shaffer prefer to emend to hu-si-ka, ‘je veux l’assigner’ (Dépotée, p. 86, fn. 55), but the dactyl lānutsūm is unwelcome from a metrical point of view.

162. pa-h is restored in the light of l. 165 (so first Ungnad, ZA 34 (1922), p. 19).

163. The restoration follows Schott, ZA 42, p. 109.

165–9. This passage is saved from monotony by three occasions on which a noun and its attribute are separated by the predicate. For this literary effect see Ch. 9, the section on Some features of language and style, sub (vii).

166. The distributive form bi-i < bitum is reconstituted by analogy with distributive amā-m (wrt. am-ma-a) < ammanum; see Powell, ZA 72, p. 91.

169. A šippum is typically a tapering projection like a horn or a comet’s tail (see CADS, s.v.). Here the word occurs in a line that falls between those describing the daggers’ blades and pommels and are qualified as being ‘of the blades’ sides’. The reference can only be to a projecting crossguard that keep the user’s hand from slipping on to the blade (so already Labat: ‘crête de leur garde’). Good examples of blades furnished with such projections are the famous gold daggers from the royal cemetery at Ur. The curved guard projects out from the blade on either side in the manner of two horns or crests (photographs: Woolley, UE II, pls. 155, 157).

170. A similarly composite dagger, with a blade of hard metal and ḫn-xa of gold, is reported by Ašurbanipal: pāzargīn pārazīlītu (ann. bar) ša-bī ša-lā ša-an-ta-bu-ša-kā (ki. ša-gi)., ‘an iron dagger (worn in) the belt, whose mountings are gold’ (V R 2 II 12, ed. Streck, 41b, p. 14). The word ḫn-xa is conventionally understood as a mounting for decorative inlay. In a dagger ḫna are most easily imagined as forming the main component of the hilt’s pommel, since soft metal and decoration are most appropriate to this part of a weapon.

171. For the ten talents of battle gear see also OB Ishchali 37: ‘bitum la eker bitas tila.

174. As noted earlier, this obscure line has already been encountered in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 27–8).

178–80. Restorations of ll. 179–89 follow Heidel and others. The sign before hu in l. 178 is more like le than ab but there is very little difference between. Though in the late text Gilgameš addresses at this point the young men of Uruk, not the elders (SB II 260–1), it is the elders that will answer here (see l. 189), so bitum is preferred in ll. 179–80 to ežidum. The imperative šīmar₂ni₃ku is restored after the parallels SB II 240 and VIII 42–3.

182. A reference to Huwasu is needed where the tablet has ḫu. The solution adopted here, that the sign gin is superfluous and sam is to be read as a logogram but not a determinative, was proposed by von Soden, ZA 71 (1981), p. 183, v 1. Alternatively the two signs may be a straightforward error that the scribe has failed to erase. Others have taken it as self-reference: ‘I, Gilgameš’ (Heidel, etc.). Such a usage would be exceptional.

183–200. This passage is extant in much reduced form in MB Bog, Fragment d, where iš-ša-na-am-ba-lu confirms the reading ittunamātal (already coll. F. J. Stephens, Or 55 (1956), p. 273, fn. 1) against Clay’s ittunamātal and proves that von Soden was right to move his support from the one to the other (ZA 53 (1959), p. 214 contra OLZ 50 (1955), 514).

187. That the orthography lu-ak-si-ma stands for the ventive luku-naim, not for lu-kumma (as transcribed by von Soden, ZA 71, p. 183, v 6), is shown by the fuller spelling [lu-ak]-sì-ma-ma in the parallel (l. 159).

191. The use of a masc. 2nd sg. stative in -dī with reference to Gilgameš has probably already occurred in OB II 64, abādkī. It is also found in the late version of this line (SB II 289), though not in Assyrian MS y, ov. 9, which has šēkētā. According to von Soden the usage, normal in Old Assyrian, is ‘a dist. archaisch in Old Babylonian’ (GAGS 6, c. 1). Elsewhere in literary OB one finds, with reference to Šamaš, nā-su-asi (YOS XI 23, 10: divination prayer); the form occurs also in MB: G. Frame, RIMB 2, p. 18, 8: dā-ka-a-ti, of Marduk (Nbk 1, NA transcript). The doublet parātiša: parsuša in the stative conjugation exactly matches the masc. 2nd sg. of the accusative independent pronoun, which in Old Babylonian can be kātī as well as kātu.

195–200. For these three couplets see above, on ll. 108–16.

204–6. The Assyrian MS y gives us an idea what to expect in this broken passage (18'): apalāmeša ša alakku ana marṣāt̄u, iltu [ . . . .].

211–12. The subject is no doubt Šamaš, who is paired with Gilgameš’s personal god (iiššu) in other such prayers (cf. ll. 257–64, 270–1, 285–6).


217. I take this line as narrative, not as direct speech, because the vocative, which in Gilgameš consistently falls in the first line of a speech, does not appear until l. 218.

219. The meaning of sašitum + ventive is here to come through an experience unharmed, as in CH 52 (river ordeal).

221. Other restorations are possible, e.g. e-li or a-na re-li-ia.

223. This fragmentary passage could be the equivalent of SB III 207 ff., in which Gilgameš gives instructions for the orderly running of the city in his absence. Most have interpreted the episode as a whole (ll. 216 ff.) as Gilgameš praying to Šamaš for an oracle, which, when given (l. 223: usama), is taken to be of evil portent, in view of Gilgameš’s anxious state of mind in ll. 229 ff. Such an analysis remains possible.

229. The line is restored from the parallel elit dār ap̄ašuša ilakku dumāšu in later Gilgameš (SB XI 139 and 309) and also in Nergal and Ereshkigal, where the tears are shed by the eponymous Queen of the Netherworld (SUT 28 iv 52 // Hunger, Uruk I i 7a). It does not belong to the common repertoire of stock lines. The phrase dār ap̄ašuša, lit. ‘the wall of the nose’, otherwise occurs only in SB XI 137 and the lexical list Šumma (MSL IX, p. 68, B 15: bad: kir-ma = du-ur-ap-pi-ia).

300. The presence of ši, surely vocative singular, makes it difficult to accept Dalley’s very different understanding of the damaged lines that follow, which supposed them addressed in frustration to Enikedu (Myths, p. 146, from 3 (1991), p. 31).


309. Whether the traces do not appear to allow [lu-ak]-sì-sha. Kamminga’s restoration, Akkadica 36, p. 19, is ruled out on the basis of space.

329. Elsewhere in literary OB the terminative gáltu-lum would be spelled gátu-ti-lu-ma (e.g. F. Thureau-Dangin, RA 24 (1925), p. 170, 14: gátu-ti-lu-ma; G. Gronenberg, RA 75 (1981), p. 110, 26: gátu-ti-lu-ma, 127, viii: gátu-ti-lu-ma; cf. ead., AO 26 (1978–9), pp. 24–6, for attestations of terminative+pron. suffixes on other words. Note that example B l iš tu-ī-ni-ta is a misprint for tu-ī-ni-šu-ša. The present orthography is exactly that which was current in the Sargonic period (cf.
241. Perhaps, with *Ahlu*, p. 1591, [it-[a]-ri, 'he lifted up'. Anlans is of course the well-known Elamite city located at Tall-i-Malayan (see E. Reiner, 'The location of Anlans', *RA* 67 (1973), pp. 57–62; and, in general, W. M. Sumner, 'Tall-i-Malayan', *AL* VII, pp. 306–20). What was special about bows in the Elamite style is unknown.

242. The beginning of the line has provoked different solutions: some restore (am-ma)a-na (following von Soden, *ZAS* 53, p. 214), others (ma aššim following von Soden, *Reclam*, p. 37; '[*aššim*] ...' on the Straße'). To my eyes neither fits the traces, and I prefer a solution which provides a claxon to the preparations (cf. Westenholz and Westenholz, p. 156, 185: 'da de var parate').

243. In the absence of a preposition before Gilgames, *u-qa-na-[u] is hardly gurrunum, 'to approach' (Penguin). Despite the present tense because, as a serbûm diacrit., it introduces speech.

244. Von Soden took the verb as II2 preterite, restored (na) mi-a-ši, and translated 'Wann wirst du zurückgebracht in die Stadt?' but with the comment 'es ist nicht klar... was damit gemeint wird' (*ZAS* 53, p. 214; see similarly Reclam*4 and note Reclam*5: 'bring zurück zur Stadt'). Others have translated similarly (Dulley, Hecker), or as if the verb was a simple I1 present, either as a question (Heidel, Labab, Bonéro, and, restoring (im-ma)-ti, Tournay and Shaffer, p. 95, fn. 98), a wish (Speiser) or a prediction (Petinato). The verb is unsuited to a question relating to Gilgames's anticipated return—unless it is future perfect, i.e. II1 transitive—and notably lacks the ventive ending that would be expected if it referred to the hero's homecoming. Apart from the problems raised by *tutur*, the first word is also open to doubt: Clay's copy did not suggest that the broken sign could be nyan and to my eyes it is more like ne. Rather than an interrogative, the broken word might be the object of the transitive *tutur*.

249–71. The elders' speech occurs in the late text in slightly different form (SB III 1–12 // 225–36).

252. The tablet has a-me-e-re, as already copied by Thompson and Clay (unpublished). The reading a-ue-er put forward by Jastrow and Clay (YOR IV/3, p. 94) is presumably a misprint or uncorrected error, correctly restored by Thompson, Gilg., and revived by D. O. Edzard, *Acta Sum* 16 (1994a), p. 2.

254. The reading likubu goes back to von Soden, *OLZ* 50 (1955), 514, though the penultimate sign turns out to be qa, rather than qi (as also in pa-as-na-aši, 1. 156).

255–6. The couplet is remarkable for the tense of its verbs. In l. 256 there is hardly room to restore l-[na]-a-re and *ušilim* in l. 255 is certainly preterite. Some have ignored the tense, while others have seen an allusion to some otherwise unknown episode in which Enkidu saved a companion earlier in his career. The key, however, is the phenomenon recently discussed by W. R. Mayer, 'Das „gnomische Präteritum“ im literarischen Akkadischen', *OR* 61 (1992), pp. 373–99. Mayer observed that in texts such as the *Samaš Hymn* and Marduk Prayer No. 2 the preterite tense is found alongside the present and stative in verbs that refer to the typical: 'Bei Aussagen über typische Situationen, Geschehnisse, Handlungen und Verhaltensweisen finden wir hier nähmlich nebeneinander den Stative, das Präsens—and das Präteritum, letzteres manchmal sogar in Parallelismus mit einem Präsens' (p. 393). The parallelism he notes is exactly that occurring between *ušešeb* and *tigur* in the late version of this couplet (SB III 4–5: šik matra tappa ušešeb ša pāšu ādāt išišu tigur, cf. SB III 218–19). Mayer expected to find the 'gnomische Präteritum' in Akkadian proverbs and everyday expressions but noted just one example. I am inclined to think that this couplet contains two more (Kovacs took the same view of the late equivalent of the couplet). Other apparent proverbs saying in SB *Gilgames* using the 'gnomische Präteritum' are to be found in SB VII 75–8: *ana bāri [... lāšu našitu [... *inšu-nis] šabbi.l 75–6: *[la] šabbi lāšu šabbišu [... ] šabbi lāšu šabbišu; X 318 var: šabbi šabbišu šabbišu (kurbā) ina māti.

261. The spelling *ša-[li]-a* attests to a 'hypercorrect' uncontracted form of *šāšum*, a false archaism that also occurs in OB Escheyen, 5. The word for 'mountain' (originally *šāšum*) is given in OAkk and some OB texts as *šāšamu*; the homophonous word *šāšum*, 'east wind', however, in uncontracted form appears as *šāšum* in Akkadian of the third millennium (Gebl, *MAD III*, pp. 264–5) and as a loanword in OB Sumerian (E. Gordon, *JOS* 77 (1957), p. 71, 4, *šašu-ti-im*).

263–4. These lines present an instance—exceptional for the boundary between two poetic lines falling in the middle of a line of tablet. With regard to *bīzaš-ka*, in the idiom 'to aid' *inšum* is normal conformed with the dative suffix, not the accusative (as pointed out by Hecker, TUTIII, p. 658).

265. The opinion of Oppenheim, that *kūnā šāšum* is simply a way of saying 'quickly' (A. L. Oppenheim, *OR* 17 (1948), p. 33, fn. 2; cf. id., *JOS* 61 (1941), p. 269, fn. 103), must be modified in the light of the evidence of the OB love incantations from Isin, which reveal that *erintam kūnā šāšum kāšānum* is a stock image: *a-dī hi-ma ṣe-ē-ri-im e-eq-qā-um er-ni-[l]-tī, 'until, like a child, I obtain my own way' (C. Wulcke, *ZAS* 75 (1955), p. 204, 111); cf. also *am-mi-ni hi-ma ṣe-e-ri-im la-di-im er-ni-ta-ša le-am-ul-ē, 'why, like a tiny child, is your (insistence on getting) what you want so annoying?' (ibid., p. 200, 54). In Wulcke's words, 'es ist vielmehr das Bild des harmlos entgegen jeder Vernunft auf der Erfüllung seiner Wünsche bestehenden Kindes gemeint' (ibid., p. 207).

266–7. The 'river of Huwawa' is otherwise unknown and does not quite ring true as the object of Gilgames's strivings: his stated ambitions are to defeat Huwawa by force of arms and to fell the cedars under his protection. One thus has some sympathy for those who prefer *nārum*, 'to slay', to *nārum*, 'river', but Speiser's rendering, 'after the slaying of Huwawa', mistranslates *inā nārum*, which as an infinitive construction would mean 'while slaying, by slaying'. As the text stands this would be a curious way of inciting Gilgames to stand amidst in Huwawa's blood and accordingly I have stayed with 'river'. But it may be that we are misled by a defective text, for l. 267 *mīt š璞* is unusually short for a poetic line.

271. For Lugalbanda as the personal god (*šum* of *Gilgames* in the Akkadian epic, see explicitly OB Nippur, OB Harsal 15–16 and SB VI 165. 273. Von Soden read *ki[-ma* ta-as]-tan-nu < taššum] II/2, 'so, wie du gekämpft hast' (*ZAS* 53, p. 215) and Speiser: 'Since contend thou wilt', and this decipherment has found its way into his syllabary as a parade example of OB use of the value *tan* (von Soden and Röllig, *Syllabare*, p. 33, also *Hau*, p. 1162; CAD *Š* I, p. 369). However, such a reading is very doubtful. First, the traces do not allow *ka*-ma, Second, the third sign of the verb is not certainly *an*; there is no example of the sylabic value *tan* elsewhere in the Pennsylvania tablet (the only time the syllable is written is spelled *ta-ša-šum*; OB II 204), but when the *kā* sign is used, on occasion for *šum* (gurut 2147, 193, 283), it does not match the sign in question here, which has too many vertical wedges to be read so. Instead it compares favourably with the certain *tāk* in l. 188. But there remains a problem of meaning: given that *tāššuma* should be transitive, whether *U* or *I*, what is its object? With some hesitation I assume that the phrase is an abbreviation of the idiom *alā pārīka tāššuma*.


280. The restoration of Tournay and Shaffer, *lu-pu-ul ša *ma-*ku-nu-lī-im* (p. 97, fn. 116), does not agree with the traces.
several columns. The presence of decimal markers—marginal wedges to mark every tenth line—at obs. 1 5' and rev. 4' indicates that this was a library tablet. The left edge of the tablet is crudely but deliberately scored with three parallel channels that call to mind the fingernail marks found in place of seal impressions on the edges of deeds, contracts and other legal documents as evidence of an individual’s compliance with the transaction (supru). The purpose of the marks on the present fragment cannot be the same and they remain without explanation.

The subject matter of the surviving text of column i is the misery of Enkidu and the solicitude that this awakes in Gilgamesh, an episode better known from the Yale tablet, which provides a close parallel (OB III 79–90), and also preserved, somewhat differently, in the late text (SB II 186–93). What remains of the reverse seems to deal with a conversation of Enkidu and Gilgamesh; the wording at first calls to mind lines of column iii of the Yale tablet (OB III 115–18). However, if these lines were to represent that passage and if the text missing between the obverse and reverse of the Philadelphia fragment occupied roughly the same number of lines as are used by the Yale tablet to tell the same story, only a little over twenty lines would missing between our two fragments of text. Given that the tablet was multi-columned, such a lacuna would be much too short: the text on the left-hand column of the reverse should occur at a point much later in the story. A more likely location is the episode of the elders’ warning and Gilgamesh’s subsequent speech to Enkidu, an episode that occupies the middle column of v on the Yale tablet (OB III 200 f.), or even some later conversation of Gilgamesh and Enkidu on the way to the Cedar Forest.

Though some lines of UM 29-13-570 are shared with the better-preserved Yale tablet, it is far from being a duplicate of that text. Quite apart from the lack of complete agreement between the two texts, the Philadelphia fragment certainly began at a point a little later in the story than the Yale tablet. Nevertheless, to judge from the extant fragments of text it can be seen as witness to an edition of the epic very similar to that represented by the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets.

### Text

**col. i**

1' i-na-1[a][ka-im-la-a-di-im-tam]

2' il-mi-[n li-{ib}-ba-ka] 3'[l]-ip-x [ . . . ]

3' en-ki-3 di-a1[a]-[na] (a-3)-im 9' i-sa-qi-ar-am [a-a 4]ni]

6' ta-bi-a-tum [l-bi u-a-ta-li-pa-ni-ni?]

7' i-na bi-bi-i[m . . . ] 9' e-mu-q[i [i-ni-i[i]

9' i-na-a-im [l-a-a][di-im-tam]

---

**Translation**

0' "[Why, my friend, (!) did your] eyes [brim with tears,]"

2' [your heart] grow vexed? [Let [] . . . !"

4' Enkidu said to [him.] [75] to [Gilgamesh]

6' ‘Sobs, my [friend, have knotted my being,]"

7' in the heart [ . . . ] [9] my strength [ebbed away,]"

9' My eyes brimmed [with tears,]"
Notes

i 3'. This apparent preface, perhaps the counterpart of the vettive in l. 11', replaces the Yale tablet's maršī(?) tāšānī (OB III 82; cf. 73 // 76).
i 4'. The Yale tablet has at this point the more common formulation Enkidu pišu ippasamma (OB III 83).
i 6'. At this line it is tempting to restore this line, like ll. 1'-2' and 5', verbatim from the Yale tablet (OB III 85-6); tabbi'īnum toršu-ša-ša-ša ddādiriya. However, space is short and I have assumed that a more economical wording was used.
i 7'. Here again, the tablet offers wording different from the Yale tablet, for which this line has abāba šumāma enmaqq ināī (OB III 87-8).
i 9-11'. This couplet, which repeats ll. 1'-3' in the first person, is absent from the Yale tablet. With regard to the apparent vettive in l. 11', the spelling a-wa for the particle ay- and vowel (i.e., a-a-aw, a-ī, a-i) is common at OB Mari (see CAD A/1, p. 218) and later, on another, in the West (Amarna and Ugarit). In the OB period it also occurs on the Diyala, in the spelling a-yi-aw-i for ay īgū (Greengus, Iraqkkali no. 18; 15; see W. Sommerfeld, Or xx 53 (1984), p. 446). It is perhaps another example of the scribal practices of Enuanna that more and more are seen to influence the writing and language of Mari as well as the Diyala towns (see below), the introduction to the Harman tablets, fn. 102). The value y(i)/wa) is exceptional in Babylonia proper. As noted in the standard modern syllogary (von Soden and Röllig, Syllahar, p. 43; cf. p. 14*), it is found there on the seal of one III-ay-ēnīl in an OB letter (CT 43 48, ed. AB 46 1, 3: li-ia-ye(e)·e-em-e-nī-ī; 7 seal: li-ia-aw-e-e-nī-ī). This letter displays orthography typical of north Babylonia (e.g., 1 9: li-hu-su e-pē-ša-ša), but it cannot be ruled out that the man who made the seal was trained in Enuanna-style writing. With regard to the present tablet, the conclusion is that, if the restoration of 11' is correct (and it may not be), the fragment is a northern intruder in the Nippur corpus. Since the UM collections contain purchased pieces as well as excavated tablets, one cannot determine whether such an intrusion took place in antiquity or in modern times.
i 12'-13'. The standard formula is restored here because it occurs at exactly this point in the Yale tablet (OB III 89-90). However, as well as this formulation in a couplet (also rev. 6'-7'), the Philadelphia fragment also uses the alternative formulation in a single poetic line, PN₁ anu labim issaqqarru anu PN₂ (i 4'-5'), and the present lines could be restored thus also.

rev. 4'-5'. These two lines of tablet are taken as constituting a single line of poetry on the grounds that they probably represent a variation on the Yale tablet's qabāl lā mahār šapat ḫarātum (OB III 115-16 // 200).

TWO TABLETS NOW IN NORWAY (OB SCHØYEN)

Two Old Babylonian tablets of the Gilgamesh epic are housed in the Schøyen Collection in Norway. Their ancient provenance is not known. Beyond the fact that both the Schøyen pieces are Old Babylonian, they are in no sense similar and probably derive from different archaeological contexts. Their publication for the first time in this volume represents a very significant addition to our knowledge of the Old Babylonian epic, and produces at the same time a real improvement in our understanding of related episodes of the later versions.

OB Schøyen

The smaller of the two pieces in the Schøyen collection is a fragment from near the top edge of a tablet inscribed with a single column of text. To judge from the curvature of the surfaces of the surviving fragment, about five-sixths of the tablet are missing, perhaps more. When complete the tablet may well have contained as many as sixty lines of text on each side.

The tablet is the work of a competent scribe, being very professionally executed. Each line is carefully ruled and on several lines these rulings have been extended on to the right edge with extra horizontal wedges. The tablet was inscribed in extremely neat and regular handwriting. No truly diagnostic orthographies are present to characterize the spelling as distinctively south Babylonian or north Babylonian. Mimation is usually expressed, but not
always. There is a single example of a consonant geminated for orthographic rather than phonetic reasons.

The text is Old Babylonian poetry of the unadorned kind usual in the Akkadian Gilgamesh. The only evidence of higher style is the use of final -a on one of the two nouns present in the construct state. Coupletts are employed. A noteworthy feature is a heavier than normal incidence of independent pronouns, but in such a small sample of text it is not safe to draw definite conclusions as to whether this has any significance. The use of such pronouns makes some lines longer than those usually employed in Old Babylonian Gilgamesh. It may be that these are to be divided in two and analysed each as a couplet (obv. 1', 2', 5', 6').

The text preserved on the obverse is almost entirely new, but allows the identification of a similar passage in the damaged section that intervenes in the middle of column i of the Old Babylonian Yale tablet (OB III). Towards the bottom of the reverse of OB Schøyen, are three lines that occur later in the Yale tablet, in the fourth column, early in Gilgamesh and Enkidu's debate about the Cedar Forest, and that are retained at the same point in the story in the Standard Babylonian version of the epic (SB II). Thus the two scraps of text won from this new fragment are fixed in relation to the epic as a whole as falling immediately after Gilgamesh and Enkidu become friends, in the fragmentary episodes that lead up to the preparations for the expedition to the Cedar Forest. The gap between the two passages represented by the obverse and reverse of this new fragment occupies 125 lines of the parallel Yale tablet (OB III 26-150). However, there many lines of poetry are written on two lines of tablet—at least seventeen in the part of the tablet at issue—so that the gap reduces to 108 lines at most. This figure tallies with the estimate noted above that the obverse and reverse of Schøyen, originally contained about 120 lines. It therefore appears that the text of the tablet represented by the new fragment would have been similar to that known for many years on the Yale tablet. It is not, therefore, an ad hoc composition but witness to an established tradition.

The text of the obverse begins with someone acknowledging Enkidu as the counsellor he had already often seen (obv. 1'-2'). Clearly this is Gilgamesh speaking, for the allusion is to the well-known dreams that presaged Enkidu's coming and to his mother's explanation of them as foretelling that he would find a friend to counsel him. The same line can be restored in the first column of the Old Babylonian Yale tablet (OB III 24-5), though it seems that what follows was not identically worded. In the following lines of OB Schøyen, which can be identified as two couplets, Enkidu addresses the prostitute, promising to reward her for bringing him into Uruk and providing him with a handsome companion (3'-6'). He refers to Gilgamesh, of course, who became the friend he longed for shortly after they ended their fight. Two broken lines follow, evidently a couplet of narrative describing action in the third person (7'-8'). Presumably these lines and the missing continuation realize Enkidu's intention by describing what happened to the prostitute after her role in the plot was finished. This is compatible with the text of the Yale tablet, for when that source resumes near the bottom of column i it presents narrative in which a plural subject responds to something the prostitute has said.

The first line of the reverse of OB Schøyen, is unintelligible but probably begins with a volunatary verb and is thus direct speech (rev. 1'). The speech continues with a command (2') and then the three lines that are known from other versions (3'-5'). These lines come from a conversation between Gilgamesh and Enkidu in which Gilgamesh, dismayed by Enkidu's opposition to the proposed expedition against Huwawa, reminds his friend of his upbringing in the wild, when he put to flight lions and huntsmen alike.

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**Text**

obv.


2' [en-ki-du10 ma-ki-ka-am a-na-ku la a-ta-ma-ru1 lu1-[na lu-na-tim] // OB III 24-5

3' en-ki-du10 a-na ka-ši-im ia-za-qa-qa-am a-na ka-ri-1[m-tim]

4' al-ki-im ka-ri-im-um lu-da-mi-qam ka-a3[-i-in]

5' aš-sum te-ar-di-im ia-ti a-na li-ib-bi uruk4' ri-bi2:1' us1 m[a-tim]

---

**Translation**

obv.

Only a few lines are missing from the beginning of the tablet.

1' 'I have acquired a friend, the counsellor [that I kept] seeing [in dreams],

2' Enkidu, the counsellor that I keep seeing [in dreams]!'

3' Enkidu said to her, to the harlot:

4' 'Come, O harlot, let me do for you a favour,

5' because you led me here, into Uruk-Main-Street-of-the-[Land.]
6' because you showed me a fine companion, (showed) me a friend.
7’ [ . . . ] of Uruk-Main-Street,
8’ [ . . . ] . . . . be (or she) entered.

Long gap

rev.

1’ [ . . . ] x[x] [ . . . ]
2’ as-ta mu-ba-dum ia-[i]-im . . . x x a r[u] x x
3’ lugal-ma-ur-dum-ma tu[r-bi-a-um] i-ma prim[edim]
5’ [ . . . ] lugal-ur-dum tu-bi-ta ma [ . . . ] m[i]-l[a]

// OB III 131 // SB II 237
// OB III 132 // SB II 238
// OB III 153 // SB II 239

Remaining few lines lost

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Fig. 3. The tablet OB Schøyen, obverse (left) and reverse (right). SC 2652/5, height 3.6 cm, breadth 7.1 cm, thickness 2.8 cm.

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Fig. 3. Continued
Notes

obv. 1'–2'. These lines are related to the words spoken by Gilgamesh in the late version when Nunsun explains to him the significance of his dreams (SB I 296–7): šarī māliku anāku ursu1 / šarī māliku anāku. As restored here the first fully preserved line lacks a main verb. In the parallel, however, which is written over two lines on the Yale tablet, there is room for one at the beginning of the line (OB III 24). My reading of the preceding line of this fragment is provisional, but solves the problem by restoring the text to yield a typical strophe, in which the sequence of units is repeated with one replaced by a proper noun (cf. similar patterns in Hecker, Untersuchungen, pp. 146–50). The result is better a quartain than a couplet:

arī išram mālikum anāku       a + b + c + d
ša diimaginīta ina sinātim B
Enkidū mālikum anāku e + c + d
ša diimaginīta ina sinātim B

obv. 5'. Uruk is commonly used as rūṭīm in Old Babylonian Gilgamesh, but this line uses a longer form of the epithet. In Gilgamesh the phrase rūṭīs mātim also occurs (without Uruk) in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 214), where it is the scene of Enkidu's first encounter with Gilgamesh.

OB Schøyen2

The second piece of Old Babylonian Gilgamesh in the Schøyen Collection is a complete tablet, a great rarity for the second-millennium epic. The text is inscribed in a single column on each side and on the bottom edge, yielding a total of 84 lines. The handwriting is elegant, and the lines uneven and tightly packed, without rulings; on both counts the document resembles a poorly executed private letter or other inscription of an impermanent nature. Orthographic mistakes are not unknown (I, 7: šu-tum for pulašu, 26: šu-tu for šu-tu). Nevertheless, the poetry is well constructed. One line of tablet usually holds one line of poetry, but on at least a few occasions a couplet, so that the 84 lines of tablet yield a minimum of 94 poetic lines. On five occasions the second line of such a couplet is the standard formula izzaqqaramma ana PN, which is shorter than the conventional line and can be viewed as a half-line. The language is once again plain; the only marks of elevated style are two supfluos enclitic vowels (sunūtam, l. 1, elsewhere in this tablet ūmatum, etc.; mušiytum, also l. 1, for mušītu). An instance of the terminative ending (la’naš, l. 41), and a possible example of construct state in -a (laqūm lātīn, l. 12); this latter might alternatively be construed as a locative -u(m). The demonstrative pronoun is contracted (ṣāti, ll. 71, 73).

The spelling conventions remain the same throughout the tablet. The names of Enkidu and Ḥuwawa are abbreviated, respectively to ša-ṣu and ša-ṣu-ra. The obvious explanation is that these names are shortened by analogy with the common ša-ṣu = Gilgamesh. Mimation is present in all but a few instances.28 Double consonants are almost always so written.29 The treatment of sibilants and other diagnostic consonants and syllables does not adhere to the conventions of northern or southern Babylonian, as defined by Goetzke and others,30 but is mixed. The following features are noteworthy:

ša-ka-li-ip (l. 1), ši-šu-am-[ni] (6) are 'northern'; [na-al] ši-šu-im (63) is 'southern'; is-za-aq-qa-ra-am-ma or is-ša-aq-qa-ra-am-ma (13, 44, 65, 68, 77) is a special case and not diagnostic (see fn. 133 below)

ša written ši: še-e-r (27), ki-im-qi-li (29), er-še-tum (34), ši-ši (35), but once zi: ši-ša-zi (42)

ša written zu: ša-ta-šu-zi (54)

ša written ša: ša-ga-li-li-si-si (2, 31), ša-ši-ša-si (29), im-qi-us-si (30) (all < ši + ši) are not diagnostic but ša-si < ši-si (34) is 'southern'

ša written ša: ša-ta-na-ap-la-as (28) is 'northern'

ša written ša: ša-na-pi-ti (38) is 'Mari' or third millennium

ša written ša: ša-ta-pi-ši (35), ša-ta-pi-ti (81) are 'southern'; written ša: ša-na-pi-ti (36) is 'northern'

ša written ša: ša-qa-qa-am-ma (6), im-qi-us-si (30), im-za-aq-qa-tu (41), ša-ši-ši (63, 66, 75), 'southern'

ša written ša: ša-šu-na (39), 'southern'

Another Old Babylonian Gilgamesh tablet that offers mixed orthography is one of the tablets now in Baghdad (OB IM). Further study is needed on Old Babylonian regional orthography; it may be that by such means light will eventually be shed on the provenance or background of these and other such tablets.

The text of OB Schøyen relates the first two of Gilgamesh's dreams on the expedition to the Cedar Forest and Enkidu's subsequent explanation of them. It therefore fills the gap that existed in our knowledge of the Old Babylonian epic between the end of the Yale tablet, where the heroes begin their journey to the forest, and other Old Babylonian tablets from Tell Harmal and Nippur, which also relate dreams from the sequence. At the same time it provides a means of restoring fragmentary parts of a Middle Babylonian version from Anatolia (MB Boğ) and Tablet IV of the Standard Babylonian version. A dramatic new detail that emerges from the text is that the goal of Gilgamesh and Ḥuwawa's journey is in this edition the 'land of Ebla' (māt ḫiba, written in l. 26 with crisis, ma-ši-ši-la). The late text's version of the same line has instead šadī Labānu, 'Mount Lebanon', and this well-known range is already associated with Ḥuwawa and the Cedar Forest in the Old Babylonian tablet from Nīrubum (OB Ishchali 31). Evidently the line of OB Schøyen reflects a time when a mountain source of cedar lay within the territory of Ebla. This is a detail of geography that

28 There are only 3 genuine exceptions: ub-šu-tu (1, if correctly restored), ša-ta-na-am (3), ša-ta-shu (21), as-ma (35, 39), im-qi-us-si (30), am-ši-ni (66); also ša-šu-na (l. 13) if locative.

29 ub-šu-tu (1, if correctly restored), ša-ta-na-am (3), ša-ta-shu (21), as-ma (35, 39), im-qi-us-si (30), am-ši-ni (66); also ša-šu-na (l. 13) if locative.
also occurs in Sumerian literature, according to a passage that reports the assembling of materials for the construction of Nanna’s processional barge:

Nanna’s Journey 68a–72, ed. A. J. Ferrara, Nanna-Suen’s Journey to Nippur, p. 50

From the mountain of cedar resin its bout-beams they fetched for As Gimmar, from the forest of Ebla its planks they fetched for As Gimmar, from the forest of cedar resin its pine-(logs) they fetched for Nanna-Suen.

For geographical reasons the location of Ebla’s forest was more likely to have been on nearby Mount Amanus than in the Lebanon ranges.

The new tablet begins with Gilgamesh asleep, as there comes to him a dream (I. 1). In the middle of the night he awakes startled and tells Enkidu that he has had a nightmare, complaining at the same time that his friend did not wake him (2–4). Gilgamesh had dreamed that he had been trying to stop a mountain falling but that it had collapsed on him, burying him under an avalanche (5–6). Though his legs had thereby been incapacitated, a bright light had appeared in the darkness and given him strength (7–8). The light had emanated from a man of shining beauty, who had pulled him out from where he had been trapped (9–12). Enkidu replies by explaining that the mountain must symbolize Ḫuvawa, who is altogether unlike anything else (13–16). The presence of the interrogative enclitic -ma in this explanation (I. 15) makes it clear that ul ladim is a rhetorical question, ‘is he not the mountain?’ and not a negative statement, as the two parallels in the dream explanations from Tell Harmal (OB Harmal) and Boğazköy (MB Bog3) were previously understood. Accordingly, the accompanying phrase (nukkur nimma, ‘he is something very strange’) can no longer be interpreted to signify that Ḫuvawa is different from the object observed; it means that he is a unique being, quite unlike any other creature. In this regard it is significant that Ḫuvawa is never represented in the dream episodes as an anthropomorphic figure but always as a non-human adversary: an avalanche (here and in MB Bog3), a thunderstorm (later in this tablet), a bull (OB Nippur), an Anu/Bird (OB Nippur) and a wild bull (OB Harmal). All these things have in common an awesome power and elemental ferocity that makes them fitting symbols of the Cedar Forest’s terrible guardian.

Enkidu continues that, once face to face with Ḫuvawa, Gilgamesh will accomplish a task never achieved before, though before so doing he will encounter furious resistance (17–20). The man in the dream, he adds, was the sun god, who will help Gilgamesh in his hour of need (21–2). Enkidu’s explanation restores Gilgamesh to optimistic good humour (23–4). The pair continue their journey non-stop for three days and then camp on a hillock, where Gilgamesh surveys the landscape before falling asleep (25–30). The motif of surveying the landscape reflects a passage of the Sumerian poems of Gilgamesh and Ḫuvawa, in which the hero and his men cross seven mountain ranges in their search for cedar. It does not survive into the late version of the epic, where each summit is instead the scene of rituals to incubate a dream.

In the new tablet Gilgamesh again wakes startled in the middle of the night and tells Enkidu his second dream, which was even more terrifying (31–3). He had been caught in a terrible thunderstorm, his ears deafened by the crashing thunder, the darkness relieved only by great flashes of lightning that set the ground ablaze (34–9). Then the fire had died out and the sun had appeared; the second line of this couplet is damaged but it is likely that the sun had shown Gilgamesh the way to safety (40–5). Enkidu replies (44). His explanation is almost entirely lost in the very damaged section that runs from the bottom edge of the tablet down to the upper reverse, but he concludes that the dream bodes well (45–53). As they continue their journey they can already hear Ḫuvawa roaring in the distance (54–7). Enkidu, who has met Ḫuvawa before, shows very visible signs of fear and Gilgamesh, concerned, asks him why (58–67). Enkidu worries that they will not be able to withstand Ḫuvawa’s unstoppable assault (68–76). Gilgamesh’s reply is marred by damage but clearly represented a show of bravado (77–81). The two heroes next make a camp for the night and Gilgamesh, woken by a third dream, duly begins to tell it to Enkidu (82–4). With the first line of his speech the text comes to a halt, though the tablet was not yet fully inscribed. It is possible that this line functions as a catch-line, for it marks an appropriate place to break the text between one tablet and a second.

For a comparative study of sections of this text with passages from later versions of the epic see above, the section on ‘Case studies in the evolution of the epic’ in Chapter 1.

**Notes**

66 Compare the later versions, where instead Gilgamesh wonders whether it was Enkidu that woke him (MB Bog3 9–10, SB IV 18–19 and parallels).

67 These parallels too, must now be translated as questions. For interrogative -ma see GAP §123b.

68 Gilgamesh and Ḫuvawa A 61–2 // B 65–1, passage quoted above, in Ch. 3, the sub-section on Climbing mountains.
FIG. 4. The tablet OB Sbuyen, obverse (left) and reverse (right). SC 3025; height 20.3 cm, breadth 7.3 cm, thickness 3.2 cm.

FIG. 5. The tablet OB Sbuyen, details of upper obverse.
Fig. 6. The tablet OB Schøyen, details of lower obverse.

Fig. 7. The tablet OB Schøyen, details of upper reverse.
Precious publication

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http://www.nb.no/baser.schoyen/44.3.432.html
P (obv. only)

Text

obv.
1 *cu-e-ka-qi-im-da
   lu-ta-ra-ta-us-ta-ti
   ab-ke-tal-ta
2 i-na-qi-ab-bi-ti-ti
   1-ar-ba
   1-a-ga-ta-ta-ta-ta
3 it-ri-ta-a-a-a
4 ib-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta
5 i-na-ab-di-a-e-ta-du
6 lu-ta-ra-ta-as-ti
7 ba-ar-ri-ta
8 a-ba-ta-ab-rum
9 il-ri-in

Translation

1 Gilgamesh was lying down at rest;
the night brought him a dream.
2 In the middle watch of the night he awoke with a start, *
3 he arose to talk to his friend:
4 'My friend, I have seen a dream!
Why did you not rouse me? It was very frightening!
5 With my shoulder I was propping up a mountain.
6 the mountain collapsed on me and girt me around.
7 Terror encircled my legs,
8 a radiant brightness gave strength to my arms.
9 There was a man, clad in a royal [mantle].

* Lit. 'his sleep startled him':

Old Babylonian Tablets and Fragments: Ob Schoyen, 233
he was shining brightest in the land and was most [comely] in beauty.

He took hold of my upper arm,

from under the mountain itself he pulled me forth.'

Enkidu explained the dream,
saying to Gilgamesh:

'Now, my friend, the one to whom we go,
is he not the mountain? He is something very strange!

Now, Juwawa to whom we go,
is he not the mountain? He is something very strange!

You and he will come face to face and you will do something cruel.
The one of death came forth . . . .

His fury will be enraged against you,
terror of him will encircle your legs.

But the one you saw was King Šamaš,
in times of peril he will take your hand.'

It being favourable, Gilgamesh was happy with his dream,
his heart became merry and his face shone bright.

A journey of one whole day, two, then a third,
they drew near to the land of Elba.

Gilgamesh climbed up to the top of a hill,
he looked around at all the mountains.

He rested his chin on his knees,
the sleep that spils over people fell on him.

In the middle watch of the night he awoke with a start,88
he arose to talk to his friend:

'My friend, I have seen another!
It was more frightening than the previous dream I saw.

Adad cried aloud, while the land was rumbling,
the sky growled and darkness went forth.

Lightning flashed down, fire broke out,
flames flared up, while death was raining down.

From the sound of thunder I was growing weak,
the day went dark, I knew not where I was going.

At long last the fire that flared so high died down,
the flames diminished little by little, they turned to embers.

The gloom brightened, the sun shone forth,
. . . . he led here and . . .

[Enkidu] explained the [dream],
saying to Gilgamesh:

'[ . . . ] . . . Adad . . . '
edge
46 [x x x x x x x x x a] f[a]
47 [x x x x x x x x x]
48 [x x x x x x x x x na š x]

rev.
50 [x x [x n] a-[a] š [ka-ak-[k] išu]
51 [x ša x x nam a-na ku-dak-l̥]
52 da-am-[a] u-tu-tu-[k] iš-ka
53 [ša di-(x)]-ka ša ka-ak-[k]-aLAB ad ar-ši,išu
54 ir-[a]-a-[k] u-ma a-[a] im uth uth-aš
55 [x x am x x x x x x x x x x x]
56 [x x x x x x x x x x x x x]
57 [x x x x x x x x x x x x x]
58 [x x x x x x x x x x x x x]
59 [ša ša muša] a-[a] ša-aš e-re-nim
60 [ša ša-aš] i dar-ru ka-li ša-na i ra-tim
61 [x x x x x x x x x x x x x]
62 [x x x x x x x x x x x x x]
63 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
64 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
65 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
66 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
67 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
68 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
69 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
70 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
71 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
72 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
73 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
74 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
75 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
76 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
77 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
78 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
79 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
80 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
81 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
82 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
83 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
84 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
85 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
86 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
87 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
88 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
89 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
90 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
91 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
92 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
93 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
94 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
95 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
96 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
97 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
98 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
99 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]
100 [ša ša na-aš ka-šu] i ra-giš pa-[x] [x x]

edge
46-8 not deciphered
97. . . he spoke . . . .
98. Do not fear, O Enkidu, . . . me!
99. I have undertaken . . . a battle that you do not know.
100. They pitched camp for the night; they lay down;
101. Gilgamesh arose to reveal his dream to him:
102. 'My friend, I have seen a third!'

11. The word enkišum is here a body part. The dual of body parts is often employed with this word, even when it more commonly denotes the abstract concept, 'strength'. Lexical texts make clear that the word body part in question is 'arm', e.g. Proto-Elamite 463:1-4 (MSL XIV, p. 100): "ā, 'arm' = e-na-ku-um, e-nu-um, gā-nu-um, a-ku-um.

12. 14–16. Lines from this quatrains are repeated as a couplet in a later epilogue, provisionally placed at SB IV 215–16: īri in niškāšu mekur muššu / ḫubbūba ha niškāšu mekur muššu.

16. Here, too, it seems that the end of the line of writing was obliterated when the reverse was inscribed.

19. This line is reminiscent of OB Harmal, 16–17: nannemisima šištu neppē.
20. As provisionally rendered here, the line relates back to some event that Gilgamesh saw in his dream. While the end of the line is undeciphered other readings of the first word are possible: slu-šam, 'arow', nel-šam, 'mighty one', or nel-šam, 'contempt' (cf. nēnum, 'to scorn').

21–2. This couplet has a close parallel in Enkidu's explanation of the bull-wrestling dream (OB Harmal, 12–13): šumā tištu šumā ninurrum in na dannamum isbabaqātā.

22. A more predictable variant would transpose the second and third words: damsā tāštātu Gilgamē šigšu.
23. This line also occurs in the Pennsylvania tablet, describing Enkidu when drunk in the shepherds' camp (OB II 104–5), and again, though slightly garbled, in MB Boğ 3:4–5 // [31].

24. 5-6. This line is the counterpart of the later text's mālē arēšu šanati ina šašī tīmē tiššu ana lādī Lababnu (SB IV 4 // 37 // [82] // 123-4). The lack of plane writing of the final vowel of šīšu may be explained by considering a crisis or running together of šīšu and anā; see also the similar case in OB Harmal, 17: i-ša-af-su-ia na tiššu ina.

25–7. 8. A version of this couplet appears as a command on OB Harmal, 1: ēlima ana širīm (or gurīm)?) ša šašim, napiltu . . .
26. The loanword Sūm. ṣarā is later šarānu. The spelling of the final consonant with a sign from the w-range also occurs in OB Aná 355: [ša-ib-ri-ig-im-ša-ša-ša/iššu 8]-ša ša šar-šašu / ša ša-ib-ri-ig-im-ša-ša-ša / ša ša-ib-ri-ig-im-ša-ša-ša (restored after a Deletes II 4: ša-ra-ri-ig-im-ša-ša-ša / ša ša-ib-ri-ig-im-ša-ša-ša). Both scribes follow Sumerian usage, where Mi and Mu have the values ša and ša, respectively. Such spellings indicate a pronunciation of the loanword in this period as šarānu.

34. In the later version of this line Adad is replaced by šamālu rešumum by qāṣaru.
35. The verb šarānu is an irregular IVI form of ap̲arum; in later texts inašrum occurs as expected (for other verbs primâe aleph are deviant in the IV stem see GAQ 99)). The SB text reads šašμarri instead. The last word exhibits antepenultimate stem, singular ekīnum. The SB text makes it plural, ekīnu.
36. The late text turns šīšu and šarānum into, šitāppu and širīnum. Said of fire šapā A is not 'to flicker' (CAD ŚII, p. 488) but 'to flare up', for with other subjects it carries a meaning
'boom', 'surge', 'billow'. A telling passage is a sequence of omens in Šumma- believer in which a lamp is reported as namuk; 'bright', and atua, 'dull', then šapki, 'shining', and ūd, 'calm' (CT 39 34, 29-32). The two pairs of statives contrast first the lamp's light and then the steadiness of its flame.

39. The spelling es-mu for ena occurs once elsewhere in Old Babylonian, in a legal document from Tell Sifr (Jean, Tell Sifr no. 29, 5: e-mu i-i-tu-i-a-k), explained in CAD E, p. 136, as a 'sandhi' writing. A second occurrence where crisis is impossible, šu umu means that šu cannot no longer be dismissed in this way but is a genuine lexeme.

40. The first half of the line is the counterpart of the later version's iidimma, which suggests that addina klsummata some point in the tradition ceased to be understood. It literally means 'as far as'. Shorn of its context the phrase appears several times elsewhere: BIN 4 228, 9: a-idd ki-a-an a-aa-dä-ka-ka, TOL XX I 17, 8: a-idd ki-a-an a-aa-dä-ka-ka, VAS XVI 131, 136 (ed. ABB VI 131): a-idd ki-a-an bas-re-va-na mi-ni-ya al-li-ri (OB letter). In the Old Assyrian letters the expression adda klummata means 'for that reason' or similar, in the Babylonian example perhaps 'for some many' (I am grateful to K. R. Vanhout for his thoughts on these passages, communicated privately). Neither rendering fits the present instance and I have translated ad hoc. The adjectival written tu-ug-pa-tam, replaced by nebišu in the late text, can be derived from the I/II stem of šapki A, 'to flay up', or III/II stem of nabû C, 'to shine brightly'; either way it is an etymological relation to the former, in the view of nabišu ēpu in 1.37. For nouns that occur separated from their adjectives and for the reversal of the conventional order, noun + adjective, see Ch. 9, the section on Some features of language and style.

41. The verb imasuqquši exhibits the II stem in its function as descriptive of action gradually accomplished, defined by von Soden, GAC §691, as 'successive ("nach und nach")' und augmentative ('immer mehr'); for examples of similar use of the same multiplication of the verb see SVBI 120 imasuquši, VIII 136-201 akkaddum, VIII 216-27 suqimmá, XI 159 suqim, XI 221 išakakkāri // XI 223 išakakkāri. The rare la-šu is replaced by ana tumuši in the SB text. The present line is the earliest occurrence of this adverb and, implicitly, the noun lašu from which it derives.

45. Perhaps one should emend to i-tal-šu-si,[a] 'Adad was crying aloud'.
45. Perhaps instead i-tal-šu-[a]-kur.


Enkidu's prior knowledge of Hwuwa is amply attested elsewhere in the epic; but the reading of the first word is uncertain in the context. An alternative decipherment is i-tal-šu-si-[a]-šu, 'be yelled', in which case Hwuwa would have been a subject repeated of the coupled fitter pointing the pattern abed-gob-bet: išum mašar erimin / ša uturra kalšina irimin / [išuktušu] mašar erimin / ša uturra kalšina irimin. But this reading would presuppose an unusual plural spelling of iši.

63 // 66 // 75. Enkidu's face has previously paled in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 165-6): ana širig šišum širig pānūtu. The restored line 1.63, kima naksim nārum, is very reminiscent of a longer phrase, kima nīnī bēri arāqi, 'to turn as pale as the stump of a tamarisk tree', which describes Ereshkigal's bloodless face (pānūtu) in the Descent of Ištar and Nergal and Ereshkigal's bloodless face (pānūtu) in the Descent of Ištar and Nergal and Ereshkigal's bloodless face (CT 15 45, 29 // 31 5 23). A restoration [ni]-ēk-si-im is precluded by the traces, however. Here the line similarly signifies fear; see further Streck, Bildergänsche, p. 70–71.

64 // 67 // 76. A similar line occurs in SB II 191: [P]ub adītu ana išišqīnu, also with reference to Enkidu.

65. The same couplet occurs in the Yale tablet (OB III 77–8). 68. What should be varied on this line is partly extant at SB III 85 (MS aa): nubattur a.x xinni, a.x xinni.
explains that an old man, who must have played some part in the dream, is to be identified as Gilgamesh’s guardian deity, Lugalbanda.

In the fourth dream (9–19), which Gilgamesh describes as even more horrifying than the first three, he sees gliding across the sky what he identifies as one of the mythical eagles (or rocs) called Anzu. It is a female but is described in terms characteristic of Huwawa, whom it accordingly symbolizes. Then a man appears and, though the text begins to fail, it is clear he rescues Gilgamesh from his plight and disables the bird. Following a short lacuna where the bottom of the tablet is broken away, the text resumes with Enkidu’s explanation of the fourth dream (rev. 1–6). After repeating part of the narrative in the same way that Gilgamesh’s mother repeated back to him his first dream of Enkidu in the late version of the epic (SB I 261–7), Enkidu predicts that when Gilgamesh is prostrate with terror in the presence of the enemy, he himself will come to his rescue. Further, the man in the dream was the sun god, Šamaš. But we discover no more, for at this point the scribe broke off from his exercise.

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**Old Babylonian Tablets and Fragments: OB Nippur**

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**OB Nippur**

**Previous publication**


**Translation**

1 'My friend, we have come close to the forest,
2 (what was foretold in) dreams is near at hand, battle is swift (upon us).
3 You will see the radiant auras of the god,
4 of Huwawa, whom your mind does ever fear.
5 You will lock horns and batter him like a bull,
6 you will force his head down with your strength.
7 The old man you saw is your mighty god,
8 the one who begot you, Lugalbanda.'
9 'My friend, I have seen a fourth,
10 it surpasses my (other) three dreams!
11 I watched an Anzu-bird in the sky,
12 up it rose like a cloud, soaring above us.
13 It was a . . . , its face was very strange,
its speech was fire, its breath was death.

[There was a] man, strange of form,

[he ... ] and was standing there in my dream.?7

[He ... ] its wings, he took hold of my arm,

[ ... ] and he cast it down [before] me.

[ ... ] ... upon it.

Lacuna.

rev.

0' 'You watched an Anušu-bird in the sky."

1' up [it rose like a] cloud, soaring above us.

2' It was a [ ... ], its face was very strange,

3' its speech was fire, its breath was death.

4' While you fear its awesome splendour,

5' I shall ... its foot, I shall enable you to arise!98

6' The man you saw was mighty Šamaš ... .

Notes

5. The line divides into two equal halves, with a pause at the caesura: ātsa[tatsuhipma] lātīna isim [tusābrātu]. The bull belongs with the second verb. Renger read ilaaprāku and translated 'as war er ein Ringer, wirst [Du] ihm (den Hals) zur Seite drehen'; this is perhaps reading too much into ilaaprāku, 'to put in the way'. Hecker follows Renger but I side with Bottéro, Tournay and Shaffer, who render the clause 'tu l'abattras comme un treistance. The bull develops the imagery of the first part of the line in a way that a wrestler would not. The causative stem of barāšu is used figuratively for violent destruction of an enemy; see the passages quoted in CAD B, p. 104, 2 c, and note Malinku I 107: šu-ru-qa = da-a-hu, 'to kill' (A. D. Kîlmâr, JASOS 83 (1963), p. 426).

6. The significance of forcing the bull's head down (flat on the ground?) is probably that this is how a bull-wrestler breaks a bull's neck. Contra Hecker, TUTAT III/4, p. 661, fn. 6a, nisatu is not plural but dual, as often.

7. Others have taken wi-ru as the god Wēr, though Renger and Bottéro drew attention to the problem such an interpretation posed with regard to the Yale tablet, where Wēr is the guardian of the Cedar Forest and thus an ally of Gilgamesh's enemy (OB III 131). Here, as elsewhere in the epic, Gilgamesh's god is not Wēr but Lugalbanda (see OB III 271, OB Harmaš, 15-16 and SDVI 165), and Wēr is thus quite out of place for this reason too. Accordingly one is led to look for a suitable adjective or common noun that can be written wi-ru. The existence of such a word can perhaps be supported by the lexical entry Malinku I 52: i-ru = ga-al-ru (A. D. Kîlmâr, JASOS 83 (1963), p. 425; also p. 435, Explicit). Malinku I 143). This adjective probably also appears in the OB text about Šarrum-Sîn and Erra, where Erra is described as wi-ru-um ša-ka-al-mu-šu, 'mighty terror' (W. G. Lamberti, BIBL.


8. As W. G. Lamberti tells me (private communication), the phrase bāšu gaqqadim in the meaning 'father, sire' is a calque from Sumerian saqdu (vars. du/aqdu), for which see G. R. Castellino, Tāk Šulgi Hymns (BC), p. 181; Å. W. Sjöberg, TCS III, p. 54. Note especially in an inscription of Samuha: ñanna diragir sag du mu še: a-na sini/ziul/išm (diragir) ba-ri-si, 'for Šin, the god who begot me' (D. Frye, RIME 4, p. 381, 41-2 // 39).

10. For a plane spelling comparable to e-erqi-erq, and from the same verb, see the imperative e-e-tri-ta-erqi, 'pass me by!', in the OB narrative poem about Narām-Sîn and Apišal (v 7; ed. Westenholz, Legends, p. 182). The form salalatišu compares, as Renger noted, with eberatim in ki-ib-nu-a-at er-erqi-ti-erq, 'four world-regions', in a fragmentary OB text about Sargun of Akkad (BRMV IV 4-5, ed. Westenholz, Legends, p. 34). The parallel is more instructive than Renger saw, however, for the gender of the number is the same as the noun. The absence of polarity thus marks the phrase salatín šarâša as comprising two nouns, though in apposition rather than in a possessive construction such as šabatāškaškaša erēbsinum. Usual language would yield salatun šarâša. Salatsu is a group of three ('triad') comparable with eberatim, 'group of four', hamatuk, 'group of five' and ešbatašu, 'heaven'. For nuination in OB see now GAC §§§ 44c (possessive pronouns), 63c (miscellaneous).

12. At the beginning of the line the reading iššina (against Renger: išša instead), also Tournay and Shaffer) and Hecker ('er erhob sich') also saw, means that ša-a-š is not the present subjunctive of the 'hollow' root VH, but the plain present of a variant II + III-Alep
root (u/u). As Renger noted, *u/u* also describes the characteristic behaviour of the mythical lion-headed eagle, the *Anzu*-bird, in an inscription of Aššur-nāṣirpal II (now Grayson, *RIMA* 2, p. 260, 74). The verb seems to cover soaring, wheeling and swooping, i.e. the flight pattern typical of large birds of prey. Division of the poetic line into units indicates that the simile occurs before the cassura and so belongs in the first clause not the second: *išibama | kima ṣepestim | iši'du | ebi.

13. To my eyes the traces of the first word do not allow Renger's *nap-ta-im-tam-ma, da war eine Schreckensgestalt*, though it cannot be discounted that some of the traces on my copy are remnants of poorly erased signs. I can offer no firm decipherment, only the comment that *dul-ul-ul-im-tam-ma, there was confusion*, is as likely as *nap-lulummimm*, if not more so. One must also bear in mind that in the parallel line, rev. 2', the space suggests that word is written more concisely, with three signs instead of four. The word *šumū* could also be translated 'double', but here probably has implications of monstrousness (cf. Bottero, *Son aspect était monstrueux*). The face of *Anzu* was a hydor for horror, even the very image of death, as we know from Enkidu's dream on his deathbed (UB Ur 65–6 / SB VII 168–9) and elsewhere (see the commentary on UB Ur 66).

14 // rev. 3'. This line is commonly used in earlier episodes to describe Huwawa himself: see OB III 110–11 // 197–8 and note.

15. The traces copied by Cavigneaux after i-di run over, as he indicates, from the reverse. rev. 4'–5'. The structure of the couplet is enhanced by the opposition of *atta* and *awālu*. The first word of i. 5' remains a problem. Renger proposed derivation from *ešumum*, and translated 'werde ich *arastal*", but the meaning of this verb is very obscure. A more secure candidate is *šentum* (e-es-tum, 'I shall mult'), but the sense leaves a lot to be desired. The unusual spelling of *uršala* recalls the use of CV signs for VC in an older tradition of orthography, as for example at Ebla. On this see below, the introduction to OB Harmal.

THE TABLETS FROM ŠADUPPŪM (OB HARMAL)

Two tablets of Old Babylonian Gilgamesh were excavated at Tell Harmal (Tall Harmal), ancient Šaduppum, and are now in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad. They were both recovered during the third season of excavations, in August 1947, in Level II of Room 211, part of a private dwelling house. The period of the dated archival tablets found in this occupation level is primarily the reign of Ibi-pl-EI II of Eshnunna. Level II terminates in a destruction associated with the invasion of Eshnunna by the Elamite–Babylonian–Mariote alliance, the event that led to the end of Ibi-pl-EI's rule in year 28 of Hammurabi of Babylon (1765 BC).

*OB Harmal 1*

The better preserved of the two pieces is IM 52615, a conventional single-column Old Babylonian exercise tablet. It is not well written. There are several cases where signs seem to be omitted by accident (see Il. 3, 5, 17), and the boundaries of the lines of poetry do not always coincide with the boundaries of the lines as written on the tablet (see Il. 15–17). Where the text is badly damaged, in Il. 6–9, these factors make added difficulties for the decipherer.

The text is composed in regular poetry, for the most part constructed in couplets, and exhibits, like most Old Babylonian Gilgamesh, a marked lack of the high literary style that is often characterized as 'lymno-epic'. An interesting feature of both tablets from Tell Harmal is the use of *ne- instead of ni-* in the first-person plural of the verb. The orthography of OB Harmal, is otherwise unremarkable. Double consonants are seldom written *plesm*; minimation is always marked.

As in OB Nippur, neither Gilgamesh nor Enkidu is named. However, the presence of Šamaš and Lugalbanda and the general context make the attribution of this piece to the epic certain. The text again comprises an account of the portentous dreams that Gilgamesh experienced on the journey to the Cedar Forest. And again like OB Nippur, the text is entirely direct speech and the identities of the speakers have to be determined from the context. Accordingly, the Il. 2–9 of this text is clearly a Gilgamesh tablet, as they report how the speaker, suddenly woken from sleep, related a dream he had experienced. Since he refers to it simply as 'a dream' and does not mention any previous vision, this nightmare is very likely the first of the sequence in the version of the epic in question. Parallel lines on other Old Babylonian tablets use ordinal numbers to refer to the later dreams, and report that each in turn is more frightening than the previous one.

In the present dream the hero found himself grappling with ferocious wild bulls. Though what follows is badly damaged, it is clear that someone rescued him from his predicament and that this person or another gave him water. The remaining text (Il. 10–17), in which...
someone explains the nightmare, is clearly spoken by Enkidu. In his view the bull that forced Gilgamesh to the ground symbolized the unusual figure of the fearsome Huwawa. A second object, described as a bright face, was the sun god Šamaš. His presence in the dream must be hidden in the damage, but no doubt he is the subject of the verb  systemctl, 'he pulled [me] forth', in 1.8, as in the parallel dream on OB Schayen. The figure who gave Gilgamesh water, however, was his divine guardian, his father Lugalbanda. The expedition enjoys the protection of Šamaš and Lugalbanda at the elders' behest (see the Yale tablet, OB III 257–65). Enkidu concludes with optimism that he and Gilgamesh stand together on the brink of great things.

IM 52615 (HL3 286) OB Harmal,

Previous publication

1957 J.J.A. van Dijk, 'Textes divers du musée de Baghdad II', Sumer 13, pl. 12
(cited there as IM 52265)
1963 W. von Soden, 'Beiträge zum Verständnis des babylonischen Gilgamesh-Epos',
ZA 53, pp. 216–19
1976 J.J.A. van Dijk, TUM IX no. 43

Text

1 'e-ši -li-i-na a-na ša-Ši-ri-im [ša] kaddim[kar]
na-ap-li-is [x] [x] [x] [x]
2 ši-ta-am ša i-li a-na-ku ek-mé-ku
3 [ši]-ri šu-tam a-ti-ud
ki la-(ap?)-ta-at ki ne-ma-at ki da-al-ša-at
4 a-Ši-Ši-Ši-kum[am] [sei] ri-im aš-ša-ab-Ša-Ši
5 i-ša-ta-šu qa-qa-Ša-am i-le-te
sar-bu-Ši-Ša-ta-i ta-hi-ip ša-me-o [x]
6 i-na pa-ni-šu a-na-ši ku? a-lu-ti-ud
7 i-šu-ba-at na-x [x] [x] [x] [x] a-ti-ia
8 x-ia ši-lu-pa-a[n]-mi-Ša-Ši-Ši-Ši-Ši [x]-mi-Ša-Ši-Ši-Ši-Ši [x]-ti-ia
me-e na-di-šu [ši]-qi-[a]-Ši-Ši-Ši

Translation

1 'Go up on to the mountain crag,
look at [...] ...
2 'I have been robbed of the sleep of the gods!
3 My friend, I saw a dream:
how omina it was, how ... , how confused!
4 I had taken hold of (some) bulls from the wild —
5 (one) was cleaving the ground with its belonging,
the cloud of dust it made was thrusting into the sky —
6 in front of it I leaned myself forward.
7 It was seizing ... [...] was enclosing my arms.
8 ... he pulled [me] forth [...] by force ...
9 My cheek ... [...] my ...,
[he gave] me water to drink from his waterskin.'
Notes

1. This line is—at least in part—an imperative counterpart of a narrative couplet in OB Schøyen, 27:8: ʕinma Gūgalma ana ʕer šadim / štanapâšu hilâšmu ʕabûšâni. The meaning of ʕer-šadim is taken from Semitic cognates, as proposed by von Soden, ZA 53, p. 217; but the new parallel offers another solution, that ʕer-šadim is a spelling mistake for ṣer-šadim. The traces after napâšu were read l-a-nu-su-qa-dim by Landsberger, RA 62 (1968), p. 100, but neither copy supports this. Nor does any spelling of ūbûšâni look possible at the end of the line.

2. The emanation of the second verb follows von Soden. The word ne-ma-at defies obvious interpretation as it stands. Alongside the etymology put forward by von Soden (apā, 'to become dim'), one thinks also of namât, 'it was a desolation' (see namât/mâm in the notes on namâ-t/a in OB III 108).

3. The remarkable plural ventive ending on the singular aspâšâbam elided from von Soden another OB example, ki ta-da-am-mi-qa-nim in the poem often called 'Man and his God' (I. Nouyagram, RB 59 (1952), p. 246, re-edited by W. G. Lambert, Studies in the Legal Texts, p. 192, 57, who translates 'that you are well favoured'). Von Soden's hope that a larger number of examples would eventually elucidate the usage has not yet been fulfilled. T. Jacobsen put forward an ingenious explanation in his discussion of the ablative accusative, analysing -nim instead as a 'departive' -n- and the expected, but hitherto missing, first singular common dative pronoun suffix -nim, 'for me' (JNES 22 (1963), p. 26). It remains a virtuoso position, unsubstantiated by further enquiry, though B. R. Foster also views the ending as expressing the 1st person reflexive (Ephes. Paps., p. 41, fn. 42: 'I captured for myself'). Tournay and Shaffer's emendation to 1st person pl. aspâšâbaam (p. 109, fn. 11) does not make parsing the suffix any easier. In our present state of knowledge these are desperate remedies and it seems wise to resort to neither of them. Thus I ignore the ending and keep to von Soden's 'ich packte gerade'.

4. Though elsewhere in this tablet the scribe writes inâ and anâ in full—at least, as transiterated here—the spelling ša-se-ša-ša very probably represents a pronunciation ša-šaša. Lambert's copy disposes of the problematical in-ma tu-ur šâmâl: (von Soden; van Diik read i-x-x-x-ša). I assume the verb is nâtâbâm 1/2 separative, in the present tense to match itetâ. Alternatively one might read itâtâbâmu < tâbâbâmu, 'tinging the sky with colour' (W. G. Lambert, Personal Communication).

5. I read ša-te-ša-ša with Lambert's copy, against van Diik, JIM IX, p. xi.

6. Attractive though it is, the reading šu-pu-[a-ni] (van Diik, loc. cit.; von Soden, A.H.M., p. 1439) does not appear compatible with the traces in either of the published copies.

7. The first clause is a question, made clear by the new parallel, OB Schøyen, 15: ūl ūšadim-ânu nabûr màm. In the matter of the last word, I follow van Diik, Samer 14, p. 115, who in TIM IX, p. x, vigorously rejects the reading ma-im-ša-[u-a] proposed by von Soden, ZA 53, p. 216. The latter restoration is ruled out for the following reasons: (a) the break appears to be too small to accept both ma and ša; (b) in order to align the ends of lines with the right-hand edge, the scribe of this tablet routinely leaves a big gap before the last sign, but never before the last but one; thus only one sign is expected after ma-im-; and (c) the parallels have màm, OB Schøyen, 15 // 17 and MB Boq. 23: ūl āšarāmî lámma mukû 'ur, the latter already noted by Landsberger, RA 62 (1968), p. 116. Landsberger's translation of the present line, 'nicht im mindesten ist der Weltstreiter würdig', assumes an unusual word order in which the subject (rîmûma) splits the predicate (ūl nabû). Like von Soden I divide the present line into two clauses, with a caesura at their common boundary: ūl rîmûma lî nîkû bar màm.

8. Van Diik and von Soden suggested a reading of the first word as ša-šašim. The tracesrecorded on Lambert's copy do not concur and I have adopted the reading proposed by J. Renger, Studies in the Legal Texts, p. 96. Now that the pattern of the dreams is more clearly understood, Renger's objection to ša-mas in this tablet rîmûma should be written with mimata, is reinforced by the consideration that the wild bull certainly symbolizes Ḥuwawa, not šâmâl. šâmâl was well known for his ḥînâm, which was proverbially bright; the word became a technical term for the light emitted by the sun and other celestial bodies (see CAD Z, p. 121, and note Renger's translation 'Lichtgestalt'). This and the following line find a parallel in a couplet of Enkidu's explanation of the avalanche dream (OB Schøyen, 21-2): u ša sâmûr Šâmâl šarrâ ma šâmû rîšû tâhât qâšîka. 

9. For Lugabanda as Gilgamel's personal god see also OB III 271 and note thereon. 16-17. The line is related to OB Schøyen, 17: tamennûmâša tîšâ at teppû. 

10. On the penuhmatu sign see van Diik, TIM IX, p. xii: 'Ma or Mu impossible, hardly Na, most likely Mu or Nu, but Na is not excluded.' The emendations given here are confirmed by the appearance of the same line in the Yale tablet (OB III 17): šîmûn lâ tâl'âlû ša inâ màm. If already Landsberger, RA 62, p. 116, fn. 68. The lack of place marking of the final -â in this tablet may alternatively be explained as signifying a running together of tâlû and inâ (Lambert). Note the comparable spelling šu-ša-nâ (OB Schøyen, 26) for ša-ša-ša.
Gilgameš reflects on how dangerous their quest is (16), but remains determined to win through to Ḫuwa-bal’s lair (17). The reply is a warning that expresses Enkidu’s concern about Ḫuwa-bal’s terrible power (19–20). With that, the text falls us for a sequence of fifteen lines at the bottom of the obverse and the top of the reverse.

The first certain phrase on the reverse involves qitūtum, ‘woods’ (36). The following line mentions melammū, ‘auras’, which certainly signify Ḫuwa-bal’s protective radiance and confirm the context as an episode of the expedition to the Cedar Forest. According to the tablet from Nerebu (OB Ishchali), the melammū divert Gilgameš’s attention after he has taken Ḫuwa-bal captive, and that is what may be happening here. At this point it seems that a second conversation begins, and the name of Gilgameš appears in the same line (38). It is safe to assume that he is not the speaker but the one spoken to, but the obscurities are such that it is uncertain whether Enkidu or Ḫuwa-bal is speaking. However, good sense prevails from l. 41, in a passage related to the lines of the late text that follow immediately after Ḫuwa-bal’s capture (SBV 144f). In ll. 41–2 someone, no doubt Ḫuwa-bal, begs for his life and goes on to acknowledge Gilgameš’s semi-divine birth (cf. SBV 144–6). The text then deteriorates but holds a reference to ‘my night’ (43) and to a command issuing from the mouth of Šamaš (44; cf. SBV 147). Possibly these lines contain a declaration by Ḫuwa-bal that he was forewarned of Gilgameš’s triumph by the sun god in a dream. The speaker concludes by offering to grow for Gilgameš’s exclusive use the three kinds of timber for which the Cedar Forest was famous (46; cf. SBV 154–5). Next, the narrator reports Enkidu’s intuitive gift for counsel, using instead of his name the epithet taddan ĝirm, ‘wild-born’ (47), an expression that is typical of the episode of the Cedar Forest. To judge from the later parallel (SBV 156f), Enkidu on this occasion launches into a speech warning Gilgameš not to heed Ḫuwa-bal’s entreaties (48). The text then becomes very fragmentary indeed, and although it continues for seven or so lines at the foot of the reverse and a further eight on the left edge, I can make nothing of them.

The text of OB Harmaš thus covers the heroes’ approach to the Cedar Forest, their capture of its guardian, Ḫuwa-bal, and the parler that follows. The first encounter between Gilgameš and Ḫuwa-bal (of which we have no account in Akkadian) is missing in this lacuna at the end of the obverse, as is the fight itself. The slaying of Ḫuwa-bal may have been dealt with at the end of the reverse and on the left edge, but the traces do not seem to throw up any similarity with the account of his death on OB Ishchali. In any event, the tale is told very much more concisely than in the later version, which expands 167 lines (SBV 241–157) on the equivalent of this tablet’s ll. 5–48.

107 This number is wrongly cited as IM 22750 by Bottero, p. 250 (also Touray and Shaffer, Dipòdè, p. 129) and as IM 52760 in the Penguin, p. 118.

108 This suggestion was made privately by W. G. Lambert, who has drawn attention to this phenomenon at Enki in L. Cagni (ed.), Il bilinguismo a Ebla, p. 394, in ORMS 55 (1983), p. 158; and in JCS 41 (1989), p. 22; see also M. Krebernik, ‘Zu Syllabaren und Orthographie der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla’, ZA 72 (1982), pp. 224–6. In the early second millennium such spellings are not completely unknown even in the scribal schools of Nippur: note e.g. ʾu-te-er-ba-ka for ʾu-te-ha in OB Nippur rev. 75.

109 Certainly ašu la ʾalaṭum (l. 16), if not locative, and zimmū ḫallū (47), probably also pātu nasīlītu (41).

110 See above, fn. 102, and the note below on l. 11. Such manuscripts of the table of Hantuk and Date Palm (ed. Lambert, BWL, pp. 155–7) and a Sargon legend (TIM IX 48, ed. Westenholz, Legends, pp. 78–93) from Tel Harmaš.

In the woods . . . . .
... greeted him, he turned his gaze to the radiant auras, to smile
its . . . We are not truly alive, O Gilgamesh . .
is distant from you, you . . . , the top of his head . . . [ . . ]
Look! . . . had he looked at the trees . . .
Haste mercy on my life, O Gilgamesh, in your . .
The cow of the fold, the goddess Ninsun, bore you!
Before you came up my mountains . . . in . . . of my night I . .
From the mouth of mighty hero Šamaš [I] heard . . . [ . . ]
the mountains, O Gilgamesh, you have . . . [ . . ] . .
Let me grow for you cedar, cypress and supālu-juniper, the tallest trees
fit to decorate a palace! The wild-born was able to give counsel:
‘My friend, a man will not . . . Huwawa . . . ’
. . . the moon god . . .

Remainder too broken for translation

136 Or ‘Yofaš’.
Diyyala tradition. The phrase baššatama al baššatu is clearly an example of a paraonomastic infinitive construction, but an exceptional one in this period. There are very few examples of the accusative singular of the paraonomastic infinitive in OB, three being noted by M. Stol, OB History, p. 105; this, the fourth, is the first with enclitic -ma. OB paraonomastic infinitives with -ma otherwise follow the model parāšatuma, which Aro and von Soden analyse as locative (see J. Aro, SoOr 26 (1961), pp. 112–13, 4, 8; GAG^P p115). The only other example of parāšatuma is very late, in Erra IV 112: na-su-am ma al na-su-ab, ‘you found no peace at all’. 39. One is tempted to read ina ba-li ša-bi, ‘without Huwa’ (in which the speaker of ll. 38–40 would be Enkidu), but in this period the preposition is bałam. 40. These words parallel those with which Ḫumbaba acknowledges Gilgames’ divine origin at this point in the later text (SB V 146): iš-tiša lizína Ninsiwa, and echo more closely still Enkidu’s acceptance of Gilgames’ royal status at the end of the Pennsylvania tablet: lizína lizína umunuku idiku ñintum lizína šašurim (or šašurim) Ninsiwa (OB II 234–7). For the long form of the goddess’s name see Ch. 4, the section on Ninsiwa. 44–5. These lines seem to be ancestral to SBV 147: ina ša Šamšu iš̄ad aššunu). 46–7. The classic case of redbloom with trees and plants is Codex Ḫmnmuṣiri §60: mu 4 kum širišu(širû) û nu-a-ba, ‘he shall grow the date plantation for four years’; cf. SB VI 105: lirabbi šummn. The three trees mentioned here occur together in Sumerian literature as sources of timber for grand building projects: šerem Šu-ur.min ša-ba.lim šamšur (Curse of Akkad 134); šerem Šu-ur.me Ša刑 ba.lim (Gudea Cyl. A xii 5). In Akkadian note Mr Ḫarsu as šad širišu(širû) eren bâti širišu(širû) eren (erem) Šu-ur.min ša-ba.lim šamšur (šamšur) ša-ba.lim虾 (šamšur) šamšur (šamšur). 47. The reversing of the usual order of noun and adjective probably stresses the latter: see Ch. 9, the section on Some features on language and style. 48. The word šašurim appears several times in the text, in the line 143 and 144 which connotes this particular aspect of the goddess’s domain. 49. The phrase šašurim is evidently an epithet of Enkidu, the subject of the šar qarrar aššuš in the next line, and comparable with nadum širin (l. 47). None of the synonyms for šarširin appears in the line. 50. The verb šaša-am is most easily parsed as šaša-mi (i.e., šaššu), and Adad is not an obvious subject in this regard. Perhaps the speaker is corrupt for the more suitable dišum, ‘he will thunder’. 51. Van Dijk read šerem šinšušu-ti, ‘torqu’uši’ l’eššu; and, identifying obverse and reverse differently from me, saw the context as Gilgames’ prayer to Ninsun earlier in the story (cf. SB III 23 ff). Room for šašu is lacking, however, and the traces are also against it. The form šinšušu-ti is not a viable one: šinšušu-ti is good hymno-epic style, leaving šašu to be explained separately. At the end Van Dijk read šaš-tišu, ‘šašu is dirge saš pašu’, but the new copy casts doubt on this. My understanding is that the object of šinšušu has already been expressed, as šašu. 52. Use of the sign tišu for šišu is typical of Mari orthography but occurs also at Tell Harmal and elsewhere in the Diyyala basin (see Westenholz, Legends, p. 80). It can be seen as diagnostic of the
Between a quarter and a third of the tablet is missing, so that the beginning of the text and most of the end are lost. What remains is somewhat damaged, particularly on the obverse, where a loose surface flake, recorded by Bauer, Greengus and Westenholz in diminishing degrees of preservation, is now entirely missing.\(^{124}\) The text is an excerpt from the expedition to the Cedar Forest. It tells of the slaying of the forest’s guardian, the monstrous Ḫuwawa, and the felling of his cedars. When the obverse becomes intelligible we are in the middle of direct speech, which may be the end of a conversation between Gilgamesh and Ḫuwawa (ll. 1’–5’). Evidently the combat between them is over: Gilgamesh has dealt the telling blow and stands victor, with Ḫuwawa at his mercy. Enkidu encourages Gilgamesh to kill Ḫuwawa and cannot understand why Gilgamesh is sparing his life (6’–9’). Gilgamesh is worried about losing Ḫuwawa’s auras. They have a life of their own and he can see them scurrying off into the depths of the forest (10’–13’). Enkidu replies that the auras, like fledgling birds lost from the nest, cannot stray far from their master and again urges Gilgamesh to kill Ḫuwawa and his household (14’–18’). Gilgamesh gives in to Enkidu’s will, takes up his weapons and deals Ḫuwawa a second blow, to the neck (19’–22’). Though the text of ll. 23’–37’ suffers from damage to the middle of each line, it is clear that Enkidu joins in and that at this further assault Ḫuwawa falls stricken to the ground. Then Gilgamesh deals with the rest of Ḫuwawa’s household, including the seven auras.

After further blows Ḫuwawa lies dead, for we hear of him no more, and Gilgamesh takes up his weapons and marches into the heart of the forest (36’–8’). He and Enkidu then set about acquiring timber, and Enkidu chooses a tall tree from which, as we know from OB IM 22–8 and the later version (SBV 292–8), he will make a gate for Enlil’s temple (39’–43’). The bottom of the reverse is missing but the end of the excerpt is preserved, partly erased, on the left edge. Enough remains to reveal that this was the episode of rafting the logs down the Euphrates (1’–2’).\(^{124}\)

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\(^{124}\) The copy of A. Westenholz remains unpublished. The copyist is thanked for generously placing it at my disposal.
Text

About 10 lines missing

1' [ . . . . ] tu-va-za
2' [ . . . . ] i-ba-ki a-n[a- . . ] x
3' [ . . . . ] x a-pa-li-[s . . ]
4' [ . . . . ] iš-ba-ka-[an]-1 ne-li ti
5' [ . . . . ] x x-ne-em [a-n][a]-ši-ri-ni
6' en-[ki-d[u]-sa-n[n][a]-ša-la-ga]-ra-[am]-a-na 2 tiš
7' ne-šer hū̄-taw-[a] hār-še-ra-am? x x mu ili (dirigir) meš-ka
8' [x x x x x] x (x) x]-tīm
9' a[m-mi-nim?] x x x x la-[a]-a-kù-an gi-mi-lam / a-na šē-ri-šù
10' d-gis ([a-n] l-[a]-šum i-sa-ga-ra-a[m] la]-na en-ki-d[u]-10
11' i-na-an-na-ma [b]-r[i]-šù ba-Ša-kù-ma
12' me-le-em-mu i-ša-1 ši i-na qa-ši-im
13' me-le-em-ma i-ša-[a]-ši-qi i-na qa-ši-im
14' en-ki-d[u]-10 a-na ša-šum i-sa-ga-ra-am a-na 4 sis
15' tīr i-ši-ra-am ba-ar-ma eša-am i-la-hu wa-at-mu-šu

Translation

Several lines missing

1' [ . . . . ] Huvawa:
2' [ . . . . ] was crying for [ . . . . ]
3' [ . . . . ] I look at [ . . . . ]
4' [ . . . . ] look hold of us,
5' [ . . . . ] before us,
6' Enkidu said to him, to Gilgames:
7' ‘Smite Huvawa, the [ . . . . ] of your gods!
8' [ . . . . ] . . . .
9' [Why, my friend, have you had mercy on him?]
10' Gilgames [said to him] to Enkidu:
11' ‘Now, my friend, we must achieve victory!
12' The auras are escaping in the wood,
13' the auras are escaping and the radiant sheens are fading into the mist.’
14' Enkidu said to him, to Gilgames:
15' ‘My friend, catch a bird and where will its chicks go?

edge

16' me-le-em-mi wa-ar-ka-tam i ne ši-te-i
17' ki-im ma wa-at-mu ir-ta-na-pu-di i-ši-im
18' ša-a-tu tu-še ne-e[r]a mu-[a]-bi-il-[i]-a [x x x x x x]

rev.

19' [iš]-meš [ši]-qi-[ir]-ra-[a]-šù
20' il-še ti-nam i-na qa-ti-šù
21' tīr-[u]-upnam-[ša]-ra-am i-na šī-[b]-bi-šù
22' *šiš i]-ne-[er]-ki-[ša]-da-am
23' en-ki-du-[i]-ši-ši-ri-šù i-pu-ul ši-[š]-ba
24' ša-la-x x x x x [m]-qi-tū
25' dam-šu ub-[a]-še x x Ša-ar-ru
26' ša-wa-wa ma-[ša]-ra-am [š]-ne-e[r]-a-[a]-qā-ša-šù
27' a-na li-na bi-er [(x x x)] ru-qiš-išù
28' ši-ši-šu i]-ne-[er]-x x x x x ri-qišù
29' qša-tim [x x x x x (x)] šù
30' i]-ne-[er]-ša-[ša]-ra-am ma-[ša]-šu qi-[š]-ši-šù
31' ša-[a]-a-[š]-ri-[g]-ši-[š]-u Ša-la-[š]-ti-[a]-šù Sa-ra-a Šu la-ab-na-an
32' ši-[x x x x x x Ša-dāš][κορ] meš

rev.

19' Gilgames heard the word of his companion.
20' He took up (his) axe in his hand,
21' he drew forth the dirk from his belt.
22' Gilgames smote the neck,
23' Enkidu his friend gave encouragement.
24' He . . . . he fell,
25' the ravines carrying . . . his blood.
26' Huvawa the guardian he smote to the ground,
27' for two leagues [( . . . )] afar.
28' With him he smote . . . .
29' the forests he . . . .
30' He slew the ogre, the forest's guardian,
31' at whose yell were split asunder Sirion and Lebanon.
32' the mountains . . .

129 Or, reading iruruš, 'entering.'
33'...all the uplands trembled.
34'He slew the ogre, the cedar’s guardian,
35'...the broken...[...].
As soon as he had slain (all) seven,
36'...the war-net of two talents and dirk of eight talents,
37'a burden of ten talents he took up,
he went down and trampled through the forest.
38'He discovered the secret abode of the Anunnaki,
39'Gilgamesh felling the trees, Enkidu choosing the best timber.
40'Enkidu said to him, to Gilgamesh,
41'[....] Gilgamesh, smite the cedar!
42'[....] at your side,
43'[....] thirty reeds long.

Break

1'...Euphrates...
2'...cedar.

The lines are evidently standard repertoire, individually and in combination.

23'. The decipherment of the line’s verb as īṣāp makes it difficult to retain a literal translation of lubaš (e.g. Dulley ‘struck at (?) the heart’; Pettinato ‘trafisse il cuore’, and Hecker ‘trafein Herz’). With Lamberti I understand the phrase lubaš epēšum to mean ‘give encouragement’ (cf. his translation of Il. 19-23’ in Papers Porada, p. 42); comparable with the well-known idiom lubaš takūnum, ‘to hearten, encourage, comfort’. However, the later version, though badly damaged at this point, gives Enkidu a more physical role and expands the line to include the lungs (SV B 265): Enkidu lubaš ḫubatu adu ḫus Ṝušpu. 24’. To my eyes the beginning of the line cannot be read ī-ša-šu-ī- (Bauer); ī-ša-šu-ī- also looks improbable.

25’. The traces do not appear to allow nam-su-tum (Bauer); Tournay and Shaffer, Léopoldés, p. 126, fn. 25, also saw that the first word must be dam-su.

26’. Given the vocalization, a reading ka-bi-ra-am derived from hubrum, kaburum, ‘stout’ (cf. Bottéro), is discounted and I retain Bauer’s kašurum.

28-9’. This couplet is the narrative that realizes Enkidu’s earlier instruction, mutūlātu niš... (l. 18’), but the object in l. 28 cannot yet be read.

30’. The reading karšaru here and in l. 34’ was discovered by A. Westonholz (see Al-Haw, p. 1559). It has usually been translated ‘scapegrace’, ‘villain’ or similar (vond Soden: ‘Schurke’; Bottéro: ‘scélérat’; Pettinato: ‘brigante’; Tournay and Shaffer: ‘vaurien’). The image of Huwawa as some kind of worthless rogue is not one that accords with what the epic tells us elsewhere. He is evil of aspect and an enemy of mankind, but guarding the cedar is his destined task and not a matter of villainy.

In connected context the word karšaru is otherwise known only from the Babylonian Theodicy, where it refers to some rascal undeserving of promotion (l. 77; cf. also l. 221). The translation ‘scapegrace’ is derived from the late synonym list Malāš VIII 125-6 (STT 394) and the commentary on the Theodicy (see W.G. Lamberti, BWL, pp. 76 and 83). In both karšaru is associated with various
A TABLET IN BAGHDAD (OB IM)

Apart from OB Harmal, and OB Nippur, a further tablet of Old Babylonian Gilgamēš is known in the collections of the Iraq Museum at Baghdad. It is one of many pieces grouped under the collective number IM 21180, but the individual number within the group is no longer known and the tablet is provisionally identified as IM 21180x. Although sometimes ascribed to Tell Harmal, the number indicates that this tablet was registered before excavations began at that site and reveals nothing of its provenance beyond that it is likely to come from somewhere within Iraq. It is certainly from Babylonia rather than a peripheral region, but an examination of the orthography, which exhibits both ‘north Babylonian’ and ‘south Babylonian’ features in the terminology of A. Goetze, does not help determine more than that. Mimation is always written; double consonants are written defectively more often than not.

Though neither Gilgamēš nor Enkidu is named explicitly in OB IM, the identification of the text as Gilgamēš is secured by the close parallels it provides to other versions of the epic. The tablet is more or less complete, but regretfully not in a condition that allows a full decipherment. It has been recopied and some account can be given of it. The first fifteen lines are too damaged to yield very much, but at the beginning Gilgamēš and Enkidu appear to be walking hand in hand in the Cedar Forest (ll. 3–4). In ll. 6 ffr. one of them is speaking. A badly damaged passage of narrative follows, in which someone is killed. If it is Hūwawa then we must accept that this account of his death is very different from that found in OB Ishchali. Otherwise it may be one of his household. From 1. 17 to the bottom of the tablet the text is much easier to decipher. As in OB Ishchali Gilgamēš and Enkidu go deep into the heart of the forest, violating its sanctity as the home of the gods. Gilgamēš praises Gilgamēš for his feat of arms and asks him to fell a mighty cedar (20–1). From this cedrus he intends to make a door for Enlil’s temple in Nippur, and Enlil and his people will be delighted (22–9). At this point the tablet turns. The reverse is hardly legible at all, which is unfortunate, because by comparison with the late text (SBV 299–302) its thirty lines must have either contained a much fuller account of the cutting of the cedar for Enlil’s door, and its razing down the Euphrates, or continued on to another episode. I can only make out ụbbaštānāti, ‘He/it will bring them (fem.)’ (l. 34), and ịnākki, ‘he loaded me’ (l. 36), which may describe how the lumber was brought off the mountain. In the late text the next episode is the arrival of Gilgamēš back in Uruk and Šarrūn’s proposal (SBV I 1 ffr.).
and one would like to know whether events in the Old Babylonian epic also followed this sequence.

IM 21180x

Previous publication

1976 J.J.A. van Dijk, TIM IX no. 46 CP 139
1982 W. von Soden, Das Gilgamesch-Epos, Reclam', p. 54 (A b) tr
1992 J. Barté, L'épopée de Gilgamesh, pp. 250 tr
1994 R. Tournay and A. Shaffer, L'épopée de Gilgamesh, pp. 138–40 T Tr
1997 U. and A. Westenholz, Gilgamesh, p. 145 tr

Text

obv.

1 not preserved

2 [.............] ā-ba-lu-nim?
3 [.............] qi-il-tim
4 [.............] iš-ša-ab-tu
5 [.....] ab x [xx] x ša x at-tim
6 [.....] x-ma i ni-a-shi-ab x-e-da-ni
7 [.....] x ka-tuk-ša-ab li x x x
8 [.....] x-ma i ni-ši-ab x-e-da-l1 ni1
9 x[.....] x ša 1erēnim(erin) ma-ša-a[r] qi-il-tim
10 x[.....] ša2-ba-at-sú [.....]
11 x[.....] ni iš? pu x [.....]
12 m[a......] x? ki2-šu-ri ki x x ba x x x[.xx]
13 zi-zu-nu-um i[......] ra-um-ma-ša ar-ta-am mu-ša-x x [(x x)]
14 ša-[.....] x-ru x-tim ša-šu x li im x ab x x / im
15 i-[x x x x] x-am x x x-am i-nē-er-ma te-ti-ik [(x x)]
16 i-[nē-er?] ša-am-ši-šu-šu
17 [di x x x ir-ša]-ši iš-gi iš-ša-tam (ša) 1erēnim(erin);2
18 mu-ša-bi-ši-li 1n [e-nu-na-ša pu-su]-ra1 mi-ši-ša
19 tsa-al-dam x ši-ši-im mi-il-ša-ša-am i-ši-[li]
20 x-sa-qar[a-am] [a-na ša-ša-[šu]
21 mi-ša-ša-um u-ba-ša-ša qi-il-tam ša GIS (erēnim(erin))

Translation

2 [.............] they bring.
3 [.............] forest,
4 [.............] they held (hands?).
5 [.............]
6 [.....] and let us sit down on our own.
7 [.....] star...
8 [.....] and let us sit down on our own.
9 [.....] of the cedar, the guardian [of the forest],
10 [.....] will seize him [.....]
11 [.....] [.....] [.....]
12 [.....] seven knots .......
13 [.....] ... foliage ....
14 [.....] [.....]
15 [.....] he slew and ....,
16 he [smote] five times.
17 ... he went trampling through the forest (of) cedar,
18 he discovered the secret abode of the Anunnaki gods.
19 The wild-born was able to give counsel,
20 he said to his friend:
21 'By your strength alone you slew the guardian,
what can bring you dishonour? The forest of (cedar) wood (22) lay low!'
22. 3rs is probably defective for *šērānim. More is missing if the line is to make sense as it stands, so I presume that šēmē belongs at the end and has slipped to l. 22 by mistake.

23. Von Soden ("die dir nun gehört") and Hecker ("deine") took the second word as the accusative independent possessive pronoun, evidently reading hū-ša-ka-um. However, the expected form in OB is ḫām. Bottéro ("un Cédre extraordinairellement élevé") evidently parsed it as the accusative adjective šāpām (cf. Tournay and Shaffer: šu-pi-ka-um), but the uncontracted form would be šāpa-um not šāpi-um. I suppose it to be the verb šēmē in the imperative of the rare II/1 stem, with a glide in place of the glottal stop. This couplet exhibits an emphatic alliteration on /š/ lacking in the later version, which has išši nisbakā šēna šēna la ma ṣuḥaša šāmē ṣuḥu (SBV 293-4).

24. As read, the genitive construct state bittē either (a) retains its case-vowel, exhibiting the old-fashioned ending (as in OB II 165), or (b) exhibits crasis, bittī. One might instead read qa-ši, 'to the hands of Enlil'.

25. An alternative but less plausible reading is li-ša-du us-su-um-gal nippur at, 'let the dragon of Nippur become glad'.
THE TABLE REPORTEDLY FROM SIPPAR
(OR VA+BM)

The tablet here referred to as OB VA+BM comprises two contiguous fragments of a four-column tablet. The fragments were purchased separately in Baghdad in 1902 and are now housed in Berlin and London. The provenance of the Berlin piece was reported as Sippar (specifically Abu Habba) by the dealer in whose possession Bruno Meissner first saw it. While this provenance is thus not secure, neither is it unlikely, since for some years the antiquities market had been flooded with tablets from Sippar. The London piece arrived in the British Museum as part of a mixed collection of purchased tablets, among which are many Old Babylonian letters and legal documents, some omen texts and a few mathematical tablets. Most of these are certainly from Sippar. The orthography of the tablet is to a large degree consistent with that found in other literary and scientific texts suspected of having a north Babylonian provenance. So the dealer may well have given accurate information. The largest fragment, VAT 4105, is from the bottom edge of a tablet inscribed with four columns of text. According to Meissner, the lowest third of the tablet is preserved, which means that the original tablet contained about forty-five lines of text in each column, in all 180 lines. The smaller piece, BM 96974, is a thick flake from the reverse of the tablet, and thus provides a continuation of columns iii and iv of VAT 4105.

A. R. Millard, who first copied the London fragment, considered that it was a ‘virtual certainty’ that BM 96974 and VAT 4105 were parts of the same tablet but doubted that there was a possibility of a physical join. He noted that the width of the only column surviving complete on BM 96974, the left, tallied exactly with the width of column iv of VAT 4105, as measured by W. G. Lambert. The additional observation that the traces of the tops of two signs copied by Lambert in the last line of VAT 4105, column iii, exactly match the signs preserved at the same point on the first line of BM 96974, column iii (At. and Tu.), encouraged the supposition that the two pieces would in fact join at that point. When it became possible eventually to put this idea to the test, the fragments were offered up to each other and did indeed join as expected. A record of this join is published here in the form of a photograph of the reverse of the tablet taken to mark the occasion (Fig. 9). The tablet gives an account of Gilgamesh’s wandering in the wild and unknown country, and his encounters with the ale-wise and with the ferryman Sursunabu. It thus provides the text of episodes that in the late epic are mostly recounted in Tablet X. For this reason the tablet has often been referred to, without comment, as OB Tablet X. While no colophon survives, such a description is misleading. The Old Babylonian epic Ḫuru eli šarrī is certainly divided into tablets, of which we have Tablets II and III. The present tablet has the appearance of a library tablet, which suggests that it was not a scribal exercise like some of the other Old Babylonian Gilgamesh tablets, but it does not share the six-column format of the big tablets from Pennsylvania and Yale; the text it contains also displays a fondness for the construct state in final -u that is not a hallmark of the six-column tablets. On formal grounds, then, of outward appearance and literary style OB VA+BM is unlikely to belong to the same edition of the epic as the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets. Accordingly it is not sensible to speculate on what number tablet of a series it might be.

The text opens in column i with an episode that has no surviving counterpart in the Standard Babylonian epic. The poet describes how Gilgamesh survived while wandering in the wilderness, killing wild animals for food and clothing and, if I read correctly, digging wells for water (i 1’–4’). Šamaš speaks to him, warning of the futility of his quest for life (i 5’–8’). From this detail we learn that Gilgamesh’s wandering has the same purpose in this text as in the later version of the epic: to achieve immortality. Later, in his encounter with Sursunabu, Gilgamesh reveals that his search is for the survivor of the Flood, and it seems plausible that a meeting with the Flood hero is already his goal from the beginning of his wandering. Gilgamesh replies with great emotion that while he still has life he must use it to the full, against the day when he will see the sun no more (i 9’–15’). In column ii he encounters the ale-wise.

The two fragments were temporarily acquired at the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, on 6 July 1994 during the 41st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. I should like to take the opportunity of expressing my warmest thanks to Dr J. E. Curtis of the British Museum for arranging the transport of BM 96974 to Berlin, and to Frau Dr E. Kienelt-Brandt and Dr J. Marzahn of the Vorderasiatisches Museum for facilitating the join and arranging the photograph.
though one that is curiously absent from the Standard Babylonian epic at this point, she counsels him on the nature of man’s lot. Her advice is often considered as an encouragement of hedonism, but in fact it merely states that a man should content himself with a life of ordinary, domestic comfort, enjoying the simple pleasures that derive from plenty to eat and drink, clean clothes and a wife, and children and a wife (iii 6–15). Very similar advice is given in Ecclesiastes 9:7–9: ‘Come, eat thy bread in joy, and drink thy wine in the enjoyment of thy heart . . .’

Gilgamesh is too grief-stricken to consider the sense of what she says, and asks her whether she can help him find a way across the ocean to the immortal hero of the Flood, here known as Šúnaḫištim (iii 16–24; cf. SB X 72–7). As she begins her reply the text breaks off, but enough remains to show that, as in the Standard Babylonian epic, she points out that none has made that journey before (ii 25–28). And, as in the late epic, she must have directed him to Šúnaḫištim’s boatman, for when the Isin cuneiform Gilgamesh has already immobilized Sursunabu (Ur-l-samih) and is busy smashing the Stone Ones (iv 1; cf. SB X 106f). When his assailant returns from this task Sursunabu asks who he is and also gives his own name (iv 2–6). In Gilgamesh’s reply the Old Babylonian text lacks the long repetition of the wanderings already told to the ale-wife. Instead Gilgamesh reports his journey in the briefest terms.

He has come around the mountains by the ‘hidden road of the sunrise’ (iv 7–11). This phrase evokes the episode of the latest version of the epic in which Gilgamesh follows the path of the sun (SB IX 136–70). This is hidden, of course, because the sun’s journey during the night is dark and unknown to men. In the late epic the episode takes the form of a race against time under the mountains of Mīlu. Though the road to the edge of the world is associated with the passage of mountains here also, there is no way of knowing whether such a race through darkness was part of the story in Old Babylonian times. But the association of Šukuri, Sursunabu and Šúnaḫištim with a journey to the sunrise means at least that the poet was familiar with the tradition according to which the hero of the Flood lived at the edge of the world in the east.

Next Gilgamesh asks the boatman to show him the way to Šúnaḫištim (iv 12–13; cf. SB X 149–54). Sursunabu’s reply is badly damaged, but he seems to agree to take Gilgamesh in his boat (iv 14–18). After further thought, however, Sursunabu points out that the Stone Ones were the means of passage but now he breaks, so Gilgamesh must cut counting poles to effect a crossing (iv 19–20; cf. SB X 155–62). At this point the tablet breaks off, with space enough remaining at the end of column iv for Gilgamesh to have carried out Sursunabu’s instructions and set off with him in the boat (cf. SB X 163–83). The encounter with the Flood hero is thus reserved for the following tablet of the series, which still awaits discovery.

108 Some have considered the epic to be a source for Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth), even though the ale-wife’s counsel dropped out of the Babylonian poems between the Old Babylonian period and the first millennium; see J. de Sorsina, ‘L’aggravation du Qoheleet et l’origine de Gilgamesh’, Revue d’Assyriologie 30 (1976), pp. 318–23. A more cautious view is given by K. van der Toorn, ‘Rites of Gilgamesh in the Book of Qoheleth’ A reassessment of the interpretative sources of Qoheleth’, Hackett, pp. 503–14.

109 Car. II 11: (eben es saqin uppa) Sùnaḫišitim. The mountain is justified in the notes, ad loc.

110 According to the Sumerian Flood Story, ‘in the land of Dilmun, towards the sunrise’ (v. 260); see further Ch. 10, the introductions to SB Tablets IX, X and XI.
Selected translations

1950 E. A. Speiser, 'Tablet X: Old Babylonian version', *ANET*, pp. 89–90 (VAT 4105 only)
1969 A. K. Grayson, *ANET*, p. 507 (BM 96974 only)
1982 W. von Soden, *Das Gilgamesch-Epos, Reclam*, pp. 79–84
1989 S. Dalley, 'Tablet X (?): Myths from Mesopotamia', pp. 149–51
1992 M. Gallery Kovacs, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, p. 85, fn. 1 (iii 1–14 only)

Translation

i 1' [.] wild bulls, the aurochs of [.] ...
2' [he] clothed himself in their skins, eating their flesh.
3' Gilgamesh [dug] wells that never existed before.
4' [he] drank the water as he chased the winds.
5' Šamaš became worried, so he went down to him,
6' he spoke to Gilgamesh:
7' 'O Gilgamesh, where are you wandering?
8' You cannot find the life that you seek.'
9' Gilgamesh spoke to him, to the hero Šamaš:
10' After roaming, wandering through the wild,
11' within the Netherworld will rest be scarce?
12' I shall lie asleep down all the years,
13' but now let my eyes look on the sun so I am sated with light.
14' The darkness is hidden, how much light is there?
15' When may a dead man see the rays of the sun?

Lacuna. When the text resumes Gilgamesh is speaking to the ale-wife:

ii 0' [My friend, whom I love deeply,]
1' who with me went through every danger,
2' Enkidu, whom I love deeply,

144 Or, 'is the darkness far?'
3’ who with me went through every danger:
4’ he went to the destiny of mankind,
5’ I wept over him day and night.
6’ I did not give him up for burial—
7’ ‘Maybe my friend will rise at my cry!’—
8’ for seven days and seven nights,
9’ until a maggot dropped from his nostril.
10’ After he was gone I did not find life,
11’ as I wandered like a trapper through the midst of the wild.
12’ Now, ale-wife, I have seen your face,
13’ but I would not see death, that ever I fear.’
14’ The ale-wife spoke to him, to Gilgamesh:

iii
1  ‘O Gilgamesh, where are you wandering?
2 You cannot find the life that you seek:
3 when the gods created mankind,
4 for mankind they established death,
5 life they kept for themselves.
6 You, Gilgamesh, let your belly be full,
7 keep enjoying yourself, day and night!
8 Every day make merry,
9 dance and play day and night!
10 Let your clothes be clean!
11 Let your head be washed, may you be bathed in water!
12 Gaze on the little one who holds your hand!
13 Let a wife enjoy your repeated embrace!
14 Such is the destiny [of mortal men],
15 that one who lives [ . . . . . ]’
16 Gilgamesh [spoke] to her, [to the ale-wife:]
17 ‘Why, O ale-wife, do you talk [ . . . ]
18 My heart is sick for my friend [ . . . ]
19 Why, O ale-wife, do you talk [ . . . ]
20 My heart is sick for Enkidu [ . . . ]
21 You dwell, O ale-wife, on the shore [of the ocean,]
22 you are familiar with all [ . . . ]
23 Show me the way! [ . . . ]
24 If it can be done [I will cross] the ocean!’
25 The ale-wife spoke to him, [to Gilgamesh]
26 ‘There was not, Gilgamesh, one like you [ . . . ]
27 One who travels [ . . . ] who [ . . . ]
28 Nobody [ . . . . . . . ]’

Lacuna. When the text resumes Gilgamesh has fallen on the Stone Ones:
i 1' A parallel passage in the later text suggests that a list of wild animals will precede the next line (cf. SB X 259-61), and so the word "nišmu" is seen as referring to a mountain-dwelling ovid, as at Mari, where it is perhaps a chamois (see J.-M. Durand, NABU 1988/15, as also for the connections with "dišunu", "Habur dišunu", and Hititite ti-sa-na-u). Away from Mari, it appears in a proverbial saying handed down in an OB or MB tablet from Nippur: "A cow-horn cow-and-calf mother and child, she doesn’t take anything off you, neither milk nor milk, nor her flesh. And a man who gains nothing by not exerting himself—who will give anything to a l'" (BWL, p. 277, 8-11; for exegesis see Durand, op. cit.). In the present passage it is difficult to take "nišmu" (or nišmi) as a nominative, given the presence immediately before it of "niši" in the oblique case, and consequently I assume that it is the first of many examples in this text of a construct state in final "l"/u (see above, fn. 136).

i 3'–4' The restoration at the beginning of the couplet resurrects the old idea of CAD B (p. 336: [išerri]), but in a more appropriate stem and tense. In the next line I owe the reading [a]šīma to A. Westenholz. Note that if is provisional, because it is a tight fit in the space available, but so too is...
the ma of Meissner’s [me]tma. No more slender alternative occurs to me. Read so, the couplet continues the narrative of Gilgameš’s wanderings, which were already the subject of the preceding couplet. Gilgameš is also given credit for digging wells in the prologue (SB I 39). That passage also summarizes the wanderings that led him to Ūta-napišti (SB I 37–42) and so confirms the appropriateness of the restoration here. The digging of wells in remote places is also a feature of the journey to the Cedar Forest, of course (SB IV passim), but that is not the context here. For other evidence concerning the hero and wells see Ch. 3, the sub-section on Digging Wells. In the second half of l. 4 ‘chasing the winds’ is an image that aptly sums up the distance Gilgameš covered and the fact that his travels took him to all points of the compass. Since winds cannot be caught, the expression also hints at the futility of his quest.

15'. My translation of i-da-ak-ku-u-uu follows von Soden’s suggestion in ZA 53 (1959), p. 220, refined in the light of AtFm, p. 1550, daqabilim ‘sich hinabhegen’. CAD D proposes i-da-ab-ku-uu-si, ‘(the despair of Gilgameš) pained him’ (s.v. daskalis). Note that, according to Goetze, assimilation between a sibilant and the 3rd masc. sg. suffix should have yielded i-da-ak-ku-u-uu-i in a north Babylonian text; the present orthography he would view as ‘southern’ (cf. A. Goetze, RA 52 (1958), p. 138). The Old Babylonian omen texts from Sippar also show occasional intrusion of ‘southern’ spelling, with some tablets exhibiting no consistency in the use of signs (see Jeyes, OB Exegiopy, p. 5). Such peculiarities may have arisen from the use of southern originals as master copies or from other factors such as local variation in scribal training.

17’–8’. This couplet is repeated at iii 1–2.

10’. This line, much like Gilgameš’s speech, is difficult, and open to various interpretations. In the past the situation was aggravated by uncertainty as to what sign lay between a-ta-al and ki. Meissner (followed by Pinches) copied lu, but its transliteration, lu(?), indicates that he was not completely sure. According to Lambert’s copy the sign is lu, which suggests attalka ki dišlim, ‘after I have gone over the wild like a hunter’ (cf. dišilum, an expedition for hunting or reconnaissance: Grayson, RIMA 2, p. 175, 80–1; Tukultili-Ninurta II; Parpola, SAA 13, 17’; Sargon II). Pinches took the end of the line similarly, translating ‘as a wanderer’. But even if one accepts the orthographies a-ta-al-ku and da-li-im for attalka (which would normally be written a-ta-al-ku) and dišalum (better da-a-a-li-im or da-zi-li-im), one is still left with the suspicion that the I 3 stem of aškum is the expected form. Moreover, with regard to the sign in question, even on the photograph the horizontal wedges can be seen to run strongly through the upright wedge and on to the next (confirmed by personal collation). Though this next upright is partly overwritten by the initial oblique wedge of ki, it may nevertheless belong to the preceding sign and not to ki, which on this tablet is sometimes written in an abbreviated form, with only one upright visible. A good example of such an overlap (and of abbreviated ki) is the sequence ša ki in iii 26. Thus to me the sign between a-ta-al and ki is not ku but lu. Accordingly I follow K. Šteko’s analysis of the second half of the line as two infinitives in apposition, šalu . . . atalku(m) dišlim (ZA 42 (1934), p. 132). The syntax is unusual but unartistic. Though šalu is not so common before an infinitive as some other prepositions, examples do occur (see J. Āro, ŠuOr 26 (1961), pp. 258–9); and for two infinitives governed by a single preposition and not co-ordinated with -ma see CH rev. xxiv 71–3: pa-ru-su-še ma-tim a-na pa-ra-li-im ša-ab-lim šu-ša-li-im, ‘in order to determine the verdicts of the land, to set right the wronged’.

111’. Meissner’s original reading of the sign between tim and ku was kab. A reading sa-ka-šum was first proposed by Pinches. Thompson emended to kaš-ka-di (cf. Heidel, Speiser). Von Soden rejected kaš on the grounds that it was not a phonetic value in use in Old Babylonian times (OLZ 50 (1955), 515); in fact kaš is attested in the Old Babylonian period, though it is rare, e.g., VAS XVI
Dalley, Pettinato), and 'trapper' (Heidel, Speiser, Jacobsen). In SB I the word clearly refers to the hunter, and I take it thus here too.

3 i–ii. This couplet repeats i 7–8.

3 ii. There seems no option but to take hi-su-at-tu as hi-su-ad-du, an example of archaic orthography.

3 iii. The word marššum is rare indeed, found outside this line in SB XI (l. 211, 214, and 272), in a wisdom fragment from Ugarit (Lambert, BWL, p. 116, 4), and in the synonym list Explicit Malkš, which defines its meaning as 'wife' (A. Draffkorn Klimier, JACOS 83 (1963), p. 456, 173–4: m. = hi-su-tam, ša-la-su). The proposal of Tzvi Abusch that we should probably translate marššum in M III 13 not as 'wife', but as 'prostitute/harlot' or the like, is an idea arising from his highly contentious speculation on the development and function of the word (see Abusch, StudiarHebra, p. 9, fn. 38; ANES 22 (1993), pp. 3–17). It is better to give priority to the opinion of the ancient synonym list.

3 iv. The conventional restoration, going back to Meissner, is ši-piš, 'the task [of mankind]' (note that the spelling ši-piš is not likely, on the grounds that elsewhere on this tablet pi is written pī, in the northern convention: see above, fn. 133). To my eyes pī looked more likely. In any case šimūm is the more appropriate word: this line alludes to the function given to man by the gods at his creation, and thus the couplet rounds off Šedu's homily by returning to the subject matter which introduced it (iii 3–4). Gilgamesh is constantly reminded of his mortal destiny.

3 v. Or ša-ha-ad-pi-ša-mu . . .

3 vi. 17/19. Restore perhaps an-ni-tam.

3 vii. Restored after SB X I.

3 viii. 23–4. This couplet appears as in two in SB X 74–7 // 151–4, whence the restoration lášir. In I, 23 perhaps restore is-ti-im. Outside the formula PNI, ana šaššum ica-gá tâm ana PNS, in this text the dative independent pronoun is used without a preposition: see iv 5, 20.

3 ix. 26. Perhaps restore m-[a-ti-i-ma], 'ever before'.

3 x. If not nišuš then a-ši [s . . .], 'where . . . ?'

3 xi. iv 9. The emendations are those of Thompson (also Jensen and Schott, ZA 42, p. 134); if-ši-di-an-ni is nearer to what is written, but inferior in sense.

3 xii. No doubt with an eye to the common use of urukiša as a stock phrase in SB Gilgamesh, most take the word re-ad-em as the feminine singular of the adjective rāšum, i.e., for rāšum. There are two problems. First, the intruding vowel; second, the plane writing of that vowel. In ZA 53, p. 220, von Soden justified such an analysis by reference to the orthographies of feminine adjectives with an unnecessary anaptyctic vowel (sometimes marked plè, e.g., te-li-ia-ta-sum), collected by him in ZA 40 (1931), p. 226, in the Hymn to the Queen of Nippur (now W. G. Lambert, Krauss AIV, p. 173). This type of hypercorrect, pseudo-archaic orthography is now seen as typical of long literary prayers in late copies (see Lambert, AJO 19 (1959–60), p. 49), and the comparison is not germane. SB Gilgamesh occasionally uses words with unexpected ephemetic vowels but these are never written plè (see Ch. 9, the section on Some features of language and style), nor is OBVA + BM a text that ever writes a short unstressed vowel plè. For these reasons I suggest an alternative reading re-shám < rukos-sum, to hide' (see above, line 12–15); this was the first appearance of the verbal adjective (*paras).

3 xiii. 18. Reading šu-hi-ta-sum, 'he leapt forth', yields a word that does not fit the context easily. Von Soden suggested that the reference is to Ūta-naššuma's successful 'leap' from a mortal state into the eternal world of the gods (ZA 58 (1967), p. 192). Pettinato's translation, 'dove 'e saltato fuori, accosta la tua mano', presumes a reading at the end of the line lu tu-es-ša-ša-ta (similarly Millard, Iraq 26, p. 102), but von Soden's 'will ich dich heranbringen' is grammatically better. This volutaive form makes an imperative likely in the first half of the line: 'do this for me so that I can take you there'. Accordingly one might read šu-bi-bi-ta-sum < šilušum, an example of 'broken' orthography. Note that in the examples of such orthographies collected by B. Gronenborg (JCS 32 (1980), pp. 156–8), the expression of the expected syllable /CU/ by signs in the pattern of CA-CA is the most commonly occurring type and the second consonant is very often a sibilant. The verb šilušum is used of crossing a water-course from one bank to the other, not only those that can be leapt literally (palgi, in a proverb and homelidades: Lambert, BWL, p. 253–4, 9 and note), but also big rivers such as the Tigris and Lower Zab (TCL III 10: pali-ti-ta ša-taš-ta-ša-ta, Sargon II; Borger, Esarh., p. 45, 86: a-ta-piš ša-ba-bal-bi). In this analysis Sursasnu's speech is ironic: in the private knowledge that Gilgamesh has destroyed the boat's means of propulsion, Sursasnu invites him to 'make its (the boat's) ... leap across the ocean as if we were a ditch; then he will be able to take him to Ūta-naššuma.'

3 xiv. 19. Compare the Yale tablet, vaššu šu-addarum umešū (OB III 164; cf. also SB II 247). There is not room here for [sa-ad-bu]-1-ma, however, so I opt for the preterite.

3 xv. 20. Von Soden recently restored the name of Gilgamesh at the beginning of the line (Reclam*, p. 64, 22), but the following text seems to preclude this. Earlier he had suggested [ša-ma?] (ZA 58, p. 190). There is a trace of the tail of a low horizontal wedge running through the remaining vertical wedge at this point, just above the heads of the first two vertical wedges of or. Note the distinct forms of the 3rd masc. sg. dative pronoun in this text: here šu-lāšum, but after a preposition, lāšum (ii 14', iii 25, iv 4, 14, 21). Von Soden thought that the variation was caused by matters of rhythm (ZA 58, p. 192).

3 xvi. 21–4. The edge of the tablet has sustained damage since Millard copied it, with the result that all traces of šu, lu and at have disappeared, and is less well preserved than it was.

3 xvii. Cf. SB X 159–60. The exact meaning of the word partum (Sum, șigi-mu) has been disputed in detail by W. G. Lambert, who presents evidence in favour of its function as a paddle (JNES 33 (1974), p. 302). Two texts show that this object was what one used for keeping a boat afloat in the narrow of a river (Lambert, Love Lyricas, p. 116, A 7: partum), and for added motive power when navigating upstream against the current (W. Schramm, OR 43 (1974), p. 162, 21': șīq-mašu; SB Adapa). Both passages suggest a pole wielded to keep a boat out of the shallows. In the present text, the enormous length of the poles—one šeqāpa being 60 cubits, about 30 metres—implies that they were primarily envisaged as punting-poles long enough to reach the ocean floor. These were consequently immense pieces of wood, wielded by a mighty hero, and thus, in Lambert's words, 'not of normal navigation'. The form šeqāpa, with the distributive suffix -a, is discussed by M. A. Powell, who points out the parallel formations ammā, šeqāta and ubāna (ZA 72 (1982), pp. 93–4).

3 xviii. 28. As von Soden pointed out, the broken sign before kum could be lu, or lu (ZA 58, p. 192); he suggested [lu-ša-ta]-i-ka. In taking g-e-re-ti-[im] in this line as pr(i)tišum, literally 'ripples', rather than serrettum, '(nose)-rope', I follow W. G. Lambert, JNES 33, p. 302, who called attention to the use of the synonym tulā, 'breast', in the late parallel (SB X 161 // 167). The 'test' of a punting pole is probably to be understood as a round lump or bush attached to the bottom end (cf. Salonen, Wasserfahraupe, p. 104, s.v. tulā). Outside OB Gilgamesh the term serett purā is found in HH IV and similis in omen texts. The lexical entry šanuir.gi.mu = ser-er-pà-rà-si (HH IV 409) is unsatisfactory on philological grounds: though šakin.tišum means serrettum, '(nose)-rope', of course, the determinative argues for a reading širib, 'staff', and the Sumerian side of the equation looks suspect. The dictionaries are at odds over whether to pay attention to the determinative or not: CAD ignores
Middle Babylonian Tablets and Fragments

Eighteen tablets and fragments from the later second millennium are presented in this chapter as sources for the epic in the Middle Babylonian period. Only one of these sources, MB Boğ., was available when the Babylonian Gilgamesh was last assembled in a single book. As already explained in discussing the epic’s literary history, the Middle Babylonian tablets are a disparate collection of texts from different centuries and very different provenances. They are witness to a complex period in the epic’s transmission that was characterized by a considerable divergence between the various different versions spawned by the Old Babylonian editions of the earlier second millennium. In the absence of more coherent criteria, the eighteen tablets are ordered here so that tablets from Babylonia precede those from the West. Fragments from a given site are dealt with together. Thereafter the order is determined by place in the epic’s plot.

THE EXERCISE TABLETS FROM NIPPUR (MB NIPPUR)

The status of the Akkadian Gilgamesh epic as a standard copy book in the Late Bronze Age, within Babylonia as well as abroad, has become clearer with the discovery at Nippur of extracts from the epic on school exercise tablets of the Kassite period. So far at least two such extracts have been identified and two more are possibilities. They are presented here as MB Nippur 1-4.

The most intelligible of these exercise tablets are the two that can be securely identified as sources for the epic. They were excavated together on Tablet Hill at Nippur in 1949. The findspot was TB 34 B (Area TB, Locus 34, Level B). This is a much disturbed level of post-Old Babylonian occupation.1 Four other tablets came from the same findspot. Two of these

1 For this findspot see McCown and Haines, OIP 78, p. 69, fn. 21: “Levels B and A (see Pl. 65) were represented only in the narrow strips left by trenches of the previous expedition. These areas were small, isolated, and at the edge of the mound. Levels A and B cannot be dated [accurately] because they contained such a mixture of pottery.” The late Thorild Jacobsen recollected that this level ‘dates after OB and is probably MB’ (private communication).
can be identified as post-Old Babylonian exercise tablets on grounds of content. Only one is datable more exactly, 2N-T 83 to the Persian period, but this piece is now known to have been part of fill and thus has no bearing on the date of the others.

The fragment here referred to as MB Nippur, has been recognized as a source for the epic since it was excavated, but it has been properly published only in recent years. The distinctive format exhibited by this tablet—a literary extract on the long axis, a lexical one on the short—is more helpful in determining its date. It is a format common in exercise tablets from Nippur, but not typical of early Old Babylonian times. According to Civil's classification of lexical tablets this format is characteristic of Middle Babylonian or early Neo-Babylonian times. More precisely, many exercise tablets displaying this format were found in 1975 (13N) on the West Mound of Nippur in a stratified context dated to the reigns of the Kassite kings Kudur-Enlil and Sargatraši—Sūrāti (1254–1233).

The lentil-shaped tablet found alongside MB Nippur, and here known as MB Nippur₂, was published over fifteen years ago in transliteration but only properly discussed very recently. The format and content of the tablet are again post-Old Babylonian: the obverse and reverse contain different texts, the two extracts are aligned with different axes and on one side there are clusters of wedges ('nine-signs') of the kind found on the Kassite-period business exercises from Nippur.

The script and the orthography of MB Nippur₂ concur with a date in the Middle Babylonian period. Diagnostic here is the use of qa in MB Nippur, and the use in both extracts of mimation only where it can be expressed by one of the common CVm signs. It seems likely that the pieces are genuine documents of this period rather than later copies. Taken together they give reason to doubt Westenholz's supposition that Tablet Hill was not occupied by scribes from the reign of Samsuiluna until the eighth century. But if he is right, we can suppose nevertheless that the two tablets were written somewhere other than Tablet Hill, either on the West Mound or elsewhere, and, whether preserved by intention or accident, imported onto Tablet Hill at some unknown date, there eventually to be unearthed in their secondary, much disturbed context. For the purposes of this book the exact place of writing is not crucial.

For details see N. Veldhuis, BiOr 56 (1999), 390; further id., 'Kassite exercises: literary and lexical extracts', JCS 52 (2000), pp. 68–9.

4 M. Civil, 'Ancient Mesopotamian lexicography', in J. M. Sasson (ed.), Civilizations of the Near East, pp. 2305–14, esp. 2308: Type V. Not everyone agrees. Jacobsen held the view that this format 'turns up in late OB and perhaps later'. Shaffer, 'Sumerian Sources', described the fragment MB Nippur, as Old Babylonian. But these views were not informed by present knowledge.

5 Locus Wb 63 Floors 2–3. I owe this information to Jorge R. Atáša-Neves (University of Chicago).

6 See Veldhuis, BiOr 56, 390.

7 Note a-ur-tum (MB Nippur, 2 and 7), a-ša-tum (5) and dam-šu-tum (MB Nippur, 2), but mu-a-da (MB Nippur, 2), e-mu-qa (3), and ī-as-qar-ti (6).

8 See A. Westenholz, Studies Lemberg, p. 445, who for this reason thought of MB Nippur, that 'we may be dealing with a [Late Babylonian] exercise copy of a Middle Babylonian original'.

MB Nippur

Though the hand is practised, errors of omission and commission mark out the scribe of this tablet, A. 29934, as a learner.¹⁰ The seven lines of text preserved on the obverse are taken from an episode well known from Tablet I of the Standard Babylonian epic, in which the gods find a solution to the problem posed by Gilgamesh’s misuse of his royal power in Uruk. On this occasion the present version offers a fuller text. The suggestion is put to the divine council that the mother goddess, Arruru, should be summoned and instructed to create a being who would rival Gilgamesh, so that the city of Uruk might have peace. I suspect that this speech is to be placed in the mouth of Ea, who habitually solves crises with this kind of initiative.¹¹ Arruru is duly summoned and told her task, either by Anu or by Enlil, who are the speakers of these lines in various versions of the later text. Though the language of the fragment is echoed in SB 1 94–8, in which Arruru, having answered the summons, is given her instructions to create Gilgamesh’s counterpart, namely Enkidu, only ll. 5 and 7 have exact counterparts in the SB epic. This is because, on the one hand, the speech I ascribe to Ea is missing from the later text, and, on the other, the text of MB Nippur breaks off one line into the instructions. These were no doubt realized by a repetition of the precative lines in the imperative and I have restored the translation accordingly. A comparable sequence of suggestion and narrative realization, also involving Ea and the mother goddess, is found in the poem of Anzu, which can act as a partial model for our passage:

²²


Ninīšku opened his mouth to speak, saying a word to Anu and Dagan:

‘Let them summon Bēlet-īlī, the sister of the [great] gods, the expert one, counsellor of the gods, [her] brothers! Let them proclaim her supremacy in the [assembly,] let the gods do [her] honour in their assembly! The matter that is in my mind to her [I will tell]! They summoned Bēlet-īlī, the sister of the [great gods,] the expert one, counsellor of the gods, [her] brothers, Etc., etc.

¹¹ As in Atra-šasis and the Descent of Utar: see Ch. 13, the commentary on SB 1 96. ¹² Collated.
This passage is also one in which Ea's initiative results in the mother goddess supplying an individual who will resolve a crisis of misused power. Her son Ninurta, already born, will be a match for the usurper Anzu just as Enkidu will be for the tyrant Gilgameš.

A 29934 (2N-T 79)  MB Nippur

此前的公开报道

1994  R.K. Tourneau and A. Shaffer, *Épopée de Gilgameš*, p. 49, fn. 43 T'r

Text

obv.
1 [^[a-ru-ru li]-i-su-ù ra-bi-[tam]]
2 [śi-ib-ni-ma] a-ṣi-lam ma-a-da
3 [li-ib-ni ma-hi] lā la da-an e-mu-qa
4 [li-ti-li]-i-[r]-ta-an-na-an-na uruk lā-li-šu ti-[iḫ]-šu ti-[iḫ]
5 [^[a-ru-ru is]-i]-u-š(-i) a-ḫa-lam // SB 194
6 [^[a-nu-num] (or *^e-nu-li*) -a-na ši]-ti-ma iz-zu-gar-ti
7 [at-ti-ta]-i-[ma]-i [^[a-ru]-a]-r(u)/(s) tab-ni-i a-ṣi-lam // SB 195

rev.

giš-list (from *Hh III*–VII?), almost totally destroyed

Translation of the obverse

1 [^[let them summon [Aruru], the great [one],]
2 [she it was created] numerous mankind.
3 [Let her create] his [equal], to be one mighty in strength,
4 [let] him vie [with him] and so let Uruk be rested!]
5 They [summoned Aruru], the sister,
6 [Anu (or Enlil)] said to her:
7 [^[you it was], O Aruru, who created mankind,

A continuation of 2 lines can be restored as follows:

[^[create now his equal, to be one mighty in strength,]
[let him vie with him and so let Uruk be rested!]

Notes

1. Here and in SB 194 Aruru is the 'great one' not only because she is important but also because, as a form of the mother goddess, she is the gods' senior, a position formalized by her epithet 'big sister of Enlil' (see below, on l. 5). In short, *nābitū* implies that she is very old. Her counterpart, Anu, commonly receives the same epithet for the same reason, the sky being self-evidently very ancient.

2. The use of *māda* to qualify *nābitū* can only be understood if the noun is collective (cf. already Tigay, *Evolution*, p. 192). Cf. below, on l. 7.

3–4. This couplet compares with a triplet in the later text: *enînna bini zikirši / ana um šilàtum li mekt[i] / lāššarumma Uruk lātapat[a] (SB 196–8). Avoid restoring *zikirši* in l. 3 of the present text because I understand it to mean Ea's idea, for reasons given in the commentary, ad loc., and I presume Ėa is speaking. The restored word *mād[i]rtum* has the advantage of finding an echo in SB 197 but other synonymous words are possible.

5. The emendation follows the later text: *Ārāru isti lātūtu* (SB I 94). Aruru's title of 'sister' is documented for Sumerian and bilingual texts by A. W. Stöbberg, *TCIII*, p. 74 (*Lugal 413*); there she is typically the (elder) sister of Enlil. In Babylonian texts the mother goddess is 'sister' of all the gods: SB Anzû 1 67 // 172, quoted above, W. von Soden, *ZA* 68 (1978), p. 68, OB Aramu-taššu 296; *^[m-a-m]/-a-[e]-a-s[i]-i[*u]-u (cf. Tigay, op. cit.); note also, in another account of the creation of man,* *be-let-揭示 aburat[ni] illa[a] mād[i]rtum* (W. R. Mayer, *ORNS* 56 (1987), p. 56, 11, 31), where it is again Ea who so addresses her.

6. The restoration of Anu is encouraged by the certainty in the later text that these words are spoken by him (SB I 100: *zišur Šar Anīm*). Though one might have expected *ana ššimmu*, it is difficult to escape the restoration *ana ššimmu*.

7. Jacobsen has suggested that *anāšlām* here, and in the late text (SB 195: *zārātuštrā bānu anâšlām*), should be understood to refer to Gilgameš, 'in the Old Babylonian sense of "city ruler"' (*Studia Sumerica*, p. 235, fn. 8). This seems an unlikely sophistication, especially in the light of *anāšlām māda* in the parallel line (l. 1).

MB Nippur

The lenticular tablet IM 57836 contains on the reverse a unilingual extract from *Hh V* and on the obverse three lines of Babylonian Gilgameš. T.B. Veldhuis, who made this identification from a cast, these lines evoked the episode in which the scorpion-man wishes Gilgameš well for his journey on the path of the sun. However, the match is far from exact, for it presumes in l. 1 a combination of SB IX 128 and 131 and apparently also the omission of material counterpart to SB IX 132–3. Veldhuis supposed that MB Nippur-2 both exhibit a text that is relatively far removed from the Standard Babylonian version. With MB Nippur-2, we have seen that the relationship between the epic as represented by that extract and the Standard Babylonian text is more intimate than at first one might think, and for this

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12 There also exists an unpublished copy of the late J.R. Finkielstein, from which ll. 2–4 were quoted by Shaffer, 'Sumerian Sources', p. 23, fn. 3.

reason one may seek a context for the extract on MB Nippur, that makes for a better match than the episode of the scorpion-man.

The classic context for well-wishing in the epic is the long preparations for the journey to the Cedar Forest, during which the heroes are blessed by the elders of Uruk, by Gilgameš’s mother, the goddess Ninsun, and by the young men of Uruk. In the light of a mention of Šamaš alongside Gilgameš in l. 1 of this extract, the most probable context is Ninsun’s appeal to Šamaš for her son’s safety on his journey, a monologue that in the late version extends over more than seventy lines (SB III 46–118). Ninsun’s speech remains fragmentary in places and is interrupted by at least one lacuna, so it is very possible that the extract copied out on MB Nippur had a close counterpart in SB Tablet III.

It is interesting that all six excerpt tablets extant from the preceding centuries are witnesses to some part or other of the Cedar Forest episode (OB Schøyen 2, OB Nippur, OB Harmal 2, OB IM, OB Ishchali). Clearly the tale of the heroes’ expedition against Humbaba appealed to apprentice scribes in the Old Babylonian period like no other part of the epic. It would not be surprising to find another extract from that episode in Kassite-period Nippur.

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**MB Nippur**

**Previous publication**

1999 N. Veldhuis, *BiOr* 56, 391

**Text**

**obv.**

1 i-na-an-na AŞamaš(uni) 4bil[.m]es x x x x ‘Now, O Šamaš, Gilgameš . . .

2 damI-la qa-[i]m[ x x x x]

3 sa-l-mi-2 lu-2 [li-ik . . . .]

(b) lines of repeated ‘nine’-signs

**rev.**

**Obv.**

Hh II 1–4

**GILGAMESH**

Gilgameš was calling to him.

**MB Nippur**

**Note**

1. Falkowicz read the hero’s name as 4gil[ga]m[eš], Veldhuis as 4gil-bi-ga-[ . . . .]. The traces of the broken signs after 4bil(qaš.bi) do not read ga.mes to my eyes [m]es looks certain as the first sign after bil. Comparable spellings also occur in the third and first millennia (see Ch. 2, spellings no. 4f-g).

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**MB Nippur**

The lenticular tablet CBS 14167 has the opening of Hh II on the reverse and a single line mentioning Gilgameš on the obverse. The words are not a full line of poetry and are not paralleled in the extant epic. However, in a text where Gilgameš is often in dialogue with Enkidu and other persons there are many occasions when such a phrase would be very suitable.

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**CBS 14167**

**MB Nippur**

**Previous publication**

2001 N. Veldhuis, ‘Kassite exercises: literary and lexical extracts’ *JCS* 52, pp. 72 and 88

**Text**

obv.

4bil-ga.mes i-ša-ri-u

rev.

Hh II 1–4

**UM 29-16-606**

Is an oblong fragment inscribed only on the obverse. About one third of the tablet is missing at the left side. The fragment of text preserved on it perhaps mentions Enkidu but the last line is reminiscent of OR Amm. I 30, where the gods are also in a state of confusion: pa-ab-ru i-qi-gu i-[qi]-du-ru da-al-ša-ma, ‘the Igigi were assembled, becoming despondent in their confusion’. Though the present lines might describe the consternation of the gods at the hubris of Gilgameš and Enkidu, there is no passage of this sort in the extant epic and the fragment remains doubtful as a source for the Babylonian Gilgameš.
THE UR TABLET (MB UR)

The Middle Babylonian tablet of Gilgamesh from Ur was first published by C. J. Gadd in 1966. The exact archaeological provenance of the piece is not recorded. Gadd records that it "was found during the excavations at Ur, but in circumstances unknown". Though I adhere to the convention of calling it the Ur tablet, we cannot be entirely certain that the tablet was excavated at the site of Ur itself. If it was not found in controlled excavation, it could have come from anywhere. The tablet is complete except for the bottom corners, and inscribed with sixty-nine lines of text, thirty-five in a single column on the obverse and thirty-four in a single column on the reverse. While we are fortunate in that the piece is largely whole, the tablet has nevertheless sustained a good deal of surface damage, and remains one of the most difficult to read of all the sources for the Babylonian epic. Happily the text preserved on MB Ur for the most part runs parallel, with some differences, mostly minor, with ll. 90–171 of Tablet VII of the Standard Babylonian edition.

The episodes retailed on MB Ur begin with Enkidu on his deathbed at dawn (1–2). In tears he recalls those he holds responsible for introducing him to civilization, namely the hunter and the prostitute. The former he curses in brief, invoking Šamaš to deny the hunter the same importance as his peers (3–6). Enkidu blames the hunter for his own failure to match up to Gilgamesh. I take this to mean that Enkidu understands that his premature demise will deny him the achievements and reputation won by his friend. The hunter is at fault presumably because he set in train the whole sequence of events that led to Enkidu’s early death. Enkidu then asks Šamaš to ensure that the hunter enjoys no success in the field, so his earnings suffer (7–8). The significance of this curse may be twofold, with application not only to the specific individual that introduced Enkidu to Šamhat but also, by way of

18 Further studies of major portions of the text have been made by B. Landsberger and W. G. Lambert: see the bibliography given below.

Foster has proposed an additional level of meaning in suggesting a play on ēru, ‘friend’, and ēru, ‘food allowance’. He translated qatīma maša ēru as ‘may he not attain what will feed him’ (‘Gilgamesh: sea, love and the ascent of knowledge’, Enayo Paps., p. 37), but this seems, in my view, to stretch maša beyond its meanings, ‘to be sufficient, enough’, ‘to be equal to (something), as competent as (someone)’.

social commentary, to others engaged in the same trade. These people, whom the epic shows to be lone figures working at the fringe of civilization, were perhaps considered beyond the pale socially, much like uncouth backwoodsmen. Certainly, hunters were typically poor and without prospects, as we learn from the apodosis of a physiognomic omen that characterizes an individual as sa-a-a-ad išappin (šukk) adi (en) tla bale (gal) tlaš (gin), 18 ‘he is a hunter: he will grow poor, he will amount to nothing’. Consequently such men were not expected to achieve the positions of importance to which their peers might aspire.

Next Enkidu vents his fury on the prostitute (9–13). She is given a fuller treatment, no doubt because the ambivalence of her social position was much more fertile ground for comment. First the unpleasant aspects of a prostitute’s life are described (14–40) and then, following Šamaš’s intervention (41–7), the rewarding ones (48–58).

The text then continues with Enkidu’s relation to Gilgamesh of his dream of the night before, describing how in the midst of a cosmic thunderstorm a monstrous figure had grabbed him and overpowered him (59–69). In SB Tablet VII Enkidu’s assailant is revealed to be Death, and the dream develops into the famous description of the Netherworld. In MB Ur, however, the scribe runs out of space on the tablet just as Death lays hold of Enkidu. Possibly he continued the episode on another tablet, subsequently lost or as yet undiscovered, but the format of MB Ur suggests that it is a scribal exercise and not a library tablet. The number of mistakes in orthography and grammar that the tablet contains is rather high in comparison with both the Old Babylonian six-column tablets (OB II and III) and the Standard Babylonian library copies, and this, together with the lack of colophon, would tend to confirm the identification of MB Ur as the work of an apprentice.

The language of the tablet is good Middle Babylonian, with regular inflections and some dialect forms. On the basis of the handwriting and spelling Gadd suggested that the date of the tablet was late Middle Babylonian, perhaps ‘the early eleventh century BC’ when the kings of the Second Isin Dynasty were active at Ur. The dated Middle Babylonian archival texts from Ur are spread from 1292 to 1079 BC, with the greatest concentration of tablets falling within the rough span 1250–1110. This evidence suggests that Gadd’s estimate may be a little low. But since one cannot even be sure of Ur as the provenance it is futile, on present evidence, to speculate further.

The date of the tablet raises the question of the relationship of the text represented by MB Ur to the Standard Babylonian edition traditionally ascribed to the Middle Babylonian scholar Sinšu-šu-kininni. The similarity of the Ur tablet to the late text is not so great as to suggest that it is the identical edition. The number of differences between MB Ur and the late text is much greater than between variant manuscripts of the latter. In the Standard Babylonian text there are many instances where single words differ from their
first on Gilgameš, who had been patiently sitting in front of Enkidu while the latter cursed and blessed the prostitute in turn. The Standard Babylonian version omits all mention of Gilgameš at this point, and instead stresses Enkidu’s troubled state of mind.

All this suggests that MB Ur has to be regarded as a witness to a version of the epic distinct from the one that became standard in the libraries of the first millennium. This presents us with two alternative hypothetical solutions, depending on whether we view Sin-šarrum-unnin’s work as petrified from the twelfth century or as subject to later revision. First, MB Ur might be descended from a tradition that was very similar to the text reworked by the great redactor of Ur-Ashur—perhaps the very text itself—which survived into the twelfth and eleventh centuries at Ur, if nowhere else, but was later abandoned in favour of the Standard Babylonian version. Second, MB Ur might represent an early recension of Sin-šarrum-unnin’s edition, which could have been subject to continuing minor editorial work until perhaps as late as the eighth century.

It would be foolish to claim that with this new edition a definitive decipherment of MB Ur has been achieved. Though progress has been made, as anticipated by Gadd in his original edition, by the bringing to the task of several pairs of what he called ‘younger eyes’, a comparison between the copy published here and the others made recently by Lambert and Westenholz demonstrates that there is still disagreement in the reading of some traces.

As the signs appeared to me and Westenholz, though Lambert’s copy indicates that he read 𒈦𒈬Ub-bu, with Landsberger.

### Other translations

- 1969 A. K. Grayson, *ANET*, pp. 505–6 (ll. 1–6, 15–27 only)

### Translation

1. At the very first light of dawn,
2. Enkidu lifted up his head, weeping before Šamaš,
3. Before the rays of the sun his tears were flowing:
4. ‘I hereby appeal to you, Šamaš, concerning the hunter, the trapper-man.
5. As for the “shackler”, who did not let me be a match for [my friend],
6. may the hunter not be a match for his friend!
7. May his income be cut! Diminish his earnings!
8. May his share (of the profits) be cut in your presence!’
After he had cursed the hunter to his heart's content,
he decided to curse the harlot also.

Come, Šamšat, I will determine a destiny for you,
I will curse you with great curse,
my curses shall afflict you swiftly and soon!

May you not find a household to delight in!
may you not sit down in the young women's chamber!
May the ground disfigure your fine-looking garment!
May the drunkard smear with dust your festive gown!
May you never acquire a house with utensils and pots,
... of the [potter!]
... Šamšat, may your... man not acquire a pure...
May [ ] the table, the people's abundance and pride, not be set in your house!
May the bed you delight in be the bench of a [ ]!
May the crossroads of the potter be where you sit!
May the ruined houses be where you bed down!
May the lee of the city wall be where you stand!
May brier and thorn skin [your] feet!
May drunk and sober strike [your] cheek!
May [the rabbit] of the street congregate in your brother!
[In your tavern] may there be mirth!
[May... ] be plaintiff, [may she] claim against [you!]
[May the] builder [not plaster the roof of your house!]
[In your bed-chamber may] there lie [wild] dogs!
[... may no] banquet [take] place!

Traces of 2 lines

rev.

[. . .]x t x x a l-rí-im-[a-k]?

[. . .] t x x x a l-rí-im-[a-k]?

[. . .] t x x x a l-rí-im-[a-k]?

rev.
45 [.....] Enkidu, the animals.....
46 May [.....] the prostitute.....
47 You [.....] how will you go up?

48 'Come, Šamšat, I shall determine a destiny for you,
my mouth that cursed you shall return and bless you:
May governors and noblemen love you,
may he who is one league (distant) slap his thigh!
May he who is two leagues (distant) shake out his locks,
may no soldier be slow to undo his belt for you!
May he give you finger rings and necklace,
with [multiple] ear-rings may he deck your ears!

57 May Ètar, most able of the gods, send you in
to a man whose household is well off, whose storage [bins are heaped] high!
On your account may the first wife be deserted, the mother of seven!
Gilgamesh was sitting before him.

 Mulling over what was on his mind,
(Enkidu) spoke to him:

59 [.....] All (that I saw), my friend, in the dream of this night:
the heavens thundered and the earth gave echo,
with me standing (there) between them.

61 There was a man, his expression was grim,
his face was like a ravening Anzu-bird.
62 [His] hands were a lion's paws,
[his] claws were an eagle's talons.

69 He seized me by the hair and overpowered me.

Notes
1. In the SB text this line becomes mimnû mô li ina namûrî, and is standard repertoire in the second half of the epic (see Ch. 13, the commentary on SB VII 90).

2–3. For other examples of this standard couplet see SB VI 82–3 and commentary.

4. The word amḫurka utilizes the 'performative' preritice (for this in Gilgamesh see SB III 11 and commentary).

5. The verb lâtu is commonly used to describe the function of a râppû, a kind of wooden shackle, perhaps a neck-stock, with which prisoners of war could be restrained (on rab ré = râppû lâtu see George, Topog. Texts, p. 304). The use here of the participle, apparently to describe the hunter, suggests that the râppû was also an instrument used in hunting.

6. Gadd and Lambert both copied the first two signs of the line as GIS'HUR. Landsberger interpreted these as lô-î-î-ḫû (properly šûrû), and thus sought a line different from that preserved in the SB text. However, there seems to me (and to Westendorp) to be more to the first sign than three wedges. Accordingly I am encouraged to read the text in the same way as the SB, though in doing so one is forced to accept the spelling šar-su-at for šarrat (cf. a comparable spelling in l. 16). To my eyes the sign before âš in the line, is unrecognizable as it stands; I assume that it is ma written over a partly erased âš, and again seek to reconcile the MB text with the SB version.

11–13. For a parallel to the formula used to introduce the curse see the passage of Ètar's Descent quoted in Ch. 10, the introduction to SB Tablet VII (on 100–5). The form šama reached with ephemerical vowel, is literary for šamâ (see Ch. 9, the section on Some features of language and style). The rare word isiru, the counterpart of the SB version's isuru, appears to be an *ipris formation from šu(m)er (see AHj, p. 1564).

15. This curse ensures the ostracism of the prostitute from the company of her peers. In the context of the preceding line, it excludes her from the normal family life which provided Babylonian women with social position and protection. There are four badly damaged signs between inâ and kikî$mâ, only the last of which is readily identifiable: though it has sustained some interior damage, the outline shape of it fits either î or û (note that SB has inâ $[m]. From the point of view of sense, Gadd's $î (for û), dam] is not likely, since the šamâm in the typical haunt of the prostitute, not of respectable family women. Landsberger read â-x-x. Lambert's reading, ki2 gi-re-at, is not wholly...
borne out by the traces: the second and third signs are not compatible in my view. In Babylonian literature the archetypical place of abode of young women is the malatuš (MB mališku), the private part of the house to which the only man granted access was the husband. No other building or chamber is so repeatedly associated with ardaytu (M. J. Geller, *AFO* 35 (1988), p. 15, II 36, 38, 40: *Ardat ši incantation; LKU 43 obv. 6; E. Reiner, *JNES* 33 (1974), p. 224, 8; syncretistic hymn to Nanlil; *CT* 16 9126-7; *Uduqjal IV*, MacMillan, *BA* V, p. 620, rev. 20-1 // SHB 58, 14-15; cf. Cohen, *Lamentations*, p. 618). However, this word is only possible if one emends to *ma-ša-a-ki* ša ardaytu. It may be that what the scribe actually wrote was *ma-ša-a-šu* ardaytu. Though young women no doubt frequented watered places daily, to draw water and socialize, nevertheless malšitu does not sit happily with the qualification ardaytu, and it seems to me that banning the prostitute from the local well, as it were, would not be the most direct way of describing her exclusion from the company of respectable women. For the moment it is safest to conclude that the traces remain without a secure decipherment.

16. It has been customary to read the first word su-nu-ki, following Gadd's original decipherment. In a MB text which observes regular inflections, I am not convinced that zinšiku, 'your lap', can be accusative, unless one takes it as a deviant form of hymno-epic: zinšiku. The second line of the couplet is concerned with clothing, and so to my mind a garment of some kind is best expected in the first. The adjective damšitu is in any case not common for a part of the body, let alone the prostitute's lap, but it is the conventional qualification of good-quality fabric (note especially pu-ba-tu damšitu in the synonym list *CT* 18 11 ii 16–17). Although šinānu can designate a garment in administrative texts, in literature it is very rare in such usage. Accordingly I read su-ba-tiš as erroneous for su-bātiš, and see in the spelling the same phonetic phenomenon that was observed in I 8, *ba-su-a-ta* for *ba-ra*. The third word in the line was read qa-lu-a-ta-[m], 'mud; sediment; (beer) dregs', by Landsberger, Foster and Lambert. To my eyes the second sign cannot be *du* but is very possibly another *qa* (Westenholz's copy agrees), which makes the word qašqaru the most likely candidate for restoration. The ground soils the prostitute's finery because, on occasions when more comfortable accommodation is lacking, it is there that she must ply her trade (as also implied in I 24). In both lines of this couplet the poet draws attention to the irony of the prostitute's situation: her job requires her to look attractive, it can also require her to get her finery dirty.

17. Foster reads the first word lā-biš-š, but what remains of the first sign rules this out; labāš šinnātš is also found in SB VIII 48. The penultimate word was tentatively read tu-[r]-eš;[t]-eš;[t]-aš by von Soden, *AHw*, p. 1373, s.v. širū, a hapax legomenon which he derived from arš, 'to vomit'. However, the traces seem to rule this out: there is space for four signs, not three, and the third of these seems to have the right shape for *šu* (cf. Lambert's copy). Thus the sordid picture of the drunkard puking over the hapless prostitute must be replaced by the graphic image of her rolling around with her drunken customer in a cloud of *kar-is*, the dust stirred up in the course of conducting her business in the open.

18–19. Though bit udāši can be a storeroom for household equipment and furniture (as in the title of the functionary ištum bit udāši), the point of this couplet is surely that the prostitute will not have a house full of dishes, pots and pans, and the nice things a housewife traditionally likes to acquire (cf. I 144). In this regard it is interesting that counterpart of the simple bit udāši in the SB text is *bit? .. * a bandāš, 'a house full of ... and lovely things' (I 111). The first word of the second line seems to be in apposition to bit udāši, despite being nominative, but I have not found a suitable decipherment. The SB version is again preserved only in the latter half of the line but seems to be different here too.

20. What precedes iltu šiš is all very doubtful; the line does not tally well with the later version, which is, in any case, also only partly preserved.

21. The phrase *ša-muḫ šiš* elsewhere occurs as an epithet of cereal crops, *šišaka* (Lambert, *BWL*, p. 158, 16: Tamir: and Date Palms); here, together with *šušu*, it apparently refers to food set out on the tray or table (cf. in the late version, *ša-ša-šiš haššša*; SB VII 114). The traces at the end of the line favour *ša šušu bišī* as much as *ša šušu bīšī* (see below in l. 28). As a whole this line looks much too long, and one might have expected a division after *ša-muḫ šiš*. However, the line is retained as a single one (with omission of *šušu*) in the SB version (I. 114). The significance of the line appears to be that the prostitute, shunned by society, will not find guests prepared to eat in her company (cf. I 133).

22. The word šinnātu is treated in HB IV 147 and Nabûnû IV 209: *ša šašša dīn mu-tam* (MSL, p. 163; cf. XVI, p. 84). The significance of the Sumerian term appears to be that this is a bed for single occupancy, and its use in the present context thus implies that the dakhirum is the place where the prostitute is to sleep, rather than where she entertain clients. The term dakhirum, in Sumerian da.qa.na and daggan, is most recently discussed by P.-A. Beaulieu, who translates 'room, bedroom, private quarters' (ZA 82 (1992), pp. 101–3) — it is something typically occupied by women and old men. Its association in šišpu with parts of the door has encouraged the translations 'Türöffnung' (*AHw*) and 'porch'; but, like its Sumerian counterpart, it can be a place where one sleeps. In the NB document from Uruk which prompted Beaulieu's discussion, a dakhirum is occupied by a temple slave (ZA 82, p. 99 = YOS XIX 110, 7). That is the point here: the prostitute must make do with very inferior sleeping accommodation. In the present context the dakhirum appears to be what she sleeps on, rather than in, and a translation 'bedroom' would be too broad.

23. The 'crossroads of the potter' refers to a junction of roads in the potter's quarter (so Foster), probably traditionally a poor neighbourhood, and maybe outside the urban area proper, near the clay-pits (cf. Oppenheim's remarks in *Or* 17 (1948), p. 41, fn. 4).

24. Gadd and Landsberger read the first word bar-ba-tu. With Foster and Lambert I follow CADD in reading bar-ba-tum, the plural of barbütu. Von Soden now analyses it as the plural of the adjective harbu 1 (AHw, p. 1559); on barbütu, 'uncultivated land', see recently M. Stol, *BSA* 54 (1988), p. 173 (sc. eššip). The form maššatib, with epenthetic vowel, is literary for maššatib but results in an unsatisfactory dactylic at the end of the line; the SB text offers a trochee, the plural maššatibāš.

25. The shaded ground below the city wall was a traditional place for the prostitute to attract customers. See the ogistic OB cult-song of Ibār: *ṣu-šu ut a-li-ba-nu pu-ur-ha ša-rim ma a-na gi-il-li du-ru-im in ni-liš*, 'gather together the young men of your city and let us go to the shade of the wall' (W. von Soden, *Or* 60 (1991), p. 340, 13–14); for a parallel passage in Ibār's Descent see Ch. 10, the introduction to SBVII (I 102–4).

28–9. This couplet is not present in the SB text. In l. 28, as Lambert noted, before su-qa a reading ina is in conflict with the scribe's habitual writing ina. However, the scribe does use both ina (II 3, 5, 66) and ana (56, 62), so the reading ina is not ruled out absolutely. In fact, it may already have occurred at the end of l. 21. The last word of the line can also be read *iš*-de-eš-piš; I agree with Lambert in elucidating this ideppir (II 1) by reference to the verb used in the I/1 stem in Tablet I of the late version to describe the thronging of wild animals at the water-hole (SB I 111 // 176) and the jostling of the crowd congregated around Eškiddu, when newly arrived in Uruk (SB I 253 // II 105). NA manuscripts of these lines spell the verb ambiguously, *idişsip or tişsip*; but the LB manuscripts offer *tişsip not ideppir*. Perhaps the first radical became unvoiced over time.

30. The emendation relies on SB VII 120. For šaššā with the nuance of 'to make a claim in law, sue', see *AHw*, p. 1196, G 13 (cf. *CAD* S2, p. 155, 'to summon' in legal contexts). The person who sues the prostitute is female (*bātiš*.)

31. The restoration at the very beginning of the line is traditional, going back to Landsberger. The evidence for the roof as the object of the verb *šuru* is now collected in *CAD S*, p. 228 (see also
hand, comprising four finger-rings each joined by a chain of worked gold to a wrist bracelet (two exemplars can be seen in Muayad Damerji, Grober Assyrischer Königenaen aus Nimrud. Jahrbuch des Kümisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums 45 (1996), p. 32, fig. 40, middle right). The effect is of gold fingers or talons stretching like a hen's foot over the back of the hand, and this might conceivably be what is meant by ṣapru. An alternative solution might be that the well-off prostitute, and maybe other women, adorned their fingernails (ṣapru) with gold leaf or some other expensive material. It may be significant, though, that the SB version has a different text, reading instead aruru ṣapru a ṣābūṭu (l. 157). One motive for altering a received text is a failure to understand what it means.

The word aruru-ri appears in the SB version and elsewhere as aruru-mu, a term most recently discussed by J. M. Durand, NABU 1992/34, who presents evidence from Mari that it means 'connexions annexes', revising his earlier view that it signified granulated decoration (ARM XXI, pp. 231–2). As a qualification of ear-rings this word probably signifies an elaborate piece of jewellery with several pendants or other component parts. Either the scribe of MB Ur has inadvertently reversed the first two signs of what may have been an unfamiliar word or the word is a reduplication, *aruru*. The word qualifies angšusu as a genitive, for angšusu can only be an object of limellu in status constructus with old-fashioned Aslašu in -u. It is not the only grammatical problem in this line. Von Soden already anticipated the new, but admittedly obvious, decipherence ururu (leże ete ane Dehenen). The masculinic possessive suffix is a bad hater, but one that is repeated with ak[šu]-mi-ba in E. S.

56. The reading ku-su-nu-ri seems unavoidable: from the traces of the first sign [k]-mu-ri does not look possible. I agree with Lambert in viewing this, a hapax legomenon, as a variant of ganīnu, which, as well as storehouse, also denotes the home where one’s family lives (as in Erra IV 84, 99, 102) and even the household or family itself (LKA 52, 19). The word before it was read ku-ku-nu-ba by Lambert, but, to my eyes the damaged traces of the end of this word are not compatible with such a reading though not absolutely clear, the third and fourth signs seem to be the same shape, i.e. ku-un-nu-ri. If this decipherence is correct the scribe is guilty of graphity. The ganīnu kunu is a secure, permanent family home, exactly what the prostitute lacks when she has no wealthy patron, as the curses have earlier repeatedly stated. Here, if we take il 56–8 together, a career is envisaged for her in life, through which the intervention of Eštar, the patron of prostitutes, she attracts the devotion of a rich man who installs her in his house and divorses his first wife, the mother of his sons. For the poet this entry into family life in a secure domestic environment marks the most fortunate potential achievement of the common prostitute.

57. For Eštar’s epithet ‘most able of the gods’ see e.g. Schell, RA 15 1911, p. 176, 12: le-i-ri i-li (Agnšusa); KAR 144, 13: le-i-ri i-li ḫallatu (incantation); cf. BMS 32 = Ebeling, Handelhebung, p. 122, 14: le-i-ri [. . .] (incantation); KAR 158 115: le-i-ri a-bi-a (song incipit).

58. mimumu, a rare form of the construct state of mimīnu, already occurs in OB letters (CT 6 7a, b: a-ni-mi-mu bit-e a-bi-a; YOS II 111, 16: a-mi-mu tu-la-ad-dinu) and in MB (boundary stone of Malukū: MDP II 104 iii 45: mim-mu id-di-di-du). In SB it is commoner (Lambert, BWT, p. 265, rev. 8: nig nam dingir u // mim-mu ili ‘the property of a god’; in onom apodes: Böck, Morphologie, p. 83, 116–17: mim-mu ili (diri) / barri (local); KAR 376 rev. 11: mim-mu bit-e ili (barri)), though some references may be the Nd indefinite mimumu // mimīnu.

This line recalls the very similar one that introduces the description of Gilgamesh’s third dream in SB IV 101: iišă kamă gαqqarri anīnumum. The discussion begins with the description of the great bird’s third dream in SB IV 101: išīša šanā gαqqarri anīnumum.
THE FRAGMENTS FROM BOĞAZKÖY (MB BOĞ)

In excavations that have been conducted intermittently from 1906 to the present day, the capital of the ancient Hitites at Hattusa, modern Boğazköy (now Boğazkale), has surrendered many thousands of cuneiform tablets, in Sumerian and Akkadian as well as in Hittite, other Anatolian languages and Hurrian. The material of Mesopotamian origin embraces the usual range of Babylonian literature handed down in the scribal tradition: Sumerian-Akkadian exorcistic literature (dâšûta), omen literature (bârûtu, Ēnûma Anû Enû, Summa izbu, etc.), hermeneutics, proverbs, school literature and lexical texts, Akkadian hymns and prayers, and a tiny smattering of mythological-epic texts. Some of these texts were equipped with a Hittite translation, while others, like Arra-šašš, Gilgamesh and the King of Battle, inspired less slavish Hittite paraphrases.

Borger, Ernst, p. 33, 10). The terrible features described in ll. 66–8 belong to the agent of Death, as is implicit in the SB version, in which the dream continues with the binding of Enkidu and his forcible abduction into the presence of Ereškigal. The fact that the figure displays the face of the Anû-bird confirms the identification, for according to a phrase quoted by a commentary on Sakhûk VII, Death (has) the face of Anû: ša ippûqâbûtu mu-u-tu pa-ni anû-anû (Anû-ki) (Hunger, Urkâ 1 32 rev. 12; cf. George, Rd 85 (1981), p. 157). The Vision of Kummû attests to another tradition, in which Death has the head of a dragon: mu-u-tu qaqqad mulûquit ša-ki-ê-sû (Livingstone, SM III, p. 71, 3); but other chthonic beings in this text have the head of Anû (ibid., 5: Hûmut-tašal, the ferryman), or, utilizing the identical phrase as SB VII 169, his face (10: ítûm etûm, i.e. an unidentified demon... a-na la an-si-pa-nu-tu ma-di-la). Though there the demon Namtar and Death (mâluû) are separate, elsewhere they are equated (nam-ta-ta = mu-u-tu: LITBA II 1 v 54// 2, 264// 3 iv 3), and in other literature the agent of Death is often personified as Namtar, who brings death to mankind and was accordingly attributed a place in the pantheon as the viceroy of Ereškigal (see the references collected in CAD N 1/1, p. 248).

67–8. These lines articulate what are probably typical features of Mesopotamian monsters: compare a Sumerian version of them in Bilgames and Huwawa A 37 // 59 // B [38]: la pirâ-gâ umû bi-rû-in-na, ‘paws of a lion, talons of an eagle,’ where these are attributes of the first of the zoomorphic constellations that Utu gives Gilgamesh to guide his expedition to the Cedar Forest.

69. Read after SB VII 171: udanimannu yâdi. For dunnunu with the dative cf. datunnunu in omen apodeses (e.g. YOS X 25, 21: mahar(kár)-ka ud-da-na-an-na-na-ah-kum, ‘your enemy will strive to overpower you’; II/vi).

Excavation at Boğazköy has so far yielded eight pieces of Akkadian Gilgamesh. These have come to light in at least two different general locations, namely the royal palace on Büyükkale and a building in the upper city, and in the course of three different seasons distributed evenly between the first series of excavations before the First World War, the second series between the wars, and the postwar series. The first of these finds was a large fragment from the late empire period, here designated MB Boğ. The second was a small and unrellaefing fragment, edited below as MB Boğ. The third and most important discovery was of a group of fragments of the middle Hittite period, here collected under the designation MB Boğ.

MB Boğ

Eight fragments of Gilgamesh were found in 1983 in the cellars of House 16 in the upper city at Boğazköy, a building whose ground plan suggests that it was a temple (findspot Square I 9-f). There they numbered among a small library belonging to the temple or its priest, that also yielded pieces of an important Hurro-Hittite bilingual text. Two of the Gilgamesh fragments were joined to a third, to make six pieces in all: Bo 83/614, 615, 625, 627 + 641 + 658, 633 and 634. These were quickly made public by the late H. M. Künemann in a paper to the 32nd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Münster in July 1985, entitled ‘Akkadische Gilgameschtexte aus Bogazköy,’ and subsequently edited by Gernot Wilhelm in an article that appeared in 1988. According to Otten and Wilhelm the script indicates that the pieces date from about 1400 BC (vorgroßreichzeitlich), and that they were written in Anatolia. They also agreed in a suspicion that the fragments could come from more than one tablet, but that they appear to be the work of one man. The snippets of text provided by the six fragments run parallel with passages of the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (OB II–III), especially, but also with parts of the late epic (SB I–VII).

Fragment (a) is a large piece from the top right-hand corner of a big library tablet. The obverse gives an account of the taming of Enkidu that compares closely with the relevant passages of the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II) and SB Tablets I–II. The text is a little more condensed than the Old Babylonian version. The sixteen lines of text preserved on the obverse constitute twenty-nine lines of poetry, as I reconstruct them. These twenty-nine lines run parallel with thirty-three poetic lines of the Pennsylvania tablet (set out in fifty-two lines of tablet, OB II 51–102). The reverse of Fragment (a) has text from Hwuwawa, but this episode is much condensed compared with OB Ishshali and SB Tablet V.


32 For Arara-šašš in Hittite (CTH 347) see J. Siegel. 'Ein hethitisches Fragment der Arara-šašš Epos', ArOr 38 (1970), pp. 135–9; the Akkadian fragment of Arara-šašš cited in fn. 12 is now published in G. Wilhelm's copy, KBO XXXVII 26.
Fragment (b) is a small flake from the middle of a multi-column tablet. Mention is made of a mother, presumably Gilgamés’s, and other key words are *iqabītu* and *malī*. These suggest that the piece belongs to an episode parallel with the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (OB II–III) and SB Tablets II–III, probably Gilgamés and Enkidu’s wrestling match, but the exact context remains uncertain.49

Fragment (c) is a reverse flake which, to judge from the manner in which the slope of the ruled lines alters, comes from near the bottom edge of a tablet, if not actually from the very bottom.46 The text is concerned with preparations for the journey to the Cedar Forest, specifically the arming of the two heroes. What little remains does not tally with the Yale tablet’s account of the same episode (OB III 165–71).

Fragment (d) is a small flake which, on the evidence of Otten’s copy, Wilhelm placed at the top of the reverse. However, to my eyes no trace of an edge remains on the tablet, and the ruling perhaps suggests that the text sets in a little way down the column. The fragment reports the ambition of Gilgamés in wording very close to the Yale tablet, though slightly condensed ([//] OB III 182–200).

Fragment (e) is a flake from the right edge, which Wilhelm could not place in context. To me the words *lulibilam, ‘may I come (back),’* and *ina ala, ‘in the city,’* suggest that this piece is from a speech by Gilgamés requesting a blessing for a safe return from the Cedar Forest. In the Yale tablet such a prayer is addressed directly to Šamaš (OB III 216–21), while in the late text Gilgamés makes a similar plea to his mother (SB III 24–34), so that she herself intercedes for him with Šamaš. It is not clear whom he addresses here, though the overall brevity of the text would indicate that Šamaš is more likely than Nisnun.

Fragment (f), reconstructed from three pieces, is a piece from the middle. The text is from the episode in which Enkidu relates to Gilgamés how, in a dream, he has seen the great gods in counsel, and they have condemned him to die. In the late text this passage falls in the missing beginning of SB Tablet VII and so in the Babylonian epic is preserved only here, but the substance of the episode is already well known from the much better-preserved Hitite paraphrase.37

The question now arises as to which fragments belong together and which do not. Otten thought that five of the six pieces could be from the same tablet, the exception being Fragment (b) on account of the clay and the small size of the script.46 In making up a new entry for CTH 341 Wilhelm accepted that Fragments (a), (c) and (d) were parts of the same tablet. He thought (b) and (f) might be parts of that tablet, too, but he could not be sure whether (e) belonged with (a) or with (b).48 The key lies with the big piece, Fragment (a). It was not clear to Otten and Wilhelm whether the tablet from which this fragment derived was of more than one column per side or not.49 Collation in 1992 did not yield certainty either way, but considerations of layout may help in deciding the issue. If the tablet was single-columned it would then be Tablet II in a series in which Tablet I covered disproportionately little ground (a Prologue, the tyranny of Gilgamés, the creation of Enkidu) and Tablet II disproportionately much (the taming of Enkidu, the wrestling match, the preparations for the journey to the Cedar Forest, the journey itself, the encounter with Huswawa). We have no way of knowing the exact state of the epic at Hattusa at the time this tablet was written but one might expect a better balance. Fragment (b) could not be part of a single-columned manuscript of such a Tablet II but would be from a second copy with a different layout.

If, on the other hand, the tablet represented by Fragment (a) was a multi-column tablet, we would then have in Fragment (a) the beginning of col. ii and the end of col. iii. The text of col. i would presumably have begun at the beginning of the epic and the text of col. iv would have ended well past the middle. Even though the text would certainly have omitted long sections that occur in other versions of the epic, it is clear from the surviving passages that the tablet represented by Fragment (a) would then have been very large indeed, but not impossibly so. In addition, one might then propose that all six pieces of MB Boğ are parts of a single tablet of four columns (see below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Col.</th>
<th>Extant pieces</th>
<th>Episodes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>missing</td>
<td>[Prologue, tyranny of Gilgamés, creation of Enkidu]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>a obv. (+) b (+) c</td>
<td>Taming of Enkidu, wrestling match, proposal to visit Cedar Forest, visit to armoury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>d (+) e (+) a rev.</td>
<td>Debate over wisdom of expedition, prayers to Šamaš, [march to Cedar Forest], encounter with Huswawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>[Death of Huswawa, falling of cedar, Istar’s proposal, Bull of Heaven], Enkidu’s dream of doom, [Enkidu’s death and funeral, Gilgamés’s lament]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This seems to me to be the nearest solution.

The edition of Gilgamés that these fragments represent was written in regular couplets of the question is to do less with the size of the characters than with the spacing of the lines. Fragment (b), which comes from the left margin of a column, has cramped lines. Fragment (f), from the right edge, has widely spaced lines. The difference in spacing is a function of the variation in slant of the lines as one progresses down each column; compare the reverse of Fragment (a).

46 Z 78, p. 103: ‘CTH 341 Gilgamés. I. Fragments akajectories. 1. A. KBo XXXII 128(c+)(b)(b) [here acd]; B. KBo XXXII 132 [here b] (même tablette que A?); C. KBo XXXII 129 [here f] (même tablette que A?); D. KBo XXXII 133 [here e] (probablement même tablette que A ou B).’

47 Wilhelm thought that the restored text of the extant columns would have filled the width of the tablet and ruled out a division into columns (Z 78, p. 101). Otten’s notation, ‘(tekstbbbb?)’, shows that the copyist was not so sure.
good Babylonian poetry, as far as one can tell from the larger pieces, Fragments (a) and (d). The text is often very close to the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (OB II–III) and may derive directly from late Old Babylonian or early Middle Babylonian originals that belonged to the same tradition. However, MB Boğ1 can deviate significantly from the older version, and

**MB Boğ1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bo 83/614, 615, 625, 627 + 641 + 658, 633 and 634</th>
<th>Copies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a Bo 83/625</td>
<td>PL 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Bo 83/633</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Bo 83/614</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d Bo 83/615</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e Bo 83/634</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f Bo 83/627 + 641 + 658</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Previous publication**


1990 H. Otten, *KBo* XXXII 128 (a), 129 (f), 130 (d), 131 (c), 132 (b), 133 (e) P'T'Tr

1999 A. George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Penguin), p. 134 (Fragment (a) obv. only) C

**Texts**

**Fragment (a), obv.**

[T] harimtu pīša ḫunuqqāma

[izzekkara ana] "en-ki-du

[dam-ga-ta-ma] [en-ki-du]" kūma ṭī tabaššu?

[ammiūni] [ti] nam-ma-ša-šum ša ye-ti [tis addādāšu] cf. OB II 54–5, SB I 208 // II 29

[. . .] x'ib [ši-ri] ki-ma ili (dingir) ūm ta-bā-ši ū ji-ši

[ā manummu] kūma kāt šurū? i-nā iš-ik-ša-ri

[T] harimtu ḫunuqqāma

[izzekkara] [a]-na "en-ki-du

al-kam "en-ki-du" [lardiška]

[ana gupri ša re]" [a]-šar tarbātiš (tūr)

[iši šu-šu-šu-ma šu-šu it-tal-bā-aš

cf. OB II 69–70, SB II 34

[išša ša ša-ni ša-ši] labartiš cf. OB II 71–2, SB II 35

[qadda ša-ša-ša-ma ša-ša išša ūm (dingir) ūm pa-ni-šu [išša] cf. OB II 73–4, SB II 36

[ana gupri ša reš ša-ša] tan-taš (tūr)

// OB II 75–6 // SB II 37

[īnā šešu šuṣarviš reši] // OB II 77

[šimmu] um-mā-mum a-na ra-ma-an-mu] (du)-uš

cf. OB II [79]?, SB II 39

[ānām Gilgīmeš ma-šiš pa-da-dā]// OB II [80]

when it does it sometimes exhibits phrasing found in the later, Standard Babylonian text. In this way these fragments provide valuable evidence for the state of the epic after the end of the Old Babylonian period and before its reworking into the canonical text of the first millennium.

**Other translations**

1992 J. Bottéro, *L’Épopée de Gilgamesh*, pp. 275–6 (Fragment (a) only)


1997 U. and A. Westenholt, *Gilgamesh*, pp. 160–1 (Fragment (a) only)

1999 A. George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Penguin), pp. 132–4 (Fragments (a) and (d) only)

**Translations**

**Fragment (a), obv.**

[The harlot opened her mouth,]

[saying to] Enkidu:

‘You are handsome, [Enkidu, you are just like a god,]

[why do you range] with the beasts of the wild?

[. . .] . . . you are like a god,

[. . .] who among men [is as splendid as you?]’

[The harlot opened her mouth,]

[saying to] Enkidu:

‘Come, Enkidu, [let me lead you]

[to the shepherds’ camp,] the site of the sheep-pen.’

One (garment) she stripped and he dressed himself;

[the other garment she put on herself;]

[Taking him by the hand, she was walking] before him like a god,

[to the shepherds’ camp, the site] of the sheep-pen.

[The shepherds gathered about him,]

[the] crowd [talked] among themselves:

[In build he is the equal of Gilgamesh,]
The older versions of the epic

312

[minda ša invadûk i-n]-a ša-dî-i // OB II [83–4]
[akla šûnuu maḫarîs] // OB II 87 // SB II 44
[i]-pal-li-is aklam[inda]i[l]m u-šad-ad-di-i
[13] kurumma šûnuu maḫarîs // SB II 45
[ippalîs hurumma] u-ta-ad-di[r],[13] TAR

[kurumma šīti si-m]-a at lâr-ru-ut-tim // cf. OB II 98
[ku]-[17] ru-[17]-n[a i-t]-i-ma[17] [assummit... // OB II 101–2

Fragment (b)
1' [x x x] [x]

2' ... // cf. OB II 222–4?
3' i-na ma-le-eš-šul // [x]
4' [a-na ark-aš-šul] // [x]
5' [al]-gim-ma-u umm[a ama]-ka? ultiška ... // OB II 234–5?
6' [a] i-na x[...]
7' [x x] x x [...]

Fragment (c)
1' [u]x[...]

2' ... [x]-mi ša t[a?...]
3' ...] a2-š2-iš a-la x[...]
4' ...]-ši i-na šem-bi x[...]
5' ...] x-ia parrû [gù][18] ši-ta[...]
6' ... a-na qitš-gim-ma-a-n[a ku?...]
7' ...] ma-na i-na ši-ib-bi-[ka?...]
8' ...] a2-hi-un [k]-i-im-mi-x[...]

Fragment (d)
1' ...] x[...]

[19] ila ša īqûbāh lûmûr // OB III 182
[ša šumûš it-ta-na-a]m-ba-lu qaqqa[ru[ki]] // cf. OB III 183
[kîma demmu peru ša Uruk] l-ša-em-mi m[aša[kur]] // OB III 185–6

[For sure it is he who was born] in the upland,
the milk of the beasts [12] he used to suck.)
[They put bread before him,]
peering at the bread, he was perturbed.
[13] They put beer before him,
[peering at the beer,] he was perturbed.
[14] The harlot opened her mouth,]
[saying to Enkidu]
'Eat the bread, Enkidu, [15] fit for a god,
[drink the beer,] fit for a king!'
[16] Enkidu ate the bread until he was sated,]
[he drank [the beer,] seven jugs (full) ...]

Fragment (b)
1' [....] [....]

2' They took each other (by the hand) [.....] in his matted hair [.....] to his rear
[... Enkidu opened his mouth, saying to Gilgamesh: 'As one unique,'] Gilgamesh, [your]
mother [bore you ... and] in [.....]

Fragment (c)
1' [....] and [....]

2' ['[....] which you [....] may he not ... [....] ... in the middle of...
[....] my [....] may the dirks ... [....]']

6' [Enkidu opened his mouth, saying] to Gilgamesh: 'If [....] x minas in [your] belt
[.... I set ...']

Fragment (d)
1' ['I will see the god, of whom they speak,]
[whose name] the earth [does constantly] repeat.41
[I will conquer him 5 in the Forest of Cedar,]
[that Uruk's offshoot is mighty I will have the [land] learn.

41 Lit. 'the earth keeps carrying'.
9' [....] û û-n ë-]en-ke]-du i-p-[û-ar-ra-su? ....
10' [....] 9[al-ga-ma] a-û-tu i-na bit]-ó-[i-i [...]
11' [....] 9[al-ke]-ra i-[en-ke]-dú u [...]
12' [....] 9[r-ma]-ra la ki-ma 8[l] [...]
13' [....] x na-kí-im-me-a a-û-ta [...]
14' [....] r[a-û]-[û]-tú [û]-dû-[k]-a-x [...]
15' [....] 9[en-ke]-]dú a-[a]-na su-su-a[-a]-tú is-[xa-ke]-ra aní Gilgâmeš [...]
16' [....] 8[a]-[û]-tú la x [...]
17' [....] x x [...]

Notes

a obv. 1–3. The text combines material found in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 51–5) with material that survives in the late version (SB I 206–8). Wilhelm thought the repetition of the phrase kîma tû tabâšû unlikely, given the text’s terse style, but the repetition in obv. 5 of the formula introducing direct speech is another example of an elaboration present neither in the Pennsylvania tablet nor in the late text.

a obv. 4. As suggested by Wilhelm, the line is restored after SB VI 173: mannumma šarūk ina zikkari.

a obv. 6. Where the Pennsylvania tablet has Uruk and E-anna, MB Boğ, has the shepherds’ camp, which is the more immediate, if less inspiring, destination. The two lines that describe the clothing of Enkidu again have elements in common with both the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 69–72: šûdû lâlim lîrim ulâšitu || lîrim šarûm ë italâšû) and the late text (SB II 54–5: šûm habîlû r[amûšša] laḫšatu || šûm šarûšu lâšitu laḫšatu).

a obv. 7–8. Given the certain restoration of qâššu šabû at the beginning of the line, one should probably resist the idiom pâh šâlîtu and take pâ-ni-šu as pâ-nâšu, locative-terminative with âlāku. This phrase replaces OB ōređēdu.

a obv. 9. The emendation follows SB II 39: ina ramûšša; one might alternatively read the plural ra-ama-an-(ne)-û-xış.

a obv. 11. Tautological spellings like ge-ir-xa, which combine a logogram with a full phonetic rendering, are found occasionally in Old Assyrian and the cuneiform of Nuzi and the West (Boğazköy, Ugarit, Mittanni); see the references collected by Wilhelm, ZA 78, p. 102.

a obv. 14–15. The closest parallel to this couplet is not OB II or SB II but SB VII 136–7: ša ulâšitu akka simit titlû lûnûma ša pâšû simit šarrûtu (cf. also SB VI 27–8).

d 2’. Though the Yale tablet has itamânkalâ màdâtum, this version certainly had something different, of masculine gender, and ki = qaqqarum seems the obvious candidate.

a rev. 1’. Ḥuwawa is speaking to Enkidu: cf. SB V 91: [aminû] lena][î Gilgâmeš talakšîtu aši maḫšiya.

a rev. 2’. As Wilhelm notes, et-ta-û-xi, if it is for et-tûlûti, is an Assyrian form. On the unexpected gemination of consonants in Boğazköy Akkadian see Wilhelm’s discussion of this phenomenon in the Šamašûra treaty, ZA 78, p. 103, fn. 20.

a rev. 3’ Ḥuwawa curses Enkidu; cf. the fragmentary SB V 253–7, especially kal[a] in 1. 254.

a rev. 5’. Wilhelm supposed that the subject of [ir]pâppûdû is the winds that Šamaš sent to blind Ḥuwawa. It might instead be Ḥuwawa’s auras, whose frantic efforts to escape are described with this verb in OB Ishchali 17’: kîma wašmû iranappûdû iq-qism.

11’ [....] Enkidu [....] he saw, one (who) like [....] may he not [acquire] descendants [....] let the [....] mourn [....]

15’ [....] Enkidu said to him, [to Gilgameš: ‘....] not [....]’

a rev. 7’. Restored after OB Ishchali 18’: šûnu tû nûrûma.

f 10’ f. The double ruling which Wilhelm took as marking a division between tablets is probably only a poorly executed ruling repeated more effectively.

f 13’. I follow Wilhelm’s suggestion that na-ki-im-me-e is a by-form of lâkimû comparable with niqûmmû,臀ma (ZA 78, p. 115).

MB Boğ

No details are known of the exact provenance within Boğazköy of this large fragment, now in Berlin under the number VAT 12890. The date of first publication indicates that it derives from the first series of excavations, conducted before the First World War. Accordingly, all that can be said for certain is that the piece was most probably one of the large number of tablets and fragments recovered by Hugo Winckler and Theodore Makridi Boğ in 1906 and 1907. These came mainly from the royal palace on Büyükkale and from Temple I in the lower town.4 According to Wilhelm the fragment dates probably to the thirteenth century BC.43

To judge from the curvature of the inscribed surfaces, the fragment comes from near the bottom left-hand corner of a big, multi-column tablet. At least forty lines are missing from the top edge, one or two only from the bottom. The extent of the missing portion of tablet on the other axis is uncertain. At least two whole columns are lost to the right, perhaps more. The text of the obverse (col. i) relates dreams from the journey to the Cedar Forest and is therefore to be compared with OB Šahyanû, which it partly duplicates, OB Nippur, OB Harmal, and SB Tablet IV.44 The fragment’s reverse (col. vii) is


errors of transmission, particularly on the reverse, where there are several clear cases of textual corruption. Sometimes the tablet is well enough preserved to show that the text is poetry, though in western style the beginnings and ends of lines of verse do not necessarily coincide with the beginnings and ends of lines of tablet. Where a sequence of poetic lines can be detected an attempt has been made to divide the lines of the translation according to the poetry, not the tablet.

**Translations**

1950  E. A. Speiser in Pritchard, ANET, p. 82 (obv. 5'–20' only)
1958  A. Schott and W. von Soden, Reclain, pp. 47–8 (obv. 5'–19' only)
1970  R. Labat, Les religions du Proche-Orient assyriques, pp. 175–6, fn. 2 (obv. only)
1994  K. Becker, TUAT III/4, pp. 668–70
1997  U. and A. Westenholz, Gilgamesh, pp. 161–2 (obv. 3'–26')
1999  A. George, The Epic of Gilgamesh (Penguin), p. 135 (obv. 5'–25')

**Text**

obv. col. i

At least 40 lines missing from top of column

1'  [j]-[r]-tu-i [-r?] ...
2'  [i]-pi-tu qe2-ru-ub2' x x [-dam]a2?
4'  [p]a-na-šu it-tä(äm-ra)

5'  [i]-ša-ab-tü-ni il-la-ku-ni
nu-ba-at [iš-kī pa 1]-ni-[la] // OB Schayen, 82
6'  ši-ti-tu ra-ši-it mu-ši šu-tal-dä-[šiš-giš-gü-maš]
7'  i-na mšil(maš) mu-[ši]-ti id-di-{ši ši-it-ta-[ši ši-bé-e-maš?]} cf. OB Schayen, 2 // 31
8'  šu-ut-ta ili-za-qar a-na 4-en-ki-du, cf. OB Schayen, 3 // 32
9'  [i]-[b]-ri a-tám-mar šu-ut-ta] // OB Schayen, 4a
9'  ki-i la-a a-tad-kä-an-ni mi-na-a-[m e-re-ku] cf. OB Schayen, 4b
10'  4-en-ki-du, [i]-bi-ri a-tám-mar šu-ut-t[a
ki-i la-a] 11' ta-ad-kä-an-ni mi-na-a-am [e-re-ku]
12'  e-li 1-en šu-ut-ti-ia ša-ni-tu [et-gé-er?]
13'  i-na šu-ut-ti-ia šu-ri ša-du-ū [... ]
14' it threw me down, it held (me by) my feet . . . […]
15' A radiant brightness gave strength to my arms.
   There was a man [clad in a royal mantle].
16' he was the most handsome in the land and his beauty […]
17' From beneath the mountain he pulled me out and […]
18' He gave me water to drink and my heart grew [calm (…) . . .]
   [On] 19' the ground he set [my feet].

20' Enkidu [spoke] to him,
   [saying] 31' to Gilgamesh:
   'My friend, we are [going to him],
   is he not the mountain? 25' He is something very strange!
   Huwawa, [we are going to him,]
23' is he not the mountain? He is something very strange!
   […] 26' Come, cast aside [your] fear […]
25' will be seen […]

26' Also, the man whom [you saw . . .]
27' of your eyes […]
28' of your body […]
29' with you […]
30' soon […] Favourable is your dream.'
31' He became glad, [his heart became merry and his face shone bright . . .

Long lacuna

rev. col. vi(?)

Probably only 1 or 2 lines missing from edge

1' [x x] x' x x x' x' x [- . . .]
2' [i na bi(e) iš(dingir)]-ša ū-na-si-ū [qimmassu (…)]
3' iš-la ki at-ta-di ar-[u-šu –u . . .]
4' iš-ta-kā-āš a-nu-Š-en-ki-da\a [- . . .]
5' lu-la ka a-nu-ka lam ta-ba-za-a-[n]i . . .
6' di-ta ša a-bārā babbar, dii umbin? […]
7' amātu[? sa sag. gēme] 30' ša ba-al-ma-na zi-x[ . . .]
8' a-ga-la (tu) ra-bi-ti ū-aš-ak-[a-al . . .]
9' uŠdaLa(dugšišša) i-na tē-di-ka ū[- . . .]
10' li-na-ša-ša […]

rev. col. vi(?)

2' . . . in the temple of his god. He shook out [his locks . . .]
3' . . . he() cast aside [his] dirty [things . . .]
4' he tied on. To Enkidu […]
5' Let me be your (wife and you) be my (husband. If) you will marry me […]
6' . . . precious stones […]
7' slave-girls that blue-green . . . […]
8' great donkeys I will make perfect […]
9' rock-crystal at your feet and […]
10' let it be brought […]

11' [Istar heard what Gilgamesh had said . . .]
12' she was scorned, pos, scabies […]
13' she turned, to the offering cup […]
14' She went up to the heavens and said:
Middle Babylonian Tablets and Fragments: MB Boğ. 323

‘Father [. . .] 15’ came across me, a bull-calf of six months [. . .] 16 we reviled me. Now give [me . . .] 17 the nose-ropes of the Bull of Heaven, [let me slay] Gilgameš [in his dwelling.]

18’ If you do not give the Bull of Heaven to me, I will [. . .]

19’ And he, Anu, [. . .] the halter of [the Bull of Heaven;]

20’ ‘Star, whatever the young man did to you, [the Bull of Heaven] 21 why would you take? The young man . . . [ . . .]

He gave him 22 the nose-ropes of the Bull of Heaven. The Bull of Heaven in . . . 23 from heaven.

His forelegs [ . . .] 24 his [. . .] he used up.

[ . . . 25] . . . famine [ . . .]

26’ [. . .] the Bull of Heaven, [his] lips [. . .]

Notes

i 1’. Bottéro understood the first word as a 3rd fem. sg. stative, evidently damqat (‘Then rēve est de bon augure, [Mon am]’! cf. Tournay and Shaffer), but a close comparison between the signs LA and AD in this tablet shows that the first complete sign is the former, not the latter (the difference lies in the bottom wedge of the second row of horizontals, which in LA falls further forward than the wedges immediately above it; see typically i 15', 9, 4 3’).

i 2’. Pettinato translates the first word ‘si aλλαντάνο’ (i.e. ədēt), but his solution is rejected here on the grounds that this passage should be Enkidu’s explanation of Gilgameş’s first dream, and thus direct speech. In the light of ĝerub I assume i-pē-il is the stative epic, compare Enkidu’s chiasmic warning, after the third dream, in OB Nippur obv. 2: šāmūtu qirētub anūri ildāmānī.

i 3’–4’. ‘These lines are a counterpart of OB Schuyer 23–4: damqat Gilgameš batuša irtu / ilīlib-batima pānnūq itumurī. Here pa-nu-šu, normally a spelling of the accusative singular, is evidently nominative dual (gimēdu), analogous with ibrāq, ‘head’.

i 5’. With ṣāqīnumu ilãššīnī compare SB VI 168: ṣāqīnummi ilāššīni and, less nearly, SB III 19–20: ṣāqīnum / ṣāqīnum. This line would seem to cover the whole interval between the first dream episode and the second, omitting the elaborate details of march and preparation for sleep that occupy the last text (SB IV 34–47). Such brevity recalls the Old Babylonian tablet that covers this episode, from which the end of the line is accordingly restored (see OB Schuyer, 82).

i 6’. Cf. OB Schuyer, 30: šātum raḫatu nāntu impīqum and SB IV [15] and parallels: šātum raḫatu nāntu illum impīqum. At the end one might instead restore lu-ā-ū, but there is need for Gilgameš’s name somewhere in this passage.

i 7’. The expression is curious; perhaps id-di-šu is a corruption of idakī, ‘he was roused (from sleep).’

vi 4'. The word irtatkau plausibly ends the narrative of Gilgamesh's toilet. As Bottéro rightly saw, Enkidu is not wanted here and his name is presumably an error. Bottéro exchanged it for Gilgamēš, restoring the second divine determinative as [iš-šar]. Alternatively, one could assume that the text is much nearer to SB VI, which begins the narrative of Istar's advances with the line ana dumkī la Gilgamesḫi iri irtatkau Šarrtu. In that case MB Boğ 3 a-anna-en-ki-dum would be another corruption under dictation, for a-na da-um-gi, and the second divine determinative would introduce the name of Gilgamēš.

vi 5'. As it stands the extant text does not appear to have a counterpart in the later text. Thompson's reading ka-la-na-ba-tam made poor sense, even with the first word emended to ka-la-na by von Soden (ZA 53, p. 221: 'es sel( en) ständig'). I assume instead that what we have is corrupt: li (aššu) ka anāfa li m[u]ta ana šumma) saḫkazannu. Cf. Istar's proposal in SB VI 9: atu li mutu anāku li allāka.

vi 6'. The first word is perhaps a simple error for gi-il-ka, for the late text's gilama (SB VI 8). Von Soden takes the stone name as nirgapandalītu (Htt, p. 793) but the sign after naš is hardly nīr(2a.0n) or any homophone of it.

vi 6'-10'. This is all very different from the later text (SB VI 9–21) but agalf(!) rabatū compares with kudamī rabatū (SB VI 16).

vi 9'. The orthography du₃₃,a for du₃₃,a = ḫut is a western spelling, already standard at Mari (see C. Michel,.Flortilgium marium 1, pp. 130 and 134-6).

vi 11'. This line is the equivalent of SB VI 80: Itar annu ina (lēmuš). The entire reply of Gilgamēš, which in the later text occupies 58 lines but would presumably have been considerably shorter at Boğazköy, has been inadverdently omitted, perhaps by skipping from one ruling to the next.

vi 12'-14'. If šarrtu takes the place of the late text's uugugat (SB VI 81) and liša lamēš the place of ana šumīš [šu] (end of the same line), the diseases and the cup must represent a detail which did not survive the transmission. The diseases also appear together in an OB incantation (Böhl, Leiden Coll. II, p. 3, 13: ek-[he]-tam si-ih-ka-tam, as read by CAD S, p. 251) but it is difficult to see them as appropriate in the present context. Perhaps one should consider the extra words a corrupt tradition (tēgati < tēgāt, 'curious', ek-he-ta < egat, 'tongue-tied'). On the other hand, given the presence of pursūtu in the next line, perhaps li-ig-ga-ta represents šakītu, 'flash'. In l. 13' the traces do not support Tournay and Shaffer's sa-hi-ti-ti (Lēpopō, p. 158, fn. 68).

vi 15'. The young bull-calf rampaging through Uruk is a metaphor for Gilgamēš that also occurs in SB I 64: ugdalār rimēnti, and in the Sumerian poem of Gilgames (and the Bull of Heaven (1245 X 196 ii 10'-11', coll.): gu₃₃,gal ša.bar.re uugugat₃₃ ti₃₃la₁/gu₃₃,gal ša.bar.re uugugat₃₃ ti₃₃la₁/a great bull on the loose, dwelling in Uruk, a great bull, Gilgamesh, on the loose, dwelling in Uruk' (an unpublished duplicate, SC 26522/2, 22-3, reads in both lines ša.bar.re uugugat₃₃ ti₃₃la₁).

vi 17'. The end of this line is restored from SB VI 95: Gilgamēš lumuru ina tabūtu. vi 18'. šumma-um is perhaps corrupt for šumma (aššu lā tanaddin)am (cf. SB VI 96).

vi 19'. Thompson misread mī-rā-ta as gūtu, 'banquet', and others have followed. Pettinato reads gūtu, 'mire'. Neither word is compelling in the context. Tournay and Shaffer translate 'appel' (āmānu). I assume the word is dirrātu.

vi 21'. I take te-la-gi as defective for tē̄lēqē, with Bottéro ('pourquoi veux-tu prendre?'); Hecker takes it as salākā (warum kommst du?).

vi 23'. malšušušu is perhaps elliptical for tē̄lēqē malšušu, as in the Vision of Kummā (Livingstone, SAAT III 32 rev. 8: 2 maj-ru-a-ti igtēs, 'the two fronts (legs): (those of) a bird'). The bull is pawing the ground, no doubt with disastrous consequences.

vi 25'. The famine is caused by the Bull of Heaven drying up the vegetation and water supplies (cf. SBVI 117–18).

**MB Boğ 3**

Bo 284/d is a tiny fragment from the middle of a big tablet, 2.4 cm in thickness, inscribed with an Akkadian text of literary character. It was excavated in the royal palace at Boğazköy in 1934, during the second series of excavations conducted by Kurt Bittel, and is now in Ankara. The findspot was Büyükkale s 16, where the fragment was evidently a stray in secondary context. The surface of the fragment is very flat and somewhat eroded all over. From the previously published copy, which had been from a photograph, it could already be seen that the text contained the key word ibrīš, 'my friend', a fact which encouraged Gurney to suggest that the fragment might be Gilgamesh. A new study of the tablet at first hand confirms his suspicions, for it reveals that the text also contains the word šamatu, 'dream'. This variant of šamaṭu is common in Gilgamesh. The combination of these two words means that the text is almost certainly to be identified as Gilgamesh. Most probably the fragment is from the dream episodes on the way to the Cedar Forest, and should be compared with OB Scheyen 2, OB Nippur, OB Harmal, and SB Tablet IV, but beyond that nothing can be said.

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44 KUB XXXVII, p. vii. This square occupies a position between the late empire-period buildings B, C and H (see the plan in E. Neve, Büyükkale. Die Bauwerke (Berlin, 1982), Beilage 36). The chief discovery of the square s 16 in 1934 was 14 large clay vessels, 11 of them in a row, standing on a thirteen-century floor; for these and other small finds from this location see K. Bittel, MDOG 73 (1935), p. 22. For the tablets found in the 1934 season see in general H. G. Gittenbuck, 'Die Texte aus der Grabung 1934 in Boğazköy', MDOG 73 (1935), pp. 29–39. The square s 15 is not associated with any of the great collections of tablets found on Büyükkale and, as far as one can judge from the location list in the relevant volumes of KUB and KG, Bo 284/d is one of only very few fragments of clay tablets found there.


46 See OB II 1 and the commentary on SB I 245.
collections of a Late Bronze Age scription that can be dated to the thirteenth and early twelfth centuries. Among these collections is a considerable number of texts belonging to the scribal tradition of lower Mesopotamia, particularly lexical and omen texts (ḫarrātu), but also a few incantations and associated rituals (dāšpātu) and other, more literary works with a 'wisdom' flavour, some of them in versions already known from Ugarit.56 The literary texts include the fable of Tamarisk and Date Palm, the Poem of Early Rulers, a traditional Sumerian-akkadian bilingual composition that reflects on the futility of life,57 a collection of wise sayings (šimânâ milâ)58 and Gilgamesh.

Four fragments of Gilgamesh were identified by Arnaud, who saw at once that they fell into two groups: one fragment was from a small tablet carrying material parallel to SB Tablets IV-V (here MB Emar),2 while the other three were from a tablet which relates the story of Gilgamesh, Ishtar and the Bull of Heaven and thus runs parallel to SB Tablet VI (here MB Emar). The three fragments of MB Emar2 were rejoined by the present author in 1999. A further small fragment published by Arnaud was subsequently suggested as Gilgamesh by Wicke. Collation undermines that identification but the piece is included here as an appendix to the present section (MsK 74105m).

In these two pieces, as in other western manuscripts of Babylonian poetry, the correlation between lines of poetry and lines of tablet is not always maintained. However, the text of MB Emar, especially, is well enough preserved to be read as poetry, particularly when comparison is made with the text of the late version, SB Tablet VI. At least one poetic line can be identified in MB Emar. The language of both tablets is Middle Babylonian, with some intrusions of Assyrian and perhaps also provincial akkadian dialect.59 The name of Gilgamesh is written in Old Babylonian style, but without abbreviation,56 bil[u]a[b]il]a-go-meš. Enkidu’s name is perhaps spelled as “en-ki-itu.”


THE FRAGMENTS FROM EMAR (MB EMAR)

Four fragments of Gilgamesh were found in 1974 at Tell Mersihe and on the middle Euphrates in Syria, the ancient city of Emar. They were part of a very large quantity of clay tablets and fragments that were excavated in the location M III in Building M, the so-called ‘Pantheon’, and published by D. Arnaud.49 On the building’s destruction the tablets had fallen from an upper storey into the chamber below, where after many centuries they were again disturbed, this time by Islamic burials.50 The tablets retrieved from this location are the remains of the
The tablet published under the excavation number Msk 74128d is a corner fragment from the right-hand edge (findspot Building M; M III SE). The first person to copy and edit it maintained that the fragment derives from the tablet’s bottom corner and that very little text is missing from the left edge to the preserved text. Thus he was apparently of the view that the tablet held only one column of text on each side. Collation in 1999 led to the modification of these observations. The most notable physical feature of the fragment is the curved surface that the tablet’s maker has given to the horizontal edge. The slope or bevel is much greater on one face than the other, so that the edge’s profile is asymmetrical. The same feature is found on many Mesopotamian library tablets, which were made so that the crown of the edges is the ridge where the two bevelled faces met, was nearer the obverse than the reverse. This observation suggests that the face identified by Arnaud as the obverse should be, in fact, the reverse and vice versa, for the profile of the piece is such that the crown is nearer the less well-preserved face. This is not conclusive, however, for the more complete of the Emar manuscripts of the Fable of Tamarisk and Date Palm is written on a tablet on which the crown of the bevelled edges is nearer the reverse face.

Nevertheless, the text itself of MB Emar, as read here, makes it unlikely that its two scraps of text are contiguous, for then Enkidu would answer his own speech. Accordingly the fragment comes from the top right-hand corner, not the bottom. In addition, on the better-preserved face of the Emar fragment MB Emar, the bevel becomes increasingly deep to the left, away from the right-hand edge, as is also the case with the reverse faces of fine library tablets from Mesopotamia. On a regular tablet modelled in this style the angle at which the face and the bevelled edge meet forms a shallow arc extending from corner to corner, with the peak of the arc situated at a point midway between the two corners. If this symmetry holds true for MB Emar, then the preserved extent of the fragment’s top edge is only about one third of the tablet’s original width. This observation leads me to propose that the piece is from a tablet of two columns per side, not one. The fragments of text yield therefore come from the top of column ii and the bottom of column iii.

The few signs preserved on the obverse are not enough to place them in context. The text of reverse comes from a passage in which Gilgamesh and Enkidu strengthen their resolve for the confrontation with Humbaba in the Cedar Forest. This episode fell towards the end of SB Tablet IV in some editions of the late epic (as represented by MSS udd), but in SB Tablet V in the one adopted here (with MS H). The key word is *muhalitätum* in L.8', which occurs at SBV 74 in the present numeration. However, it is not possible at this stage to identify MB Emar, specifically as Tablet IV or Tablet V of whatever Middle Babylonian edition of the epic it represents. In addition, the text of the Emar fragment has little in common with the late edition. Though the latter is very fragmentary at this point, it is clear that the Emar version is both less expansive than SB Tablet V and, for the most part, differently worded.

### MB Emar

**Previous publication**

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publication Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>D. Arnaud</td>
<td><em>Emar VI</em> 1, p. 328</td>
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**Text**

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<th>Syllable</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ii 2</td>
<td>[sip-3a 1-1-1] x x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Long lacuna

**Other translations**

<table>
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<th>Translator</th>
<th>Publication Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>G. Pettinato</td>
<td><em>Emar 1</em>, <em>La saga di Gilgameš</em>, p. 277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>A. George</td>
<td><em>The Epic of Gilgamesh</em> (Penguin), p. 136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Translation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Syllable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ii 1</td>
<td>[... ] <em>Enkidu</em> [opened] his mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii 2</td>
<td>[to speak, saying to Gilgamesh ... ] ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Long lacuna
Notes

ii 1. The use of the sign KAKU for pā is a distinctive western phenomenon, occurring also at Boğazköy, Ugarit and Amarna. References have been collected by C. Wilcke, ZA 79 (1989), p. 186.

ii 3. Now that the identification of obverse and reverse is secured and the fragment of text here identified as col. ii is no longer seen to be a continuation of the conversation introduced by this line, we are no longer obliged to understand Gilgamesh as the subject. Reference to the late version indicates that there it is Enkidu who speaks of the mašhalištu (SBV 74) and this must also be the case here. Given the limited space available on the tablet it seems that after izabb[i] the scribe omitted the expected continuation, issaqaru ana Gilgameš.

ii 4. The restoration is very provisional, suggested by SB X 86: ana mé māši hā salkaldu tuppā šina. The line of poetry continued on to the next line of tablet.

ii 5–6. The line of poetry restored over these two lines was used by Enkidu in a similar predicament in SBV 131: hē nippala hamātā mī[a][i]š. On the reversal of nouns and adjectives see Ch. 10, the section on Some features of language and style.

ii 7. Without good context the word ša-ah-na is open to several interpretations (for aš similarly written in a literary tablet from Assur, e.g., Msk 74143m, obv. 4 = Tamarisk and Date Palm). I read ša-ah-na, a stative verbal form in Assyrian dialect. Arnaud and Bottéro took it from the noun tēnu, 'sandal'. It can be derived just as easily from šaštānu, 'to be warm'.

ii 8. The rare word mašhalištu is literally 'that which causes one to slip' (cf. its Sumerian counterpart ki ba.an.zē.e), prompting the translations 'slippery ground' (CAD M/Z, s.v.) and 'ein schlüpfrige Stelle' (AHw, p. 775). It occurs in a suggestive context in a section of a lexical list that treat the defences of a city:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ki ba.an.zē.e</th>
<th>mašhalištu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sig.ō̂m</td>
<td>in-[da]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nam.tū</td>
<td>nē-met-tum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MSL XVII, p. 196, Aruagal C 49–51

For this reason I assume that it is not just any slippery place but the technical term for a glacis, the smooth slope at the base of a defensive rampart which is designed at once to reinforce the wall and to hamper the approach of enemy forces, siege engines, towers and ladders. The point of the line would appear to be that while a man cannot expect to climb such a slope alone, two men helping each other have a good chance of success.

MB Emar₂

The three fragments that Arnaud published as relating the story of Gilgamesh, Istar and the Bull of Heaven have been established as joining pieces and are here referred to as MB Emar₂ Fragment (a). Their findspots were Building M₁, M III NE (Msk 7498n and 741042) and SE (Msk 74159d). This assemblage can now be supplemented with two further fragments that were identified and copied by I. L. Finkel in 1987. The new fragments carry text from the same episode as MB Emar₂ Fragment (a) and are here referred to as Fragments (b) and (c). They are written in the same script as the Meskene pieces and one of them, (b), appears to continue the text of the Meskene assemblage in such a way that there is little doubt that the two fragments are from the same tablet. There is every probability that the other piece seen by Finkel comes from the same find and accordingly it would seem that we now have three pieces of the tablet in question. The tablet represented by these fragments was inscribed with at least two columns on each side. So far we have a substantial portion of col. i and two sections of col. ii, but nothing of the reverse.

In contrast with the lack of match between MB Emar₂ and SB Tablet V, the text of MB Emar₂ is surprisingly close to SB Tablet VI, both in overall content and in textual detail. It seems likely that, like MB Emar₁, the tablet held four columns of text, and not six or more, for it reaches the halfway point of SB Tablet VI towards the bottom of col. ii. Very probably this is its own halfway point if it so it began and ended at the same places in the text of the epic as SB Tablet VI. Given the fact that the story of Gilgamesh, Istar and the Bull of Heaven is a self-contained episode it would not be surprising if MB Emar₂ and SB Tablet VI were coextensive in this way. On the same grounds this feature would have no bearing on whether the epic was already divided into the same number of tablets as it was in the first millennium. Where the text of MB Emar₂ can be compared at length with the later version, there is considerable agreement in the wording. For this reason the text is set out below according to the line-divisions and numbering of the SB text and the restorations are taken, as far as possible, from the same source.

The most notable point of difference between the two versions is the preservation in MB Emar₂ of a whole section that is absent from the SB text (i 28–31). The section records a
332 THE OLDER VERSIONS OF THE EPIC

tradition that the nomadic Suteans was counted among the goddess Istar’s paramours. According to my understanding of what is a very fragmentary passage, he was for his pains condemned by her to live the rough life of the desert camp, defeated in battle and driven from place to place. If a myth is alluded to here, it comprises a variant of Istar’s affairs with the shepherd and with Dumuzi and makes for an appealing acolyte of the nomadism of these second-millennium pastoralists. According to the evidence from Mari and Alalah, the centre of Sutean activity seems to have been Syria west of the great bend of the Euphrates, that is, the immediate hinterland of Emar, though Suteans were also familiar as foreigners to the Babylonians of the period. The presence of the story in MB Emar, might be accounted a local interpolation pandering to western tastes. On the other hand, if it was part of the text imported to Emar from southern Mesopotamia—and we have no way of knowing what that source comprised—it is equally possible that it was retained there as


M 9204n + 9211z + 9301d (+) two
unnumbered fragments

MB Emar₂

unnumbered fragments

a M 9204n (Msk 7498n) + 9211z (74104z) + 9301d (74159d)

i 1’−35”, ii 1’−12”

b unnumbered fragment

i 24’−32’

c unnumbered fragment

ii 1’−7”

Previous publication

1985 D. Arnaud, Emar VI/1, pp. 241 (7498n), 263 (74104z), 401 (74159d) (Fragment (a) only, unjoined) C

1987 D. Arnaud, Emar VI/4, pp. 384−6, no. 782, ‘Épopée de Gilgamesh, chant VI’ (Fragment (a) only, unjoined) TTr

1998 Thomas R. Kämmerer, Šumūlūkī (AOAT 253), pp. 146−55 (Fragment (a) col. i only, unjoined) TTr

Text

col. 1 (Fragments (a) (+) (b))

Beginning missing

1 [sippa anātā li-na-aš-ši-gi jub jum [p-p] ka

// SBV1 15

2 [li-kamši ina šaplika ištu-[] lu-ši el-lu-ni-[ik-ku]

// SBV1 16

3 [. . . ] liši laši u mati li-[i] ša-ni-ik-ku bi-[l-][a]

// SBV1 17

4 [enatšu kalka lašušu . . . ] x lu-li-x-da

// SBV1 18

aš [p(p,)+ka ] ša ina šuri šašina ay ir-si

// SBV1 21

5 [bil-ga-mes pā(kwru) limi-pu-iš-aq-ba-li[]

// SBV1 22

6 [tizzaqara ana rubūti šu]-ur

// SBV1 23

ul-ta-ma [a-na-ku ha-ti aš-ha-2] u-ši

// SBV1 24

Material of local interest, while in Babylonia it fell by the wayside. However that may be, in the version of the poem represented by the fragments from Emar the story of Istar and the Sutean effectively takes the place of her liaisons with the lion and the horse (SB VI 51−7), material that is not present in MB Emar₂.

Also present in MB Emar₂, but absent from the SB text is the line i 25’, describing how the goddess Istar is said to be 

'... alalas-breath (bird). However, overall MB Emar₂ has the shorter text. As well as lacking SB VI 51−7, it does not have equivalents of SB VI 19−20, 35, and it has one-line versions of the couples SB VI 39−40 and 90−1. Many differences occur in the wording of the two versions: significant differences in the counterparts of SB VI 16, 25, 27, 41, 58−60, 112 and 116−17, slight ones in the equivalents of SB VI 15, 17, 26, 38, 40, 42, 113 and 118. The fragments of MB Emar₂ thus stand in a similar relation to the Standard Babylonian text as the Ur tablet, and what was stated in the introduction to the latter about literary history can be taken as read here too.

Other translations

1992 J. Bottéro, ‘Morceaux d’Emar’, L’Épopée de Gilgamesh, pp. 269−71 (Fragment (a) only)

1992 G. Pettinato, ‘Emar 2’, La saga di Gilgamesh, pp. 277−79 (Fragment (a) only)

1999 A. George, The Epic of Gilgamesh (Penguin), pp. 136−8

Translation

col. 1 (Fragments (a) (+) (b))


[Kings shall kneel beneath you,] lords will come [up to you,]

[. . . produce of mountain and land they shall] bring you as tribute.

[Your nanny-goats] shall bear [triplets and your ewes twins,]
[your] ox shall have [no equal under the yoke].’

[Gilgamesh] opened [his mouth] to speak,
[saying to the lady] Istar:
‘If indeed [I were to] take you [in marriage.]’
she should not neglect herself (and my clothing),

[... should I] neglect my sustenance and [my] food?
[... the] thing fitting for...?

2 badly damaged lines

['[You], a foreigner] that does not solidify [ice],

[an archer]-[a door] that does not close the door of [oak and dr]au,

[an elephant] that... its covering,

...[that soils] him who carries it,

wata-shki [that cuts [him who carries it]],

[a battering] ram that destroys a wall of stone,

[a shoe that bites the foot of] one going along the street!

[What bridegroom of yours grew] old for ever?

Lacuna of 2 lines

['To Dumuzi, the husband of your youth,
to you have allotted perpetual [wailing, year on year.]]

[You] loved the [speckled] allalu-bird,

[very soon] [you had enough of] his charm!

[You] struck him and broke [his wing]

[now] he stands in [the woods] crying "My wing!"

You loved the [... Sutan],
your house... you [... a tent, you
broke his [weapons on the field] battle,
you keep driving him? onward...[ ...]

You loved, [when] you dwelt [in the fold],
the shepherd (and) the herdsman who regularly killed a sheep,
who daily piled high for you (bread baked in) embers,
you struck them and] turned (them) into wolves.'

col. ii, from the middle (Fragment (c))
[Anu opened his mouth] to [speak,]
[saying to the lady Iltar:
[4h, but did you not provoke King] Gilgamesh,
so [Gilgamesh] was [accounting things that revile] you (and) insult you?]

[Iltar] opened her mouth to speak,
[saying to] her father, Anu:
Notes

i 11'. As restored this line differs only from SBVI 15 in the choice of part of the body, kappīka for īdāka.

i 2'. Though a prescriptive is expected and īnu-u suggests lā, I cannot find a prescriptive lā el-lā-ni-[...] that gives satisfactory meaning. Accordingly I follow Arnaud in assuming that this line agrees closely with SBVI 16. The restoration of bē]-la-ū is suggested by the SB variant tarrū hāti u rūdu (MS Q). The verb ellīnī(ākkā) stands in place of the SB noun rūdu.

i 3'. For täšānāka MS VI 17 has the prescriptive stative tä našānāka.

i 4'. The word before täšānāka was restored by Arnaud as tu]-m-ā], 'a twin', though he translated it as plural ('des jumeaux'). However, this reading is uncertain for two reasons: (a) the broken sign is not a convincing ma, and (b) tu-āma in the singular would yield very odd sense, for a dual is required. All three manuscripts of SBVI 18 do indeed have good dual forms (tu-āma and tu-āmā). Perhaps read maš-ta-ja. Otherwise I cannot offer this solution to the problem.

i 5'. Arnaud read the first-preserved sign differently (qa-[b]-a-ka), and restored accordingly. I have followed SB 24-5 more closely, though it would appear from the size of the lacuna in MS A that the late version had a fuller text.

i 19'. The order of the two nouns is transposed in SBVI 26: harummati u balūtīt. The apparent use in the present line of enclitic -ma for the conjunct is poor Akkadian.

i 10'. The phrase preserved in this line was read si-in-ta, qa-ti] by Arnaud ('ornament de la main'); simt or sindis MB for simt. Collation does not favor qa (compare the examples in ii 6'-7') but did not produce any clear alternative (the trace of the sign following it is now missing entirely). The counterpart of this line in the SB text is evidently the couplet VI 27-8: [təšakalinni nā] hab simat

"O father, [give me, please, the Bull of Heaven,]
[that I may slay [Gīšaneš ...] ..."

col. ii, towards the bottom (Fragment a)

Ištar [opened her mouth to speak,]
saying [to her father, Anu:]

2 or 3 lines destroyed

`... [let] me ... [ ... ]'

Anu [heard] what she had to say,
[and] he placed in her hands [the nose-ropes of the Bull of Heaven.]

in Uruk it did not ... [ ... ]

[It dried up canebrake, woodland] and reed-bed.

When it went [down to the river, the river] fell [by seven cubits ...]

Remainder lost
la-la-a-hi tu-la-la; 53, 1, 3; la-ta-na-a-la-la-La; 54, 6: ū-ta-em-bu-ū-La-la-Le), as well as narrative poetry (SB Gilgamesh I 195: suh-bi kūšša; Nergal and Ereshkigal = SIT 28 iv 53-6: ū-ta-ba-a La-la-a-Hi; Hunger, Uruk I 1 v 7b-9: ū-ta-a-ba-ū-‘La-la-a-ba’).

1925 to 1939. \(^{39}\) The piece was first published in 1959 by A. Goetze and S. Levy. It preserves fragments of text similar to parts of SB Tablet VII. The appearance of the tablet is typical of Late Bronze Age library tablets from the West. Other cuneiform texts of this period originally from Megiddo (Magidda), an Egyptian possession, are letters of the local ruler, Biritah, to his overlord the Pharaoh. \(^{40}\) Uninscribed clay liver models also attest to the exposure of the city’s elite to Babylonian intellectual traditions. \(^{41}\) Petrographical analysis of the fabric of MB Megiddo shows the tablet to be made of a clay that cannot derive from a source closer to Megiddo than the coastal plain between Ashkelon and Sidon. \(^{42}\) This clay is distinct from the material used for Biritah’s tablets, which was potters’ clay local to Megiddo. On these grounds MB Megiddo is unlikely to have been written in Megiddo itself. If written in Palestine it will derive originally from a site nearer the Mediterranean coast than Megiddo, but it may have come from further afield. In either case, it is hard to imagine that the fragment was not unwittingly excavated during the pre-war excavations near whose dump it was found, and we can assume that, whatever the tablet’s ultimate place of origin, it was imported to Megiddo at some time in antiquity.

The text is set down on the clay without much regard for poetic lines, as was often the habit in the West (cf. MB Emar and MB Bog). Only in those few places where the text agrees closely with MB Ur and SB Tablet VII can one determine where the lines of poetry begin and end. In a few places such boundaries can be ascertained as clearly falling in the middle of a line on the tablet. On the obverse, where the scribe used space freely, they sometimes coincide with a longer gap than that which usually separates successive words. Identifiable line boundaries are denoted in the transliteration by means of an oblique slash. Where there is verbatim concordance between the Megiddo tablet and the other recensions, as at obv. 13'-14', restoration of the lines provides a tool with which to judge the width of the tablet.

Goetze and Levy considered the piece to be from the bottom left-hand corner of a tablet of four columns, each of about sixty lines. They dated it to the fourteenth century BC on the grounds of a palaeographic comparison with Amarna-period letters from Byblos and other towns of the Phoenician coast. Their conclusion was that ‘the sign forms . . . are slightly earlier than those of the Amarna texts quoted and that among the Amarna tablets themselves they resemble most closely those that have been written in the Phoenician cities’.

These comments are substantially at odds with the recent report of A. Westenholz, whose notes on the fragment read as follows:

Unlike the original editors I would date it to the fifteenth or even sixteenth century, on the same grounds of palaeography; but who really knows with such outlandish texts? I cannot agree with their statement: ‘the clay of the tablet is of good quality’; it is full of sand, with a very thin surface slip or wash. It was, however, well baked in antiquity to an orange-reddish colour (the interior is brown).

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\(^{39}\) For the date of discovery I am indebted to Osnat Misch-Brandi, Curator of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages, Israel Museum, who reports further that the fragment was ‘registered in the Department of Antiquity (R 1170) on the date 31.5.’.

\(^{40}\) ED 242-8 and 365.

\(^{41}\) G. Loud, Megiddo II (OIP 62; Chicago, 1948), pl. 255, 1-2.

\(^{42}\) The results of the analysis await publication by Yuval Goren, Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na’aman. I am indebted to Goren for sharing them with me.

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Nor can I agree that the fragment is from the corner of the tablet; there is no trace of the upper edge of the reverse. Judging from the curvature of the tablet, admittedly indistinct, it is rather from around the middle of the left-hand edge, and probably from a one-column tablet. The tablet may originally have had about thirty-five lines on the obverse and forty on the reverse. \(^{43}\)

Renewed collation in 1999 vindicated Westenholz’s observations on the physical characteristics of the fragment. Unless the tablet was irregular in profile, the curvature of the extant piece’s reverse indicates that it is from the left edge of a tablet of one column per side only, slightly nearer the bottom than the top. On the reverse there is absolutely no trace extant of the upper edge that Goetze and Levy considered ‘clearly marked’. The size of the original tablet would have been very approximately 25 x 18 cm., in portrait format. The obverse may thus have contained as many as forty lines and the reverse, which is much more tightly written, rather more.

The obverse begins with a reminiscence of the hero’s epic exploits, apparently voiced by Enkidu (obv. 4'-8?). These lines have no counterpart in the late text at this point in the story, unless they are to be placed in the lacuna at the beginning of SB Tablet VII, between Enkidu’s dream of doom and the cursing of the door he made for Enlil. What follows in MB Megiddo is not the cursing of the door, however, but an assertion that something, evidently the dream, was favourable but, at the same time, hard to interpret (obv. 10’-12’). The terminology recalls Enkidu’s reaction to Gilgamesh’s nightmares in OB Schøyen and SB Tablet IV, where preserved, \(^{44}\) but since we know from the late version that the present context is likely to be that of a conversation following Enkidu’s dream of doom, it must instead be Gilgamesh who offers such reassurance. The late counterpart of this passage is thus the much longer speech at SB VII 69-89, where in comforting his friend Gilgamesh remarks, among other things, on the rarity of the vision he saw. \(^{45}\) The text of the Megiddo tablet continues with Enkidu telling his second dream, in which he finds himself overpowered by a monstrous opponent and led captive to the Netherworld (obv. 12’-18’?). This is a counterpart of MB Ur 59-69 // SB VII 162-221.

The reverse describes Enkidu’s deathbed agony and the subsequent grief of Gilgamesh. The opening lines are very fragmentary. They seem to be the remains of a speech of Enkidu, perhaps the counterpart of that which in the late text ends at SB VII 252. Unfortunately most of the late speech is lost but it ends with Enkidu’s plea that his friend remember him. A similar concern is found in the Megiddo tablet, when Enkidu asks that the customary libations of water be made for him to perpetuate his memory after death (rev. 5’-6’). He has no family to look after these matters, for Ḫumbaba’s curse has made sure of that, \(^{46}\) so we can assume that Gilgamesh is to arrange for the appropriate people to conduct the necessary ritual. \(^{47}\) By way of reply Gilgamesh simply exclaims that his friend has been his saviour, a

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\(^{43}\) See A. Westenholz, Studia Lambert, p. 445.


\(^{45}\) Epy. SB VII 72: [t̠umatu šišiosu] pristim maššis, and 74: [. . .]niššu šišiosu aṣṣis.

\(^{46}\) See SBV 257.

\(^{47}\) Whether one reads in rev. 5’ ša[pa] or ša[ugal], the subject is 3rd person, so evidently not Gilgamesh himself.
sentiment that harks back to his mother’s prediction that this would be so (rev. 7). "In SB Tablet VII Gilgamesh’s reply to his friend’s appeal is also short but refers again to the extraordinariness of his dream." The lack of formal narrative to mark the change of speaker, in both versions of Enkidu’s death, brings a heightened drama to the episode.

The Megiddo tablet continues with the telling of the days of Enkidu’s final decline (rev. 7’–12’), presenting a close parallel to SB VII 255–62. The last lines are very fragmentary. They include the report of somebody ‘sobbing like a dove’ (rev. 13’–14’), but it is unknown whether the subject of this standard image is Gilgamesh or Enkidu. As the text peters out it appears that Gilgamesh announces his intention to mourn or to make his people mourn. Probably such an intention was averred at the end of SB Tablet VII, still missing, though the great lament itself begins in SB Tablet VIII.

From this analysis of its contents it seems likely that the Megiddo tablet, when complete, covered events from Enkidu’s dream of doom to his expiry, the episodes that mark respectively the beginning and the end of SB Tablet VII. Nevertheless, concordance between the text of the two versions is rare, a fact that serves to emphasize how much more remotely related MB Megiddo was to the SB text in comparison with the broadly contemporaneous fragments from Babylonia. Moreover, the Megiddo tablet finds no place for much material present in MB Ur and SB Tablet VII. It knows neither the cursing of the door (SB VII 37’–64’) nor the longer passage comprising the execution of the hunter and the prostitute, Šamaš’s intervention and the blessing of the prostitute (MB Ur 1–58 // SB VII 90–161).

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46 These words must be spoken by Gilgamesh, for it is not his role to save his friend but Enkidu’s; cf. SB I 268 // 291: ilukiškamme dammi uggp māštābi ibrī.

47 SB VII 253: ibrī 'umur iusza ša li šu manaššašu?'

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Israel Museum 55-2

MB Megiddo

Copy: Pl. 30

Previous publication


1968 B. Landsberger, ‘Zur vierten und siebten Tafel des Gilgamesch-Epos’, RA 62, pp. 119 (obv. 8’–12’), 121 (obv. 2’–8’), 131 (obv. 12’–rev. 1’), 132 (rev. 2’–7’), 133 (rev. 7’–12’), 135 (rev. 13’–19’)

1977 M. Magnusson, BC: the Archaeology of the Bible Lands (London: Bodley Head-BBC), p. 23 (obv. only)

2000 A. Westenholz, Studies Lambers, p. 451

Text

obv.

1’ [x x] x [.............]

2’ [x] x iš/a²? r[i............]

3’ [ū-š] a-š-ab-bi x [.............]

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Other translations


1999 A. George, The Epic of Gilgamesh (Penguin), pp. 138–9

Translation

obv.

1’–2’ traces only

3’ [u-ni] speaking [.............]
4' ['I] cut down [ . . . . . . . ]
5' you, when [ . . . . . . . ]
6' its mountains, and we [destroyed Humbaba, who in]
7' the Cedar Forest dwelt, [we seized the Bull of Heaven and]
8' [we] slew (it). In [ . . . . . . . ]
9' [ . . . ] this [ . . . . . . . ] 
10' was favourable and [ . . . . . . . ]
11' it [was precious], it was favourable and it [was . . . . . . . . ]
12' [ . . . ] it was difficult.’ In [my] dream [ . . . there was a man,]
13' he was short of stature, he was large [of . . . Like the (roaring) Anzu bird]
14' was the set of his [face. His hands were a lion’s] paws,
15' [his claws were] an eagle’s talons. [ . . . . . . ]
16' his [ . . . ] all [ . . . . . . ]
17' [of an] eagle, [his] hands [ . . . . . . . . ]’

Lacuna

rev.
1' ‘Moaning [ . . . . . . . ]
2' for my friend [ . . . . . . . ]
3' ‘Take hold, O Gilgameš [ . . . . . . . . . ]
4' he had no [ . . . ] he did not [ . . . . . . . ]
5' You enabled me to roam . . . In commemoration of]
6' my name may [they pour] pure water [ . . ]’
7' ‘O my friend, who rescued me from [ . . . !] Enkidu lay sick for one day and]
8' a second day. In the bed [ . . . . a third]
9' and a fourth day. In the bed on [ . . . . . . . ]
10' The sickness grew too much for him [ . . . . . . . ]”
11' Enkidu was cast [down] on the bed [ . . . . . . . ]
12' He called for Gilgameš and he . . . [ . . . . . . . ]
13' at his cry he [ . . . . . . . ]
14' He sobbed like a dove [ . . . . . . . . . ]
15' was too little. In the night [ . . . . . . . ]
16' the foremost of [ . . . He was mourning]
17' for his friend [ . . . . . . . . . . ]
18' ‘I will (make?) mourn [ . . . . . . . ]
19' I myself for . . . [ . . . . . . . . . . ]’

Remainder lost

72 Or, reading ši-eš-šu, ‘the sickness worsened, his flesh [ . . . . . . . ]’
Notes

obv. 3’. Careful inspection of the traces reveals that the broken sign after bi cannot be interpreted as a-lesu (Goetze and Levy). The traces are of a sign that begins with two horizontal wedges, like e in obv. 13’.

4’. In neither Levy’s copy nor Westenholz’s is there room at the beginning of the line for the [a-][u] restored by Landsberger, but on this tablet it is feasible that a negative particle could have ended the preceding line. Landsberger saw in these lines an assertion by Enkidu of his innocence in the matter of felling the cedar, given that in OB Ishchali, as also in the newly recovered conclusion of SB Tablet V, the emphasis is on Gilgamesh as the lumberjack. However, it is clear from Enkidu’s address to the door in SB VII that he, as well as Gilgamesh, felled cedar. Elucidation of this passage in MB Megiddo will have to await the discovery of new text.

6’–7’. The restorations are made with reference to Gilgamesh’s résumé of his exploits with Enkidu, as given several times later on in the SB text (VIII 52–4, X 31–3 / 128–30 / 228–30): ša nin-nemidima nibi šada / nišatina ala ninuru / nusalti Ḥumbaba ša ina qitli erēni alu (Tablet X adds ina nērihitu?) ša šadi midūtu ṭūti. Note that the exploits are given here in the correct order, with the slaying of the Bull of Heaven coming after the killing of Humbaba, not before. In comparison with the late text, Megiddo’s ša-da-za comes a problem, for it is not a regular accusative. It might be locative, prompting the restoration [mil][ku] kešu[k], but such forms are rare in Gilgamesh and it is better to assume that in the reporting of the heroes’ first exploit the text was different from the SB version.

7’. Landsberger considered the subject of aš-bu to be the gods, who elsewhere in Gilgamesh are said to dwell on Lebanon (OB IM 17–18, OB Ishchali 38’, SBV 6). Others read aš-pu-[Γ4̅], irregularly from sapāru. However, neither reading takes account of the similarity of this passage to SBVIII 52–4, etc.

8’. If the first word is restored correctly compare SBVI 95, where nēru also appears to take a ventive ending (lu-nīr-[a]u).

9’. Landsberger restored the beginning of the line [a-su-][a]-lim. Contrary to Levy’s copy, the copy continues then, though not necessarily restored mitigaru, ‘harmonious’ (also favoured by Landsberger). However, neither of Enkidu’s dreams can easily be described as promoting a feeling of harmony and some other adjective is to be sought.

11’. Landsberger’s translation ‘sch[wierig]’ presumes a reading pa-[aš-gas]. . . , following Levy’s copy and the apparent parallel in the following line, but collation appears to rule this out.

12’. Westenholz saw the first preserved sign as ir or similar. However, collation favours the traces as copied by Levy.

13’–15’. The text a-na anā ... sapāru is restored after MB Ur 66–8 and SB VII 169–70.

16’. A reading [u][š][k][d][u] / pāz [. . . ] (after MB Ur 65 and SB VII 168) is not confirmed by collation; it would in any case presume that the recension represented by MB Megiddo placed the phrases that describe Enkidu’s assistant in a different order.

17’. The reading of the beginning of the line is owed to Westenholz. rev. 1’. Collation disposes of Landsberger’s ši-in-ma-[a]-za, which he identified with MB Ur 69: šišat šimmatu // SBVII 171: šišat šimmatu. 3’. Here and in rev. 12’ the sign after mi is clearly pan not gim. For this spelling of the hero’s name see Chapter 2, where it is no. 12c.

10’. At the end a reading ši-ru-sa was advocated by von Soden, AF 20 (1963), p. 82, fn. 1. It remains possible, though the complex of signs after šakdi resembles ūgu in the line above much more closely than Levy’s copy suggests. The difficulty of determining here what is damaged clay and what a wedge means that collation could not decide the matter one way or the other.

13’. The cry is likely to be that of Gilgamesh, uttered in anguish at the realization of Enkidu’s approaching death. Collation rules out ki-k[u].

14’. Or šummaritu. Two restorations have been put forward for the verb in this line. The suggestion of von Soden, AF 20 (1963), p. 82, fn. 1, was ši-ša-am-ma[i]-zi < ummulu, ‘to make write’. A less improbable restoration is šu-ša-am-ma[i]-zi, as proposed by Landsberger. The suggestion was that šummaritu was corrupt for šāṣuritu, a view repeated by CAD S, p. 379, where the many attestations of the stock similar kina summati ša dāsumma are collected (p. 380 for kina šāṣuriti ša dāsumma). I have adopted Landsberger’s reading but reject his analysis. It is less mistrustful of the ancient scribe to assume that the verb in question is a correctly spelled intensive II/1 stem of šāṣuriti.

15’. The interpretation of the first three signs as a spelling of šat follows Goetze and Levy. Landsberger emended to e pa-(bi)-aš, ‘mög er nicht halten’, but emendation is unnecessary. Comparable writings of closed syllables C₂aC₂ with the sequence C₂-a-C₂ have been collected by B. Groeber, JCS 32 (1938), p. 157, who notes the presence of ‘broken orthographies’ in texts of all periods. Another example in a western copy of a Babylonian literary text is ši-ša-am-ma ša šashiti in KAS XII 194, 56 (Adapa from Amarna).

16’–17’. ‘To my eyes the broken sign after alarēl is not ša [U] (Landsberger). The phrase ana šišatu recalls the opening couplet of SB VIII: nin-ma šerī ša namūni / Gilgamesš lubaši ana šišatu. I have restored accordingly.

18’. Landsberger considered lubaši ‘schlecht für lubaši’, obviously mindful of SB VII 144 // VIII 88: ulubakku nēša ša Urub šišatmaišaka. If not the sole witness of an otherwise untested intensive II/1 stem, the spelling might alternatively stand as a defective writing of U2 lubak; either way the line anticipates Gilgamesh’s own mourning. Von Soden’s emendation to lu-daš-aq-go[ti]-[ši], ‘Ich will zerkleinern(?!’ (AF 20 (1963), p. 82, fn. 1), is not borne out by collation.
Assyrian Fragments of One or More Intermediate Versions

The many Gilgamesh tablets deriving from the libraries of Aššurbanipal at Nineveh outnumber by a large margin the rest of the Assyrian manuscripts of Gilgamesh. The former pieces, the Kuyunjik tablets, were the modern world's first sources for the epic and they form even now the basis of our understanding of the its structure and content. The Kuyunjik tablets remain the largest group of Gilgamesh tablets extant from first-millennium Mesopotamia. It is our good fortune that, with only two certain exceptions (MSS Y and ZZ), they bear witness to a version of the epic that seems to have been canonical not only in seventh-century Nineveh but also in the later libraries of Babylon. This is the text known here as the Standard Babylonian version, edited in Chapter 11.

At intervals over the past century of archaeological exploration in the great cities and provincial towns of Assyria, however, fifteen other first-millennium fragments of Gilgamesh have come to light. Some of them fit comfortably into the Standard Babylonian text as we know it from Kuyunjik and Babylon. These are eight pieces from Aššur (the two parts of MS A, Tablet VI; MS B, Tablet XI; the three fragments of MS E, also Tablet XI; MS D, also Tablet VI; and a manuscript of Tablet I as yet unpublished); one from Sultanetpe, ancient Ḥuzurina (MS F, Tablet VII); and one from Nimrud, ancient Kalakh (MS G, Tablet I). For reasons of format or content, or both, the remaining five Assyrian fragments do not sit so easily with the canonical text. Three, MS X and the two pieces of MS Y, come from Aššur, a fourth, MS Z, from Nimrud, and a fifth, MS E, from Sultanetpe. In script MSS X and Y are distinctly more old-fashioned than the other fragments from Aššur (MSS A, B, C and D). They are not Middle Assyrian but may be from the tenth or ninth centuries. The second Nimrud tablet (MS Z) also looks older than the seventh-century manuscripts.

Assyrian MS Y holds passages recounting the preparations for the expedition against Ḫumbaba. The text of the obverse runs parallel with the end of Tablet II of the Standard Babylonian epic but is often much more like the Old Babylonian Yale tablet. It is a duplicate of neither, however, and clearly represents the epic at an intermediate stage of transmission. The reverse, very fragmentary, is unplaced. Assyrian MS X yields two fragments of text from the episode of Gilgamesh's dreams on the journey to the Cedar Forest. This part of the epic, Tablet IV in the Standard Babylonian version, is now much better known than for-
(h) vowel harmony
y₂, obv. 6' iz-za-qu-ru, 14' u-ru-du, 13' iz-zaq-ru, z v 18' u-la-lu if for tallaku. Note also in MS y the declension of the proper noun "hu-ba-ba (acc. y₂ obv. 19'), "hu-be-be (gen. y₃, y₅, y₂ obv. 11', 22' )
(i) other Assyrian forms³
e 8 and y₁, "7 akh for kima or kī, e 12 el-let for ellel, 35 lá for al, 36 ditto, y₂, obv. 16' la-me-e-lu for lenēšu, rev. 3' šu-a-su for šābu, z ii 21', 28' ar-ši for urphī, iv 10 [as]-sa-kān for aštakan, vi 12' šu-sa
(j) high proportion of defective spellings of double consonants
e 2, 31 a-kaz-za-mu, 12 ni-tal-lāk, pu-ra-ti, 18 šī-ta-kān (I/3, cf. 19 šī-tal-kān), 25 šī-ma-iši, 30 e-kim-ma-na, 35 n-su-šā-sa, 36 šī-ru-a-ta, 38 šī-ta-a-te, 40 i-nar-a-dā-da-qa-te, x rev. 10' šu-tu, y₂, obv. 6' iz-za-qu-ru, 13' la-ma-su, 14' u-ru-du, 16' us-šā-ši-ir, 17' i-ta-qa-ra, 18' a-pa-la-a-ti, 21' u-ša-nāl(NAGA), 22' a-na-ši-ša, z i 20' i-qa-tap, u 5' a-na-tal-la, 18' qū-dū-dū, 19' šu-mu-an, 20' i-ra-ši, 23', 30' la-ba, 26' šu-ma.n, 34' nī-nēš-dū-šu, vi 3' [e]-la-ma, 8' e-nu-ša, 11' [i]-na-ša-sa, 14' šu-da-ni-ma
(k) CV for VC and vice versa⁴
e 6, 13 dagāl for ralp, 9 ni-ši-tal-pu for nišallupu, 11 ši-ul for šālu, 27 tu-kal-lat, 33 nu-ša-al-pi-šu, z ν 24' u-ša-na-nu, 27' te-ru-[rub]
(l) CVC for CV, CV⁵
 e 9 ni-ši-tal-pu for nišallupu, x rev. 6' mad-en-kid
(m) a subset of (l), where inflected final vowels are unmarked
 e 8 quer, 10 tu-lām, 12 el-lat, 17 še-emat for šimēt, 23 [uš-su]r for uššārā, z vi 17' su-pur
(n) a subset of (l), where subjunctive -u is unmarked
 e 12 ni-tal-lāk, 18, 19 šī-ta(k)-ša, 20 tap-pa-šī
(o) CVC-CV or CV-CVC-CV for CVC⁶
 e 6 šu-pu-ul-šu for susūr, y₃ ši-i-d-[de] for ṭāde
³ Assyrian dialect forms in the Kuyunjik manuscripts of Gilgâmēš are collected in Ch. 9, the section on Some features of language and style (sub vi-a).
⁴ For this as a feature of NA writing see the examples collected by K. Deleer, 'Studien zur neuaunyischen Orthographie', Or ns 31 (1962), pp. 186-93. For instances in the Kuyunjik manuscripts of Gilgâmēš see Ch. 9, the section on Spelling conventions (sub a). The use of CV signs for VC is now known to be very old, since it was established practice in the third millennium, especially at Uruk. Though such writings sometimes occur in OB tablets (see OB Hārmal and Nippur for examples), it would not be correct to view the sudden increase in them in the first millennium (in Babylonian as well as Assyrian) as the resurrection of an old convention. The explanation favoured by I.J. Gelb and others (e.g. Gelb, A Study of Writing, pp. 151-2), that such spellings reflect the growing influence of Aramaic writing practice, still holds good.
⁵ For CVC for CV, CV see K. Deleer, ‘Zweisilbige Lauwertze des Typs KKVV im Neuaunyischen’, Or ns 31 (1962), pp. 7-26; evidence for bisyllabic values with contrasting vowels (CVC for CV, CV) needs collecting, but good examples, picked at random, are the spellings muk-er-e-i in the DN Tīšmē-erē-ši-kērtē, 'She-Hears-the-Words-of-Him-who-Pays-Homage' (Menēl, Šimpēl II, p. 194, GAB 41); ī-šar-šu for šar-ri (STTH 38, 100); Poor Man of Nippur, and ī-šar-šu for šar-supāri (KAR 1, 18; Ears’s Descent). For such writings in the Kuyunjik manuscripts of Gilgâmēš see Ch. 9, the section on Spelling conventions (sub c).
⁶ For the same phenomenon in a Kuyunjik source see Ch. 9, the section on Spelling conventions (sub b).
See Deleer, Or ns 31, p. 194. For comparable spellings in Kuyunjik tablets see Ch. 9, the section on Spelling conventions (sub f).
For the practice of doubling a consonant in this position in history see the commentary on SB Tablet V 1; examples in manuscripts of the OB epic are collected in Ch. 9, the section on Spelling conventions (sub d and e).
³ The sign NAGA was used syllabically at Babylon, appearing in a letter of Supplementa to Nīsînu of Ugarit (P SIM IV, p. 36, 26; rub-rq), C. Rätzer and E. Neo, Mesopotamische Inschriften nos. 325, list for this sign the phonetic values mē-ga
⁴ e.g. Amarna: Adapa (Ed 356), Nergal and Ereshkigal (Ed 357), King of Battle (Ed 350); Babylon: Gilg. MB Boğ-ša, Ugarić Flood story, opening lines at least (Ugārijka V 167, ed. Lambert and Millard, Ama-Lū,mā, pp. 131-3); Emar: Gilg. MB Emar-šu-Megiddo: Gilg. MB Megiddo
⁵ Note the false break in the Assyrian MSS a, col. 1, where SB VI 139-40 are divided in the wrong place. Other examples of false breaks are older, being established in all extant MSS, e.g. SB XI 132-3 and 317-18.
versions are older and the better-attested versions are more recent. Assyrian centres were, from the point of view of the dissemination of Babylonian culture, peripheral. It is clear that the 'canonical' editions of much of the traditional literature of scribal learning that we know from the tablets of first-millennium Nineveh, Babylon and Uruk are the result of a deliberate process of standardization. On the evidence, especially, of the activities of such men as Esagil-kin-apli, a scholar of the mid-eleventh century who was held responsible for new editions of many important exorcistic and divinatory texts,13 we assume that this standardization took place towards the end of the second millennium in Babylonia. We can suppose that new editions of traditional texts rapidly replaced the old in Babylonia but that they did not reach the peripheral centres so quickly. Provincial regions are well known for the retention of old traditions, so superseded editions can be expected to have survived in Assyria after they had disappeared in Babylonia. The preservation of Middle Assyrian copies of some Babylonian texts in seventh-century Assyrian libraries illustrates how much local scholars cherished old tablets. In this hypothesis, tablets of new editions of traditional Babylonian literary compositions were extant in Assyria in the early first millennium and continued to be copied out right down to the seventh century.

As has already been noted in the discussion of the Middle Babylonian Gilgamesh in Chapter 1, Assyrian MS y holds text of an episode also available in an Old Babylonian version as well as the late epic, and is an unambiguous witness to a version of the epic at an intermediate stage of development between the two extant parallels. It affords a very clear example of the preservation into the seventh century of an old tablet and an even older version of the text. Assyrian MSS x and z are very probably fragments of another old edition (or editions) of the Gilgameš epic. The presence in them of proper names in non-Standard Babylonian spellings, as collected above under category (a), serves to bolster the argument, for the spelling of many of the proper names encountered in the epic was not standardized in the earlier second millennium.

When an edition of a Babylonian text has a long history of copying in a country where different rules of grammar and spelling exist, one can expect some intrusion of that country's grammar and spelling. As the evidence assembled above shows, this has happened in the case of Assyrian MSS e, x, y and z. Assyrian dialect has left a few traces (categories b–i) and Assyrian orthographic conventions are everywhere visible (categories j–t). But despite this, the survival of typically Middle Babylonian spellings in MSS e, y and z (category u) helps to remind us that these copies' antecedents were ultimately southern. The texts transmitted by Assyrian MSS e, x, y and z are in language overwhelmingly Babylonian. For this reason I am reluctant to characterize the tablets presented in this chapter as sources for an 'Assyrian recension' of the epic. More exactly, I see them as vestiges of one or more Babylonian editions that pre-dated the Standard Babylonian version and remained current in Assyria well into the first millennium BC.

The question arises as to the date of this putative old version (or versions). The tablets provide no explicit information on this topic, beyond the impression gained from the script that some of them, at least, date to the tenth or ninth centuries. The only other evidence they provide is the presence of the Assyrian features listed above. In commenting on the textual history of Atra-šis, the text's editors noted that similar mixtures of Assyrian and Babylonian forms and orthography are exhibited in Middle Assyrian copies of Babylonian literary texts.14 They suggested the Middle Assyrian period as the time of origin of their Assyrian recension, though no Middle Assyrian copy of Atra-šis is extant. No truly Middle Assyrian copy of Gilgameš has been recovered, either, but it is likewise hard to believe that tablets of Gilgameš were not included in the literary spoils sent home by Tukulti-Ninurta I when he sacked Babylon. This event is often considered seminal in the dissemination of Babylonian literature to Assyria but it remains possible that too much emphasis is placed on it, given how little we know of the cultural interaction of the Babylonian and Assyrian intelligentsia in most periods. Babylonian tablets no doubt travelled north in many periods. Perhaps the fragments presented in this chapter are descended from a version or versions of the epic imported to Assyria by Tukulti-Ninurta but, then again, perhaps not.

THE FRAGMENTS FROM AŠŠUR
(ASSYRIAN MSS x AND y)

In the absence of excavation numbers, nothing can be said of the provenance of these pieces other than that they were excavated by Andrae at Aššur before the First World War. Judging by the script, the fragments are older than all other manuscripts of Gilgameš from the same city (MS a, b, c and d). The handwriting is of a kind familiar from the reigns of Aššurnasirpal II (883–859 BC),15 so they may date from the early ninth century, but scripts change slowly and a tenth-century date is not ruled out.

Assyrian MS y

Assyrian MS y comprises two fragments of similar clay and script, VAT 10585b and VAT 10916, that were identified by Stefan M. Maul only in 2000. They yield text of the episode in which the preparations for the journey to the Cedar Forest are described, and accordingly can be compared with the Old Babylonian Tale tablet (OB Tablet III) and the Standard Babylonian epic (SB Tablets II–III). The two fragments both show affinities with the older and younger texts, and for that reason too it is likely that they are parts of a single tablet. Their combined text can be viewed as witness to the epic at an intermediate stage in its development, post-Old Babylonian but pre-dating the standardizing of the text as the Standard Babylonian version. Though of comparatively early date, the fragments of

13 See Ch. 1, the section on Sin-Yeqi-unninni and the SB epic.


15 This is the view of S. M. Maul, a leading expert in Assyrian handwriting from Aššur; see his edition of MS y in MDOG 133.
Assyrian MS y are far removed in time from the date of the standardized edition. Most probably they are descended from Middle Assyrian copies of Middle Babylonian originals. So far as it is possible to tell, the text is written in the conventional southern manner, the lines of poetry coinciding with lines of tablet. Some lines of poetry are doubled up on to a single line of tablet. As already reported, the spelling exhibits many Assyrian habits and the occasional Assyrianism. Unlike most seventh-century Assyrian copies, Assyrian MS y consistently renders the inflection of noun and verb in faithful accordance with the rules of late second-millennium grammar.

The first piece, MS y₁₁, is a small fragment that has only one face preserved. In it Gilgameš states his intention of doing battle with Humbaba in the Cedar Forest, even if it means a glorious death (1'–5'). He chides the cautious Enkidu for the feeble objections that are ill suited to his fearsome appearance and heroic past (6'–9'). The text is very like the Yale tablet (OB III 141–57). The lacuna that intervenes at this point between the two fragments of MS y can be filled with reference to the Yale tablet. There Gilgameš ends this speech to Enkidu by vowing to fell cedar and win renown (OB III 158–60). He then takes his friend to the coppersmiths, who cast great weapons for them, and closes the gates of Uruk to convene an assembly (OB III 161–77).

The second piece, MS y₁₂, comes from near the bottom of the right-hand column of a tablet that probably held two columns of text on each side. The text of the obverse holds the remains of three speeches delivered at the meeting of the assembly of Uruk. Gilgameš tells of his plan to go to the Cedar Forest to make a name for himself (1'–5'). This speech is very similar to the end of his first address to the assembly on the Yale tablet, where it is fully preserved (OB III 178–88). As in that tablet, Gilgameš's bravado is followed immediately by the elders' response; in the Standard Babylonian epic Enkidu intervenes between the two speeches (SB II 272–86). The counsellors advise that their king's youthful enthusiasm has got the better of his judgement (6'–10'). They go on to warn him that the forest and its precious timber are guarded by the ogre Humbaba, whom Enlil himself appointed (11'–15'). Their speech is again similar to the Yale tablet (OB III 191–6) but ends by reprising lines that occur only once in the Yale tablet, at a much earlier point in the episode (OB III 134–7). In this respect it anticipates the Standard Babylonian version.

In a speech that is hitherto all but lost in lacunae (OB III 201 ff., SB II 301 ff.) Gilgameš laughs off the elders' warnings and reaffirms his intention of subduing Humbaba (16'–19'). That done, he plans to make rafts of logs from the Cedar Forest and float the timber down river to Babylon, with Humbaba's decapitated head as the trophy of his victory (20'–2'). His speech thus anticipates the narrative that relates how these things are done, which is only partly preserved in the Standard Babylonian epic (SBV 300–2). The counsellors respond in turn but here the text breaks off. This second speech must be their blessing for the journey, for that is what comes next in the older and younger versions of the epic (OB III 211–15, SB III 1–12).

To judge from the curvature of the surfaces of MS y₁₂, not very much text is missing between the end of the obverse and the beginning of the reverse. Unfortunately, very little of the reverse is legible. The content includes speeches of Gilgameš and Enkidu. Enough of these are preserved to show that this part of MS y has no counterpart on the Yale tablet. There the elders' speech is followed by Gilgameš's prayers to Šamaš and Lugalmanda, the arming of the two heroes, the elders' second blessing and envoi, words of encouragement from Enkidu, a short response by Gilgameš, the young men's blessings and the heroes' departure. In the Standard Babylonian version the poem is much expanded at this point. After the elders' speech, which opens SB Tablet III, Gilgameš and Enkidu visit Ninsun, whereupon she delivers her long address to Šamaš and adopts Enkidu. Thereafter the text of SB Tablet III becomes fragmentary. Though it is not possible to identify in it any counterpart of the reverse of MS y₁₂ there is at least one lacuna large enough to accommodate it. The next verbal exchanges between the two heroes fall in the dream episodes on the journey itself, but even in the lost continuation of the Yale tablet these would be too far removed from the elders' blessing to find a place in the immediately following column of MS y.

In short, Assyrian MS y has speeches of Enkidu and Gilgameš not found in the Yale tablet and lacks the visit to Ninsun which occupies so much of SB Tablet III. Provisionally one can remark that the Assyrian tablet gives an account of what happened prior to the heroes' departure that is fuller than the extant Old Babylonian text but not as lengthy as the late epic. The tablet represents the poem at an intermediate stage of its development. It should be noted, however, that though the text of Assyrian MS y often reflects its intermediate position between the extant Old Babylonian and Standard Babylonian texts, the version of the poem that it represents does not constitute a link in a direct lineal descent. In it are several examples of textual variation in language at places in the poem where the older and younger versions agree with each other. The following examples show how Assyrian MS y sometimes deviates radically from the Old Babylonian text where the late version remains more or less faithful:

(a) "šâmûšûma manâ ûmmûšûma
mimmû ša tureppašû lârumûma (çw ûlûrûma)
OB III 142–3
amûlatti manâ [ûmûlûšûma]
SB II 234–5
ša amûlûšû manâ ûmûlûšûma
[ ... ] ša pullûšu ša [mûlûšû qaqqaddû]
Assyrian MS y, 1'–2'"  

(b) "sêlêrtûma Giğâmeš lîbbakâ naškka
mimmû ša tereppûšû lâ têle
OB III 191–2
sêlêrti Giğâmeš lûbbakâ nûška
u mimmû ša ûlûmûšûma (çw. tâqakkû) ul têle
SB II 289–90
[ ... ] ša tâqakkkû maqîr [ ... ]
[ ... ] ša lê tâqakkû maqîr [ ... ]
Assyrian MS y, obv. 7'–10'  

SB III 174 ff., possibly also 136–46 and 235 ff.
THE OLDER VERSIONS OF THE EPIC

(c) pīšu Girmumma napāsu mātu

OB III 198

[pišu Girmumma napāsu mātu]

SB II 292

[pišu Girmumma napāsu mātu]

Assyrian MS y1, obv. 12'

(d) išmēna Gilmēna sīqār māliškā

išmēna Gilmēna amēr mālīškā labātī

išpalam[išša] anā Enkidū

OB III 201–2

SB II 300–1

Consequently the term 'intermediate' employed with regard to the text represented by Assyrian MS y signifies a temporal relationship, no more. This poem stands between the Yale tablet and the Standard Babylonian version only in time. We cannot place the three texts in a direct descent. To use the analogy of a human family, Assyrian MS y may be a nephew of the Yale tablet and the Standard Babylonian poem a nephew or a great-nephew, but the text represented by the Assyrian tablet can only be an uncle or cousin of the latter, not a parent.
6' The senior [advisers rose],
saying [to Gilgamesh],
6' [You are young], my lord, [carried away] by enthusiasm,
8' [...] what you speak of finds [no] favour [...] 9'
9' You [are young], my lord, [carried away] by enthusiasm,
10' [...] what you speak of finds [no] favour [...] 11'
11' [...] [...] of Humbaba will be too ferocious for [you ...]
12' his [speech] is fire, its utterance is death; 13'
13' [For] sixty leagues each way, [the forest] surrounds him, 14'
14' [who] is there where venture within? 15'
Adad is the [first, but] he is the second!
15' [In order to] keep his cedars safe,
[Enil made it] his destiny [to be] the terror of the people.
16' When Gilgamesh heard this,
he turned around to [his] friend.
17' He laughed, saying to Enkidu:
'My friend, shall I be so [...] 18'
so afraid that I cannot go into his presence?
I shall travel [the distant path to where Humbaba is,]
19' and Humbaba, like a lion, I shall [...] 20'
I shall rope together rafts of cedar, cypress [and supālu-juniper (?).]
21' Thereon I shall collect together [...] 22'
I shall cut off the head of Humbaba and come downstream [...]'
23' The senior advisers ...,
saying [to Gilgamesh],
24' 'Let [...] you,
[may] the god Samaš [ ...']
Notes

y 2'. Though incomplete, the line is clearly very different from its counterpart in the Yale tablet and the late text. The verb pulleda, lit. 'they are in shade', alludes to the shadow of death that looms over men.


4'. The first word is corrupt; the Yale tablet reads samma antaquit.

5'. The verb of the Yale tablet is tlaš. This version of the poem uses a more neutral word.

8'. As restored from its counterparts, this line of tablet is not filled and may have held two lines of poetry. The spelling ti-id-[de] for tidde exhibits the principle that long syllables can be written closed (see the introduction, spelling point 0). Maul proposes a different solution, in which tidde exhibits the influence of the MA and NA present udda.

y 1'. Maul reads the traces as in-[na]-idi-ti-ti. Without good context it is better to reserve judgement.

3'. The traces exclude the Yale tablet's perfum la Uruk.

5'. Perhaps aliaztu (Maul).

8' // 10'. A negative is required to save the sense of the line, for the elders are clearly opposed to Gilgamesh's wish.

9'. The traces of libbado are collated.

13'. The signs be-ri replace the distributive bēni of the Old Babylonian text (note also be-ri in MB Bog. d 7'). As the replacement of the older version's difficult nu-ma-at, the word lu-ma-su is probably an intentional emendation by a baffled editor, with nu interpreted as lu.

15'. This line stands midway between the Yale tablet (OB III 136-7: alšum iššum[u erētim] / puššiši-im [pu-šili-ši-im] sib [iššumu Ešilu]) and the late version (SB II 218-19a, etc.: alšiu iššum-erētim / ana alšiu ša nis šibna Ešilu). Unless one emends the present text to (ana) puššu with SB II, the word spelled pu-šili-ši-im is accusative and consequently plural, as in the Yale tablet. Assyrian vowel harmony is then ruled out as an explanation for the vowel /e/ after the stem (c*puššu). Instead the form represents an unusual contraction of the Yale tablet's broken plural, puššiši-im < puššu (for the contraction /'a/ to /e/ outside Mari see GAG §16k).
Assyrian MS x

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Text

obv. (col. i)
1' [...] šu ma [...
2' [...] x bu me [...
3' [...] x x x x x [\"...

4' [...] x-ki-ma qa-a-ša it-ta- [\"
5' [...] x i-ša-a ma-te la-an-ša [\"
6' [...] a-ta ša šiš-ni šu im-ta- [\"
7' [...] [\"DED \"giš-gim-maš [\"... [\"a-ru-u[r...[\"
8' [...] it-ik-x[(x)] x [\"

rev. (col. iv?)
1' [...] an [...] [\"
2' [...] x ša-ru ša-ša-mi-[\"...[\"
3' [...] x-nuk šu-taš-dû- [\"
4' [...] šu-me ul ta-ah-[\"...[\"
5' [...] [\"ana] dî[i] (uru)-ka-ma tu-ur x[...[\"
6' [...] [\"\"en-kiš [\"paška]-šu šu ipuša(dû)]-[\"am-ma i-qab-bî\"
7' [...] [\"iz-qa-qa ra-a nû-[\"...[\"
8' [...] [\"ib-ri ša ta-ma-tu-u...[\"
9' [...] [\"...[\"ša ma u-ba-an-x[...[\"
10' [...] [\"...[\"šu tu x[...[\"

Translation

obv.
1'-3' too damaged for translation

4' [...] and...[\"
5' [...] x cubits was his height[...]
6' [...] of his figure[...]
7' [...] Gilgameš became frightened[...]
8' [...] [\"

rev.
1'-3' too damaged for translation

4' [...] you were not...[\"
5' [...] 'Go back [to] your city!...[\"
6' [...] Enkidu opened his mouth [to speak,]
7' [...] to [Gilgameš]
8' [...] [The...[, my friend, that you saw...[\"
9' [...] [\"
10' [...] the dream[...]
11' [...] Gilgameš opened his mouth [to speak,]
12' [...] [saying to Enkidu:...[\"

ASSYRIAN FRAGMENTS: MS x
A TABLET FROM NIMRUD (ASSYRIAN MS Z)

The tablet IM 67564 is one of two Gilgamesh tablets from the library of Ekilda, the seventh-century temple of Nabû at Kalaḫ (Nimrud), excavated in 1955. The findspot was 'NT H2 in pit through broken burnt brick pavement of period II'. It was published by J.A. Black in 1996 and identified by W.G. Lambert as a Gilgamesh text shortly thereafter.

Assyrian MS z is a big piece from the left lower part of a very large tablet that certainly held more than two columns of text on each side, probably three. The dupsus looks older than the hands found on Kuyunjik tablets. It is certainly not Middle Assyrian but it may be classified as early Neo-Assyrian. The library where the tablet was kept seems to have been built in about 800 bc, but the tablet could already have been in existence at that time. Uniquely among the extant first-millennium copies of the epic, it holds the text of more than one tablet of the poem. The two columns surviving on the obverse yield text that matches parts of SB Tablet X. Judging by a comparison with the Standard Babylonian text, each column held about 120 lines of poetry. The text preserved on the reverse columns, probably cols. v and vi, is partly a match for SB Tablet XI and partly not.

The text of the three columns that match parts of SB Tablets X and XI is here incorporated into the editions of the Standard Babylonian epic. The episodes concerned are those of Gilgamesh's conversation with Siduri (col. i), his arrival chez Uta-napišti (col. ii) and his return home to Uruk at the end of the epic (col. vi). Translation and commentary can be found in Chapters 11 and 13. The match is not perfect, for there are several places where the text of Assyrian MS z appears to deviate from the Standard Babylonian version, and often space appears too restricted to allow restoration of the full text. In addition, decipherment is hampered by the tablet's badly damaged surface. Possibly MS z deviates more than the present transliteration suggests. In col. i 14'-16', for example, it is difficult to see how to match the extant traces with SB X 79-84 and to fit all six lines into the available space. In ll. 27-30 of the same column the poor state of SB 97-101 hampers decipherment, but enough is preserved of both versions to show that the beginnings of SB X 101 and its counterpart on Assyrian MS z do not tally. In col. vi 7'-9' there hardly seems room for all of SB XI 309-13 and in the following two lines phrases appear to be inverted (vi 10': aššan dungal // SB XI 314: dumgal štāpšu; vi 11': šinanī edī // SB XI 315: edī šinanīmatu). The counterparts of the last five lines of the epic are so badly damaged on MS z that it is impossible to suggest any readings at all, let alone how they were distributed.

The penultimate column, probably col. v, is the least well preserved, but in terms of significance for our knowledge of the epic's history it is the most important. We expect the text of Tablet XI to end in the damaged part of col. vi, about two-thirds of the way down the extant portion, in the passage that follows the lines describing the return to Uruk. The remainder of the column could have been given over to an elaborate colophon but I could find no trace of a catch-line. The tablet is very damaged hereabouts. Possibly the text deviates from our expectations at this point also, by providing an ending of Tablet XI different from that attested in the Standard Babylonian text. In any event, with columns that contain about 120 lines of poetry we can expect the middle of col. v to fall at a line corresponding to about SB XI 200, at the end of the well-preserved account of Utanapišti's Flood. Such expectations are confounded. As preserved, the text of col. v is completely different from any part of SB Tablet XI. What we have instead is an account in the first person in which some words, but not all, may fit the end of the familiar story of the Flood, as told by its survivor, or are at least reminiscent of that narrative. The more striking points of similarity are these:

(a) v 18' šeûט 'seven'
The numeral calls to mind Utanapišti's ritual preparations for sacrifice (SB XI 159):
šeûט u šeûט dāgūrnu šutīn.
(b) v 23' uḫallī 'I prayed'
Praying to the gods might accompany the sacrifice.
(c) v 24' ṷašnam 'I shall send rain' or 'I shall send provisions'
The verb ṷašnam, ṷašnamākhanītu occurs ambiguously in Ea's cryptic warning to the people (SB XI 43, 47, 88, 91).
(d) v 25' думалītu 'my tears'
Tears were wept by Utanapišti as he gazed on the flood waters in the aftermath of the deluge (SB XI 139): elī dīr aqppiyāiti itākā думалīya.
(e) v 30' nesītu 'I am remote'
Utanapišti tells Gilgamesh how the gods removed him from the world of mortal men (SB XI 206): itšešnīma itna rūqi itna pī nārāti usšēšši'tānu.

If this is indeed a telling of Utanapišti's story, then quite clearly it is a very different one. The last line preserved on col. v relates Gilgamesh's reaction to what he has heard. Again, the line does not tally with the text of SB Tablet XI, which at that point in the story has Gilgamesh taking up Utanapišti's challenge to do without sleep.

The text of Assyrian MS z is of such importance as a whole for the epic's history that I present it here on its own as well as in the composite edition of SB Tablets X and XI. The following transliteration is set out as the signs are written on the tablet, showing clearly the many places where lines of poetry do not coincide with lines of tablet. Line numbers from the late text are interpolated as superior characters.

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16 J.A. Black, CTNIV, p. 410.
18 See Black's discussion of the history of the library and its tablets in CTNIV, pp. 3-7.
Text

1' [. . .] 49 amat širiya kab-ta₂-]:fat eli(ugu)-ia
2' [49 ura rūgata arappud še₃₄ amat Enkidu širiya habia₃₃ eli(ugu)-ia
3' [49 ḫarrana rūgata arappud jej-e-ru
4' [49 kitṣ ṭakut kitiš lu-qa-ul a₄₄ na-ka₄₄
5' [49 ibri ša aramu tu-ši-te₄₂]-[ši]-iottleš-
6' [Enkidu širi ša aramu ši]elijk-ši-nil
7' [49 anāku ul ša šāšūma a-nē-(d)-] lam₄₄-ma
8' [1 ul atešṭa dār]-da-ri
9' [2 Gilgomeš ana ša]-ši-[ni-
10' [-ma]-takkarana ana šašša₄₄ minnīma šašša(mi₄₄-ma)]UL ḫarrana(kaškal)₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
11' [. . .] 4₄₄ mina širi shalli (4₄₄) maššumu šaššma₄₄-tam(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
12' [. . .] šíša₄₄ širi(x)₄₄ šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
13' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
14' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
15' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
16' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
17' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
18' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
19' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
20' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
21' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
22' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
23' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
24' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
25' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
26' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
27' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
28' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
29' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
30' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
31' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
32' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄
33' [. . .] šašša₄₄-tam₄₄(ka)-li₄₄ ū₄₄ aššumu(maššumu)[kaskal]₄₄ ša "UD₄₄-napāṣṭi(zi)₄₄

The line divisions in SB X 196–211 are provisional, for Assyrian MS z i–16 is the only extant witness to this passage and on this source the beginnings and ends of lines of tablet do not necessarily coincide with the divisions into lines of verse.
THE EXCERPT TABLET FROM SULTANTEPE
(ASSYRIAN MS e)

The odd-looking excerpt tablet from Sultantepe, ancient Išuzirina, was excavated in 1951 together with a manuscript of SB Tablet VII, MS f. Both formed part of the seventh-

THE OLDER VERSIONS OF THE EPIC

368

31' iriš-[t]uk [S-TUK ...]...]
32' traces

THE EXCERPT TABLET FROM SULTANTEPE
(ASSYRIAN MS e)

The odd-looking excerpt tablet from Sultantepe, ancient Išuzirina, was excavated in 1951 together with a manuscript of SB Tablet VII, MS f. Both formed part of the seventh-
century library of a certain Qird-Nergal.29 The excerpt tablet S.U. 51/7 contains in its forty-three lines text that can be treated as a source for the first seventy-two lines of Tablet VIII of the later version of the epic. The matter at hand is Gilgamesh’s great lament for his friend, Enkidu, and his summoning of the craftsmen of Uruk to make a magnificent funerary statue. The text is an extract, ending in the middle of Gilgamesh’s declaration of how he wanted the statue to look.

In shape, script and orthographic style the tablet is quite unlike MS f, and the two pieces most certainly do not form a pair. Assyrian MS e is a single-column tablet of landscape format, complete except for slight damage to its corners and the loss of its right-hand edge. The dactyl is a large and somewhat squat Neo-Assyrian hand, with few archaic characteristics (note the form of š in l. 28). The tablet also sets itself apart from MS f, and indeed other literary tablets from Sultantepe, by an abundance of badly formed signs and erasures. The many strange orthographies led its first editor to suggest that ‘the scribe was working from dictation, without understanding what he was writing’.23 His indifference to vowels, their value and presence or absence, can probably be put down to the influence of Aramaic writing practices. The peculiar spellings of MS e can be assembled, together with its many clear errors, under the following headings:

(a) preference for the vowel a, typical of Sultantepe tablets

6 lī-bu-na-ka for lībānīktu, 7 eɡīr-na for arīnī, 10 min-dan-mu for mindimmu, 12 ina a-ha-šu, 20 ta-pa-ši for tapāšiššu, 27 a-nam-ba-e for umamba, 31 nam-ma-r for nimmu, 35 a-la-pa-te for īšu, 38 a-ha-qa-am a-ta-ba-ka for baq̄am um addiš

(b) -aya for iya, a subset of (a)?

27 a-ha-a-a, 29 la-la-a-a, cf. 25 ši-ma-na-a-ša-ši for šimā′inni yāši, 29 la-ba-ri-ši-na-ta-a for lubā šimā′irīya

(c) -for -iya

26 th-ri-e for thriya, 28 šī-bi-i for šibīya

(d) other irregular or curious spellings

1 nā-ri, 3 ši-zî-bi-ši for šibāšiša, 11 nam-ma-e, 14 me-=-na-šu-šu for tābūzīni īšu, 17 a-ši na for ušinnā

(e) lack of grammatical agreement

11 lībīktu [. . .] elīt (cf. SBVIII 14?), 13 lībīktu ešlīt ēli ēpāš

(f) lack of subjunctive -u

4 [t̪e]-e-šu-[ka?] for tešdišu-ka

29 For details see the notes on MS f in Ch. 8, the introduction to the manuscripts of SB Tablet VII.
22 This phenomenon was first observed by W. G. Lambert, ‘The Sultantepe tablet, a review article’, RIMA 23 (1959), pp. 125–6.
23 This orthographic feature also occurs in LB copies; see, in this book, SB VII 95: th-ri-i (MS g) and the further examples cited by W. G. Lambert, ‘Critical notes on recent publications’, OMAS 40 (1971), p. 95.
24 See also the introduction to this chapter, where examples of loss of subjunctive -u and other final vowels are treated as an orthographic phenomenon rather than a phonemic one.

(g) other serious errors

3 i-na-ba-ša-ša for urabbāka, 4 me-re-e for merēš, 5 i-tur-ka for ṣullušu, 7 um-ba-nu-um, 14, 32 a-la-ku for ālu, 24 ina na-me-su-ma for ina umēššu, 32 i-na-ma-ma for min-ni-mūma, 34 at-ta tuk-ka-ma for ta′adramma, 39 i-na-at-ḫar for inaṣṣu, 40 40 Murūbā, for šimāg, 41 ṢUD.BAN for ša-lumānu

In the absence of a colophon we cannot even be sure whether the tablet was inscribed at Êzurim. It may have been imported from another Assyrian centre.

The exact place of this piece in the history of the epic is uncertain. The text it bears is a good match for SB Tablet VIII, as it is known to us from Kuyunjik and Babylon, and I have incorporated it into my edition of that text in Chapter 11 as a legitimate source. It is not a perfect fit, however. Apart from the many minor variants, some of which are clearly to be ignored as corruptions, there are places where Assyrian MS e disagrees more radically with SB Tablet VIII. The clearest case in point is the extra material inserted between SBVIII 47 and 48 (= SBVIII 47a). Elsewhere, at least one whole phrase is missing, namely ina uszinni in l. 9.25 Similar deviations occasionally occur between different manuscripts of the Standard Babylonian version, it is true, but it remains possible that this tablet is a late copy of a fragment from an older edition once current in Assyria and its provinces, an edition that contained Gilgamesh’s lament in nearly identical wording to SB Tablet VIII. Perhaps the most eloquent evidence for supposing Assyrian MS e to be a witness to a version other than the Standard Babylonian edition is the way the poetic lines are written, for they do not always coincide with lines of tablet. In addition, the scribe sometimes leaves a blank space to mark the division between lines, especially near the beginning of the tablet. As observed above, the arrangement of poetry in this manner was not a custom of the first millennium.

To show the arrangement of the text most clearly, the transliteration given here is set out as the signs are written on the tablet, with line numbers of SB Tablet VIII interpolated in the text in superior style. For translation and commentary see the edition of SB Tablet VIII in Chapters 11 and 13.

S.U. 51/7

Assyrian MS e

Previous publication


1954 O. R. Gurney, "Two fragments of the Epic of Gilgamesh from Sultantepe" , JCS 8, pp. 90–5

1957 O. R. Gurney, STT 1 no. 15

1999 A. George, The Epic of Gilgamesh (Penguin), p. 64 (obv. only)

Copy: Pl. 34
Text

34 mi-na-a ši-tū ši-ba-ta-ma ka-za-gi 46 at-ta tu-ra-ma li (a tashemmanāma yāsā)
35 ša ši-šu li ša-na-ša-a rēši (sag) 45-šaš-kā 38 a-la-pa-te ši-ba-šu-ma [a lā inākhab]
36 mi-ma-ma 47 ku-tu-ma ib-di kīma (gim) hallati (ē.gi, a) pa-nu-ut 48 ana-ku
[kīma arī]
37 a-tu-te eli (u) 49 kīma (gim) nēši (u) maţa ša ša-ša-te ma-ra-našu 65 tama-nišārā
38 ina pa-ni-šu ša arki (egir) 63 a-ba-qa-am a-tu-ba-ka qu-un-[nun-tum]
39 [p]ē 49-[es]-tum 64 a-ta-šar-[i] na-da-a da-a-te a-aš ki-hi [. . .]

ASSYRIAN FRAGMENTS: MS ZZ

A VARIATION AT NINEVEH?
(KUYUNJIK MSS YY AND ZZ)

It was stated at the beginning of this chapter that the tablets from Kuyunjik bear witness to the Standard Babylonian version of the epic 'with only two certain exceptions.' This figure arises partly by default, for where no Late Babylonian sources supplement the Kuyunjik tablets there can be no proof that the Neo-Assyrian manuscripts represent the Standard Babylonian version of the epic as opposed to a closely related older version of the kind represented by the tablet from Nimrud (Assyrian MS 2). This matter will be raised again in Chapter 9, where recensional differences within the Standard Babylonian text are considered. Here I present the two Kuyunjik fragments that seem at present to have no place in the Standard Babylonian epic.

Kuyunjik MS ZZ

The first is the fragment K 19276, previously unpublished. It comes from towards the bottom right-hand corner of a tablet of uncertain format. In the published catalogue its contents are described as 'uncertain.' The presence in the text of Gilgameš (obv. 2', 6') and the Cedar Forest (rev. 2') are clues that call to mind two possible identifications: (a) the epic itself and (b) omen apodes of the kind collected in Chapter 3, the sub-section on Omens mentioning Gilgameš. A fragment of a narrative formula for introducing direct speech

in [en]
THE OLDER VERSIONS OF THE EPIC

(obv. 6': ['PN opened his mouth to speak,'] saying to Gilgameš') or ['PN said [to him,] to Gilgameš') discounts the latter identification. Probably this piece is a source for the epic.

Nevertheless, it has not been possible to integrate the text of Kuyunjik MS ZZ into the editions given in Chapter 11. It may be significant that physically this fragment is quite unlike any other Gilgameš tablet from Nineveh. The clay is bright red-brown and the script minute. Provisionally I suggest that this is another remnant of an older version of the epic that survived in Assyria alongside the Standard Babylonian text. Consequently it takes its place in this chapter.

K 19276

Kuyunjik MS ZZ

Copy: Pl. 35

Text

1' [e]-ti-[ma . . . . . . . . . .]
2' a-mur [dāruš ša kimâ qe nipâti]
3' ša šarru (lugal) ā(r)-ku-â ša umâšâšu (amâlu) mamma]
4' e-li-ma [ina muḫḫi dāri ša Urâk šallâk]
5' te-me-na [siḫma libûta ṣubbî]
6' šum-ma [liḫitašu lâ aqarrat]

Translation

1' Go up [. . . . . . . . . .]
2' See [its wall which is like a strand of wool,]
3' that [no] later king [can replicate, (nor any man).]
4' Go up [on to the wall of Uruk and walk around,]
5' [survey] the foundation platform, [inspect the brickwork!]
6' (See) if [its brickwork is not kiln-fired brick . . . .]

If this small fragment is Gilgameš and not some other text that emulates the epic, it yields a text similar to the prologue and the conclusion of the eleven-tablet epic. By comparison with the prologue three lines are omitted (SB I 14–16). The line that precedes amur (/ SB I 13) is different from the expected line (SB I 12: ša ENUMA QADDAS šuttummi elâ) and does not match the conclusion either (SB XI 322: Gilgameš anâ šattuma izakkar ana Ur-anâši malâḥ). It could be the same line as l. 4'. These differences are too great for Kuyunjik MS YY to be included in the edition of the Standard Babylonian poem given below. It may be that it represents some variant, older edition.

Kuyunjik MS YY

The second Kuyunjik fragment edited here is K 16024, which has long been known as not quite a true source for the first-millennium epic. It is a piece from the left edge of a tablet of unknown format. The text can easily be restored by reference to Tablets I and XI.

K 16024

Kuyunjik MS YY

Copy: Pl. 35

Previous publication

1930 R. C. Thompson, Gilgâniš, pl. 54, p. 67

CT
Part Three

THE STANDARD BABYLONIAN EPIC
The extant fragments of the Standard Babylonian epic are, almost without exception, broken remnants. The first task of sorting these fragments is their allocation to different manuscripts and then to a given tablet. Henceforth in this chapter 'manuscript' means an individual clay tablet that is a source for the epic; the term 'tablet' is usually reserved for the twelve sections into which the poem was traditionally divided. In the task of sorting we rely on physical evidence, such as clay, script and shape, as well as textual evidence. The work of sorting was begun by George Smith in the 1860s and continues to this day. At present the identified fragments are 184 in number, where 'fragment' is defined as an object bearing its own individual museum number or other inventory mark. Many such fragments join to form larger assemblages or pieces of manuscripts, so that the total is reduced to 116. These 116 pieces have been sorted according to the criteria cited above and bear witness to seventy-three different manuscripts, excluding items that are uncertain or not placed. Many of these seventy-three manuscripts are known from two or more separate pieces and some from as many as four.

Only 108 of the 184 fragments of the epic currently available were known to Campbell Thompson when he prepared the previous edition of the epic. The addition of seventy-six fragments in almost as many years represents a slow but considerable increase in our knowledge of the epic that can be put down to discoveries made in museums and in the field.

1 This total does not of course count the many fragments that were joined before being numbered, for example in the 1860s and 1870s, nor those that were accessioned under a single number.

2 For the purposes of this discussion I have left out of the statistics the two cases where fragments bear separate sigla because it is uncertain or unproven that they are parts of the same manuscript (SSY and DD, AA and CC). Thus the total might be as low as 71. Two fragments that find no place in the edition below are K.13880 and BM.34313. They are probably not sources of the epic and have been discussed above, Ch. 3, the section on Other attestations of Gilgamesh. Other fragments previously proposed as sources for the epic but without place in this edition (or in Ch. 7) are cited below, in the footnotes to this chapter: Ash. 1924.1795 (OBCT XI.48), see fn. 46; Rm 907 (Haupt, Ninurta-pusri no. 49), see fn. 52; K 6497 (MacMillan, B4 V/5 no. 44), see fn. 68; S.U. 51/187 (STT 112) and S.U. 51/116, see fn. 81; 79-7-8, 194 (C.T 46.26), see fn. 83; 79-7-8, 137 (JCS 42 (1990), p. 90), see fn. 85.

3 The 107 fragments of the epic listed among the British Museum pieces in Thompson, Gilg., p. 95, and the solitary piece in a foreign collection, KAR 115.
Details of the discoveries of text that have been made since Thompson’s edition are given below, in the description of each tablet’s manuscripts, but a brief report of the overall progress in recovering the first-millennium text is in order at this point. In London thirteen previously unknown fragments have been identified in the Kuyunjik collection, seven of which join pieces that were already known. A further five join have been made where both pieces were already known. More spectacularly, the Babylonian collections acquired by the British Museum in the late nineteenth century now provide twenty manuscripts, of which Thompson knew only five, and those only in part. In Berlin, three more manuscripts from Andrae’s excavations at Aššur have been added to the single one that was known to Thompson, and the latter has been supplemented by the discovery of joining fragments in Istanbul. In addition, two pieces deriving from Koldewey’s seasons at Babylon have been identified and published. The long-running German excavations at Warka have so far yielded six new manuscripts, the British campaigns at Sultantepe and Nimrud two each. Three purchased manuscripts have been identified, one in the collections of the Oriental Institute, Chicago, and two in private collections.

In terms of numbered fragments (not joined pieces or manuscripts), the progress since Thompson’s edition can be summarized as seventy-six more fragments. Of these, seventy-four are currently identifiable as true witnesses to the Standard Babylonian version of the epic. Two Assyrian pieces, already treated in Chapter 7, are in places so close to the Standard Babylonian text that they can be used to reconstruct it. Twenty-two fragments—almost one third of the total number of fragments of the Standard Babylonian epic identified since Thompson’s edition—are published here for the first time. All but one of these new pieces are in the British Museum. Eight (mostly tiny scraps) come from Kuyunjik, thirteen (including some large pieces) from the Babylonian collections acquired between 1879 and 1883. The remaining piece is a small fragment of a Late Babylonian manuscript of Tablet IV now owned privately.

The identification and excavation of the many Babylonian manuscripts means that the libraries of Aššurbanipal at Nineveh (Kuyunjik) lose the overwhelming numerical superiority that was theirs in Thompson’s day: there are now thirty-four or thirty-five Kuyunjik manuscripts (depending on the provenance of MS KK) and thirty Late Babylonian ones. Nevertheless, the Kuyunjik manuscripts remain the best-preserved witnesses to the text of the epic. There is no tablet of the epic that is not represented by at least one Kuyunjik manuscript, and most tablets were present in multiple copies. The provenances of the thirty-eight or thirty-nine manuscripts that do not come from Nineveh are given in detail below, tablet by tablet. Overall there are eight or nine manuscripts from Assyrian cities other than Nineveh: four from Aššur (Tablets VI and XI), two from Kalaḥ (Nimrud); Tablets I and X–XI, two from Ḫuzirina (Tablets VII and VIII) and the purchased fragment MS KK (if not from Nineveh). Among the Babylonian manuscripts there are probably seven from Uruk, the six excavated there (Tablets I, II, III, IV and V) and one of the purchased fragments (Tablet II). The lack at Uruk of pieces from the latter part of the epic is remarkable; presumably this peculiarity is an accident of discovery that will be rectified by further excavations. Koldewey’s two finds have a secure provenance at Babylon (Tablets I and III). The Late Babylonian fragments in the British Museum derive from the operations of the local inhabitants and the excavations of Hormuzd Rassam in the 1870s and 1880s. It is clear that the most productive site of the time was Babylon, though some of Rassam’s pieces might instead come from Borsippa. There are so few pieces of Gilgamesh in the collections accessioned after 1881, when the principal source of Rassam’s finds became Sippur, that one suspects even these are from Babylon or Borsippa, and not from Sippur. Only Tablets VI and IX are not yet represented among the British Museum’s Late Babylonian manuscripts.

The dates of the seventy-three currently known manuscripts of the epic vary from the middle of the first millennium to the end. Those written for Aššurbanipal date to his reign (668–627 BC) but, as will be discussed below, many of the Gilgamesh manuscripts in the royal collections of Nineveh may be older. How much older is difficult to judge. None is Middle Assyrian but there are certainly eighth-century tablets among their number. The other Assyrian fragments mostly come from the same period, that of the Late Empire, which was brought to a close by the Medes and Babylonians in 612 BC. The manuscripts from Babylon are probably all from post-Assyrian periods, that is, from any time between the sixth century and the first. The latest dated colophon is on MS Sb, which was written in about 130 BC, at a time when Greeks and Parthians battled for control of Babylonia.

### ON THE KUYUNJIK MANUSCRIPTS

The manuscripts are described below, tablet by tablet. However, by way of an introduction some general observations can be made concerning those from Aššurbanipal’s libraries at Nineveh. More is known about the assembling, copying and composition of these great royal collections than formerly, and it is now necessary to bear this knowledge in mind when studying any Kuyunjik manuscript. The most important question that must be posed regarding such a manuscript concerns its origin: whether it was one of those manuscripts written at Aššurbanipal’s command, either in Assyria or Babylonia, or one of those many

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1. Kuyunjik: K 8589, 17343, 18183, 19325, 19549, 20013, 20778 and 22151; Babylonian: BM 34449, 35419, 35079, 35103, 35567, 36099, 37023, 38833, 41835, 72719, K 15145, F 234 and 235. Another three pieces from the Babylonian collection have hitherto been published only as illustrations in my non-academic translation of the epic (George, Penguin): BM 34557, 34853 and 93052.

2. One exemplar: Tables II and III, 2 exemplars: Tablets III and VIII; 3 exemplars: Tablets I, VI and IX; 3 or 4 exemplars: Tablets IV, 4 exemplars: Tablets VII and XII; 4 or 5 exemplars: Tablet XII.

3. The apparent absence of Gilgamesh in those parts of first-millennium Sippur excavated by Rassam (and also Schell) also extends on current evidence to the library found in the temple of Šamaš in 1986. G. Pertinax’s report of the discovery there of a cuneiform tablet giving extraordinary new text from the episode with Ḫumbaba remains to be confirmed (cf. P. Mander, "Gilgamesh and Dumuzi. Due invenzione della ricostruzione," Miscellanea di studi in onore di Raffaele Siriti [Naples], p. 282, fn. 7).

4. The two Assyrian manuscripts that have the appearance of being older than the others. MS S from Aššur and MS A from Nineveh, are fragments of one or more older recensions of the poem, as already discussed in Ch. 7.
older pieces that entered his collections by inheritance, donation or confiscation. These are of course issues that need to be considered by examining the libraries’ contents en masse, a huge task beyond the scope of this book but, as whenever the edition of a long text brings together a good group of Kuyunjik manuscripts, it would be remiss not to offer some initial observations.

First, none of the Kuyunjik manuscripts of Gilgameš employs Babylonian script. Therefore it is probably safe to assume that they were all written in Assyria. Whether any of them were copied directly from Babylonian imports cannot be determined at present. Two fragmentary Assyrian inventories, one of them dated to early 647 BC, do record the accessioning of clay tablets of Gilgameš into the royal libraries. Most of the accessioned reports in these and other lists are clay tablets and writing-boards requisitioned by Aššurbanipal from Babylonian scholars, probably as war reparations after quelling Šamaš-šuma-ukin’s revolt. Unfortunately, neither the name of the object’s previous owner nor his place of residence is preserved in this particular case, so though it is probable that the item in question came from Babylonia, we cannot be absolutely certain.

Second, some observations can be made on the surviving colophons, which are edited below at the end of Chapter 11. Colophons survive, if not always intact, on sixteen Kuyunjik manuscripts: MSS A (Tablet VI), B (JJ), C (XI), D (IX), F (I), G (XII), H (V), K (X), N (XII), O (VI), Q (VII), R (VIII), S (VIII), T (XI), FF (Tablet unknown) and JJ (IX). These fall into five groups or types: (i) short colophons that report simply the number of the tablet in the series and usually also its faithful adherence to an existing master-copy or ‘original’ (MSS F, G, H, Q, W and probably FF), (ii) short colophons like Type (i) but with the subsequent addition of a label denoting Aššurbanipal’s ownership that was incised in lapidary script—not stamped—on the clay after it had dried hard (MSS A, C, D, K and R; the label is always Aššurbanipal colophon a), (iii) short colophons which label the manuscript as Aššurbanipal’s property (MSS B: abbreviated form of Aššurbanipal colophon e), (iv) long colophons that claim Aššurbanipal himself as scribe (MSS O, V and JJ: all Aššurbanipal colophon d), and (v) colophons which name an owner other than Aššurbanipal (MSS N). Note that among the Gilgameš manuscripts from Kuyunjik there are no colophons that record the manuscript’s deposition in the temple of Nabû (Aššurbanipal colophons n and o).

Manuscripts with colophons of types (iii) and (iv) were presumably written in Aššurbanipal’s scriptorium. The single Gilgameš manuscript with a colophon of type (v) was obviously acquired by the royal libraries from an already existing collection, in this case the library of Nabû-zuquq-kēnū, a famous scholar of Kalah who flourished in the late eighth century. Manuscripts with colophons of type (i), which make no reference to royal ownership, may have been taken over from other collections, but one cannot be sure that this is what their silence implies. Colophons of type (ii), where an ownership label has been added at some later date, seem at first stronger evidence that the clay tablet so endorsed was not originally in Aššurbanipal’s possession but was acquired secondhand from some other collection. However, two cautionary points should be borne in mind. First, the older collection may simply have been the library of Aššurbanipal’s predecessors and become his property on his accession. Second, on MS R note that not just the ownership label was incised later but also the preceding line of the colophon, which records the fidelity of the copy. The later addition of colophon as well as label could imply that some clay tablets produced by Aššurbanipal’s scriptorium were allowed to dry before being labelled. We cannot know the reason for this, but perhaps it was necessary for certain manuscripts to undergo some kind of quality-control procedure before receiving the official label. Therefore one cannot be sure that the later addition of a label indicates a manuscript which came into the library secondhand.

It is worth noting that in no tablet of the series for which several Kuyunjik manuscripts are extant does the same type of colophon appear twice. Thus the three exemplars of Tablet VI, MSS A, O and Q, all exhibit different colophons, as do the two manuscripts of Tablets VIII, MSS R and V.

Further, there is the question of the physical properties of the clay tablets. More than half the Kuyunjik manuscripts are distinctive enough to be allocated tablet types. Those that are here designated type A exhibit a highly regular square script of great sharpness, on a smooth fine clay that retains a high polish. Type A copies are MSS BB (Tablet III), O (VII), L (VII), S (VIII), J (XI), U (XII) and probably JJ (IX). The margins between columns are very narrow and defined by two lines ruled with a straight edge (not a cord). Colophons, where preserved (MSS Q, V and JJ), are long (type iv), and indicate that these manuscripts were copied expressly for Aššurbanipal’s collection. Probably all the type A manuscripts were written in the Nineveh scriptorium as part of Aššurbanipal’s programme for enlarging the royal collections.

Type B uses an angular script in which some signs are particularly distinctive, especially Ƨ, Ɓ, Ɛ etc. (the lowest oblique wedge falls in a very forward position, so that what is normally the first oblique is usually tucked in behind it), ܩ (the wedges of the second rank tend to lie almost flat) and Ȝ (the horizontal falls very high, sometimes midway between the two obliques). Type B copies are MSS F (Tablet I), Q (VI), Z (VII), E (IX) and W (XI). The clay is softer and tends to fracture into small crumbly pieces. The tablets all exhibit the same slim profile but different widths of margin are employed: two rulings in MSS F and Q.
three in W and EE. MSS F and Q both use wedges in the margin to mark every tenth line. The three type B manuscripts that are preserved in column vi have the same simple colophon, type (i) above. Despite the slight differences of format, it is possible that this type represents a set of manuscripts prepared from the same batch of clay and inscribed by the same man. Whether he was a scribe of Aššurbanipal or some earlier scholar cannot yet be determined for certain, but one might suppose that were he writing a tablet for Aššurbanipal’s library he would have said so.

Five or six manuscripts exhibit a smallish script that employs four wedges in many places where conventional Neo-Assyrian orthography uses only three, for example the uprights in the signs šu, ʿd and šn, the first rank of obliques in ḫl, ṣm, qar etc. On these manuscripts the sign ra is also distinctive: the second rank of wedges is not horizontal but oblique. Whether these features of calligraphy are signs of a date earlier than the seventh century is yet to be determined. If they were this would be an indication that these manuscripts were not written in Aššurbanipal’s scriptorium but brought to the royal libraries secondhand. The Gilgamesh manuscripts that exhibit this ducus are MSXY and DD (both Tablet IV and possibly parts of the same manuscript), A (VI), C (XI), G (XII) and perhaps FF (colophon, tablet number unknown). They share two other physical characteristics: narrow, three-line margins and a slim profile. Colophons are types (i) and (ii). Though they are perhaps not so firmly established a set as types A and B, they may reasonably be designated type C.

MSS X (Tablet II), S (provisionally IV), AA and CC (both IV, probably parts of the same manuscript) and H (V) look very alike in script and clay, and exhibit the same narrow margins comprising three lines made with a fine cord. In the slightly elongated form of some signs the script is reminiscent of Middle Assyrian, and though it is clearly younger than that, it is probably older than the seventh century. Two of these manuscripts are preserved at the bottom of the last column: one has a colophon, MS H (type i), the other only a catchline (MS AA). This group, also less distinctive a set than types A and B, is type D. In the next chapter it will be noted that some or all the type D manuscripts may eventually turn out to be witnesses of an older, intermediate recension of the text that was very similar to the Standard Babylonian version but not identical to it.

It may be observed that in these four sets a given tablet type is usually represented only once among the different manuscripts of a given tablet. The exception is Tablet IV, for which two type C manuscripts are available, MSS Y and DD, and perhaps type D, MSS S, AA and CC. However, in both these cases the reservation of separate sigla does not exclude absolutely the possibility that MSS Y and DD and at least two of MSS S, AA and CC belong together as parts of the same manuscript.

There are other cases where Kuyunjik manuscripts exhibit physical similarities and thus may belong together. MSS B (Tablet I) and T (XI) are very similar in clay and script. The ducus is very similar to that found on type A manuscripts. These two exemplars also share the same style of margin, wide and comprising three lines ruled with a straight edge (not a cord), and the same flattish bevel on the edge. MSS E (VII), R (VIII) and K (X) also look similar to each other. The margins between columns are wide, but made of two rulings only. In addition, MSS R and K are among the very few manuscripts of the epic on which there is light vertical ruling dividing each column into two, in an attempt to mark a caesura in each verse (the others are MSS N and aa). They also have in common a type (ii) colophon.

Some account must also be taken of what is now known of the archaeological provenance of the Kuyunjik tablets. As is well known, the literary tablets found at Nineveh come chiefly from two buildings, the South-West Palace built by Sennacherib as his ‘Palace without Rival’ and the North Palace rebuilt as a royal residence in the latter part of the reign of Aššurbanipal. Both buildings were looted and burned by the Medes and Babylonians in 612 BC. The majority of tablets were excavated in the South-West Palace by Austen Henry Layard and Hormuzd Rassam in 1849–51, the most significant discovery, in May 1850, being the great mass of fragments found lying deep on the floor in and around what Layard called the Chamber of Records (mainly Rooms XL and XLI), they appeared to have fallen from an upper storey as the palace burned.13 More clay tablets were found in the North Palace by Rassam in 1853–4, including the archive found in December 1853 on the floor of the Lion Hunt Saloon (Room C), probably a secondary context,14 and no doubt also by William Kelly Loftus in 1854, who extended Rassam’s workings in the North Palace. Other excavators, from George Smith in 1873 to L. W. King and R. Campbell Thompson in 1902–5, mostly reworked the old diggings and found more fragments from the royal libraries, but in increasingly smaller numbers, so that it appears Layard and Rassam had retrieved much the largest part of what had survived the destruction of the buildings.

Study of the archaeology of clay tablets in the Kuyunjik (K) and associated collections (DT, Sm, Rm, 79–7–8 etc.) is hampered on several counts. First, very few pieces are known for certain to come from one palace or another. Indeed, we have such information about only three of many dozens of Gilgamesh fragments (parts of MSS O,Y and BB). While some general information on the probable provenance of the various collections is available as a result of Julian Reade’s research in the unpublished reports of the excavations,15 more often it is possible only to determine roughly the year of discovery. Second, the situation is complicated by the inability of the British Museum—infundated with cuneiform tablets well beyond the capacity of its staff—to number at an early date all the pieces found by Layard.

13 Physically the small fragment MS S looks most similar to MS X (Tablet II), especially in top edge (Xii), but place for its text can no longer easily be found in Tablet II, and for the moment it is ascribed instead to Tablet IV.

14 If MS S is really Tablet I it ought, as a Type D manuscript, to be part of MS AA, but if it is CC probably cannot also be part of AA, for the profiles of the two fragments S and CC are very different. Thus on physical evidence S and AA can go together and also AA and CC, but not all three. Since the ascription of MS CC to Tablet IV is absolutely certain, unlike MS S, and only one type D manuscript is expected for any given tablets, there are grounds for preferring the combination of AA and CC and for doubting whether S is rightly placed in Tablet IV.


Rassam and Loftus, and the failure to keep apart fragments from the various different seasons. An instructive illustration of this problem is Rm 289 (MS X, Tablet II). The left-hand part of the fragment now registered under this number was translated by Smith in 1876, but was still unnumbered when Haupt first copied it in the early 1880s. After the publication of his copy in 1884 the fragment in question was joined to Rm 289, a piece from a collection still in the ground in Smith's lifetime. The assemblage was republished under the number Rm 289 by Haupt in 1891. Before the join was made the fragment known to Smith was kept in the same box as Sm 2097 (part of MS M), but since he considered both pieces to be witnesses to column ii of Tablet IV, their storage together has no implications for identifying the unnumbered piece as part of the Sm collection. It could equally well derive from any of the older excavations.

In spite of these difficulties—and leaving aside the small number of intrusions from elsewhere in Nineveh and from other sites entirely—it is safe in general terms to say something of the place and date of excavation of the different collections. Tablets with K numbers, or at least with lower K numbers, were found either by Layard and Rassam in 1849–51, or by Rassam in 1853–4, or (maybe only a small number of pieces) by Loftus in 1854. To this generality can be added Reade's report that the very lowest numbers mostly derive from Layard's finds in the South-West Palace. The only Gilgameš manuscript among these very low numbers is K 231 (MS A, Tablet VI).

The DT collection comes from George Smith's first expedition, in 1873, the Sm pieces from his second, in 1874. According to Reade the Kuyunjik tablets among the former batch come mostly from the North Palace, the Sm collection mostly from the South-West Palace. In the latter building Smith cleared a large area around Rooms XL, XLI and XLIX, and himself estimated the haul of clay tablets at nearly three thousand. Manuscripts of Gilgameš comprising or including fragments from the DT collection are MSS N (Tablet XII, which also shares in the K and 81-2-4 collections) and O (Tablet VI, also K, Sm, Rm and Rm II). The fact that MS O also utilizes a piece from the Sm collection warns us of the danger of attributing too dogmatically any given manuscript to one or other of the two palaces. In this particular case we can resolve the perceived conflict in our expectations, for George Smith himself reported that the parts of MS O recovered in his first

expedition came from the North Palace. Nine other manuscripts share in the Sm collection: MSS C (Tablet XI, also K collection), K (Tablet X, also K and Rm), M (Tablet III, also K and Rm), P (Tablet I, also K), Q (Tablet VI, also K and Rm), T (Tablet XI, also K, Rm II, 81-2-4 and 82-5-22), Y (Tablet IV, also K and 79-7-8), FF (unplaced) and GG (Tablet VII). For one of these we also have a specific provenance. The fragment of Gilgameš's dreams translated by George Smith in Assyrian Discoveries, pp. 176–7, as part of the eighth tablet of the series, is MS Y (Tablet IV). Smith records that it was found in Sennacherib's palace.

The label Rm refers to the first consignment of antiquities despatched by Rassam after his return to Kuyunjik in January–May 1878, and Rm II (or 2) to the second, sent following his resumption of excavations later in the same year. Both collections contain pieces from the South-West Palace and pieces from the North Palace. The first Rm collection provides pieces of seven manuscripts, MSS J (Tablet XI, also K collection), K (Tablet X, also K and Sm), M (Tablet III, also K and Sm), O (Tablet VI, also K, DT, Sm and Rm II), Q (Tablet VI, also K and Sm), U (Tablet XII, also K), X (Tablet II, also K) and HH (Tablet XII). The second contains parts of four manuscripts, MSS O (Tablet VI, also K, DT, Sm and Rm), R (Tablet VIII, also K), T (Tablet XI, also K, Sm, 81-2-4 and 82-5-22) and Z (Tablet VII, also K).

The collections that are numbered by date of accession are self-evident. The 79-7-8, 80-7-19, 81-2-4, 81-7-27, 82-3-23, 82-5-22 and 83-1-18 collections comprise or contain further batches of Kuyunjik fragments despatched by Rassam during the remainder of his sojourns in Mesopotamia, which lasted until October 1882. According to Reade the first two of these collections contain pieces from both palaces, but we should expect 81-7-27, 82-3-23 and 82-5-22 to come from the South-West Palace, where Rassam was concentrating the efforts of his workforce more and more as time passed, and 83-1-18 specifically from Room LIV and vicinity. Gilgameš manuscripts are found in 79-7-8: MSS L (Tablet VII) and Y (Table IV), in 80-7-19: MSS BB (Tablet III, also K and Ki 1904-10-19) and JJ (Tablet IX), in 81-2-4: MSS N (Tablet XII, also K and DT) and T (Tablet XI, also K, Sm, Rm II and 82-5-22), in 81-7-27: MS B (Tablet I, also K), and in 82-5-22: MS T (Tablet XI, also K, Sm, Rm II and 81-2-4).

Further Kuyunjik fragments were retrieved by E. A. Wallis Budge during his third and fourth missions to the Near East (Bu 89-4-26, 91-5-9). Reade reports that these mostly derive from the South-West Palace, especially the area around Room LIV. Still more fragments were gleaned from the old diggings by L. W. King and R. Campbell Thompson when the British Museum reopened excavations between 1902 and 1905 (Ki 1902-5-10, Ki

19 Reade, CROLL 30, p. 213: ‘Only the numbers K 1-278 (with a few exceptions caused by subsequent renumbering) were allocated in the 1850s; we can be sure that the great majority of tablets bearing these low numbers were found during Layard's 1851 [sic] excavations in the South-West Palace at Kuyunjik, notably in the area of Rooms XL and XLI; for details see further Reade, ROL 9, p. 422.
20 Reade, CROLL 30, p. 214; id., ROL 9, p. 422.
21 Smith, Assyrian Discoveries, p. 144. The 1874 collection contains about 2200 numbered clay tablets and fragments (Sm 1–2196 and the four higher numbers listed in Bezoel, Car. IV: the remaining higher numbers denote uninscribed objects), and thus a significant part of it appears to have disappeared from sight, as it were, either through misnumbering or through loss. Many may have been small pieces that were not numbered until long after Smith [this work was completed only in the 1980s], and would then have been accessioned into the K collection. Others may have lost their separate identities when joined to pieces from other collections.

DT 2 and DT 4 unnumbered, which must be the two 'portions of the sixth tablet of the deluge series' found in 1873 in the North Palace, one, at least, in the same trench as the famous deluge fragment DT 42 (now CT 46 15): see Smith, Assyrian Discoveries, p. 102; id., Chaldean Account of Genesis, p. 7.
22 Sm 1040, excavated in 1874, most probably during the clearing of the area around Rooms XL and XLI, Layard's Chambers of Records (Smith, Assyrian Discoveries, pp. 144–5).
23 Reade, CROLL 30, p. 214: 'an unpublished report from H. Rassam suggests that most of the 83-1-18 Nineveh tablets were found in the area of Room LIV in the South-West Palace.'
1904-10-9, Th 1905-4-9). Among these collections only the 1904 batch contains a fragment of a Gilgamesh manuscript, MS BB (Table III, also K and 80-7-19). In an unpublished report written on his return in September 1904, King noted that this piece was among clay tablets collected from scattered locations of the South-West Palace (Room LIV area and Rooms I, XXVII and XXX). During Thompson’s later seasons in 1927-32 a careful record of findspots was kept, so that for the first time we have Kuyunjik tablets with reliable provenances (among the 1929-10-12, 1930-5-8, 1932-12-10 and 1932-12-12 collections). However, no fragments of Gilgamesh have been identified among the pieces from these seasons.

A different approach to the provenance of the Kuyunjik documents has been made by S. Parpola. His analysis of the individual collections by context admitted that little could be learned by this means about the provenance of most pieces, but showed that it was possible to determine from the nature of the archival documents mixed in with the 83-1-18 collection that this batch of clay tablets comes mostly from the South-West Palace. This finding certainly confirms the truth of Rassam’s own recollection of the origin of the 83-1-18 batch in and around Room LIV of Sennacherib’s palace. The same procedure purported to show that about 90 per cent of the Rm II collection came from the North Palace, with the balance from places away from Kuyunjik, such as Nebi Yunus and Sherif Khan. In this case there is no independent confirmation, and indeed, some evidence to the contrary. Reade’s research leads him to state that Rm II tablets were found in both the North Palace and the South-West Palace, though he does not say in what proportion. There are no items from the 83-1-18 batch among the manuscripts of Gilgamesh, but there are five Rm II pieces, as already listed. If Parpola is right, most of these five should come from the North Palace, if not of all of them. Two of the four Gilgamesh manuscripts that share in the Rm II collection also utilize pieces from the Sm collection, which is considered mostly to come from the South-West Palace (MSS O and T). As already noted above in the discussion of the DT collection, MS O is known to have come from the North Palace, in agreement with Parpola’s thesis. With MST, on the other hand, the presence in the assemblage of fragments from the Sm and the 82-5-22 collections makes a provenance in Sennacherib’s palace more probable. Though MS R likewise utilizes a Rm II fragment, its similarity to MS K suggests the same provenance. Indeed, since there are many more cases of joins between literary Rm II fragments and pieces thought to be from the South-West Palace,26 it is probable that the conclusion Parpola reached from his analysis of the archival Rm II tablets has no validity among the literary tablets, which form the majority of this collection. Further study may show that many of the literary pieces in this batch come from the South-West Palace not the North.

The evidence thus presented can be conveniently tabulated (see table below). The table provokes a few further comments. First, the preponderance of provenances in the South-West Palace agrees with the fact that the sheer volume of clay tablets found by Layard in the Chamber of Records is a strong indication that the majority of the Kuyunjik tablets stem from that discovery. Turning to matters of detail, it is significant that three of the five certain type C manuscripts exhibit a certain or probable provenance in the South-West Palace. This leads me to suppose that the others came from there too. Assuming that type C script is older than Aššurbanipal, as I suspect, then we might suppose that the presence of these manuscripts in the building erected by Sennacherib is a vestige of the old collection of cuneiform tablets inherited by Aššurbanipal on his accession. This assumption would agree with our expectation that the older tablets were stored in Sennacherib’s South-West Palace while those written for Aššurbanipal were kept in the North Palace.27 If type B and type D manuscripts also belonged to the existing, pre-Aššurbanipal collection, as may well be the case, one might expect to find them stored alongside type C. One type B manuscript utilizes a Sm fragment and is likely to come from Sennacherib’s palace for that reason (MS Q). Since the presence of a Rm II fragment is no argument for placing another type B manuscript in the North Palace rather than the South-West Palace (MS Z), I have provisionally assumed that all of type B should follow MS Q’s lead into the latter, and also all of type D. But this may be too simplistic an arrangement, for there are reasons to doubt that the older and younger library tablets were kept strictly apart. First, by virtue of a DT fragment Nabû-zugq-pēnu’s copy of Tablet XII (MS N), written nearly forty years before Aššurbanipal’s accession, falls among the North Palace tablets. Second, not all the type A manuscripts, typically with long Aššurbanipal colophons, fall as expected into the North Palace. Though three of the manuscripts with such colophons do seem to come from there, unless King was mistaken in his report one good example of this type is firmly provenanced in the South-West Palace (MS BB). Nevertheless, given the nature of the evidence one can do no more than look for overall trends and the table therefore assumes as a working hypothesis that type A manuscripts, apart from the one exception, come from the North Palace.

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26 Information courtesy Reade; see also id., RLA IX, p. 423. This provenance is at odds with our expectations, since the 80-7-19 fragment of MS BB is among that part of the collection reported as found in the North Palace (nos. 261-311). King’s search for cuneiform tablets in the South-West Palace in 1903-4 is described by John Malcolm Russell, The Final Sack of Nineveh (New Haven, Conn., 1998), pp. 23-6.


29 Using the information available up to 1983 (latest additions by R. Borgen, ‘Die Kuyunjik-Sammelung 1982-1983’, ABO 31 (1984), pp. 331-46), at least 19 Rm II pieces form joins with Sm fragments; two with low K, one with low 80-7-19, one with 82-3-11, two with 82-5-22; one with Bu 89-4-26. Joins to fragments from collections suspected of a North Palace provenance are fewer: four with DT, four with high 80-7-19. All are literary tablets or historical records.

30 Layard reported that the two chambers were ‘entirely filled to the height of a foot or more’ (Nineveh and Babylon, p. 345). According to Reade this would mean that he had found ‘28 cubic metres of clay tablets’, clearly too high a figure since it is more than double the space now allocated to storing the K tablets individually in boxes on museum shelves, but it confirms that the bulk of the collection came from there (Reade, RLA IX, p. 421).

### Kuyunjik manuscripts: tablet types, colophons and provenances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS Collections represented</th>
<th>Tablet number</th>
<th>Manuscript type</th>
<th>Colophon type</th>
<th>Provenance for provenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provenance recorded as South-West Palace</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y K, Sm, 79-7.8</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Smith, AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB K, 807-19, EJ 1904-10-9</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>King, unpub.</td>
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<td><strong>Provenance recorded as North Palace</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O K, UT, Sm, Km, Rm II</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Smith, AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provenance probably South-West Palace</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A K</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>low number</td>
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<tr>
<td>B K, 817-7.27</td>
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<td>(like mis T)</td>
<td>iii</td>
<td>81-7-27 coll’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>XI</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Sm coll’n</td>
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<tr>
<td>D K</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td></td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>colophon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E K</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>(like mis RK)</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>cf. ms K</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Type B</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Type D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K K, Sm, Km</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(like mis ER)</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Sm coll’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M K, Sm, Km</td>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Sm coll’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P K, Sm</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Sm coll’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q K, Sm, Km</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Sm coll’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R K, Km II</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>(like mis ER)</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>cf. ms K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>Type D</td>
</tr>
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<td>XI</td>
<td>(like ms B)</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Sm, 82-5-22</td>
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<td>W K</td>
<td>XI</td>
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<td>Type B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X K, Rm</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Type D</td>
</tr>
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<td>Z K, Rm II</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Type B</td>
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<tr>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Type D</td>
</tr>
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<td>CC K</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Type D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD K</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Type C</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Type B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FF Sm</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td></td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Sm coll’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GG Sm</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td></td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Sm coll’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provenance probably North Palace</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J K, Rm</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Type A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L K, 79-7-8</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>[?]</td>
<td>Type A</td>
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<tr>
<td>N K, UT, 81-2-4</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Nab60-aqop-kara</td>
<td>DT coll’n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U K, Rm</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Type A</td>
</tr>
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<td>VIII</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>iv</td>
<td>colophon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJ 80-7-19</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>A?</td>
<td>iv</td>
<td>high 80-7-19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Provenance beyond conjecture**

| HH Rm | XII | [?] | - |

Of course, the numbers here are too small to allow certainty, and a much wider enquiry involving much more of the Kuyunjik collection is needed to test clarification of the situation. For the moment it should be no surprise, given the upheavals of reconstruction, restoration and refurbishment that both buildings went through in the period between Addurbanpal’s accession in 668 and the sack of Nineveh in 612, if manuscripts that to us seem to belong together (such as O and III) were found in separate locations. It has long been known that in the South-West Palace archival and literary tablets were thoroughly mixed in a way that would not have made for easy use. During the decades the various different archives and collections may have been moved around many times, so that here they became mixed and there separated.

However that may be, the clues that we have corroborate what we can already infer from the documentation of Addurbanpal’s time: that the royal palaces already housed some literary tablets on Addurbanpal’s accession and that he enlarged those collections by taking over existing tablets and by an intensive programme of copying. It is disappointing that we appear to possess no complete sets of the epic from Nineveh, that is, copies of Tablets I-XII all from the same hand. However, it is not surprising when one considers that the private libraries that were incorporated into Addurbanpal’s collections would not necessarily have had complete sets, and that in his own scriptorium the work of copying the tablets of a given literary series may have been allocated to a team of scribes rather than to one individual.

No sets can be observed among the Babylonian manuscripts. Those few pieces with preserved colophons were the property of private individuals, but at least some of the others may have belonged to temple libraries such as the library of Ešilu at Borsippa. Perhaps we should not expect to find complete sets among them, for the libraries of the first-millennium scholars and temples that we know, such as they have come down to us, do not appear to have contained all the tablets of any given series. It seems that in this period only Addurbanpal achieved comprehensive holdings of literary texts.

### TABLE 1

Three manuscripts of Table 1 survive from Addurbanpal’s libraries at Kuyunjik, MSS B, F and P. The great majority of the twenty numbered fragments that make up these four manuscripts derive from the great finds of 1849–54, and many were utilized by George Smith in his pioneering translation. Only two fragments certainly derive from later excavations, a piece of MS P found by Smith in 1874 and a piece of MS B sent back by Rassam in 1881. A further Assyrian source is MS g from Nimrud, ancient Kalah. To complement these, no fewer than six Babylonian manuscripts are now also available (MSS d, h, n, s, x and co). On
the last occasion that the cuneiform sources for the epic of Gilgamesh were united in one volume, in Campbell Thompson’s edition of 1930, the same three Kuyunjik manuscripts were well represented but only two small fragments from Babylonia were known (parts of MSS d1 and h). Since then some progress has been made with the Kuyunjik manuscripts. Two separate parts of MS B were joined back to back by C. B. F. Walker in 1974 (B). Two small fragments identified by W. G. Lambert in the course of preparing the most recent volume of the catalogue of the British Museum’s K collection, were joined to MSS F and P in 1990 and 1991 respectively. These new fragments appear for the first time in the present volume. MS g was discovered in 1955 among the shattered remains of the library of E-zida, the seventh-century temple of Nabû at Nimrud. The excavation records report that the clay tablet was ‘partly baked’, which implies that it was an unbaked tablet exposed to heat during the great conflagration that ended the building’s history when the citadel of Kalaḫ was sacked in 612 BC. It was announced by D. J. Wiseman in 1968 and published in 1975. In the meantime, in 1960, Wiseman had published the Babylonian fragments MSS o and part of n. BM 34248, all that was known of MSS d, in 1930, was re-published in 1965 with two added fragments joined by W. G. Lambert two years earlier, along with his new copies of Wiseman’s fragments and an old copy of MSS h by Pinches. In the 1980s I. L. Finkel discovered a large and handsome Late Babylonian fragment that joined MS h, and Lambert found a further fragment of MS d marooned in the K collection, though it originally belonged with Rassam’s first batch of tablets (d1). Two further fragments of MS d, came to light more recently: one was found by Lambert and joined by me in 1990 (BM 34357), the other identified and joined by T. Kwasmann in 1998 (Rm 956). In 2002 Finkel found a new fragment of MS n (P 234). These five fragments appear in cuneiform for the first time here. One of the new fragments of MS d greatly improves our understanding of the first few lines of the epic, while the other adds significantly to the description of Gilgamesh’s heroic physique. The new fragment of MS h restores the beginnings of the lines eulogizing the hero. As with most Late Babylonian manuscripts in the collections of the British Museum, it is impossible to be absolutely certain of the provenance of MSS d, h, n and o. The collections to which their nine constituent parts belong were acquired by the British Museum in the space of a few years, 1877–80 (Rm, Sp, Sp II, 80-6-17 and 80-11-12). Some were bought

31 Thompson also considered K 16024 (Gigl, pl. 1) a possible source for Tablet I (or XI). It is closer to SI 113–20 than the parallel lines of SB Tablet XI, but it is not an exact fit. Consequently it finds a place in Ch. 7 above, as Kuyunjik MS YY in the section on A variant version at Nineveh?


33 For the excavation of the cuneiform tablets and their context see now J. A. Black’s introduction to CTh IV. The findspot of the Gilgamesh tablet was H2 pit (Ibid., p. 42, no. 199).

34 Ibid., p. 29.


36 For full details of publication of this and all other manuscripts see below, the individual tables of manuscripts in Ch. 11.

37 This was no doubt the ‘duplicate of the first tablet of the Gilgamesh series’ that Pinches was forbidden to publish 60 years previously; see his note in JJS 25 (1933), p. 201.


from the dealers Marini and Spartali, by the Museum directly or by Hormuzd Rassam on its behalf; and others were excavated by Rassam. At this time Rassam’s workmen were working at Babylon and Borsippa, and joins of fragments from these batches of tablets indicate that much of their contents derive from the same spots at these two sites. With a thorough-going study of first-millennium palaeography yet to be made, such manuscripts are difficult to date in the absence of colophons. They are not likely to be older than the sixth century and could be much later. MS d is written in a large hand that is probably a sign of very late date, Seleucid or Parthian.

For the two other Babylonian manuscripts, MSS x and cc, more specific information is available. The former was excavated at Babylon during the campaigns led by Robert Koldewey (1899–1917). The excavation number is not preserved, so that one cannot be sure of its exact findspot. It was published by J. van Dijk in 1987, who noted that where findspots were known for the batch of clay tablets to which it belonged, they were mostly in the mounds Merkes and Ishan Aswad. The script is small and the text tightly written. MS cc was found at Uruk in the 29th season (1970–1). As such it is part of a substantial mass of Late Babylonian literary and scholarly fragments excavated in the 27th, 29th and 30th seasons that belonged originally to the private libraries of Anu-iskur, Išqāš and probably other scholars of the Persian and Hellenistic periods. This find also produced exemplars of Tablets II (MSS bb and ee), III (MS aa) and V (MS dd). The findspots of these tablets were disturbed contexts in and about a Parthian-period dwelling-house some 500 metres south-east of the temple E-anne. The reverse of MSS cc was published by E. von Weiher in 1993. The obverse is published here for the first time.

The Kuyunjik manuscripts are all six-column tablets, which is the standard format for manuscripts of the Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh epic. Colophons survive on MS B, which has an abbreviated version of Ašurbanipal colophon e, and MSS F and J, which simply identifies it as a copy of Tablet I. MSS B and P are quite well preserved. MS B, made up of at least thirteen individual fragments divided between three separate pieces, retains parts of all six columns, though the obverse is very badly damaged. MS P is less damaged in the middle and right-hand columns (ii–v), but the left-hand columns are entirely missing. The column-lengths of MSS B and P counted or estimated, provide the line numeration in the present reconstruction of the text. Tablet I is one of the longer tablets of the epic, at 300 lines or slightly less. According to this numeration MS B has columns of between forty-seven and
fifty-six lines of poetry. It rarely doubles up lines of poetry on to a single line of clay tablet. MS F has columns of between forty-eight and sixty-eight lines of poetry, with many lines of poetry doubled up, especially in column ii. MS F comprises four small fragments which share the crumby brown-red clay and distinctive angular script that were identified earlier in this chapter as characteristic of Kuyunjik tablet type B. The scribe marked every ten lines with an oblique wedge, the standard marginal mark. F ₁ is from columns i–ii, near the top edge, F ₂ from the lower right-hand corner, F ₃ from the middle of columns iv–v, and F ₄, which is mostly colophon, from the lower part of column vi. The turn from obverse to reverse falls after l. 167, which indicates columns of about fifty-six lines of poetry. Several verses are doubled up on to a single line of clay tablet.

The Nimrud fragment (MS g) is a large obverse flake from the middle of column i, with the very beginning of some lines of column ii also preserved. A column’s length, measured from the middle of column i to the corresponding point on column ii, was just under eighty lines of poetry, according to the reconstruction of Tablet I offered below. This figure suggests that the original manuscript held the text in four columns, not six, if the text inscribed on it was only Tablet I. However, the other Nimrud piece (Assyrian MS z) contains Tablets X and XI, so it is conceivable that MS g likewise once held more than one tablet of the series. Tablets I and II comprise about 625 lines between them, which with a colophon would fit neatly into eight columns of MS g.

The Babylonian manuscripts are mostly small fragments. MS d is a piece from the top edge of columns i and ii, providing also a few traces at the bottom of the reverse. The transition from column i to column ii was made at l. 56, which indicates that MS d was a conventional six-column clay tablet. Enough remains of MS h to judge that the curvature of the reverse that it too was a manuscript of six columns. It is currently preserved for almost the entire length of its left-hand columns, obverse and reverse, with the beginnings of some lines of the middle columns also extant. Though the text itself does not quite reach it, the bottom of the tablet is preserved at columns i and ii, and allows one to judge that the text moved from one to the other at about l. 54–6, depending on whether this point the poet doubled lines up or not. The turn from column ii to column iii was made at l. 113, while column vi begins at l. 259. MS n is a small fragment from the top edge, towards the right-hand corner, on which is preserved text from the right-hand columns. The obverse column begins at l. 97 and the reverse column ends at l. 200, which in a six-column format implies an average column-length of fifty lines of poetry and signifies that the text was more tightly written on the reverse than on the obverse. MS o is a larger fragment from the top edge at the left-hand corner, with text of the left-hand columns preserved. The end of the text on the reverse is followed by a widely spaced colophon. Assuming that this fragment, too, is from a six-column tablet, one would say that each column was about fifty-three lines long. However, the colophon contains a line-count which gives the length of Tablet I as [2][4]8 (hardly 3[4]8) lines, a figure very much at odds with our reconstruction. Even with repetitious passages pared down to the minimum, it is difficult to see how fifty-two lines could have been cut from the text. The solution to this conundrum must await the discovery of further manuscripts.

The question arises at this point as to whether any of the four Late Babylonian manuscripts just described, all housed in the British Museum’s collections, are parts of the same clay tablet. The answer appears to be no. MS d is distinct from MSS h, n and o on grounds of size of script. Thanks to Finkel’s joins, MSS h and o now overlap considerably and are very clearly parts of different manuscripts. MS n overlaps with neither but cannot be part of MS h, because it begins column iii much earlier and comes from a thicker tablet; the thickness of its top edge marks it out as distinct from MS o also.

The Late Babylonian fragment now in Berlin, MS x, is a very poorly preserved fragment from the middle of a six-column tablet, with part of the right edge preserved. In contrast with the normal shape of a literary tablet, the surface here identified as the obverse is convex while the reverse is flat. Either the piece has been badly distorted in the ground or the two sides of the tablet were inscribed in the wrong order. Text is preserved in two columns on both sides. A column’s length on the reverse, measured from the middle of column iv to the corresponding point on column v, was forty-nine lines long. Probably the obverse was more tightly written, as it would have to have been if the whole text of 300 lines was reproduced. The same may be said for the Uruk manuscript, MS cc, a fragment from near the bottom edge that holds parts of one column on the obverse and two columns on the reverse. A column’s length, calculated in the same way as for MS x, was also about forty-nine lines long. The hand is very small and fine.

**TABLE II**

Table II is now known from one Kuyunjik manuscript (MS X) and seven Late Babylonian (MSS c, k, p, s, z, bb and cc). The absence of other copies in Ashurbanipal’s libraries is remarkable, as too is the large number of Babylonian pieces, but both peculiarities are probably accidental. Of all the tablets of the epic this one has benefited most from the discoveries of the past two generations, but it is still far from complete. Thompson utilized only MS X in his reconstruction, though he was able to supply much of the storyline from the Old Babylonian Pennsylvania tablet (OB II). For him MS X comprised three separate fragments, Rm 289 and K 8574, whose place in Table II is secured by the Pennsylvania tablet, and K 7224, which resembles Rm 289 in script and clay. However, the new manuscripts make it well-nigh impossible for K 7224 to remain in Table II. An alternative place for it would appear to be Tablet IV, where it is now MS S. ₄₆

₄₄ Parpola, S A R Gilg, p. xxxii, assumes exactly that, considering all 44 pieces to be parts of a single exemplar, his MS b. His error has already been pointed out by T. Kwaśniewski, ‘A New Text to the Epic of Gilgamesh Tablet I’, *NABU* 1998/99.

₄₅ The poor condition of the piece made conservation very difficult. As a comparison between van Dijk’s copy and mine will show, the reverse flake on which the edge is preserved was originally glued 5 mm too far to the left. Thanks to the skill of the VAM’s conservators it has now been moved to its true position.

₄₆ See above, fn. 15–14. The exercise tablet Ash. 1934.1795, published by W. G. Lambert in 1989 as holding on its obverse a passage similar to MS S and identified as ‘Epic of Gilgamesh II(2)’ (*OBCZNL*, p. 8, no. 48), does not seem to fit either Tablet II or Tablet IV, and finds no place in the present edition.
The first of the Babylonian manuscripts to be made available was the Chicago fragment, MS x, published by A. Heidel in 1952. As Heidel reports, the piece was purchased unbound in Baghdad by Breasted in 1919–20. It was subsequently baked. The batch of clay tablets that it came with, supplied by the dealer G. Khayat, includes much material from Warka, so that it is probable that Uruk is the provenance of MS x. Such an origin is supported by an idiosyncrasy of script, for Heidel’s fragment shares with many Late Babylonian documents certainly excavated at Warka a curvilinear form of the sign ḫī, with only one horizontal wedge.

The two other Babylonian manuscripts published to date are certainly from Urak (MSS bb and ee), and come from the great find of Persian and Hellenistic-period literary texts that also yielded copies of Tablets I (MS cc), III (MS aa) and V (MS dd). Both were edited by E. von Wehner, MS bb in 1972 and MS ee in 1993. The two fragments were excavated in different seasons and in slightly different locations, though the contexts were thoroughly disturbed. It has been suggested that these two pieces join. Although it has not been possible to put this to the test by bringing the fragments together, other evidence can be adduced. Careful analysis of the handwriting as legible on the available photographs (Figs. 10, 11) reveals that the two fragments exhibit different forms of common signs such as ḫī, Ṙ, Ṛ, ḫī, ṛīm, and the ligature ḫ-en. In addition lines of MS ee are more tightly packed than on MS bb (10 lines occupy respectively 2.8 and 3.4 cm). The explanation for both facts is that the two pieces were written by different scribes.

The four Babylonian manuscripts now in the British Museum, MSS e, k, p and s, are published here for the first time and add slightly to the known text. MS e, k and p were identified by J. L. Ebeling, MSS e and p are from collections that are presumed to come from Babylon and Borsippa. MS s is part of the collection 82-9-18. Most of this consignment was excavated by Rassam at Sippar (Abu Habba), but part of it came from Babylon, with a few pieces from Dhibat. Given the noticeable lack of copies of the epic in first-millennium Sippar, it is very probable that MS s was not found at Abu Habba.

None of these four fragments appears to belong to the same manuscript as any of the others, though MSS e and s are quite similar. MS p is remarkable for its script, a tiny but very fine, sharp hand. MS X is a six-column tablet surviving in two disconnected fragments, a large piece from the middle of the bottom edge (X1) and a smaller piece from the middle of the top edge. Both fragments hold text from the obverse and the reverse, so that parts of columns ii, i, iv and v are preserved. All the fragments of text adjut the top or bottom edge, so that a

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### Provisional Line Numbers

Table II can easily be proposed based on this manuscript's standard column length and on the presence of marginal markers at every tenth line. The present edition assumes a column length of fifty-eight lines for MS X, which results in a reconstructed text of just over 300 lines.

MS bb is a fragment from the bottom left-hand corner of an elegantly written clay tablet, with some twenty lines of text extant on both sides. The annotations of the scribe indicate that it was copied from a broken original. The overlap between MSS X and bb in column i reveals that the Babylonian manuscript had a shorter column of about forty-five lines, at least to begin with. The reverse is slightly more tightly written on the reverse than the obverse, with some doubling up and the omission of a broken passage of five lines' length, so that one can assume this manuscript would have caught up with MS X by the end of column vi. Therefore the top of column vi on MS bb becomes the key point for the numeration of the last fifty lines or so of Table II, where MS X fails us. MS ee is a large fragment from near the left-hand edge of the reverse, with parts of two columns preserved as copied by von Wehner. It has not been possible to collate this piece, but its two columns are almost certainly columns v and vi of a six-column tablet. MS e is a small fragment from the middle of the left edge. The margins of text preserved on the obverse and reverse are duplicates of MS bb.
column i and MS ee column vi respectively. Comparison shows that MS e had columns appreciably longer than MS bb. This is also true of MS k, a fragment from the bottom edge that provides parts of four columns. Column i of this manuscript ends at a point even later than the Kuyunjik manuscript, I. 62 in the present reconstruction. Several lines of poetry may have been doubled up, however, for column ii was considerably shorter, at about forty-nine lines, which shows that MS k must have been a regular six-column tablet. Columns iii and iv, now missing, gave the text of about 109 lines between them. MS s is a very damaged flake from the middle. In the present reconstruction its two columns are identified as the lower parts of columns v and vi of a six-column tablet. MS p, another fragment from the middle, holds text from what must have been column iv of another six-column tablet. MS s is a tiny flake that is provisionally placed in column vi.

39 This tablet of the series is also much better known than previously. 36 No further fragments from the Kuyunjik collection have been identified beyond the known to Thompson, which belong to the two different copies (MSS M and BB); the only progress here has been the joining of Sm 2097 and K 3423 + Rm 579 back to back in 1986 (M). From Babylon, however, we now have four exemplars (MSS c, i, y and aa). Only a tiny fragment of one of these was known to Thompson, namely BM 34191 (part of MS c), which was republished in 1965 by W. G. Lambert alongside its duplicate, the already known fragment MS M6. In 1987 J. van Dijk published the first, and so far only, Late Babylonian school tablet to hold an excerpt of the Gilgamesh epic (MS y). 38 At first this excerpt appeared to duplicate MS dd and thus to belong to Tablet V, but von Weller’s publication in 1993 of the obverse of a large fragment from Uruk (MS asa) enabled it to take its true place in Tablet III. In the meantime in the British Museum I. 1. Frökel had much enlarged MS c by joining BM 41835 to BM 34191 in 1982, and Lambert had also discovered a completely new exemplar, MS i. These two fragments are published here for the first time, as also is the reverse of MS aa. MS c now bridges the gap between the Kuyunjik manuscripts in column i and adds considerably to our knowledge of the heroes’ send-off towards the end of Tablet III. MS i offers text duplicating the obverse of MS aa. The reverse of MS aa allows a better understanding of the episode in which Ninsun adopts Enlilis as her son.

MSS c and i are again from British Museum collections that largely derive from Babylon. 34 They exhibit slightly different script but are otherwise very similar. Like MS s (Tablet I), the school tablet MS y was excavated at Babylon by Robert Koldeweys expedition. Its excavation number is preserved, so that its findspot is known: Kars Südwest 01W 23. 35 a square on the processional way just north-east of the main entrance to the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II—clearly a secondary context for a Late Babylonian exercise tablet. MS as is from the same find at Wara as MSS cc (Tablet I), bb and ee (Tablet II) and dd (Tablet V); see above. 36 The four fragments that make up MS M provide parts of every column of a regular six-column tablet, though very little of columns iii, v and vi is useful. Thanks to the new fragment of MS c, which fills the gap in column i between the fragments M6 and M3, one may now see that column i of MS M was thirty-six lines long. The reverse of this exemplar appears to have been even less compactly written, with at least four lines of poetry in columns iv (M, rev.) spread over two lines of clay tablet. If the scribe continued this lavish use of space the manuscript cannot have contained more than about 200 lines and a colophon.

33 The fragment Sm 2097 was considered part of Tablet III by Hangis, Namrudos no. 49, and Jones, KVP VII, pp. 150–3, but copied as an unplaced fragment by Thompson, Gilgamesh, pl. 8. It is now included in the epic, for it contains one of Gilgamesh. It is edited with duplicates in Ch. 3 above, the section on Gilgamesh the king.
34 For the literary context on the obverse of the exercise tablet OJS 73 46 see above, I. 46.
35 Sy, Sp II 816–25, all paraphrased through Jürgen (Readings in Literature). Catalogues IV, p. 97.
36 Van Dijk, BDS XXXV, p. 18; with BE 21725.
37 Pfeiffer, Square X XVIII 1, 44 above Liber IV (von Weiler, UFR 29–30, p. 107, no. 79; 1971–2 session).
This is at odds with other manuscripts and cannot be explained while the text of the latter part of Tablet III is so poorly preserved. MS BB comprises two separate pieces from the top edge of a six-column tablet, BB₁ from the left-hand corner, BB₂ from the middle and right-hand corner. Parts of all six columns are preserved, but only column i offers a good chunk of text. Column i was forty-four lines long, exactly the same as MS c. MS c comes from the lower left-hand corner of a six-column tablet of which parts of columns i, v and vi are extant. MS aa is the right-hand half of a six-column tablet, with most of column iii and parts of columns ii and iv preserved. The three columns of the Obverse dwindled in length from forty-two to thirty-eight to thirty-six lines, longer than MS M but shorter than MSS BB and c. According to the scribe’s occasional notations, MS aa was copied from a lightly damaged original. MS i comprises two joining fragments from the middle of the obverse, with parts of two columns preserved, presumably columns ii and iii. At this point on the tablet a column’s length of MS i was about thirty-six lines of poetry.

The line numeration of the present edition of Tablet III is very provisional, a working compromise based in different places upon the differing column lengths of MSS M, aa, BB and c. As reconstructed here column vi of MS c begins at about 1.207, so that the last preserved line of Tablet III is 233. This may be too high, but even so it is clear that not all the text of the long exemplar such as MSS BB and c would have fitted on to a manuscript like MS M, and one must therefore bear in mind the possibility that different manuscripts may have set the division between Tablets III and IV at different places.

TABLET IV

Parts of five Kuyunjik manuscripts survive, MSS S, Y, AA, CC and DD, though this might be reduced to four or three, if MSS Y and DD or AA and CC belong together, and further still if MS S turns out to belong elsewhere. Of the seven extant pieces Thompson knew all but one, MS CC. However, while he recognized MSS AA and DD as belonging to Tablet IV, MS S he edited as part of Tablet II and MSY as part of Tablet V. The fragment from ASur, MS x, published by E. Ebeling in 1923, but Thompson found no place for it. Since it cannot be integrated into the text of the epic even now, it is increasingly probable that it represents an edition slightly different from that copied out in the seventh century. Consequently I have dealt with it in Chapter 7 as a fragment of a deviant recension. Of the five Babylonian manuscripts currently extant none was available at the time of Thompson’s edition (MSS r, t, u, v and w). The two fragments of MS w, from Jordan’s excavations at Ur, were the first to appear, one in 1929 in a preliminary copy from the hand of A. Schwart, both in 1931 in A. Falkenstein’s definitive publication of the literary texts from the 1928–9 season. They were found unbaked in Square Xc Xv 5, along with many thousands of other fragments, amid fill in a post-Assyrian-period building abutting the outside of the precinct wall of the temple E-anina. The date of these tablets, to judge from archival documents in the same fill, is the sixth century.

MS r was made available by D. J. Wiseman in 1960 and again, along with MS u, by W. G. Lambert in 1965. These new pieces helped B. Landsberger in 1968 to eradicate much of the confusion that had hitherto attended the correct placement of sources of Tablets IV, V and VII. The existence of MS T was advertised in 1988, in the third volume of E. Leitch’s Sippar catalogue. Published here for the first time, it adds a scrap of new text from the telling of Gilgamesh’s second dream. The British Museum fragments, MSS r, t and u, come from the purchased collections 81–7–6, 83–1–21 and Rm respectively. The first and last of these are mostly from Babylon, while 83–1–21 comprises material that used to be known as ‘AH unnumbered’, i.e. fragments excavated by Rassam at Sippar (Abu Hamda). Joints have been made between pieces in this collection and fragments from other Sippar collections but also pieces from the Sp III collection, so one cannot rule out Babylon as the provenance of MS t. According to J. L. Finkel the Late Babylonian MS v, also published for the first time, is certainly the piece identified by I. G. Pinches among the cuneiform collection of Lord Amherst of Hackney on 28 August 1903. Pinches wrote, ‘found fragment of 5th tablet of Gilgamesh Series’. Nothing is known of its provenance, and it adds but a little to our knowledge of Gilgamesh’s dreams.

MS S is a fragment from the middle of the left edge. The bevel of the edge suggests that it is from the reverse, i.e. column vi of a six-column tablet. It is very similar in clay and script to MS X (Tablet II), and may be from the same scribe. MS Y is written in a small square script of type C, with four wedges often used where conventional Kuyunjik hands use three. The angle of the bevel of the bottom edge of MSY indicates that this fragment is from a left-hand column of a six-column tablet, near to the bottom corner, and curvature, content and lack of colophon suggest column i rather than column vi. MSY₂ is from a right-hand corner, and is more probably from the top of column iii than the top of column iv. The third fragment of this manuscript, MSY₃, does not run to an edge and is too small to place on grounds of curvature. Column i of MSY appears to be forty-three lines long, if the restoration is predictable, which suggests an overall line count, allowing for a colophon, of about 250 lines. MS DD is a fragment from the middle which duplicates column v of MS AA, and

See above, fn. 13–14.
s therefore assumed to be from the reverse. MSSID and DD have been given separate sigla because the script of the latter is rather larger than that of the former; but since MS DD is from the reverse and scribes sometimes write larger as they near the end of a clay tablet, a case could be made for proposing MS DD as part of MS Y. MS AA, the lower left-hand corner of a six-column tablet with parts of the left-hand and middle columns preserved, is very probably from the same hand as MS H (Tablet V). The bottom of the left-hand column has, after a ruling, the first line of Tablet V in the recension of Nineveh (// MS H i 1). Assuming this is a catch-line, the column is the sixth and the piece is from the reverse, despite the flatness of its surface.43 The profile of what remains of the bevelled edge corroborates this view, for its crown is nearer the destroyed side than the preserved surface, making it likely that the former is the tablet's obverse and latter its reverse. Column vi is written rather tightly, with several doubled-up lines, and there is no space for a colophon, a fact which suggests that this manuscript was not copied in Aššurbanipal's scriptorium. Indeed, the ductus looks older than the regular Kuyunjik scripts, and this copy of Tablet IV may originally have belonged to an older Assyrian library. MS CC, from a top right-hand corner, is very different in appearance from MS Y. Its discoverer thought it looked like part of MS AA,44 but the script (note St) and spacing are not a perfect match and, though I do not reject the possibility that it belongs with MS AA, I have reserved a separate sigil for it.

The Babylonian manuscripts are all extant only as small fragments. One part of MS w is from the top edge of a six-column tablet, towards the left-hand corner (w1), the other from the middle of the reverse at column iv (w2). The former has text preserved on obverse and reverse, with the first few lines of columns i and ii and a few traces of the ends of columns v and vi extant. Column i ends at l. 33, which suggests an overall line count, allowing for a short colophon, of about 195 lines, substantially less than MS Y. Despite this, column iv on the Kuyunjik MS CC ends well in advance of the end of column iv on MS w. The easiest way of explaining this problem is to assume that Babylonian scribes reduced the number of lines of Tablet IV considerably by omitting some of the repetitive passages that introduce the dreams of Gilgamesh. Only further discoveries of text will help resolve this problem.

An added difficulty here is that we might expect an Uruk manuscript of Tablet IV to be longer than a Kuyunjik manuscript, since the original manuscript of Tablet V (dd) places the division between Tablets IV and V at a point at least eighteen lines later than the Assyrian manuscripts.

43 The fragment's physical appearance led Haupt to classify it as from the obverse, with parts of cols. 1 and ii preserved (also P. Jensen, KB VII, p. 160, and others). Haupt's arrangement, rejected by Thompson, found a more recent exponent in J. V. Keesler Wilson, On the fourth and fifth Tablets of the Epic of Gilgamesh, in Ginsbarg, Cog., pp. 103–11. His motive was to resolve a perceived diachronicity in the development of the plot. However, with Landbergcr's subsequent study of Tablet IV and, in particular, his supporting of the inclusion of all of Gilgamesh's dreams, this difficulty has resolved and no longer forms a base for argument (cf. further Landberger, Bd 62, pp. 104–5, fn. 27). Further doubt about the place of MS AA in Tablet IV have been expressed by J. Renger, 'Zur fünften Tabcl des Giltameshsop', Studien Reifen, p. 321: The newly discovered OB tablet now in Norway (OB Schevius), provides more evidence here, for it corroborates a sequence of passages wherein the hero bora Humbaba's terrifying roars long before he arrives at the forest. Provisionally, then, MS AA remains in Tablet IV but more text is needed to clarify the succession of episodes.


u scripts (AA and H). This seems indeed to have been the case with the Babylonian MS v, a piece from the bottom left-hand corner which has parts of columns i and vi preserved. Column i ends at IV 37, which on a six-column tablet suggests an overall line count, allowing for a short colophon, of about 215–20 lines. However, the top of column vi has text which duplicates the middle of column ii of Tablet V on the Kuyunjik manuscript (MS H).45 All this points to a situation whereby Assyrian scribes divided Tablets IV and V at one point, Babylonian scribes at another. For this reason I assume that the traces at the bottom of column v of MS w would have fallen in an Assyrian copy not in Tablet IV but in Tablet V. MS S, r, t and v are fragments from the middle of three different manuscripts that shed no further light on this question, and further discoveries of text are needed to see just how Babylonian scribes squeezed what at Kuyunjik amounts to perhaps 330 lines into copies of Tablet IV that are smaller than their Assyrian counterparts. In these circumstances the line numbering of the present edition is necessarily highly provisional.

### TABLET V

This tablet of the series is known from just two manuscripts, MS H from Kuyunjik (two joining fragments) and MS dd from Uruk. As noted immediately above, they start at different places, and it seems that Assyrian and Babylonian scribes differed as to the point of division between Tablets IV and V. In the present edition I have adopted the Assyrian practice. Accordingly, the reverse sides of two Babylonian copies of Tablet IV, MSS v and w, also provide text for Tablet V. Of these four sources Thompson knew only MS H, but he considered MS Y (Tablet IV) to belong here.46 MS dd was found in the twenty-ninth season of the excavations at Warka (1970–1) and comes from the same general find as MSS bb and ee (Tablet II), cc (Tablet I) and ee (Tablet III). It was published by E. von Wehler in 1980. The clay tablet is now in a more complete state than von Wehler's photographs indicate, for in the course of studying the piece in 1989 I came across some tiny detached fragments which it was possible to re-attach. The most important of these is a small flake that allows the restoration of the passage in which Gilgamesh and Enkidu despatch Humbaba.

MS H is a large fragment from the top edge at the left-hand corner, with parts of columns i, ii, v and vi extant. It has a catch-line and rubric stating its place in the series, but no colophon of the kind customary in Aššurbanipal's libraries. Like MS AA, which it resembles closely in clay and script, MS H was probably inherited or acquired from an older
collection. MS dd is the upper half of a six-column tablet of which the obverse is rounded and the reverse flat. Parts of all columns are preserved. Unfortunately not enough of the colophon has survived to yield the name of the scribe’s owner. The line numeration of Tablet V is based upon the estimated column lengths of both sources. On the obverse of MS dd a column length was about forty-five lines, but significantly less on the reverse, for there the scribe makes lavish use of space. Where MS H duplicates MS dd, in columns v and vi, one may estimate a column length on the Assyrian manuscript of about fifty-two lines.  

TABLET VI

Tablet VI is reconstructed from three manuscripts from Asšurbanipal’s libraries (MSS A, O and Q) and two from Asšur (MSS a and d). No Babylonian copies have yet been recovered. Many of the fourteen numbered fragments that make up the Kuyunjik manuscripts were known to George Smith, who first reconstructed the text of Tablet VI in 1875. By the time of Thompson’s edition all three manuscripts were as they are now, and the left-hand fragment of MS a was also available (a1). The other Berlin manuscript, MS d, had been published shortly after MS a, by E. Ebeling in 1923, but it found no place in Thompson’s edition. Many of the fragments which made up the right-hand part of MS a, in Istanbul, were made available in transliteration by R. Frankena in 1960, and W. G. Lambert later made copies of most of them (a2). In 1991 I was able to make further progress in reconstructing the Istanbul fragments. As can be seen from my copy, the Berlin and Istanbul pieces would certainly join if brought together.

MS A, O, Q and a are all regular six-column tablets and there is no reason to suppose that MS dd was not. The text they provide is complete enough for a definitive numeration to be established without difficulty. At 180 lines this is somewhat lower than Thompson’s, largely because Thompson counted as two verses several single lines of poetry that overran on to two lines of clay tablet. MSA comprises two fragments, a large piece from the left with three edges preserved (A1) and a small piece from the middle of the right edge (A2). Columns i, ii, v and vi are preserved down their entire length but columns iii and iv are in poor condition. The scribe wrote with increasing use of space, on the reverse often running one line of poetry over on to a second line of clay tablet. Columns i, ii and v offer forty-four, forty and twenty-six lines of poetry respectively. The catch-line and colophon are followed by Asšurbanipal’s property label (Asb colophon a), which was incised on the clay tablet after the clay had dried hard. The script of MS A is small and upright. It employs script type C (cf. RU, Û, 1H, AMAR, QAR, RA etc.).

MS O comprises two big pieces which overlap but do not quite join. Together these pieces represent much of the original clay tablet, with only the lower right-hand corner missing. However, the surface of columns i–iv has sustained heavy damage and retains only scraps of text. Half of column v is extant and the whole of column vi. Like MS A, MS O is written with progressively more use of space. Column i held forty-three lines, column ii thirty-eight, columns iii and iv sixty-three between them and column v only twenty-five, with several lines of poetry running over on to a second line of clay tablet. Half of column vi is given over to an elaborate colophon (Asb colophon d). The script is the regular, square ductus on smooth clay designated above as type A.

MS Q is in still less good shape. Three fragments are extant: one from the top edge near the left-hand corner, with parts of columns i, ii, v and vi preserved (Q1), another, much smaller, from the top edge near the right-hand corner, but with text extant on the reverse only, at the bottom of column iv (Q2), and the third from the middle, with scraps of columns ii, iii, iv and v preserved. MS Q is more evenly inscribed, so that column i held thirty-three lines, columns ii, iii and iv 102 between them, and column v twenty-nine lines. In column vi the text finishes early enough to leave space for an expansive colophon, but the catch-line is followed by the rubric and simplest form of colophon only. Clay and ductus mark this manuscript as a type B tablet.

MS A is now the best-preserved of the sources for Tablet VI, lacking only a large piece from the bottom left-hand corner and smaller pieces from the right-hand corners. Columns i and ii hold seventy-three lines between them, column iii holds thirty-one lines, columns iv and v only fifty-eight together. The colophon marks it as the work of a certain Asšur-ra‘immapišti, a junior apprentice scribe. The exact provenance of MS A is known: it was retrieved from a disturbed context in a private house at Asšur, where it was part of a collection of texts described by O. Pedersén as the “library and archive of chief singers”. In the same context were found two tablets of Enta dēkī (KAR 117 and 164), the Asšur manuscript of the syncretistic hymn to 1star (KAR 109 + 343), a copy of the Divine Love Lyrics (LK14), other hymns and prayers (KAR 98, 105, 361), a ritual (KAR 141), an incantation (KAR 76), a homeroLOGY (KAR 177) and some pieces still unpublished. From elsewhere in the same house comes a similar mixture of religious literature as well as copies of scholarly texts and well-known literary compositions such as Etušu (LK1 14), Anšū (LK4 1) and 1stair’s

Pedersén, Archives and Libraries in the City of Asšur 2 (Uppsala, 1986), pp. 34–41, N 3 no. 45. Findspot: Square ISII, entrance shaft to grave chamber, in fill with 28 other unbaked tablets.
Descent (LKA 62). This is a set of texts with an emphasis very different from the larger collection found in the House of the Incantation Priests, and perhaps gives us some idea of what compositions might be sung. The interest in the love-life of Ištar, witnessed not only by SB Gilgamesh V, Ištar’s Descent and the Love Lyrics but also by a myth of Ištar and Dumuzi (LKA 15), may not be accidental, for the Dumuzi-Ištar cult is known for its use of song. Archival documents in the same house date mostly to the eighth century, with a single example from the post-canonical period immediately before the city fell to the Medes and Babylonians. Aššur-rišu-napišti, the writer of MS a, is the only certain individual described in the colophons of these tablets as a junior apprentice (šamaššu šetru). Perhaps he was a student of the best-attested figure of this library, Aššur-šumu-ibšum the chief singer (margallu), who flourished in the middle decades of the eighth century.

The other Aššur fragment, MS d, is a small flake from the middle, presumably to be located in column ii. In the absence of an excavation number its exact provenance is unknown.

**TABLET VII**

The manuscripts of Tablet VII comprise four from Kuyunjik (MSS E, L, Z and GG), one from Sultantepe (MS f) and one from Babylon (MS g). The four Kuyunjik manuscripts were all known to Thompson, though he placed parts of them in Tablet IV (MSS L8 // GG). Two of these four have benefited from the discovery of new pieces: MS E was made available in transliteration by B. Landsberger when he published his study of Tablets IV and VII in 1968, and MSS E and Z were identified more recently by W. G. Lambert in the course of preparing his recent catalogue. MS f was excavated at Sultantepe, ancient Huzirina, in 1951 and published by O. R. Gurney in 1954. It is part of the library of the seventh-century scholar Qudri-Nergal, found dumped against the outside wall of a private dwelling-house. Further cleaning in Ankara has revealed more of the surface of this badly mutilated source.

The three fragments that are denoted by the siglum MS g were published in 1965 by W. G. Lambert. There is no proof that these pieces must be from a single manuscript, but they are very similar in script and general appearance (except for the obverse of g, where the script is somewhat cramped) and they belong to collections which are suspected mostly to have come from the same source.

None of the manuscripts is well preserved for more than half a column. The several lacunae that intervene in the extant text mean that the line numeration given in the present edition is only a rough guide. The three six-column tablets from Kuyunjik, MSS E, L, and Z, all have columns of similar length, of between forty-seven and fifty-two lines. The whole text of Tablet VII would have occupied about 300 lines.

MS E is represented by four fragments. The biggest of these is from the bottom right-hand corner of a six-column tablet, with parts of columns i, iii and iv preserved (E2). From a nearby part of column iv is the tiny flake MS E3. Less obviously parts of E are a bigger flake (E3) and a more meaty fragment (E2), but close comparison suggests that they belong together, and, since they are more like MS E than any other Kuyunjik manuscript of Tablet VII, it seems safe to include them under that siglum than to suppose that there were five exemplars, or six, of Tablet VII in Aššurbanipal’s libraries. MS E, comes from the lower part of column iii; MS E6 bridges the column margin in the upper middle part of columns iv and v. The two fragments thus ought to back on to each other, but not enough clay remains to allow a back-to-back join. The last few lines of MS E7, from the left side of column iv, possibly overlap with the tail-ends of lines on E6, but there is again no chance of a join.

MS L also comprises four fragments, including two fairly large corner pieces, one from the bottom left-hand corner, with parts of columns i and vi extant (L2), the other from the bottom right (L7, columns iii and iv). Two small fragments preserve parts of the margin between columns iv and v (L6 and L8), but do not quite join L1. The script and clay are type A. MS Z comprises three fragments. The largest is from the top right-hand corner, yielding parts of columns iii and iv (Z1). The small flake Z2 would join the obverse of this piece if enough of the body of the clay tablet was preserved. A larger flake survives from the middle of column ii (Z3). The script and clay are type B.

The fourth Kuyunjik exemplar, MS GG, comes from very near the bottom left-hand corner, and thus preserves the end of column i and part of column vi. The end of column i on this manuscript must have fallen at the earliest at l. 69. The end of Tablet VII is not preserved, but on the basis of MS L, the text must have held between about 270 and 290 lines, depending on the type of colophon. It therefore seems quite possible that, quite exceptionally for a Kuyunjik Gilgamesh manuscript, MS GG utilized a format of only four columns. Another Kuyunjik piece, ascribed to columns ii and iii of Tablet VII by its copyist, W. G. Lambert, now seems not to be part of the epic.

normal scribal convention is clearly not also the case with STT 112, in which there is marked curvature of the side bearing the colophon, which is of course the reverse. The unsurprising fragment SU 51:216, reported in STT 11, p. 21, as also "possibly part of STT 14," was unavailable for study and remains unpublished.

BM collections Sp 81-7-4, which were excavated by local people, mostly probably at Babylon, reached the British Museum through the dealers Marius, Sparrâlu and Shemtor (see Read in Leichty, Catalogue VI, p. xv).

BM tablet 79-7-4, 154 = CT 46 26, ed. B. Landsberger, RA 62 (1968), pp. 122–3.
The Sultantepe manuscript also departs from the conventional six-column format. It is a piece from the lower part of a single-column tablet in portrait format, with the turn from obverse to reverse placed at l. 78. The hand is small and well practised. Many lines of poetry are doubled up on to one line of clay tablet by this manuscript, but quite clearly the complete tablet could not have held the entire text of Tablet VII. If it broke off at the end of a section, then the likely point of conclusion would be the end of Šamaš’s speech (l. 147), which would leave enough space for a typical Sultantepe colophon. This would also be about the halfway point in the text, leaving a similar number of lines to fill a second tablet. However, no such document was found, and the latter part of Tablet VII may not have been present in the collection.

Of the three smallish fragments that make up the Babylonian exemplar MS g, two have been baked by the British Museum conservators and one remains in the tablet’s original unbaked condition (g2). MS g is from columns i and just iii, and by its physical appearance cannot have been far from the bottom edge of the tablet. MS g3, which resumes the text only four lines after MS g, breaks off, is thus from almost the top of column iii. MS g5 follows on from MS g6, bottom of column i, and breaks off after only four lines. It must therefore be from very nearly the top of column iv. Not enough of the body of the tablet is preserved to permit a secure back-to-back join between MSS g5 and g6, though they may touch. According to the line numbering provided by the Kuyunjik manuscripts, the columns of text on MS g were about fifty-three lines long. The script of MS g is medium-sized, and often the top horizontal wedge of signs such as LU and EU is omitted; these factors mark MS g as late, certainly post-empire.

**TABLET VIII**

The two Kuyunjik manuscripts extant for this tablet (MSS R and V) are complemented by an excerpt tablet from Sultantepe (MS e) and a manuscript from Babylonia (MS m). Thompson knew only the Kuyunjik manuscripts, but not in their present state, for both have benefited from the discovery of new pieces. The first new source to come to light, however, was the Sultantepe manuscript, discovered in 1951 and published by O. R. Gurney in 1954. It came from the same pile of tablets as MS f (see above, on Tablet VII). In 1960 W. G. Lambert published two more pieces: a big flake that he had joined to MS V in 1958, and another fragment that was confirmed as Tablet VIII in 1982 when S. Parpola joined it to MS R. Also in 1960 D. J. Wiseman made available a small Late Babylonian fragment; the piece was republished by Lambert in 1965 (m2). Lambert later identified a further fragment of MS V in the course of cataloguing Kuyunjik fragments (V4) in 1985 and in 1985 I. L. Finke found and joined the three pieces of a big Late Babylonian fragment that is part of the same manuscript as Wiseman’s (m3). Both are published here for the first time. With its long list of grave goods, Finke’s piece improves enormously our knowledge of the preparations for Enkidu’s funeral.

The Kuyunjik manuscripts are both in standard six-column format. MS R, consisting of four joined fragments, is from the middle of the top edge, with text preserved on obverse and reverse. Columns ii and v hold some complete lines, columns i, iii and iv only scraps. Column vi has only the ends of three lines of catch-line, colophon and Aššurbanipal’s label (Ašb colophon a). Both colophon and label were incised into the hardened clay after drying. MSV is even more poorly preserved. The largest piece comprises two joining flakes from the obverse, with parts of columns i and ii extrast (V2). The top right-hand corner survives, and provides text from the top of column iii and the bottom of column iv (V2).23 Both left-hand corners also survive, but only as tiny fragments (V3 and V4). Traces on the reverse of MS V can be identified as one of Aššurbanipal’s longer colophons (probably colophon d). MSV has the script and clay characteristic of Kuyunjik tablet type A. Thanks to MS e, which provides a long sequence of lines at the beginning of Tablet VIII, it is possible to calculate the lengths of column i in MSS R and V as forty-two and forty-nine lines respectively. The discrepancy can be explained by difference in the length of the two manuscripts’ colophons. MS V needed to leave at least half column vi free for its long Aššurbanipal colophon, while MS R required only the space of ten lines. The length of Tablet VIII was about 250 lines.

The Sultantepe manuscript, MS e, has already been described in Chapter 7. Three of the four fragments of MS m come from a collection considered to derive mainly from Babylon, with a smattering of pieces from Borsippa.86 MS m4 is a small obverse fragment that must belong to column i. The newly joined fragments of MS m form a large piece from the bottom right-hand corner, with a run of nearly seventy lines of text preserved on columns iii and iv, along with scraps of columns ii and v. The turn from obverse to reverse cannot have taken place much sooner than l. 147 (I place it at l. 149–50), so that one may assume columns of nearly fifty lines on the obverse. In some lines of column iv the scribe leaves blank spaces, apparently to indicate that he copied from a broken original. Where he thought he could restore, e.g. from parallel lines, he put the text in very faintly, perhaps after the clay had dried a little, and the signs are often poorly formed in these places.

**TABLET IX**

Three manuscripts from Aššurbanipal’s libraries constitute our only sources for Tablet IX. MSS D and its duplicate MS JJ were known to Thompson. The new piece is MS EE, which was suspected as part of K 8261 (MSV) by J. V. Kinnier-Wilson. "Miscellaneous literary Kuyunjik texts", JCS 42 (1990), pp. 85, 90. The presence of part of the right edge would place the fragment in col. iii, but such a placing is now precluded by the discovery of MS m4, and the piece finds no place in the present reconstruction.87
identified by W.G. Lambert among the high-numbered Kuyunjik fragments. It adds lines that were already predictable, from the episode of Gilgamesh's race with the sun.

MS D is a large piece from the top edge made by George Smith from two joining fragments. The obverse preserves the top halves of columns i and ii and part of column iii. On the reverse a scrap remains of column iv, and larger portions of columns v and vi, though much damaged. The length of the columns can be judged roughly from the curvature of the reverse to be about thirty-six lines on the obverse, thirty-four on the reverse. The latter figure is confirmed by MS EE, which supplies text that bridges the lacuna between the end of col. iv and the beginning of column v. The overall line count for the whole text of Tablet IX is 196. Column vi of MS D closes with catch-line and rubric and a two-line label (Asb colophon a). The label was incised on the tablet after the clay had hardened. MS JJ is a fragment from the top left-hand corner, yielding the first lines of Tablet IX on column i and the remains of a long colophon of Aššurbanipal on column vi (Asb colophon d). MS EE is a small flake from the middle of the reverse, which is crossed by the margin between what, on a six-column tablet, must be columns iv and v. It belongs to neither of the previously known manuscripts. Its clay and script show that it is the sole remnant of a type B copy of Tablet IX.

TABLET X

The single Kuyunjik manuscript used by Thompson remains the only copy of Tablet X extant from Aššurbanipal’s libraries (MS K). The intervening years have seen a single addition to it, a join to K3 made by W.G. Lambert in 1963. At about the same time Lambert made joins to two important Babylonian manuscripts of Tablet X, parts of which had already been published by Thompson (MS b) and by D.J. Wiseman in 1960 (MSS b and d). The results of these joins were published in 1965. In 1967 Lambert joined a further fragment to MS f, some of which he made available in a composite transliteration in 1980. A copy of the whole is given here for the first time. The six fragments that make up MS b and the three that make up MS f derive once again from purchased collections that are assumed to have originated in Babylon. On this occasion their provenance in that city is confirmed by their colophons. The most recent addition to our knowledge of Tablet X is Assyrian MS z, which contains Tables X and XI in an edition that matches the Standard Babylonian text in three of the four columns that survive. Details of this piece have been given in Chapter 7.

The three pieces of MS K consist of five numbered fragments and make up a six-column tablet with parts of all columns extant. The top left-hand corner is represented by K3, but the bottom left-hand corner is missing. Most of columns ii and v are extant on K4, which also reaches nearly to the bottom right-hand corner and thus yields text from the end of column iii and the beginning of column iv. The right-hand part of the tablet is otherwise represented by K6, a small fragment from the top edge with text preserved on the obverse only, at the top of column iii. Columns of MS K are about fifty-one or fifty-two lines long on the obverse, about forty-seven on the reverse. Many lines of poetry are doubled up, however, particularly in the earlier columns, so that the overall line count of Tablet X reaches 322 as currently reconstructed. If the first lacuna on MS K held any doubled-up lines, the line count would be correspondingly higher. The colophon comprises catch-line, rubric and Aššurbanipal’s label (Asb colophon a). The last was incised on the tablet after the clay had dried hard.

The Babylonian manuscripts do much to fill the gaps in MS K. MS b is from the left edge of a six-column tablet. Much of columns i, ii, v and vi is extant. A typical column length, calculated from the mid-point of column i to the mid-point of column ii, was sixty-two lines of poetry. Few lines are doubled up on this manuscript, so this figure is not far off a column’s actual length in lines of clay tablet. About half of column vi is given over to an elaborate colophon. According to this the manuscript was written by Bēl-abēš-ūṣur for his father, Ištar-Marduk-balātu, who was presumably his teacher also. We know that in year 185 of the Seleucid era (127 BC), some time after he completed his scribal training, Bēl-abēš-ūṣur became an astrologer of E-sagili, the temple of Marduk at Babylon. As a product of his apprenticeship, MS b was thus probably written at Babylon in about 130 BC. This is a date well into the Parthian period, and makes MS b the latest dated manuscript of the Gilgamesh epic so far known. MS a (Tablet XII) may derive from the same source.

MS f is from the top edge, with parts of columns i, v and vi preserved, and a tiny scrap of column ii. The reverse is much more tightly written than the obverse, with the number of doubled-up lines increasing as the scribe realized he was running out of space on the tablet. This is one of the very few Gilgamesh manuscripts that has been punched with holes to aid drying. The short colophon reports that MS f was written at Babylon during the co-regency of Seleucus and Antiochus, i.e. at the beginning of the third century BC. The name of the scribe is lost; he was of the family of Adad-abēš-ūṣur.

TABLET XI

There are four manuscripts of Tablet XI extant in Aššurbanipal’s libraries (MSS C, J, T and W), another two from Aššur (MSS b and c) and one from Babylon (MS d). The last column of the deviant Assyrian MS z, from Nimrud, can also be used as a source of Tablet XI. Thompson utilized all four Kuyunjik manuscripts and the Babylonian fragment, but here again there have been a few improvements in our knowledge. A new copy of MS j was

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88 Lambert, C.R.A. 26, pp. 54–6, MS c.
89 Sp, Sp li, Sp III and Rm.
90 For details see the footnote to this colophon, at the end of Ch. 11.
91 Thompson also considered K 160224 (Kuyunjik MS YY) to belong here, if not in Tablet I.
published by W. G. Lambert in 1965. The reverse fragment K 8569 was identified and joined to K 8517+ (MS W) by C. B. F. Walker in 1974. More recently the fragments K 8593 and 8595, already known but previously detached, were joined to the same assemblage, the former by Walker in 1981, the latter by me in 1988. One of the two unnumbered fragments published by Haupt from Delitzsch's rough copies as nos. 65 and 66, was rediscovered by W. G. Lambert among the high-numbered K fragments, and joined in 1990 to K 8594, another piece of MS W (W). The other one remains to be found but is presumed to belong to the same, comprehensively shattered part of MS W; it therefore takes the sigilum W. Finally, a corner fragment belonging to the same manuscript has also lately come to light (W). The two new fragments of MS W appear here for the first time. Assyrian MS z was published in 1996. The fragment of MS e identified in Berlin by W. G. Lambert and reported in 1969 was published by S. M. Maul in 1999 alongside a second piece of the same manuscript that he had newly discovered. In 2001 Maul found a third piece of MS e and the fragment denoted by the sigilum MS b and published them immediately.

The text of Tablet XI, by virtue of the Deluge story the most famous of all the tablets of Gilgamesh, is very nearly completely recovered. The overall line count is now 328. This figure is greater than Thompson's mainly because he did not count as two verses the many doubled-up lines that are so written on all manuscripts. MS C, painstakingly rebuilt by George Smith and now comprising some seventeen joined fragments, is essentially a complete six-column tablet, though the bottom right-hand corner and parts of the top edge and middle are missing, along with much of the surface of the obverse. Columns contain forty-seven or forty-eight lines of tablet, rather more lines of poetry. The colophon is short. All'kurbanipal's label (Aššu colophon a) was incised on the tablet after it had dried hard. The script is type C (e.g. O, S,(,(, B,(,(, I,(,(, A,(,(, R,(,().

MS J, a fine example of tablet type A, comprises two fragments, a large and a small. The large piece is the much-photographed right half of a beautiful six-column tablet, with most of columns iii and iv extant and the right-hand parts of columns ii and v (J). The top edge was vitrified in the burning of the citadel at Nineveh. Parts of column iii visible on photographs of the Flood tablets taken when George Smith was rebuilding MS C, in about 1873 (Figs. 12, 13), are no longer extant and have been restored in my copy under hatching. A badly vitrified fragment from the top left-hand corner, with text extant on the obverse only (J), very probably comes from the same manuscript. The manuscript began in very cramped style, with small script and several verses doubled up on to a single line of clay tablet. Columns of MS J were a little over fifty lines long.

None of MS T was known to George Smith and in his day much of it was not yet out of the ground. Most of it was probably identified by T. G. Pinches. Joints among its nine constituent fragments make up two extant pieces: a large fragment from the bottom edge,

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89 J. Haupt, Assyriology, p. 125.
90 Lambert, Corpus, 3rd Suppl., p. 63, K 21502.
91 This piece was kindly brought to my attention by J. N. Postgate. It has since been catalogued by Lambert, Corpus, 3rd Suppl., p. 6, K 27443.
92 Lambert and Michael, Aru-šubû, p. 164 on pl. 9.
yielding the bottom two-thirds of column i and smaller portions of columns ii, v and vi (T2), and a big piece from the top right-hand corner with large parts of columns ii, iii and iv preserved (T3). Columns of T are appreciably longer than those of other manuscripts of Tablet XI. The first column held sixty-four lines of poetry, the second fifty-nine on fifty-two lines of clay tablet. Consequently column vi, which begins at l. 298, would only have been half filled with text, and presumably held in the remaining space one of Allurbanipal’s longer colophons.

The shattered MS W, largely rebuilt by George Smith, now comprises three separate fragments and a presumed fourth, the missing MS W’. MS W is the left half of the clay tablet, with text preserved on columns i, ii, v and vi. The top edge is extant, only a little is missing from the left edge, but the bottom part is lost. Slight damage has affected column i since Haupt copied it; the signs now missing are restored in my copy under hatching. MS W is a small piece from the middle of column iii. MS W’ is the bottom right-hand corner. MS W fits somewhere between them, near the right edge. Depending on how much more clay there is than just the surface sketched by Delitzsch, MS W’ might join either of its neighbours, or both. None of column iv survives. Columns of MS W are about the same length as MS J. The colophon is simple. The manuscript exhibits the clay and script of type B.

MS b is a fragment with text on both sides, exhibiting many lines doubled up. It comes from a clay tablet that turned from obverse to reverse somewhere between l. 214 and 239. This feature marks its format apart from the regular six-column tables. The piece may represent a manuscript of one or two columns per side, inscribed with Tablet XI and a well-spaced colophon. Alternatively, it could be from a six-column tablet inscribed with Tablets XI and XII, a total of 481 lines in the present reconstruction. MS c is a six-column tablet represented by its bottom left-hand corner, a fragment from further along the bottom edge and another from the middle of column iii. It turns from columns i to ii at l. 55 and from columns iii to iv at l. 172, roughly the same points as MS W. In the absence of excavation numbers no details are known of the exact provenance at Alattar of any of these fragments. Details of Assyrian MS k have been given in Chapter 7.

MS j is from the left edge, near the top, of a Late Babylonian tablet with columns of about fifty lines on the obverse and rather more on the reverse. The script is smaller, particularly on the reverse, than that found on other Late Babylonian Gilgameš manuscripts, with the exception of MS p (Tablet II). As part of the second Spartali collection it may be assumed to come from Babylon.

TABLET XII

Seven manuscripts of Tablet XII are currently extant, comprising nine separate pieces. Five manuscripts are Neo-Assyrian (MS G, N, U, HH and KKC) and two Late Babylonian (MS a and q). All the Assyrian manuscripts except MS KK certainly come from
Aššurbanipal's library; MS KK might do too, but it could equally well come from another site such as Aššur. MS N originally belonged to the library of the famous scholar Nabû-uzuq-pîkû, whose cuneiform tablets were later incorporated into the royal collections at Nineveh. According to its colophon it was written in Kalâh in 705 BC. The Babylonian manuscripts almost certainly come from Babylon and are likely to have been written in the Persian period or, more probably, even later. Only four of the Assyrian manuscripts were known to Thompson (MSS G, U, HH and the lower half of N), and neither of the Babylonian ones. MS KK was made available by E. Weidner in 1936, when it was still in a private collection. The obverse of the upper half of MS N was joined and published by W. G. Lambert in 1960. The reverse, which is mostly colophon, is copied for the first time in the present volume. The Babylonian manuscripts appeared in copies by D. J. Wiseman (1960, MS a), W. G. Lambert (1965, MS a) and I. L. Finkel (1984, MS q).

The Assyrian sources MSS G, N, U and KK are all tablets of six columns. One cannot be sure with the fragment MS HH. The disposition of lines on the Babylonian source MS q indicates that it was certainly a clay tablet of four columns (two per side), and MS a may have shared this format. MS G comprises two separate pieces: G₁ is the lower part of the tablet across its full width, with text surviving on all six columns; G₂ is an obverse flake from the top edge, with parts of columns ii and iii extant. The first five columns of MS G held 29, 29, 31, 28 and 29 lines respectively, with column vi occupied by seven lines of poetry, generously disposed over twelve lines of clay tablet, and a double-spaced colophon. The script is type C (e.g. Bu, Ą, ʕ). MS N is the left part of a tablet, with about one quarter of the width remaining. It holds thirty lines in column i, but slightly fewer in each of columns ii–v, for column v ended at l. 143. Column vi holds ten lines of text and a double-spaced colophon. The script is slightly smaller than that of the other Kuyunjik pieces, with the peculiarity, first noted by Haupt, that the sign Ë has an extra horizontal wedge, as in most Neo-Babylonian scripts.

MS U survives as two small fragments, one from column ii (U₁), the other from column iv at the right edge (U₂). It exhibits the sharp script of a type A tablet. MS HH, a third small fragment from Kuyunjik, from column i at the left edge, has a different script and is not part of the same manuscript as MS U. MS KK, a larger piece from the top right-hand corner of a fifth exemplar, has text from the top of column iii and the bottom of column iv. The first two columns held fifty-nine lines between them, the next two only fifty-four.

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\[\text{MS a is a fragment from near the top of the left edge, with text preserved on column i and a colophon on the reverse. Its owner belonged to the same family as the owner of MS b (Tablet X) and might even have been the same person. The fragment may thus be of the same very late date. MS q, a fragment from the lower middle, disposed of the text in columns of about forty-five lines. The margin between the columns is punched with drying holes. Though they do not overlap, the two Babylonian pieces do not appear to be from the same clay tablet.}\]

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67 MS a was purchased by George Smith from Marini in Baghdad. The St 76-11-17 collection to which it belongs is overwhelmingly Babylonian material. MS q is part of the 81-6-25 collection, bought from the dealer Spartali and also mostly Babylonian material.


69 P. Haupt, BR I, p. 68.
write that so far we have about two-thirds of the poem at our disposal. As new manuscripts are found this fraction will steadily grow. Several centuries hence there will surely come a day when the text is once again complete.

The reason for the progress that has been made since 1930 is the steady accumulation of new sources, particularly Late Babylonian tablets, documented in the preceding chapter. The existence of multiple witnesses for many lines of the epic enables an enquiry to be made into the textual variants that can be observed between them, and at the same time allows some preliminary remarks on the existence of distinct recensions within the Standard Babylonian text. This introduction will also call attention to noteworthy features of language and style in the Standard Babylonian poem. Finally, it will examine the spelling conventions observed in the Kuyunjik manuscripts of Gilgamesh.

TEXTUAL VARIANTS AND RECENSIONAL DIFFERENCES

In a text passed down through many generations as part of a scribal tradition, there is a factor that must always be borne in mind: the part played in the transmission of the text by scribal intervention. When a text is copied out by scribes who are less than conscientious in reproducing the copy in front of them or who consider it their privilege to change what they do not like or understand, there arise changes in wording and phrasing, variation in order of lines in repetitious passages, and expansion and compression of predictable couplets and quadrains. Experience shows that exactly the same kinds of change also occur when memorized text is recited, written out or otherwise handed down. As we know well from many late colophons, oral transmission played some part in the process of passing on texts of the scribal corpus. Not all first-millennium tablets were the end result of an unbroken tradition of copying from old master copies. The part played in textual transmission by the human memory is inherently unquantifiable. Consequently, we cannot expect to place every written source of the Standard Babylonian epic in a neat genealogy of manuscripts in lineal descent from an ancestral master copy attributable to Sin-leqi-unnini. But we might nevertheless look to see if some manuscripts fall together in groups, as determined by the sharing of textual variants that arose for one reason or another in the course of the poem's long history of transmission. Some crude perceptions already exist in this regard. The Neo-Assyrian and Late Babylonian tablets that are our sources for the Standard Babylonian poem have often been thought to bear witness to two different editions of the epic, a Ninevite version and a Late Babylonian version. Now that we have many more pieces from Babylonia, this notion can be put to the test.

Places where, in terms of extent of text held on a given tablet of the series, Ninevite and Late Babylonian manuscripts are (or seem to be) incompatible have been noted in the preceding chapter. To recapitulate briefly, one Late Babylonian copy of Tablet I gives in its
colophon a line count that is considerably short of the reconstructed text, which relies heavily on Neo-Assyrian manuscripts. There are also difficulties in resolving the estimated lengths of manuscripts of Tablet III, though there the problem lies in reconciling two Kuyunjik manuscripts. The switch from Tablet IV to Tablet V takes place earlier in the older (Assyrian) manuscripts than in the later (Babylonian) manuscripts. Tablet IV nevertheless appears to be shorter in the Babylonian manuscripts (such as they are) than in the copies from Kuyunjik.

As more manuscripts come to light these problems will be clarified. For the moment the prominent large-scale difference between the Neo-Assyrian and Late Babylonian copying traditions is the point of division between Tablets IV and V. This looks like a difference of recension. By ‘recension’ is meant a copying tradition that adopts or generates minor changes in an established text without making major changes of the kind that distinguish different editions of the text. If there are such recensions in the Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh epic, they should also be visible in the textual variants that exist between the various manuscripts, and it is to these that I now turn.

One indication of the existence of variant recensions might be the different ordering of lines that can be seen between different witnesses to the same passages and in passages of repetition. In Tablet II 218–29 a divided transcription reveals two different line orders, as well as other variants, and suggests the difference might be determined by the date or place of origin of the manuscripts. MS X is Neo-Assyrian, MSS k, z and ee are Late Babylonian:

218 X atšu ššumu erēni = ee harrātu ilti [ul ša alēkē]
219 X ana palṭati ša nitti ūmmu Ellil = ee [amēli ilti ša amērēti]
220 X omits = ee nasir q[ilīti erēni . . .]
221 X Ḫumbēka rigmâtu abēlu = kee Ḫumbēka [rig牤tu a]bēlu
223 X šilmmēna apa šuš bēr rimmat qūtu = kee šilmmēna ša šuš bēr rimmat qūtu
224 X mannu ša uradu ana qûltu = kee mannu ša uradu ana qûltu
225 X omits = kee Adad iltēn u ša šarmā
226 X omits = kee mannu ša igtēlu ša igšu
227 X atšu ššumu erēni = kee atšu ššumu erēni
228 X ana palṭati ša nitti ūmmu Ellil = kee ana palṭati ša nitti ūmmu Ellil
229 X u arúqqilētu ša-[šakkassu] lu[tu] = kee u arúqqilētu [ša-šakkassu] lu[tu]

On this evidence one might well propose the existence of two different recensions of the text according to period and place, one current in seventh-century Assyria (represented by MS X) and the other circulating a few centuries later in Babylonia (witnessed by MSS k, z and ee). When the passage is repeated later in Tablet II more than one recension can again be seen:

289 X [geḥēti Gilgamē]lū bēbaka naḫka = szeke geḥēti Gilgamēlū bēbaka naḫka

X [atšu ššumu erēni] → 298

X ana palṭati ša nitti [šilēti] u Ellil → 299

Here again the Neo-Assyrian MS X, from Kuyunjik, disagrees with the Late Babylonian sources in its ordering of the lines. However, the Late Babylonian manuscripts are far from unanimous. MS e, from Babylon, is too damaged to be useful. MS s, of unknown provenance, and MS z, from Uruk, agree with each other and so may witness a distinct recension. MS ee, also from Uruk, adds a line (repeated from SB II 229), differs from MSS s and z in the order of two others, and thus attests perhaps to another recension. The lack of unanimity among the Late Babylonian manuscripts suggests that the notion of a division of the text into two recensions (Neo-Assyrian v. Late Babylonian) is too simplistic. This will become clearer in the discussion of textual variants that follows.

Here I must interpolate a note of warning. Some of the early Neo-Assyrian sources edited in Chapter 7 and identified as remnants of intermediate editions of the epic nevertheless hold text in that places is very close to the Standard Babylonian version. We have also seen that there may have been a variant edition of the Gilgamesh epic at Nineveh, there was not of other Babylonian poetic narratives. For this reason it must be asked whether any of the Kuyunjik manuscripts incorporated into the editions of the Standard Babylonian epic given in Chapter 1 might, in fact, be identified instead as witnesses to one or other of the intermediate editions. The age of the various Kuyunjik tablets has been discussed in the introduction to the manuscripts in Chapter 8. Some of them, notably the type D manuscripts (MSS H, S, X, AA and CC), are certainly older than the mid-seventh century, when Assurbanipal was most active in accumulating tablets for the royal libraries. It is among these that one should look first for signs of a variant version.

Unfortunately, the type D manuscripts happen to be sources for parts of the epic that, for want of many duplicates, are still fragmentary: MS X is the only Assyrian witness to Tablet II, MSS AA and CC (which may be parts of the same tablet) are the principal sources for the latter part of Tablet IV, MS S is unplaced but provisionally part of Tablet IV, and MS H is the sole Assyrian exemplar of Tablet V. Where they can be tested against other Kuyunjik manuscripts of Tablet IV (MSS Y and DD), MSS AA and CC exhibit only minor variant
(a) Expansion or contraction of text

SB I 69-72

Fx [urra a u [mēša ikaddûr tērē]]

SB I 83-90

P ina pukêt šubû [nu tāšt]

SB I 209-10

BP alha luttarrûka ana libbi Uruk supûri

SB I 259-60

Ph [ummi Gilgâmed] enqet muddē kalâma tâ išakhar ana mûrû

SB I 273-4

B [dumqet šuqa]t† a[?] hûnuha

SB I 281-2

h [ešlitu u] hama[ma]râ ešlitu

SBVI 90-1

Q Gilgâmed umânnû pîštēki [u ertētik]

SBVI 119-24

Oa ína nipnílu ša al šuttatu ippetēma

SBVI 150

A i[ni]šubû aljašme kîlûlu

For the moment the samples of text where type D Kuyunjik manuscripts run parallel with Late Babylonian sources are too small to determine with confidence whether we are dealing with variant recensions that arose over time within the Standard Babylonian version or, more interestingly, with variants between the Standard Babylonian version and the older, intermediate versions of the epic known to have been current in Assyria. The recovery of further Late Babylonian witnesses to Tablets II, IV and V will clarify this problem. In the mean time we should remain aware that eventually some or all of the type D Kuyunjik manuscripts (and maybe even other sources from Nineveh) might turn out properly to belong with the material edited in Chapter 7.

Moving on from line-ordering to other kinds of textual variation, it is possible to assemble a fair sample of variants (leaving aside the very many minor variations in spelling) from the texts of Tablets I, VI and XI. These, the three best-known tablets of the Standard Babylonian epic, are all reconstructed from several witnesses and are consequently the most likely parts of the poem to produce evidence for grouping manuscripts according to shared variants. The following substantive differences occur between the various manuscripts of Tablets I, VI and XI (for translations see the editions in Chapter 11). Neo-Assyrian sources are denoted by sigla in capital letters if from Kuyunjik (A, B, C, F etc.), and by bold face if from elsewhere (a, b, c etc.). Late Babylonian manuscripts are signified by plain lower-case letters (h, k, l, n etc.).
(j) Variant possessive constructions

SB I 36  g  šuq arši širi Rūmār-Nūssu  h  šuq arši širi ša Rūmār-
Nūssumma

SB I 210  BP  mūkātu Anu  cc  [m]ūkātu ša Anu

SB VI 159  A  imitiš álē  Oa  imitiš ša álē

(k) Variation in dialect or other ostensible difference in pronunciation

SB II 157  B:  [ummi]  h  ummi

SB II 126–7  B:  emqet  ho  emqet

SB II 295  o  ummā

SB II 295  ho  limqatamina  B  limqatamina

SB II 16  Oa  duqni  A  duqni

SB II 7  AO  hā'ir  Q  hāmer

SB II 10  Aa  lāšumidda  O  lāšumidda

SB II 12  A  šamidda  Oa  šamidda

SB II 18  AQ  šidā  a  šidā

SB II 68  A  nīkāl  a  nīkāl

SB II 69  A  ḫurdaši  a  ḫurdaši

SB II 104  A  lāqāššir  a  lāqāššir

SB II 124  O  isī[aq][i]  a  isīaq[i]

SB II 148  AQ  šaṭkā[i]  a  šaṭkā[i]

SB II 158  O  harīnatī  a  harīnātī

SB II 166  A  ušrī[nna]  O  ušrīnna

SB II 115  T  itīqātī  J  itīqātī

SB II 196  C  [p]iqtad  Jb  iptad

SB II 200  b  ušāla[mni]  J  ušālānāni

SB II 235  T  [kur]ušurripa  J  kururrippa

SB II 314  Cj  duqašti  W  duqašti

(l) Other minor differences in words and expressions

SB II 82  P  ṣašu  h  šašu

SB II 109  B  labūši  P  labūši

SB II 213  P  qāšša  B  qāšša (corrupt?)

SB II 240  Px  šarrākā  B  šarrākā (corrupt?)

SB II 269 2/292  B  emitqā ṣašu  h  emitqā ṣašu

3 Some examples of variation collected here may more properly reveal a fluctuation between truly phonetic spellings (e.g. limqatamina, šamidda, ušrīnna, duqni) and morpho-graphemic renderings that combine etymological and phonological data (e.g. limqatamina, šamidda, ušrīnna, duqni).

Collected thus, the variants of Tablets I, VI and XI make for a long list but, spread over more than 800 lines of text, they are relatively few. They are also comparatively minor. What we learn is that words and phrases can be modified grammatically or completely replaced, words added or omitted, and phrases and lines reworked. Whole lines are very occasionally inserted or omitted. Groups of two or more lines can be transposed or reordered, but rarely. The textual variation that can be seen within the first-millennium manuscripts of the epic is similar in type to differences in wording exhibited between the older versions of the poem and the Standard Babylonian epic (see the section of Chapter 1 on the evolution of the text). But there are proportionately fewer of them, and large-scale alterations—addition and removal of whole passages and episodes—are entirely absent. Variation of the kind seen here is no more than can be expected in a history of transmission covering half a millennium and at all times subject to the whim of scribes' memory, eyesight and wilful tampering.

The question is then how far the variants observed in Tablets I, VI and XI can be seen as generally indicative of recensional differences, and in particular whether they clarify the supposed existence of separate Neo-Assyrian and Late Babylonian versions of the epic. A glance at the variants of Tablet I, which is well provided with Late Babylonian manuscripts, shows that not all the minor differences in its text occur as distinct to Assyrian tablets on the one hand or Babylonian on the other. For example, in SB II 199 two manuscripts have uškāšši and one what is very probably a later corruption; in SB II 289–90 two sources have verbs in the present tense and one source has them in the preterite. These might well be recensional differences but neither is a clear-cut case of Assyrian manuscripts a. Babylonian. On the one occasion one Neo-Assyrian manuscript and one Late Babylonian agree while another Neo-Assyrian tablet disagrees; on the other one Neo-Assyrian manuscript and one Late Babylonian agree while the other Late Babylonian source disagrees. These variants may be cases of old e. late recensions but this is impossible to confirm while we know nothing of the relative ages of MSS E, O and H.

In Tablet VI there are as yet no Babylonian manuscripts, but instead three from Nineveh and two from Assur. These present a snapshot of the Bull of Heaven episode as it was handed down in at least two different Assyrian scribal centres in the mid-seventh century BC; however, one cannot be sure that MSS O and Q were actually written at Nineveh. It can be
seen that where there are variant readings in the text, MS A, which as an Aššurbanipal tablet was almost certainly written at Nineveh, and MS a, which was written at Aššur, usually disagree—but not always. The other sources found at Nineveh, MSS O and Q, both waver in their allegiance. MS Q shares readings with MS A more often than it does with MS a, but sometimes ploughs a completely different furrow.4 MS O, on the other hand, is more prone to disagree with MS A and agree with MS a. Aššur MS d, in so far as it is preserved, offers no certain case of disagreement with MS a, but it is too small a fragment for this fact to hold any statistical value. The conclusion one takes from the variants present for Tablet VI is that if they signify different recensions, at the time of writing these recensions were not divided strictly along discernable geographical lines or by date.

The most striking feature of the variants observed in Tablet XI is the independence of MS J. This source, chiefly represented by what as an object is the most famous of all tablets of Gilgamesh, is characterized by several inferior variants and occasional textual corruption. It usually stands alone in opposition to the other Kuyunjik sources of Tablet XI, and clearly represents a divergent tradition of copying that could be defined as a distinct recension. The two tablets from Aššur (MSS bc) and the single Late Babylonian source (MS j) do not, as preserved, reveal any significant deviation from the other Kuyunjik tablets (MSS CTW), but again they are too small for this to mean much.

An important point to be made in passing is that, though they are later than the Kuyunjik manuscripts, the Late Babylonian manuscripts sometimes preserve a text that reads better. The version of SB I 186–7 given in MS x is obviously superior to that offered by the three Kuyunjik tablets, which transpose the lines into an illogical sequence. Another prominent instance of Late Babylonian superiority, but one not encountered in the variants listed above, occurs in my view near the end of SB Tablet X, where it seems the Kuyunjik manuscripts are corrupt.6

leaving aside the complication introduced by the uncertain place of the type D manuscripts in the poem’s history, the conclusion is that variant vocabulary, variations in tense, the addition of single lines, the transposition of lines, and, rarely, more radical reordering are established features of the sources for the Standard Babylonian epic. Some of these features might be assumed to denote recensional differences, but if so there is conflicting evidence as to when and where different recensions might have arisen. For the moment it is certainly unsafe to speak of distinct Neo-Assyrian and Late Babylonian versions of the Standard Babylonian epic. The question of recensions is dogged by another unknown: how far textual variants are as truly indicative of different recensions as some textual critics have supposed them to be. Work on variant readings in much better-attested texts of the Sumerian

4 Instances where MS Q stands alone in the list gathered above are supplemented by places where it offers undecided or unrecorded traces that are incompatible with the reconstructed text—e.g. in SB VI 97, 98, 121 and 155.

4 The arguments are given in Ch. 13; the commentary ad loc.

literary corpus has not been very successful in isolating clearly distinct and consistent groups of manuscripts.7 Remembering also the potential of different scribes to make the same mistakes independently, one must conclude that a methodology seeking to view variant readings as necessarily indicative of recensional differences is exposed as naif.8

Given the relative paucity of manuscripts so far available—relative in comparison with many Sumerian texts, not to mention Greek and Latin compositions—these remarks on recensions are necessarily provisional. More evidence will surely come to light, but even then it may remain impossible to disentangle the very complex history of the transmission of the Standard Babylonian epic in the first millennium. The recensional history of compositions of the cuneiform scribal traditions tends to be more confusing as more manuscripts appear. As always when facts are few in history, one should be suspicious of neat and tidy schemes.

SOME FEATURES OF LANGUAGE AND STYLE

The Standard Babylonian epic is, like the older versions of the poem edited in the preceding chapters, characterized by a lack of ornate style and very sparing use of elevated language of the kind called ‘hymnic–epic’. It is not the purpose of this introduction to write comprehensively on the literary style of the poem. Such a study would involve the examination of the many other Standard Babylonian literary texts written in the same idiom.9 One of the objects of the present text edition is to provide others with the wherewithal to make such a study. However, it is my purpose in this section to draw attention to some features of elevated language that occur in the late version of the epic, to other prominent literary devices that catch the eye and to the intrusion of dialect forms.9

First is the occasional use of words exhibiting, in the addition of genitive pronoun suffixes and in the formation of feminine nouns and adjectives, anaptyctic vowels (‘Hilfs- vokale’) that by the standards of common grammar are unwarranted or irregularly placed.


4 For more on this point see the succinct overview of the methodologies of textual criticism and their use in Assyriology by P. Michalowski, Texten und die Deutung der Assyrer aus dem 13. Jahrhundert v. Chr. (Berlin, 1988), pp. 23–6.

9 Many aspects of poetic style in Gilgamesh and other SB poetic narratives have already been noted by Hecker, Untersuchungen; see briefly J. Renger, ‘Mesopotamian epic literature’, in F. P. Čižmář (ed.), Epic and Saga (Bloomington, Ind., 1978), pp. 46–44. A volume analysing the style of the late ‘hymnic’ text is already available: Bertram M. Groenenberg, Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jungbabylonischen hymnischen Literatur (FAOS 141–2; Stuttgart, 1987). A study of Old Babylonian literary style is expected from N. Wansier, Style and Form in Old Babylonian Literary Texts (Leiden, in press 2002).

9 Other features of language and style are discussed in the various sections of commentary, as they arise, sequence of tenses preterite-present before direct speech, at OB II i; the ‘gnomic preterite’, at OB III 255–6; non-coordinating -na on verbs, at SB I 117–18; coordinative -na on nouns, at SB I 143; the ‘performative’ preterite, at SB III 11; concessive ka, at SB I 145.
The practice is highly developed in some Old Babylonian poetry and survives in Standard Babylonian texts as a literary affectation. Examples in Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh are as follows:

(i) literary interpolation of anaptyctic vowels

such as samtusu instead of samtusu (I.14), tâmatu instead of tâmatsu (D.20 XI.134 MS J), përatu instead of përatu (I.106 II.176), ūmatu instead of ūmatu (VII.102 and probably I.222, X.320), t₃natu instead of t₃nattu (I.245 etc., see further the commentary ad loc.), rîgamatsu instead of rîgamatu (II.221 // 278 // 291, X.306), rîquatu instead of rîquatu (II.25 etc., see the commentary), bâmeriki instead of bāmerki (VI.42), kîbsêkti instead of kîsêkti (VI.68), agratu instead of aqartu (VII.93), bêlâsa for bêlka (X.188)

Such forms have already been encountered in Old Babylonian sources of the epic: šunatum in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 1) and one of the tablets now in Norway (OB Schøyen 1), mûṣṣûnum for mûṣṣûnum in the latter (OB Schøyen 1), and rîgamatu in the Yale tablet (OB III 110 // 197). One of the Middle Babylonian tablets has other examples (MB Ur 11 ūmatu for ūmatu, 22 mayakkâtik for mayakkâtik). The spelling š-û-su instead of šinatu (SB IX 37) can also be mentioned as an example of a noun taking an exceptional extra vowel, though in this instance it is a case vowel.

A usage related to that documented above at (i) is the formation of a construct state *parisi instead of *paratu. This is an occasional feature of Old Babylonian texts in the high literary style, where it is a survival of the Old Akkadian genitive construct state in -esi.12 Such formations are rare in older Gilgamesh, with one example in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 165 ana šaigi esitum, if not crisis). In the late version one encounters the following:

(ii) 'seglate' nouns with Auslaut-i in the construct state

SB III 16 ana māqari Nûsin (MS BB) instead of ana māqar N₃, VII 139 tibrî (MS L) for tibrî (nominative), VII 147 māški (also MS L) for māšak (accusative, hardly plural), XVII 175 patari (MS R) for patar (certainly singular)

Of these only the first cited is genitive and thus a form exhibiting genuinely archaic morphology. Genitive construct māpāri appears in other Standard Babylonian texts, too.13 If they

12 For this feature as a hallmark of ‘hymnico-epic’ style see W. von Soden, ‘Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt des Akkadischen’, ZA 40 (1931), pp. 214-5, 225-6, also D. O. Edzard, ‘Zu den akkadischen Nominalformen parasu, parasu- und parasi’ in ZA 72 (1982), pp. 87-8, who postulates that the use of these and other variant forms of the noun may have been motivated by questions of rhythm.


14 e.g. CT 19 5, 7, ed. W. H. Grimmer, ‘Studien zu den akkadischen hymnischen-epischen Texten’, HSKO 1, p. 186, §2-pu-aš-ki ha-la-la-la, see further von Soden, ZA 40, p. 211.

15 For examples of genitive construct māspāri outside the epic see Ch. 13, the commentary on SB III 16. Note that the two words cited by Gronberg, Synax, Morphologie und Stil 2, p. 24, §3.3.1.3, as exhibiting regular accusative construct states in -CE both have other explanations. 3-di in išk hubbišku (now Livingstone, SAA III 4 rev. 217) is dual and so regular, and the first half of e-ta-eš-šu (KGR 122, 12) is not a noun in construct state but fem. sg. imperative es (as interpreted in the new edn by Livingstone, SAA III 6, 12). The common Assyrian expression ana bar-aš-DN (e.g. SAA III 3 elev. 13 and NA legal documents, puzûn) is again a regular dual genitive construct, barešu.

16 For this feature as a hallmark of ‘hymnico-epic’ style see W. von Soden, ‘Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt des Akkadischen’, ZA 40 (1931), pp. 214-5, 225-6, also D. O. Edzard, ‘Zu den akkadischen Nominalformen parasu, parasu- und parasi’ in ZA 72 (1982), pp. 87-8, who postulates that the use of these and other variant forms of the noun may have been motivated by questions of rhythm.


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22 e.g. CT 19 5, 7, ed. W. H. Grimmer, ‘Studien zu den akkadischen hymnischen-epischen Texten’, HSKO 1, p. 186, §2-pu-aš-ki ha-la-la-la, see further von Soden, ZA 40, p. 211.

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26 e.g. CT 19 5, 7, ed. W. H. Grimmer, ‘Studien zu den akkadischen hymnischen-epischen Texten’, HSKO 1, p. 186, §2-pu-aš-ki ha-la-la-la, see further von Soden, ZA 40, p. 211.

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is found outside poetry as well as inside, especially in the elevated prose favoured by the composers of many inscriptions of first-millennium kings, where the verb is regularly placed in periphrastic position. Two less well-known features of literary word order are highly visible in Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh and its antecedents and deserve highlighting here. The first of these is the reversal of noun and adjective. Often this happens at the end of the poetic line. Consequently it can sometimes be argued that the order was changed to achieve the desired stress on the periphrastic syllable. This is so in the following examples:

(iii) transposition of noun and adjective resulting in periphrastic stress

OB II 107 ša'arām pagāšu, SB I 199 ėšāku pagāšu, I 234 šak̄iš'a amēl[a], VI 75 anna qabāšu, VII 93 šak̄iš'a nāqūšu; VII 207 anna amēl[a], VIII 19 ēšātu Perātuš, IX 54 rāqātā āšu, probably also VIII 176 ēšātu Perātuš; note also SB I 217 qāddāsā mūṣak Amīn šāšar and VI 113 // 154 anna qabāš // qabāš (var. qābāš) šāšar, where, however, reversal may be a device to avoid the adjective becoming separated from the noun it modifies. Another case may be SB I 29 šanu'udu bēl gāšit, depending on which syllable of the adjective takes stress.

However, there are also cases in Gilgamesh where there is no apparent metrical reason for such reversal:

(iv) transposition of noun and adjective resulting in no change in stress pattern

OB Schaefer, 40 šipūtišum īšīli išātišum, MB Emar, ii 5'-6' kamātā [mīš], SB IV 105 nebušu īšīli šāša, VI 131 kamātā mīš, VII 197 kašāti (var. kašāti) itaqqiš mē nādatā, X 300 ruqāt ša'arākā šāša, XI 256 šānu šēpu (var. šānu šēpu) šumārū // 265 šānu šāqām šumārū

More commonly one finds adjectives preceding nouns away from the ends of lines:

(v) transposition of noun and adjectives away from the ends of poetic lines

OB III 270 kašātā mē, OB Harmal, 18 šīqātim šāšu, SB I 30 šaqqu šāq̄a Lullū Urur, I 37 šānu Gilgāmesh, I 214 etc. mūṣašu šāšu, I 268 // 291 dāmmu šappā, II 176 šūnurru šēpušu, V 8 šūnurru, VI 138 damqū Gilgāmesh, VII 149 agga šāšušu, VII 150 esza šāšušu, VIII 89 šāmāštā mīš, X 307 agga mūtām

In these cases (iv-v), where—in our present knowledge of Babylonian metrics—metrical justification for the reversal of the normal order is lacking, the transposition of noun and adjective can be presumed to have a semantic function, namely to place emphasis on the adjective. Such a nuance may also be present in some or all of the examples collected under (iii).

A further example of literary style visible in unusual word order is the separation of a noun and its attribute by the predicate or when, on the object, by the governing verb. Often this feature is combined with a reversal of noun and adjective, especially in later texts (see iv). A well-known example is šulūšā šānu esza, 'he bought a three-year-old goat'.

24 Alternatively this is a stative, pa-a-aš for qābāš, and irrelevant here; see below, the section on Spelling conventions, sub (g).
and *uttamaššu in SB XI 273. Middle Babylonian and Assyrian dialect forms have been noted for the early Neo-Assyrian manuscripts edited in Chapter 7. In the Kuyunjik tablets the number of truly Assyrian dialect forms is very small. Examples are:

(viii) Assyrian dialect forms
SB II 62 nāqissu (MS X) for Standard Babylonian ŋeqissu, II 111 iptarik (MS X) for iptarik, II 180 ūšāt (also MS X) for ūšāt, VI 155 iši (MS O) for iši, VII 160 šešṭānīki (MS L) for šešṭābi. Note also the mixed form VII 153 šiššānīki (MS L) for šiššānātānīki, NA šiššānātīki.

MS X is a type D manuscript, which one must bear in mind as perhaps holding an older recension of the text more prone to Assyrian influence, but MSS L and O are type A manuscripts and the latter was certainly written for Aššurbanipal. In MS a, from Aššur, intrusions of Assyrian are more frequent: SB VI 18 bālādī for Standard Babylonian bālā, VI 96 tuššatān for anunniššu, VI 113 qabāš for qabāš, perhaps also VI 155 šušā for šuša. Mixed forms also occur in MS a: VI 104 šuššā for Assyrian for šuššā, but should be feminine, šuššā. VI 124 itaiqu is neither Standard Babylonian itaiqu nor Assyrian itaqua. The prevalence of Assyrianisms in MS a is no surprise, for a greater intrusion of Assyrian dialect is expected in Babylonian literary tablets copied in Aššur. The same tablet includes two non-Standard Babylonian forms which are not obviously Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian: SB VI 68 nāšu for nikku, VI 69 šaradātu for šarratātu.26

Assyrianized spelling is commoner at Kuyunjik than fully Assyrian dialect forms. The commonest manifestation of it is in the use of the prefix ę- with verbs primae aplei:

(ix) I- third/person singular conjugation prefix in ę-
SB IV 98 e-ti-iq (MS Y) for Standard Babylonian ę-tu, IV 213 e-tal-du (MS S) for itatalu, V 6 e-ma-ru (MS H) for šarrari (true Assyrian šarrari), X 15–16 e-nu-uš-ma...e-te-dil...e-te-dil-ša e-te-la-a (MS K) for imuršāna...inšāl...šālaššā inšāl (all fem.), X 145 e-te-[m] (MS K) for šāmī, XI 223 e-pi (MS J) for ši, XI 314 e-te-[pu-uš] (MSW) for šapuš, XII 37a e-tar-ru (MS G) for šarrūt, XII 63 e-pu-uš (MS G) for ši, XII 97 e-bal (MS G) for šaltar.

MSS S and H are type D manuscripts. Note also, in Neo-Assyrian tablets from other centres, SB VI 5 e-te-pa-ru-ma (MS A, Aššur) for Standard Babylonian šeja[mm]ma, VII 61 e-la-a (MS f, Sultantepe) for šalā. However, the prefix ę- also occurs in Late Babylonian manuscripts, e.g. SB XI 314 e-te-pu-uš (MS J), and consequently is not always diagnostic of Assyrian manuscripts. In so far as they can be identified, cases of nominal declension in-e rather than -i are infrequent in the Kuyunjik manuscripts.28 In Tablet I, a fair representative of the poem, I note only SB I 165 maš-qī-e (MS F) instead of maš-qī-i (MS P), 169 uš-me (MS P), a common spelling in Babylonian and hardly diagnostic of Assyrian morphology.

192 sin-nīš-te (MS B) instead of sin-nīš-ti (MS P), 244 šu-na-te-ka (MS B; MS P: šu-na-tu-ka), 256 dā-šš-te (MS P), 284 and 289 dā-šš-te (MS B).

A certain case of Neo-Babylonian dialect intruding into a Kuyunjik manuscript is SB XI 115 šušā (MS J) instead of šuššā (MS T); SB III 15 nūlīk (MS BB) for nūlīki is also Neo-Babylonian, unless the result of a spelling error. Turning to the Late Babylonian manuscripts, one finds scant evidence of contemporaneous dialect. An unambiguous example of Late Babylonian morpholgy is SB I 276 ummu (MS b) for Standard Babylonian ummu, I 295 the same (MS e). Spellings sometimes reflect well-known changes in phonology, for example SB II 271 lis-ša-qa-ma (MS bb) instead of earlier liragānu in SB III 34 MS e retains the old form, li-ša-qa-ma.

Though dialect forms are relatively few in number, the fact that they are present at all suggests that individual editors and copyists brought to the text the epic local pronunciations. Because the conventional spelling of Standard Babylonian is more exactly morpho-graphemic than truly phonetic, the written poem prevents us from knowing exactly how geography affected the pronunciation of the text. The same is true of time. We can be sure that the way the ancients spoke the text changed over the centuries. Some indication of the pronunciation of literary Babylonian at the end of the cuneiform tradition can be had from the Greek transcriptions of the Parthian period. Occasional deviant spellings in Late Babylonian manuscripts that reflect the phonology of Akkadian observed in the corpus of Graeco-Babylonica—for example, tu-ā-ru for tumlu in SBV 104 (MS dd) and ka-lu-a for kālāna in SB I 286–7 (MS b)—remind us that the conventional orthography of Standard Babylonian texts reports an antiquated form of the language that by the late first millennium BC was no longer current.

**SPELLING CONVENTIONS IN THE KUYUNJIK MANUSCRIPTS**

Tablets from the seventh-century libraries of Aššurbanipal uncovered in the buildings of Kuyunjik, the citadel mound of Nineveh, are generally considered to be the most reliable witnesses to texts of the Babylonian scribal tradition as it stood in the first millennium BC. Accordingly, the reader of a text like the Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh epic will place more weight on the evidence provided by Kuyunjik manuscripts than by those from other Assyrian cities of the same period and those from Babylonia of the later first millennium. That being so, it is necessary to understand the orthography of these tablets.

Scribes of the Kuyunjik tablets adhere by and large to common practice in using cuneiform. There are, however, places where words are spelled unconventionally or without apparent regard for traditional morphology. Since it is important for the reader of these

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26 See most recently M. J. Geller, 'The last wedge', ZA 87 (1997), pp. 64–85.
tablets to be aware of the possibilities of interpretation inherent in a given sequence of signs, especially where the text is damaged, I have assembled evidence for spellings on Kuyunjik manuscripts of the epic that seem to me express words and syllables in ways that deviate from the predictable orthography of Standard Babylonian literary texts at this period. Many of these practices were a feature of Neo-Assyrian orthography generally, and consequently have already been noted in the introduction to Chapter 7.

(a) CV for VC
SB I 121 ru-qi-ti (MS P) for rūqtî, VI 163 ta-ka-ba-ta-li-na (MS A) for ṣabātānina, VI 158 ke-ze-re-ti (MS O) for karrati; for such signs in final position see below, under (w)

(b) CVC-VC or CV-CVC for CV
SB I 220 lu-uq-ri-kam-ma (MS BP) for ṭū护卫, III 11 [pu-ri-ri]-in-ni-ma (MS BB) for puṣṭāna, VII I in-na-ma (MS Q) for mānma (or mānma), XI 6 na-duat-tu (MSW) for nadata, XI 69 ni-qa-nu for nīqu, XI 123 na-ka-hu-ma (MS JT) for anāša-ma, XI 197 ṭi-ṭil-ri-kam-ma (MSS CJ) for uṣbartāma, XI 202 bi-ri-ni-in (MSS CJ) for bārni, XII 220 a-me-lat-tu (MS J), if not phonemic. Note also VII 39 ul-ši-ed-du-u (MS f, Sultanantepe) probably for ulāda

(c) VC for CV,CV, where V₁ = case vowel or other suffixed final vowel
SB II 185 a-ma (MS X) for amātu, III 16, 21 ša-ra-tu (MS BB) for šarratu, III 54 ša-ḥal-laq (MS BB) subjunctive, III 46 sa-šil (MS BB) for šīlā, III 56 kal-lat (MS BB) for kalat, XI 70 da-šem-ma (restored) for genitive

(d) VC-VC for VC at the morpheme boundary
SB V 1 i-na-pa-at-tu (MS H) for inappatī, XI 88 ūkū-an-na-an-nu (MS J) for ṣaṣṣanatī

(e) CVC for CV at the morpheme boundary
SB I 160 [i-na]-m-din-na-an-[mi] (MS P) for inamdînînî, I 194, 216 šam-ha-ta (MS P), III 12 ta-qa-qa-na-ha-ti (MS M). Note also VI 58 na-qid-da (MS a, Aššur)

(f) CVC for CVC or CC
SB II 163 [k]i-pir (MS X) for kipir, VI 5 i-te-pi-ram-ma (MS O) for tešmanna, VI 46 tal-te-bir (MS Q), also MS a from Aššur for talṭebīr, VII 170 ṣu-qa-pa-a-ti (MS L) for ṣuṭpātu, VIII 50 ta-ria (MS R) for ṣardu; note also VI 5 e-te-pi-ram-ma (MS a, Aššur) for tešmanna

The following practices not already observed in Chapter 7 occur in the Kuyunjik Gilgamesh tablets:

- Cf. the introduction to Ch. 7, sub (b).
- Cf. ibid., sub (a).
- For an alternative, morphological explanation see Ch. 13, the commentary ad loc.
- Cf. the introduction to Ch. 7, sub (a) and (b).
- On consonants spelled double at the morpheme boundary see further Ch. 13, the commentary on SBV I 7.
- Cf. the introduction to Ch. 7, sub (b).
- Cf. ibid., sub (a); the opposite usage, C-VC for CVC, could be seen in spellings like maḫ-ri for maḫar, but a morphological explanation is thought more probable; see above, the preceding section, sub (b).

- For nominative or accusative singular
SB I 7 ha-ii-im-ti (MS B, also LB MS d), I 109 lu-bu-ul-ti (MS P), I 115 um-me (MS P), I 167 ha-a-di (MS P), I 167 ha-ri-m-t (MS P), I 175 nam-maz-[a]-e (MS P), I 205 ha-ri-m-ti (MS P; if correctly restored), III 9, 224 ib-ri (MS BB), III 46 ib-bi (MS MBB), VII 101 ha-ri-m-ti (MS E), VII 134 ha-ri-m-ti (MS L), VII 137 lu-ul-ti (MS L), VII 188 ti-ti (MS Z), VIII 3 sa-bi-ti (MSS RV), VIII 50-1 ku-da-ni (MS R), VIII 59 ib-ri (MS R), IX 45 ṣu-tu-ti (MS D), X 259 nin-ti (MS K), X 313 ku-ri-ti (MS K), X 10 pi-pi-ti (MS W), XI 154 u-ri-ti (MS J), XI 155 u-ri-bi-ti (MS J), XI 175 na-pi-ti (MS J), XI 307 ku-li-ti (MS T), XII 8 mi-ik-ke-e (MS N), XII 52-4 eki-tim (MS G). Note also VI 11 el-me-le (MS a, Aššur)

- But cf. 177 i-e-pi (LB MS x) for i-ṣip, and further, Ch. 13, the commentary on SB I 112 // 177.
- If not for the adjectival jībā, see Ch. 13, the commentary ad loc.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

The composite text given in Chapter 11 is a variorum edition in the traditional Assyriological style. Since the plates contain the cuneiform text in all its witnesses, the full contribution and extent of each different manuscript is readily at hand. The distribution of textual variants by manuscript is noted in translation, as well as in transliteration, so that those who do not read cuneiform script can nevertheless control the different traditions. The transliteration is necessarily eclectic, bringing together in a single reconstruction the readings of very different manuscripts. In much of the Standard Babylonian epic the choice of extant manuscripts for any given line of text is very limited. By consequence poor or atypical spellings often find their way into the eclectic transliteration in the absence of better readings, as do some corruptions. In fragmentary passages some words are necessarily hybrid, combining the evidence of different manuscripts. Where multiple manuscripts offer the editor a choice of spellings, those that are more complete or more familiar have been selected. Where variants occur, I have favoured one over the other for reasons that are mostly subjective. As is normally the case in Assyriology, the result is an idealized, hybrid text. The epic presented in Chapter 11 is essentially a modern construct built from ancient evidence, not the authentic text of the Standard Babylonian epic at one single moment in its transmission. Given the fragmentary nature of the sources, their paucity, and their different provenances and dates, it would be unrealistic to make any claim of true authenticity, and until the unlikely day when a complete set of twelve undamaged tablets becomes available, it always will be.

43 It is planned to place a synopsis ('score') transliteration of the SB manuscripts on an internet site in the near future.
44 For the 'constructed' nature of ancient literary texts in modern editions see Black, Reading Somerian Poetry, pp. 33-48.
Synopsis and Exegesis of the Standard Babylonian Epic

TABLET I

The epic opens with a prologue that introduces the hero, sums up his achievements and invites the audience to picture themselves on the ancient walls of Uruk, where they will discover a stone tablet and read for themselves the trials of Gilgamesh (I, 1–30). The discovery of new text (MS d1) reveals that the prologue begins with a repeated couplet involving the hero as a man of extraordinary wisdom (1–4). This theme is implicit in the famous incipit itself,  ša  naqbu[i] tineru. The word naqbu has two meanings, (a) ‘totality’ and (b) the deep body of underground water believed to supply springs and wells, that is, the cosmic realm of Ea better known as the Apsû. The root is seen in the rare verb naqbu, an equivalence of Sumerian bûru, ‘to be deep’. On this evidence meaning (b) of naqbu is primary; meaning (a) arose through idiomatic expression in which the ‘depth’ of something meant the totality of it.

The translator is left in a quandary as to which meaning of naqbu to choose, while Gilgamesh certainly saw more than any other human being and thus saw ‘all’, he also had a brief view of Ea’s domain in retrieving the magic plant of rejuvenation (SB XI 290). The independent usage and the ostensibly plural variant sits more easily with (b) than (a), as does the spelling with Sumerian idim in one colophon. While no single consideration tips the balance decisively, the accumulated weight of evidence leans in favour of (b). It remains possible that we are expected to understand naqbu in both its literal meanings, ‘all’ and the ‘Deep’ (or ‘Depress’), but the line becomes more pregnant with meaning if the word is under-

1. MSL XIV, p. 282, 3, ill 169; 3=nrū = naqbu.
2. For a philological argument that the word must refer to the subterranean water only, since it is not found with the meaning ‘all’ in independent use, see J. Silva Castello, ‘Naqbu totality or abyss in the first verse of Gilgamesh’, Iraq 60 (1998), pp. 219–21. However, in this case usage may be misleading for naqbu is a comparatively rare word. More common synonyms such as g5bû, bilabû and napharu are mainly used to qualify nouns but can also appear independently. A conjoin such as the personal name Gulfû-depur, ‘I saw all’, is rare, but might afford a nice parallel with the epic’s incipit. The plural naq-êr occurs in the colophones of MSS A, O and a (all Tablet VI), G (Tablet XI) and G (Tablet XII). The Sumerian idim is used by MS n (Tablet I, LB).

stood as symbolizing profound wisdom. In acquiring from Ea’s protégé, Šuma-napistâ, the knowledge for which he was celebrated, Gilgamesh was initiated into Ea’s realm, the source of all wisdom. The connection between the acquisition of wisdom and Ea’s cosmic domain is found elsewhere in the epic, when, in her address to Šamaš, Ninsun asks rhetorically, ‘will Gilgamesh not become wise with Ea of the Apsû?’ (SB III 104).

The phrase that concludes the incipit,  idî mātu, ‘the foundation, basis of the country’, also seems to be metaphorical. As noted in the commentary (Chapter 13, ad loc.), it more easily qualifies naqbu than Gilgamesh. As such it might be understood to have a literal, cosmological reference, for the realm of men was believed to stand on top of the cosmic abode of Ea. However, there is an objection, for mātu is not in cosmology a synonym of erti, ‘earth’. The word usually signifies the land as a collection of people (‘nation’) and nowhere clearly means ‘earth’ as a concrete object. The implication of the phrase idî mātu in relation to naqbu would thus seem to be that the knowledge the hero famously acquired on his visit to Šuma-napistâ—he’s ‘seeing the Deep’—was the foundation stone on which Babylonian civilization was built, i.e. the whole basis of its existence. This inference is supported by II. 42–3, where Gilgamesh is credited with the re-establishment of antediluvian cultic life as a consequence of his journey to the Flood hero. The Sumerian poem we call Death of Gilgamesh is informed by the same tradition and gives more details.4 Thus the epic’s opening line celebrates Gilgamesh as one who learned from Ea, through an intermediary, the profound wisdom that underpins the proper, divinely ordained basis of human government and society.

The second quatrains of the prologue develops the essential theme of wisdom, relating that Gilgamesh knew everything there was to know, even secret knowledge of the antediluvian age (5–8). The allusion is undoubtedly to his unique experiences in the realm of Šuma-napistâ, for erti la em abidi, ‘of the antediluvian age’, can only be the knowledge imparted by the survivor of the Flood in Tablets X–XI. This is a crucial phrase. The actual narrative of the Deluge is usually identified as the reference, no doubt because it is so famous and so well preserved (SB XI 8–206). However, only a part of it describes events that took place before the Deluge. In my view the fragmentary discourse that precedes the Flood story is equally well described as ‘of the antediluvian age’, in that it appears to set out the duties of ideal, antediluvian kingship and the proper expectations of man in the state that the gods assigned him (SB X 266–322). In particular, Šuma-napistâ’s disquisition on the cultic duties of kings, the provisioning of temples, ties in with the tradition discussed in the preceding paragraph, that Gilgamesh was responsible for restoring temple cults interrupted by the Deluge. The word erti is appropriate here, for when it means ‘report, message, news’ it refers to useful knowledge.4 Gilgamesh did not just bring back a fascinating narrative, he recovered instructive information of a lost time. Since the emphasis of the opening lines is on the profound wisdom that the hero’s experiences brought him, it may be that Šuma-napistâ’s homily was as

4. The passage is quoted in Ch. 3, the sub-section on Crossing the ocean.
5. In military terms, ‘intelligence’. The word erti also means ‘intelligence’ in the sense of conscious reasoning power, and thus provides an interesting example of how two very different languages can develop comparable usage independently.
much in the poet's mind as the Flood narrative when he coined the phrase EMPLA AMM ABAB, if not more.

The following couplet implies that, utterly exhausted by his adventures, Gilgamesh was, at the last, allowed to rest and take stock of his life, so that he left for posterity an account of himself written on a stone monument (9–10). So it was, for by the end of the epic he was reconciled to his mortal destiny, no longer driven by his futile quest. The next couplet introduces Gilgamesh's one great concrete achievement, the wall of Uruk, which the epic thus holds up as an enduring monument to his fame (11–12).

The mention of the wall is a skillful device that allows the poet to move on towards the narrative and to provide a frame for the composition. The conceit is that, rapt in admiration for the wall, one will climb on to it (13–21), there to gaze out over Uruk, a great city of houses, date-groves, open spaces and, of course, the sanctuary of Ishtar (22–3). These lines, the poet's invitation to his audience, are repeated at the very end of the epic as Gilgamesh's invitation to his companion, Ur-sin in the name of Nibiru, to do the same (SB XI 323–8). But, more than this, there on the wall one will actually chance upon a box that holds a stone tablet telling Gilgamesh's story (24–8). The mention of such a box and tablet recalls the ancient custom of depositing royal inscriptions in the foundations of monumental structures. Very probably the poet is evoking a fictional scene in which an inscription left by Gilgamesh himself, when he built the wall of Uruk, is discovered. The tablet of lapis lazuli (1.27) which the audience is invited to read is evidently to be identified with the stone monument on which he set in writing his adventures (1.10), so that 'the impression is deliberately created that the whole epic was written down in antiquity by Gilgamesh himself, just as the Naram-Sin Legend purports to have been written down by Naram-Sin'. There is an anachronism here, perhaps, for if a tablet inscribed with his story was deposited in the foundations of the walls of Uruk at the time of their building, it could not relate the whole story of Gilgamesh, according to Tablet XI, the walls were already standing when he returned from his last adventure. However, it would be foolish to insist on chronological consistency in a poetic narrative of this kind, and equally unwise to be troubled by the question of whether the whole epic could actually be written on a lapis tablet. The prologue ends as it began, with the name of the epic's protagonist (28).

After the prologue comes the hymn of praise that is known to have begun the Old Babylonian epic, at least in the version represented by the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets. The mood of the hymn is very different from the prologue: no mention is made of exhaustion and struggle, only of strength and glory (29–46). Suitably framed by the word gurra, 'king', it divides into three parts. First come three couples glorifying Gilgamesh's unparalleled status and beauty (29–34): Next is a couplet recording his parentage, his father being Lugalmanda, his mother the goddess Ninsun (35–6). The third section of the hymn functions as a précis of Gilgamesh's epic career (37–44), but one in a very different mood from the summary already given in II, 5–10. Here he is celebrated as a king adventurer and pioneer explorer whose journey to Utanapishtim, achieved 'through sheer force', brings not personal discovery but public improvement. His encounter with the Flood hero enabled him to reintroduce the arts of civilization after the destruction of mankind by the Flood (42–4). As already noted, the tradition according to which it was Gilgamesh who did this informs the epic's incipit and a passage of the Sumerian poem on the Death of Gilgamesh.

The poet now begins the description of his hero (47–62). First he stresses Gilgamesh's semi-divine origins, already reported in the preceding hymn, then the part played in his making by deities other than his mother, namely the mother goddess and Ea as Nudimmud, the 'Man-Fashioner' (47–50). These two customarily work in tandem to produce human life: in other words it is Ea's role to invent the concept of man and the technique of his creation and the mother goddess's task to convert Ea's ingenuity into reality (as in Enki and Ninnab), but in some cases Ea must also work his magic on the base material before it can be given life. Here the goddess roughs out the human shape in clay (eparu) and the god of skill turns the crude model into the finished article (fitzeptu).

The joining of the fragment BM 34357 to MS d, reveals for the first time that the passage recounting the birth of Gilgamesh leads in turn to the measurements of his physique, which are naturally exceptional (51–8). Unfortunately the beginning of this section is still badly preserved, so that it is not even certain exactly how long it was; my reconstruction allows for the loss of the maximum number of lines. Such material was certainly included in an earlier version of the epic, since it is already present in the Hitite paraphrase. As Otten notes, the passage recalls the heroic stature of five and a half cubits ascribed to Enannatum in the Stele of the Vultures, and finds parallels further afield in Goliath and a Kurnarni myth. According to the Hitite, Gilgamesh was eleven cubits tall, his chest nine spans wide, and another part of his anatomy three unknown units long.

The poet follows the measurements with a description of Gilgamesh's hair, with which he is lavishly furnished, and his beauty, which is surpassing (59–62). Great beauty is a

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8 For this and other traditions relating to the parentage of Gilgamesh see Ch. 3, the sub-section on Family connections.
9 Cf. OB Astrum-Xa 1249–52.
10 There may be a reference to the tallness of Gilgamesh as proverbial in Gudea Cyil. B xiii 16, ed. Edzard, RIME 39, p. 100: [l][i][l]-[i]-[g]-[a]-[m]-[a]-[d]-[u], a 'grown tall as the Gilgamesh(?).'
14 Chicago Hittite Dictionary P. 65.
15 The unidentified feature is read ["gurra]-[i]-sib-i-qa-ka-ši] by Otten but emended to ["gurra]-[i]-sib-i-qa-ši] by Laroche. Presumably he is thinking of mem-, 'cheek, face'; however, the Chicago Hittite Dictionary does not cite the passage as such and the enigma remains.

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9 Ibid., p. 194.

10 Cf. already the comment of A. L. Oppenheim: 'the suggested derivation of the epic from the text of the stela is a literary topos, and its use presupposes a reader who is sophisticated enough to accept it as a literary fiction and not as proof of the authenticity of the text or, worse, an imposition on his critical sense' (Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 238).

traditional attribute of kings, and one that is enshrined in mythology. The most explicit source is a late account of creation in which the mother goddess works again at Ea's behest:

\[ 2 a pa(ka)-lu i-pul(di) - ma i-gabbi(dug, go) \]
\[ ana \ bila(ga)n-ili d[gir] amdu(nim) z[ika(nu) ]\]
\[ ba-let-il(ing) ms n[a]t(ing) ma-ru(ba(gal) ms al-ti-ma \]
\[ as-ti-ma tab-ni-ma lula(ja, u-bu, lu) a-me-ru \]
\[ si-ka-ri lu(a-ga)-lu ma-li hu a-me-ru \]
\[ tu-ka-su tu-ka-ri gi-[m]r la-a-ni-lu \]
\[ a-bi-ri z[i]-n[i]-lu bu-an-ni-i zu-mu-ru-i \]
\[ ba-let-il(ing) is ta-ti is i-qa lu(a-ga) ma-li lu a-ni lu \]

Ea opened his mouth to speak,

saying a word to Biššu:

'You are Bille-II, the sister of the great gods,
it was you that created man the human,

Fashion now the king, man the prince (or man of counsel)!'

Gird the whole of his figure so pleasing,

make perfect his countenance and well formed his body!

Biššu fashioned the king, man the prince (or man of counsel).

Having introduced the protagonist the poem now moves on to narrative, with a description of Gilgamesh's tyranny in Uruk (63–72). The hero dominates the city like a wild bull. He exhibits the prowess with weapons that is the proper attribute of Mesopotamian kings. The ideal king was assumed to be a warrior without equal in strength and unmatched in skill. Though Gilgamesh is most famous for wrestling, the present passage refers explicitly to armed contests (65). The personal involvement of early Mesopotamian kings in such activities is attested in Šulgí C 131, where the great king of Ur boasts of his skill on, as it were, the Campus Martius: kišal.ma.še.ki.še.gim 1[a, lu ba b]a ni.gi.še. ‘In the great courtyard, as on the battlefield, who could withstand me?’

The poet makes it clear that the hero's behaviour is an abuse of power. His terrorizing of the city's youth is qualified as na kuškutu, a phrase which denotes some kind of arrogance and implies his behaviour is beyond what is proper. This is the antisocial conduct of an immature young man unbridled by the wisdom and self-control that age and experience will bring. The narrative is punctuated by intermittent reminders that Gilgamesh is the king, the shepherd of his people, a device that evokes a contrast with the unkindly deeds described. The nature of this tyranny is not explicitly described, except that it has to do with the hero's weapons, which are kept ready for action, and the pukku, which keeps his companions on their feet. The important thing is the result: the young men and women of Uruk are not, as they should be, at the disposal of those members of their families that have a rightful claim on their time. The womenfolk keep complaining to the goddesses (73–8), with the result that the gods of heaven take the matter up with the supreme authority in heaven, the god Anu (79–93).

There has been much discussion of Gilgamesh's abuse of power. Some have recalled his fame as builder of Uruk's wall and suppose that his tyranny constitutes the imposition of forced labour to build it. Others have referred to the rite of the primae noctis described in the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II) and have understood Gilgamesh's offence to be sexual violation. A third suggestion is that Gilgamesh wore his people out with athletic contests. This last idea agrees with the Hittite tradition that Gilgamesh triumphed over the young men of Uruk every day, and with the Sumerian poem of Gilgamesh and the Netherworld. In the later text it seems that Gilgamesh continually engages the young men of Uruk in some kind of time-consuming game or sport involving the pukku and mabālu, a heavy wooden ball and mallet. The women of Uruk are obliged to spend their days ministering to the needs of their exhausted menfolk until their outcry results in the disappearance of the two objects into the Netherworld. The presence in our episode of the pukku ball and the women's outcry reveals that the epic preserves at least echoes of this theme, so indicating that the nature of the oppression remained in the literary memory, if only dimly recollected. But in this text the pukku activity is not the only vehicle of oppression. The phrase 'his weapons are ready' indicates that Gilgamesh exhausted his companions with weapon practice or other martial pursuits as well as athletic sports. Sulgi's boast of dominance in martial contests has already been noted. The episode of the pukku ball in which the narrator reports that 'a rival was appointed' to challenge the king also reflects some kind of formal contest between king and subject, evidently a young men's champion.

In characterizing Gilgamesh as a tyrant the poet recognizes a truth recurrent in Mesopotamian history. Whether through waging successive wars, erecting monumental buildings or digging new waterways—sometimes all three—the mighty kings that dominated the Babylonian stage, from Sulgi to Hammurapi to Nebuchadnezzar II, all made copious demands of their subjects' blood, sweat and tears. The ambitions of a powerful ruler often bring down much suffering on the people of this land, even in the present day.

The importance of Gilgamesh's oppression to the poem's narrative is that it acts as a mechanism for the creation of Enkidu. Anu's response to the persistent outcry that reaches his ears at third hand is to have the mother goddess summoned and to charge her with the creation of a counterpart to engage the energies of Gilgamesh (94–8). The publication of the fragment MB Nippur, shows that the Standard Babylonian text is telescoped: there, and no

\[ 17 \] See OB II 218–20 and Ch. 3, the sub-section on Sanctuaries and cult.
\[ 23 \] See further Ch. 13, the commentary on HB XII 1.
\[ 24 \] OB II 190–5, on which see the introduction to the Pennsylvania tablet in Ch. 5.
doubt in other versions of the epic, before instructions were put directly to Aruru, some figure—unidentified as the text now stands but presumably Ea—made the suggestion to the gods that she be given the task of creating a match for Gilgamesh. The sometime mention of these gods leaves its trace in the plural issi (1.94).

Enkidu is created from clay as the first men were: fully grown and without a mother’s cries, in silence (99–104). He lives in an animal state: hairy and unclothed, un governed by thoughts of family (or, an important variant, gods) and wider social identity, feeding with the gazelles on grass and water (105–12). In these particulars, too, he is a replica of the first men, dwelling far removed from civilization, both in space and in behaviour. This point has been much discussed;29 here I limit myself to citing the literary tradition reporting the Babylonians’ conception of how the first men lived. This is most clearly expressed in the literary dispute between Ewe and Grain:

nam.lu.ülu u.un,ri.a.ken,ne
ninda gum.ü.bi mu.mu.un.mu.un.un.un.ü.ü.am
ugu gis.gi.ca su.bi mu.un.gen
udu.gi.mim ka.ba ü mu.ni.lib.gu
a sûr sûr.rä.ca28 i.m.na.hu.na.ne

The humans of those far-off days
did not know the eating of bread,
did not know the wearing of clothes.
The people went naked- limbed,
eating grass with their mouths like sheep,
drinking water from ditches.


Note also the incipit of the text that tells of the mythical introduction of grain to Sumer, setting the scene in remote antiquity when ugu.e udu.gi.mim ü ka ba mu.ni.lib.ur[1(N1), ur[2]], the people *cropped* grass with their mouths like sheep;27 and Berossus’s report that the first men ‘lived without laws just as wild animals’,28

The brief narrative of Enkidu’s early life is supplemented by later references in the episode of his first encounter with Šāmšat and in Gilgamesh’s lament. These make it clear that Enkidu did not just grow up like a wild animal, he grew up with wild animals. The herd was his family for, in the absence of a mother and father, he was reared by gazelles and wild asses (see especially SB VIII 3–6). In this respect the story of Enkidu’s early life is the earliest of the well-known corpus of folk tales of human babies raised by wild animals.

The poem now moves on to Enkidu’s discovery by a hunter, whose reaction to the extraordinary sight that daily confronts him at the water-hole is one of fear, astonishment and dismay (113–21).29 The hunter reports what he has seen to his father, adding that he now realizes who has been dismantling his snares and filling his traps so that he cannot earn his living properly (122–33). The next section remains poorly preserved but its import is clear. The old man tells the hunter to go to King Gilgamesh in Uruk and to bring back with him a prostitute, whose charms will lure Enkidu away from his habitat (134–45). It seems that comments that feminine wiles are more than a match for even the strongest of men. The lines that express this sentiment are still incomplete (139, 141), but the idea is a universal motif and its truth in Enkidu’s case is vindicated by what happens next. The hunter does as he was told. He apprises Gilgamesh of what has happened and Gilgamesh duly tells him to take with him the prostitute Šāmšat (146–66).

The hunter and Šāmšat leave Uruk and after a journey of three days arrive at the water-hole (167–70). Two days later the animals come to quench their thirst, Enkidu among them, and Šāmšat catches her first glimpse of his savage appearance (171–9). The hunter encourages her to use the tricks of her trade to entice Enkidu and seduce him (180–7). This she does (188–93). There is perhaps a certain comedy in the situation. The trapper, covering in his hide, is too terrified to tackle Enkidu himself but does not demur to send a woman to do the job. The hunter’s words and their realization as narrative describe one by one the steps by which a prostitute attracts and excites her client. Enkidu and Šāmšat come together in an epic week of love-making and then, his passion satisfied, Enkidu turns to rejoin the animals (194–6). But the ruse has worked. The animals take him for a human and shy away. The encounter with Šāmšat has brought ‘defilement’ and loss of strength, so that Enkidu repels his former playmates and cannot keep up with them (197–200). At the same time he has gained in intelligence and is able now to understand what Šāmšat tells him (201–6). The concept of defilement through sexual experience is one that tallies with a widespread human belief that sexual knowledge brings the end of innocence. The idea that ejaculation engenders weakness is also common. On his deathbed Enkidu uses telling language in lamenting this first step in his transformation from animal to human state. He was ‘pure and undefiled’ (*elšu*) but Šāmšat made him feel ‘diminished and degraded’ (*šamšat*).30

Šāmšat, the voice of civilization, is astonished that such a god-like figure should roam the wilderness in the company of gazelles and other creatures. She proposes to take him back to the holy city of Uruk, where the mighty Gilgamesh holds sway like a wild bull (207–12). The imagery here echoes the poem’s earlier description of the tyrant. Enkidu’s emergent humanity prompts him the desire for a friend (213–14). His response, however, is not fully consistent with this yearning. He asks that Šāmšat lead him to Uruk but, once there, he intends single-handedly to overthrow the rule of Gilgamesh (215–23). Šāmšat’s reply falls into two parts. She extols the city for its festivities and the attractiveness of its prostitutes


27 Reading from PBD A.11, p. 20.

28 Cuneiform republished by G. Windisch, *Koalitsiion*, p. 15, 1. An alternative emendation of mu.ni.lib.ki.t[i2], to mu.ni.lib.ki.t[i2], might be prompted by a line of the *kalag* of Inana for Ur-Ninurta that describes the king’s duties to his people in terms of a shepherd’s responsibilities to his flock: udu.gi.mim ka.ü.gu.bu.ka.kin.kin.gi.a.na.gi ba.ba.gi.gi.gi, ‘as with sheep may he keep seeking out grass to eat (for their) mouths, may he find water to drink (for their) throats’ (Ur-Ninurta A 26, ed. A. W. Sjöberg, *A blessing of King Urinurta*, *Festschrift Mem. 16*, vol. 1, p. 190).


29 D. O. Edzard, ‘Komit und Parade durch übermütigen Wortaufwand’, *Orants 54* (1985), pp. 48–50; consider this passage intentionally comic on the grounds of excessive verbiage. This is hard to prove or refute, for the identification of Babylonian humour remains a highly subjective pursuit.

30 See MS U 39–40, SB VII 130–1.

31 Šāmšat’s speech is discussed by B. Foster, ‘Gilgamesh: sex, love and the ascent of knowledge’, *Essays Pap*, pp. 26–9.
and praises the beauty of Gilgameš. Then she warns Enkidu that Gilgameš is stronger than he is and that to challenge him, the sun god’s favourite, is an act of blasphemy (224–41). Not only so, but the gods have arranged for Gilgameš to have a premonition of Enkidu’s coming, in the form of two symbolic dreams (242–4). Thus Gilgameš’s dreams, which in the Old Babylonian epic he relates to his mother, the goddess Ninurta, at first hand, are here reported at second hand, by Šamšu-ili, as too are Ninurta’s interpretations of them.82

In the first dream (245–58) a meteorite had fallen to earth near Gilgameš. He tried to pick it up but at first he could not budge it. A crowd gathered around and made a fuss of it. Embracing it like a wife, Gilgameš managed to carry it to his mother, who made it his equal. Šamšu-ili goes on to report Ninurta’s response (259–73). Ninurta had repeated her son’s dream to him and predicted the coming of a friend whom he would love like a wife and who would save him. Gilgameš had then had a second dream (274–85). In it he saw a strange axe lying in the street, again the centre of the crowd’s attention. He picked it up and took it to Ninurta. He loved it like a wife and Ninurta made it his equal. Ninurta’s response had been much the same as with the first dream (286–93). Again she had predicted the coming of a friend whom he would love like a wife and who would be his sovereign.

According to A. D. Kilmer, the symbols by which Enkidu is represented in the dream episodes make allusion to the Ittar cult: the meteorite, kiuru, evokes hezeru, who would be a male counterpart of a kezeru woman (a kind of cultic prostitute), and the axe, haššinnu, evokes assinnu, a cultic performer who, typically as a eunuch, took the female role in the sexual act.83 By this analysis what Gilgameš sees in his dreams is a twofold prediction of the arrival of a close male friend who will also be his lover. As Kilmer puts it, ‘the implication of the double pun is, of course, that the often suspected, much discussed but of late rejected, sexual relationship between Gilgameš and Enkidu is, after all, the correct interpretation’.84

Without corroborative evidence it is always difficult to vindicate a suspected play on words, as also to refute one. There is no doubt that Babylonian scribes enjoyed playing with words, whether out of piety in serious exegesis or out of fun in lighter contexts. The usual medium of such games was Sumerian, whose monosyllabic lexemes made it a versatile instrument for speculative etymology. But Akkadian could add a dimension, as in the ingenious interpretation of šuratu, a rare word for ‘vulva’, which a medical commentator glosses šur-rī-da-du da-du ma-ra,’cave of the darling, darling = child’.85 The association of like-sounding words that is the essence of punning is a device most vividly seen in the poem of Atrahāšīs, where 4we-e-idda (//Alla) and his šenu are sacrificed and reinvented as aššu and its eṣemmu.86 As a ritual commentary tells us explicitly, folk etymologies can be based on phonetic similarity: tam-rī-qa-ta la ina pi(za) natt[i(ug)],87 ‘ete-tam-mašt qa-[iz-i],88 ‘crushing by the teeth’, which people understand as ‘he kept looking at [my] hands’. The association of like-sounding words is also one of the tools used by diviners to establish links between cause and effect.89 Phonetic similarity between sign values and Akkadian words is also open to exploitation, as in the omen text which explains the apodosis amāli(ba)90 šarru(maš)-ēnī(gi), ‘omen of Sargun; as man-gu (vir. man-gi) ummāšt[i](iri), šašbar(dab);91 ‘paralysis will seize my army’.92 Against this background it should be expected that an interpreter of dreams would give some thought to phonetic similarity in identifying the symbolism of what was seen.

It remains to enquire whether the words kiuru and haššinnu would bear to those who registered puns with kezeru and assinnu an intimation of homosexuality. The word assinnu is common. Such persons were a conspicuous element in Babylonian society; their outrageous behaviour and homosexual proclivities were well known.93 The word kezeru is a much rarer beast. In Babylonia it is known only from Old Babylonian lexical texts, where the context is men with distinctive hairstyles,94 and from the Kassite-period personal name Kezeru, ‘Curly’.95 The significance of this hairstyle as a mark of a particular role is only apparent from the better-known female counterpart, kezeru.96 In the Old Babylonian period the word kezeru could refer to a woman under an obligation to perform for a goddess cultic duties (parnu) that may or may not have included some kind of harātimūtu, ‘prostitution’.97

82 OB Atrahāšīs II 1223–30 // SB II 103–12.
83 LKA 73 obv. 15, ed. Livingstone, Mesopotamia, pp. 126.
84 The most famous example is the historical omen recording Narḫm-Sîn’s capture of Apilium (a-epi-[IJ-sî], by breaching its wall (i-nas pa-ṣu-ṣu-um), a success which was forecast by two perforations (pi-il-2a pa-pi-μa) in the gall bladder of a sacrificed lamb (YOS X 24, 9). The symbolic identity of the perforations and the breach would be evident even were they not both rendered with the same word, but the toponym is suggested by the phonetics alone. Less obvious examples, involving more ingenuity, are to be found in the diagnostically omens of Shakhkā (A. R. George, JR 53 (1981), pp. 157–67), where e.g. the sighting of an ox leads to a fatal prognosis, according to the commentary because ox and ghost are both Sumerian ṭ, (l. 18), the stubbing of a thumb likewise, because finger and grave are both Sumerian ṭ (l. 42).
85 OB Šumer maratu, edited with late duplicates by U. Jeyes, A Compendium of gall-bladder omens, pp. 358, obv. 10; 375.
88 Psalm 112; 7; BEKIV 35a, 29.
90 See M. L. Galleri, ‘Service obligations of the kezeru-women’, Or nos 49 (1980), pp. 133–7; K. van Berloef, CR 28, pp. 281–2; J. Spacq, Some notes on štuktibbinit/nibít kezeri (II), Akkadica 67 (Mar–Apr. 1990), pp. 1–9. The debt was discharged in silver to the nukkut hequrilt, ‘overseer of the kezerum-women’. This payment has been identified as a fee for prostituting their trade’; so Lambert, Xenia 52, p. 137, but the fact that it is characterized as a nībušum, ‘compensatory’ (7) sum, suggests rather that the fee was paid to lot of service, either to release the individual from future obligations or to excise the duty of serving at all.
For present purposes it is interesting that there is a single example of a man, one Tarbü, owing such an obligation, but we do not know whether he was acting for a woman or was himself the debtor and thus, possibly, a harem. Other women styled harem are found in the lists of palace women ('harem lists') from eighteenth-century Mari, where they cannot be common prostitutes. Their association with musical performance at Mari—as probably also in the Sumerian tale of the Slave and the Scoundrel—suggests that these palace harem women entertained the king with singing and dancing. They may have been refined ladies, like the elaborately coiffed and ornately attired Japanese geisha, but courtiers nevertheless and presumably available to the king.

After the Old Babylonian period the function of the harem becomes clearer. In literary sources, as is well known, she is one of several classes of women in the service of Ītar whose duties appear to have included prostitution (see SB VI 158, Erra IV 52). In first-millennium Assyria, moreover, there is clear evidence for the place in the cult of this goddess of the male harem alongside the female harem, to wit, a penalty clause in a land deed.

Though Babylonian evidence for the association of harem men with temples is lacking, the facts that (a) a class of such persons was typical of the cult of Ītar in Assyria and (b) male cultic prostitution was a feature of Babylonian Ītar cults, suggest to me that the ancient audience would have appreciated the implication of a pun kīru : harem, and that Kilter was right. The meteorite of the first dream represents a catamite and so, in the second, does the axe. The debate over the nature of Gilgameš and Enkidu's friendship—homosexual or platonic—still leaves commentators divided. In my view the language of the dreams is clear. Gilgameš will love Enkidu as a wife. However, as regards the mechanics of the plot, the nature of the pair's friendship is not important, only the fact of it.

To return to the story: Šamhat relates to Gilgameš that he has reacted to his mother's interpretation of his dreams with pleasure, for his kindly instinct told him he needed a friend to counsel him. He looked forward to his coming (294–7). Having told Gilgameš's dreams to Enkidu, Šamhat and Enkidu make love (298–300).

46 YOS XIII 314, 2: paraq[ī(m)] harem, i.e. 39.
47 See N. Zeigler, La harem du Zimri-Lim (Floresqueum mariannum 4; Paris, 1990), pp. 87–8.
48 Where a girl acting like a harem plays the akīra, sings and dances; cf. ibid., p. 87, fn. 552.
49 Postgate, Palace Archives 17, 31–2; 7 kañ[h]u.bā.[l]a]ššu.šu.bat; 7 1a-ik-ken(!) ti-[a]-ér-[u]ššu “arka- 1i-1[a]-a-a, (a boughs claimant) shall donate seven harem men and seven harem women to Duru who resides in Arbaš. Note also in a list of households at Sībari the S. J. Finkelstein, JCS 7 (1953), p. 141, no. 85, 22: 3 [mar]-tā.[du]-nu-šu; 1a-ik-ken(!) ti-[a]-ér-[u]-ššu “three houses, members of the harem class; it is not clear whether the writing mar]-tā.[du]-nu-šu; 1a-ik-ken(!) ti-[a]-ér-[u]-ššu means harem or ‘women’ (JCS XI 68 and 76; cf. G. van Driel, Cult of Allāt, pp. 181–2); all we know is that they were dedicated to the service of the temple.
50 OB II 33, SB 125 6: 284, 267/289; the repeated use of the verb hāšā in this connection implies a sexual relationship. If there is any doubt about the significance of this imagery, note also SB VIII 29, where, in death, Gilgameš veils Enkidu like a bride. Graphic evidence for a sexual relationship now comes from SB XII 96–9, as understood in the light of a new manuscript of the text's Sumerian forerunner, BIN 250–3.

SYNOPSIS AND EXEGESIS: TABLET II

TABLET II

Apart from the incipit, almost the first thirty lines of Tablet II are missing. When the text resumes it seems that Šamhat has been talking to Enkidu in much the same vein as she did after their first encounter. Šamhat asks Enkidu again why he lives with the gazelles (29). Two damaged couplets follow, which seem again to describe how her words make an impression on the newly intelligent Enkidu (30–3). Šamhat then dresses Enkidu in part of her garments and leads him to a shepherds' camp (34–7). The shepherds gather around Enkidu and compare him with the mighty Gilgameš (38–43). To Enkidu's puzzlement they offer him bread and beer (44–6). The text now becomes very badly damaged, but enough remains to indicate that, as in the Pennsylvania tablet, Enkidu is reported never to have encountered human food and drink before, and that Šamhat duly encourages him to eat and drink (47–51). Seven more lines are either missing entirely or destroyed beyond recovery (52–9). The episode is well known from the Pennsylvania tablet, however, where it is told in nine lines of poetry (OB II 99–114). Enkidu eats and drinks as he is bidden, becomes drunk and starts to sing. After a barber shaves off his coat of animal hair, he uses scented oil to perfume his body in the Babylonian fashion. Now truly a man, he gets dressed and takes up a club. The late text resumes at this point. Enkidu defends the camp against wild animals and while he stays up on watch the shepherds sleep undisturbed (60–2).

Under the guidance of a woman the brute Enkidu has been transformed from animal to man, but his job as the shepherds' nightwatchman means that he is temporarily stranded between the wild and the city, a kind of halfway house. It is time to move him to the city, to the confrontation with Gilgameš that is his destiny. The catalyst that sets this change in motion is, as in the Pennsylvania tablet, the arrival on the scene of a stranger (63–4). More than thirty lines are missing at this point, a passage that corresponds to a slightly longer section of the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 123–78). Enkidu is dallying with Šamhat when he sees the stranger and hails him. The stranger explains his business. He is going to a wedding in Uruk where, with divine assent, Gilgameš habitually enjoys the seemingly unique privilege of iux primas noctis. It is his right to deflower a bride in her nuptial bed before the bridegroom can consummate the marriage. Enkidu is enraged. Remembering his pledge to confront Gilgameš and challenge his supremacy, he goes directly to Uruk. At this point the text of Tablet II resumes. Enkidu stands in the street and blocks Gilgameš's path (100–2). In lines that echo Gilgameš's dreams, an admiring crowd gathers around Enkidu, fascinated by his strange appearance (103–8).

The following couplet seems to be a poor précis of material that occupies a longer section of the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II 190–9). There the poet describes how, at times of festival, the young men of Uruk chose a champion to challenge Gilgameš, and how, on the particular occasion when Enkidu arrived to confront Gilgameš, the wedding bed was ready and Gilgameš had already joined the bridal procession. As I read it, the late text has lost the reference to festivals and has inverted the two key events: the wedding bed being ready, a substitute (pālu) is appointed for Gilgameš (109–10).
The business of Gilgamesh's 'substitute' is one that needs comment. In the equivalent line the Pennsylvania tablet uses the word meherum, 'rival' (OB II 194–5). The replacement of this word with pītu (if correctly read) evokes the well-known concept of the substitute king, šar pītu. This was an expendable person of low rank appointed to absorb in the king's stead the ill portended by certain eclipses of the sun and moon, of Jupiter and other planets. The ritual involved is best known from the Neo-Assyrian period, but its existence already in the nineteenth century BC is suggested by the chance succession of Emili-bêni while temporarily installed on the throne of the ill-fated Erra-imittī of Isin, as famously recorded in a chronicle.46 However, I cannot see that the narrative of Enkidu's challenge is well served by reference to this royal substitute. The plot requires a rival, not a replacement. Perhaps a Middle Babylonian editor, failing to understand the long-obsolete custom which was, it seems, the context of the older version of the line, sought instead to connect it with something he knew, the ritual of the substitute king. In doing so he destroyed the line's original reference and failed to replace it with anything meaningful.

Enkidu bars Gilgamesh from entering the house where the wedding ceremony is to take place and the two heroes wrestle (111–15). Here a long lacuna intervenes, extending over nearly a whole column. Part of the missing text must have been the counterpart of the concluding lines of the Pennsylvania tablet, where we learn that Enkidu submits to Gilgamesh's authority (OB II 227–40). We remain largely ignorant as regards the following episode, for the continuation of the Old Babylonian edition on the Yale tablet is badly damaged; all that can be said is that Gilgamesh and Enkidu make friends as Ninsun had predicted. When the text of Tablet II resumes it appears that Gilgamesh is introducing Enkidu to his mother, using standard lines that express admiration for his new friend's strength and physique (162–4). The beginning of Ninsun's reply is poorly preserved (165–74); it seems to conclude with an acknowledgement of Enkidu's strange birth and lack of family (175–7).

Enkidu has been listening and is reduced to tears, whereupon Gilgamesh comforts him (178–87). The discovery of MS p provides us with the beginnings of some fifteen more lines at this point, enough to yield a taste of a conversation between Enkidu and Gilgamesh that ends with the mention of Humbaba (188–202). Perhaps to distract Enkidu from his misery, Gilgamesh proposes that the pair make a glorious expedition to the Cedar Forest. The middle of his speech to this effect is still missing but the end became available recently, with the publication of MS ee (212–15). In the Babylonian epic the Cedar Forest is a faraway place, visited only at the greatest peril, but not a mythical location, for the various versions fix it firmly in the 'land of Ebla', i.e. Amanus, and in Lebanon. The first Mesopotamian rulers known to have mounted cedar-felling expeditions to Amanus and Lebanon are Sargon and Naram-Sin of Akkad, and very probably Gilgamesh's journey with Enkidu in the Babylonian epic is a literary reflection of their campaigns or others like them.47 Certainly cedar-felling is at the heart of the story, as it was in the Sumerian poems of Gilgamesh and Šuštuk.

Enkidu answers that Humbaba is guardian of the Cedar Forest by Enlil's appointment, a truly lethal enemy, in fact, second in power only to the storm god; also the forest is protected by the debilitating effect it has on those who intrude (216–29). Gilgamesh scorns Enkidu for a weakling (230–3). Life is short and given over to mundane activities (234–6). And Enkidu's experience in the wild will stand him in good stead, so let the pair of them be off to have their weapons made (237–42). A short lacuna holds the end of Gilgamesh's speech and the line or lines narrating the heroes' journey to the smithy. The smiths cast weapons of extraordinary size and weight (247–54). The only witness to this episode was copied from a broken master and is defective. The damage was so bad that five lines had to be omitted entirely from the new copy (255–9). This lacuna corresponds to the slightly longer passage of the Yale tablet that describes the bolting of the city gates of Uruk and the public convening of the assembly of elders (OB III 172–9). In the late text Gilgamesh first addresses not the elders but the men of fighting age (etlištu), and tells them of his intention to undertake an expedition such as nobody has ever undertaken before, a journey that will end in battle with Humbaba (260–4). He asks for their blessing for a safe passage there and back and promises to celebrate the ašitu festival twice when he returns (265–71).

The business of the twofold celebration of the ašitu needs explanation. The ašitu festival was the culmination of a time of great celebration that followed hard on the New Year. The audience is given to understand that formerly there had been one ašitu festival but that Gilgamesh's long absence on his expedition to the Cedar Forest resulted in the festival taking place twice in the year. It is often overlooked that in the historical period at Uruk (and elsewhere) there were indeed two such festivals annually. Although this state of affairs was first noted by E. Thureau-Dangin in 1921,48 it is worth reiterating the evidence, for there is now much more.

At Uruk itself the Late Babylonian ritual for the seventh month, Tašritu, states that the processions to the ašitu house of Anu at Uruk was carried out then exactly as in the first month, Nisannu.49 A Neo-Assyrian letter reports similarly, that the New Year's procession of Marduk at Babylon took place in Tašritu just as it did more famously in Nisannu, and that a similar situation obtained at Dēr.45 According to recently published texts of first-millennium date, the Nippur Compendium §13 and the Nippur cultic calendar,54 at Nippur the ašitu in Nisannu celebrated Marduk (presumably originally Enlil), while another in Ayyaru (the second month) was for Ninurta as the champion of the gods, but also for Ištar as queen of Nippur and for Sin. The same text glosses another festival of Enlil and

47 See in more detail above, Ch. 3, the sub-section on Climbing mountains.
48 Relc., p. 87.
50 S. Parpola, SAA X 253.
Ninurta as ud-duk, 'renewal'; this is probably a New Year's festival in the seventh month, for the following entry seems to represent the eighth month. The autumnal New Year is enshrined in the very name of the seventh month (taššūtu, 'beginning') and also in the calendar of Old Babylonian Sippar, where the first month of the regular year is Sebūtum, 'the seventh', implying the existence of another New Year at six months' remove. Thus the situation in second- and first-millennium Babylonia appears to be consistent: there were two New Year's festivals, one in spring (Nisannu), the other in autumn (Taššūtu). These cultic events roughly coincided with the equinoxes. A similar polarity also informed the late third-millennium calendars. By the first millennium each of the two New Years had become associated with an akītu celebration. The akītu had itself been a biannual festival at the end of the third millennium, at least at Ur. There it was apparently an agricultural festival celebrated at or near the equinoxes in months I (harvest) and VII (sowing). Against this background Gilgamesh's promise to perform the akītu festival twice on his return from the Cedar Forest appears to be a cultic syllogism, explaining why it was that the Babylonians celebrated two different akītu festivals at two different New Years.

Enkidu advises the elders to dissuade Gilgamesh from going against Humbaba, repeating the words he earlier spoke to the king (272–86). The elders, in turn, speak to Gilgamesh. They tell him he is not old enough to understand the implications of his proposed adventure, and they repeat Enkidu's warning (287–99). Gilgamesh listens but laughs off their advice (300–1). The remainder of the tablet, perhaps twenty lines, is missing. The Yale tablet is also damaged at this point in the story, but enough survives to show that Gilgamesh turns to Enkidu and scoffs at the idea of fearing Humbaba (OB III 203 ff., also Assyrian MS 92, obv. 16 ff.).

TABLET III

Tablet III begins with a speech of advice for the journey to the Cedar Forest, addressed at first to Gilgamesh (1–10) and then to Enkidu (11–12). The speaker's identity is uncertain, for

the lines introducing him are missing at the end of Tablet II, but we can be sure that he is a spokesman for the city elders, who advise Gilgamesh very similarly in the Yale tablet (OB III 247–71). The lines spoken to Enkidu perhaps reflect an early protocol: the assembly formally entrusts the king into the care of his bodyguard, who is charged to bring his lord safely home and restore him to the assembly's responsibility. This does not imply that the assembly exercised control over the king. It was the elders' duty to provide counsel that would guide his policy and government. In their absence Enkidu must fill this function, as indeed he does.

Before they set out on their journey Gilgamesh and Enkidu must seek the approval of Šamaš, protector of travellers. In the Yale tablet Gilgamesh addresses the sun god directly (OB III 216–21). In the Sumerian poem of Gilgamesh and Huwawa he does this at Enkidu's bidding. In the late epic the request for divine guidance and protection has developed into a much longer episode, which begins with the heroes' visit to Gilgamesh's mother, Ninsum, in her temple at Uruk (13–22). There Gilgamesh announces his intentions to her in the same words that in Tablet II he has used to the young men of Uruk (24–34). Gilgamesh's bravo elicits sorrow in Ninsum, a devoted mother (35–6). Her response is to seek the help of Šamaš, who among the gods is Gilgamesh's especial protector. To that end she conducts an elaborate ritual that begins with sevenfold ablutions in her bath-chamber; she then adorns herself in finery and gems (37–42). Having suitably prepared herself, Ninsum goes up to the roof of her temple, where she strews incense before the sun god to attract his attention (43–5).

Ninsum's preparations recall cultic practice, for one is reminded that the ritual series Bit rimki, 'House of Ablutions', which prescribes the correct protocol for the king's ritual washing, divides the rites into seven 'houses'. Such bathing customarily took place in the early hours, often before sunrise. In the series Bit rimki itself the king was expected to begin the ablutions in the wash-house at the very moment the sun rose, and much of the litany of the ritual was addressed to Šamaš. Presumably these two facts are not coincidental. It is evident that in our passage Ninsum goes up on to the roof in order more effectively to speak to Šamaš. If the rituals she conducts reflect actual practice, what she is doing on the roof, having come straight from her seven baths, is making an offering to the rising sun. As a time when Šamaš was freshly up and least burdened by the day's business, the period immediately after dawn was no doubt the most effective moment for winning his attention.

Ninsum begins her long monologue by blaming on Šamaš her son's desire for reckless adventure and by hoping that his wife, Aya, the dawn, will intercede with him on Gilgamesh's behalf, so that when the sun is no longer in the sky the hero is protected nonetheless, by the

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53 See George, Tepi Testu, p. 449.
55 In seventh-century Assyria the akītu festival of Aššur was held in Nisannu and Taššūtu, after the Babylonian model, while that of Istar of Arbīl also occurred biannually, but in the immediately preceding months of Ulūtu (VI, traditionally the month of Inana) and Adadu (XII). On the dates of the Assyrian festivals see most recently E. Weins, 'Royal feasts and royal triumph in a priest fragment of Ashurbanipal', in S. Parpola and T. M. Whiting (eds.), Assyria 1995 (Helsinki, 1997), p. 347.
56 See Sallab bergen, Kalendar 1, p. 175: 'anstatt von einem einzigen "Jahresanfang" zu sprechen müssen wir eher von zwei Polen, die jeweils für sich einen "Jahresanfang" bildete, ausgeben'.
58 Gilgamesh and Huwawa A 8–12.
59 J. Laessoe proposed that these seven "houses" were separate chambers, rather than individual units, in the main structure of the wash-house (Bit Rimki, p. 85); it seems equally possible that the ritual simply means that king was required to enter the bath-chamber seven times, as Ninsum does in the present passage.
60 Laessoe, Bit Rimki, p. 11.
61 RRR no. 26 IV 34–5; cf. Laessoe, Bit Rimki, p. 84.
As the text of Tablet III again becomes fragmentary Ninsun repeats her plea that Aya remind Šamaš to commend her son to the care of the night (74–9). Next she asks for Šamaš to see to it that the days of Gilgamesh’s journey be long and the nights short, adding further requests concerning details of the march and seeking Aya’s wife’s intercession a third time (80–6). In the Sumerian poem of Gilgamesh and Ḫuwawa the sun god provides the hero with celestial guidance in the form of seven constellations that will show him the way to the Cedar Forest. In the Babylonian epic he gives help of a different kind, namely thirteen winds. This gift is made at Ninsun’s prompting, for she continues her appeal by suggesting that Šamaš mobilize the storms against Ḫumbaba at the moment of Gilgamesh’s need (87–93). The next section begins fragmentarily but the matter at hand is clear: Ninsun asks Šamaš to direct his attention to those who pray to him at morning and as his steeds pound across the sky; then at the day’s end he will make his homecoming to the food and rest that await him (94–9).

The homecoming of the sun god is described more fully in a bilingual prayer to Šamaš for use at sundown.** It may be useful to quote the first eight lines in full:

** This passage has recently been expounded by Fosser, *Enki Prys*, p. 33.

** Robert: ka.an.inin.ma ki’azu.kursu.t₂₂₂₃ₙ₃₉₄₈us₃₂₂₅.²₂₂₂₃ₙ₃₉₄₈us₃₂₂₅, a 'incantation formula: ritual prayer to Utu at sunset'; on the homecoming of the sun see further W. Helmquid, *The sun at night and the doors of heaven in Babylonian texts*, JCS 18 (1968), pp. 127–51.
his new status and confirming aloud his new relationship with her and with Gilgamesh (116–28). The new text recovered on MS aa corroborates the conventional view that this passage describes Ninsun's adoption of Enkidu into her family. Here, then, is the realization of the prediction Ninsun made on hearing Gilgamesh's dreams: that she would make Enkidu the equal of her son (OB II 43, SB I 290).

The manner of Enkidu's adoption needs comment. It seems that Ninsun is setting a precedent with Enkidu. Henceforth persons like him, orphans, foundlings abandoned by their families and children given up in time of famine, will belong to the temple of Uruk. They will be taken in, marked with a special sign and raised under the nominal guardianship of the Divine Daughters of E-an-ni. Evidently this means they will be brought up by the temple women (I. 123). The passage probably preserves old protocol that attended such institutional adoption. It can thus be understood as aetiology, explaining how the custom arose that temples took in waifs and strays and looked after them in return for their labour when older.

Finally, Ninsun repeats what she had earlier said to Sama regarding long days and short nights, and other details of the journey (129–35). Probably she still addresses Enkidu, and thus charges him to guard Gilgamesh on the journey. After a lacuna we find Gilgamesh and Enkidu taking part in some cultic ceremony but the text is very fragmentary and it is difficult to say more (146–55). A further lacuna interrupts the text and what follows is more damaged still: someone is wishing Gilgamesh and Enkidu well for the journey and giving instructions about how best to divide each leg of the journey (166–73). A third lacuna intervenes at this point. When the text resumes Gilgamesh is leaving instructions for the conduct of his city in his absence (202–11). The discovery of more of MS c provides a fuller knowledge of this speech and of what follows. The officers and young men mob Gilgamesh as he and Enkidu depart, and repeat to him the blessing that the elders spoke at the beginning of the tablet (215–27). As the text breaks away near the end of the tablet, Enkidu begins speaking (228–33). Probably he tells Gilgamesh to send the following crowd home, as he seems also to have done in the Yale tablet (OB III 277–80). The missing end of Tablet III no doubt told of the heroes’ final departure.

The text of the first three-quarters of Tablet IV comprises a set pattern of three episodes in sequence. As the text is reconstructed here, the sequence is repeated five times. The three episodes are (a) lines of narrative describing Gilgamesh and Enkidu's progress on their journey, their camp for the night, their dream-ritual preparations and Gilgamesh's sudden wakening in panic after a nightmare, (b) his relation of the dream to Enkidu and (c) Enkidu's explanation of it as favourable. The text of episode (a) appears always to be the same, disregarding a few very minor differences; episodes (b) and (c) contain very many fewer lines in common, for they are adapted each time to the different dreams and their various explanations.

The narrative episode (a) begins with lines that record Gilgamesh and Enkidu's heroic speed of travel: running non-stop they make in three days the equivalent of forty-five days' march (1–4 // 34–7 // [79–82] // 120–4 // 163–5). Up to the night of the fifth dream the journey occupies five of these epic three-day marches. If one takes the text literally, they cover in these fifteen days a distance that would normally occupy seven and a half months. The three-day marches are already present in the Old Babylonian epic (OB Schoyen, 25–6). Every third evening the heroes rest. They pitch camp and conduct rituals to incubate a favourable dream (5–11) // 38–48 // [83]–93 // 125–35 // 166–76). Though some text is still missing, the new fragment MS CC adds details to our knowledge of the ritual procedures that prepare for the dream incubations, as discussed by previous commentators. Facing the setting sun, Gilgamesh and Enkidu dig a well and, probably, make libations of its water to the sun god and legsbandia, just as the elders had instructed them in the Old Babylonian Yale tablet. Then Gilgamesh goes up to the top of the hill, makes offerings of flour to it and asks in return for a favourable dream. Meanwhile Enkidu has been hard at work building and making weatherproof what is, as I understand it, a special structure, the bitu (?) Zaqqit (or zaqqit), "house of the dream spirit (or spirits)"). Zaqqit or Zaqqui is well known as a spirit who brings dreams, and was given a place in the pantheon as a child of Samaš, as too were his colleagues in this task, Manu (d) and "An[za]qar. The bitu zaqqit is a known expression, though elsewhere the reference is to abandoned dwelling-places swept by winds or haunted by phantoms (Sum. ga.l.l.[a]). Enkidu then makes Gilgamesh bed down in what
appears to be a magic circle inside the structure and himself retires to lie down at its entrance. Finally, Gilgamesh falls asleep. The episodes end with him waking up suddenly at dead of night, rousing Enkidu and telling him of his shock and dismay: he has had a dream that leaves him bewildered and apprehensive \((16-22)\ // [49-55] // 94-100 // [136-42] // [177-83]\).

Of the five passages in which Gilgamesh relates his nightmares to Enkidu and Enkidu reassures him by explaining how they bode well \((b-c)\), none is perfectly preserved. The first dream involves a mountain and falling \((23-5)\). It is perhaps a version of the first dream in the edition of the Old Babylonian text represented by OB Schuyten, in which Gilgamesh fails to prevent a mountain collapsing on him, is buried under an avalanche and rescued by Šamaš. There, the mountain stood for Humbaba. In the present text Enkidu interprets the dream very briefly as symbolizing the giant Humbaba’s downfall at their hands \((26-33)\). The second dream is missing entirely \((56 ff.)\). The identification of MS means, however, that a fragment of Enkidu’s explanation is now extant; it mentions Humbaba in circumstances that probably envisage him subduing \((69-78)\). The third nightmare is the best preserved: Gilgamesh dreams of a violent thunderstorm that sets the ground alight \((101-7)\). Enkidu’s interpretation is almost entirely missing \((108 ff.)\). The fourth dream is entirely lost \((143 ff.)\). The fragmentary remains of Enkidu’s explanation again describe a victory over Humbaba \((155-62)\). An unplaced fragment of one of Enkidu’s interpretations is probably all that remains of the fifth dream episode; it describes Šamaš as saving the day by binding something’s wings \((1-7)\). The preceding dream was very probably the counterpart of the nightmare about the Asāli-bird preserved on OB Nippur as the fourth dream.

Enough survives of the dreams and their explanations in the late text to show that the sequence agrees with neither of those found in the older versions. The present state of knowledge of the dream sequences in the various versions can be tabulated as below. Too little survives of the dreams recounted in the fragmentary Assyrian MS \(x\), and for that reason the version it represents is omitted from the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>OB text</th>
<th>MB text</th>
<th>SB text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>avalanche (OB Schuyten)</td>
<td>trace only (MB Bog.)</td>
<td>avalanche?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>wild bull (OB Harmal.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>thunderstorm (OB Schuyten)</td>
<td>avalanche (MB Bog.)</td>
<td>trace only (MS tii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>bull (OB Nippur)</td>
<td>[not extant]</td>
<td>thunderstorm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Asāli-bird (OB Nippur)</td>
<td>[not extant]</td>
<td>trace (MS CCwy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{77}\) This dream has been interpreted as describing a volcanic eruption, e.g. by E. von Weizsäcker, ‘Gilgamesh und Enkidu. Die Idee einer Freundschaft’, Arch. Anat. 11 \(1980\), p. 114. From the account given in OB Schuyten 34-42 it is clear, however, that a storm is at issue; the fiery rain is lightning.

Evidently two different sequences of dreams were possible in the Old Babylonian period. The only extant Middle Babylonian tablet tallies with neither of them. An expansion of the older versions by the insertion or addition of one or more extra dreams cannot yet be proved but is to be expected. Comparison with the earlier material also clarifies the symbolism and pattern of the dream episodes. In each nightmare the ogre Humbaba is represented by some violent and inhuman force that threatens to crush the hero. It is stated in the second-millennium texts that each apparition is worse than the previous one, a crescendo of terror that is not explicitly reported in the late version. \(^{78}\) With Gilgamesh pinned underneath his adversary there appears from nowhere a man, sometimes two men, to extricate and succour him. Enkidu explains that this knight in shining armour, as it were, is Šamaš, sometimes accompanied by Lugalbanda. With their help Gilgamesh will surely emerge victorious from the coming battle with Humbaba.

When the text of Tablet IV resumes the story has moved on. Someone is addressing Gilgamesh in heroic terms \((190-3)\), reminiscent in tone, if not in vocabulary, of a recurrent paean in the Sumerian poems:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{il.\textit{u}lu_1 \textit{u}lu_2 \textit{u}lu_3 \textit{ba} si.\textit{su}} \\
\text{du.mu_4 gi.l_5 zal dingir.re.e ne} \\
\text{gu lútik
tuku_mian é gub}\_6 \\
\text{er.tur_7 *bīgamas unug}^8 \\
\text{ta mi.\textit{du}u_9 ha}
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{Ho, hurrah!} \quad \text{Tall-grown sapling,}
\]

\[\text{noble one in whom the gods delight,}
\]

\[\text{angry ox standing ready for combat,}
\]

\[\text{young lord Gilgamesh, honoured in Uruk!}
\]

\[\text{Bilgames and Ḫuwawa A 130-4 // 164-9 // B 1-4, Bilgames and}
\]

\[\text{the Bull of Heaven 120-2+}
\]

Versions of the Sumerian lines are expressed by the poet at the beginning of Bilgames and Ḫuwawa B, by Ḫuwawa or Enkidu when Bilgames comes face to face with the ogre, by Enkidu when he cautions his lord against setting Ḫuwawa free, and again by Enkidu when he encourages Bilgames to despatch the Bull of Heaven. The last occasion is a functional parallel to the Akkadian lines of the present passage, for on this occasion it is likely that Enkidu speaks, giving his lord heart once more. Šamaš overhauls and shouts from the sky for Gilgamesh to attack Humbaba before the ogre has an opportunity to put on his protective cloaks \((194-8)\). The narrative then turns to the figure of Humbaba, who is heard belowing in the depths of the forest \((199-205)\).

A short lacuna intervenes. A fragment of text that seems to belong here contains text from the middle of a conversation between Gilgamesh and Enkidu \((210-19)\). The end of this conversation survives on another manuscript \((226-48)\). Enkidu complains of stiff limbs. It is usually assumed he has been overtaken by the physical debility that the Cedar Forest is rumoured to inflict on those who venture into it \((cf. SB II 229)\). Against this view, it must be cautioned that at this point the two heroes have not actually entered the forest proper, though they are already in earshot of Humbaba. A presumption commonly made

\(^{78}\) The phrases that express this are OB Schuyten, 3: \textit{e lû.ti.in} la ūmuru 

\(^{79}\) For this interpretation of \(1\).\textit{lu}, \textit{lu}, see the section on Bilgames and Ḫuwawa B in Ch. 1.
about Enkidu's speech is that he mentions the gate of the forest (231), but this involves a restoration where many others are possible and is not adopted here. Similarly in Gilgamesh's reply (232-48) some have understood the text to report rubbing the body with a magic plant to banish fear of death (239). This idea relies on a restoration that is even less compelling and should be abandoned. What is certain is that Gilgamesh reminds Enkidu of their achievement in getting thus far, having crossed so many mountain ranges. The immediate allusion of this remark is to the mountain-tops on which Gilgamesh conducted his rituals on the eve of each nightmare. The theme of a journey punctuated by mountain climbing also informs the Sumerian Bilgames and Hujawa, which tells how Gilgamesh's expedition, with the constellations to guide it, crossed seven mountain ranges before he found a suitable cedar. In the continuation of his speech Gilgamesh urges Enkidu on to battle and glory. Occupied in such talk they arrive at the forest's edge, and Tablet IV concludes (249-50).

TABLE V

Gilgamesh and Enkidu stand gazing at the forested slopes of the Cedar Mountain: the tracks made by Humbaba are clearly visible and they perceive that the mountain is the residence of gods and goddesses (1-6). The tradition in which the pantheon resides together on an imposing mountain has a long history in the east Mediterranean world but is not indigenous to southern Mesopotamia, where there are no mountains and where gods reside each in his own city. Nevertheless, it already informs two Old Babylonian Gilgamesh texts that describe the Cedar Forest as the 'abode of the Anunnaki'. According to Lambert the notion of the 'pantheon residing on a mountain top' was introduced to southern Mesopotamia by the Amorites.

The poem goes on to describe the wondrous sight of the dense-growing trees, but the text quickly gives out (7-18). After a long lacuna a fragmentary passage relates how Gilgamesh

See esp. Landsberger, R4 62, p. 110.


OB Ischihal 38'; mitaš Enunnašu // OB DM 17-18: mitaš itt Enunnašu

W. G. Lambert, 'Synchrony of ideas between southern Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine as seen in literature', in H. J. Nissen and J. Renger (eds.), Mesopotamien und seine Nachklang (CRRA 25), p. 314. There are indications in other literature that a mountains-top or other high place was a suitable home for the gods. Taken literally, a passage of Inanna and Eblig suggests that one tradition identifies Mt Eblig as the home of the Anunnaki gods (see A. Zgoll, Der Reichtum der En-ki-ana Anu im Lied nin-me-lara, p. 91). It may be a question of comparative juxtaposition rather than equation (so P. Antinger, 'Inanna et Elil', ZA 88 (1998), p. 175a, fn. 41). Another Sumerian tradition about the gods dwelling on a mountain is attested by the opening of the dispute between Ewe and Grain, according to which An gives the Anunnaki gods at lursag an li ba di.xa, the mountain of both heaven and earth' (B. Alster and H. Vansighous, 'Lahar and Ashshur', Assyra 9 (1987), p. 14, 1). This is a cosmic location, not a terrestrial one, associated in that text with the principal 'pure mound' (ddu.ki) on which the gods dwell together (for this see George, Topog. Texts, p. 290, House Most High, p. 77). The 'pure mound' is not itself a natural hill, however, but a habitation mound or tell (dūku, I owe this insight to J. A. Black). The many ceremonial temple-names incorporating words for 'mountain' (kur, ṣar sag), demonstrate nevertheless that the concept of the natural mountain as a suitable place for a god to dwell was common in lower Mesopotamia from at least the late third millennium, even if originally alien.

and Enkidu ready their weapons and enter the forest (53-8). Attention turns to Humbaba, but the text is so damaged at this point that we cannot determine what is happening (59-64). Then Gilgamesh and Enkidu converse. What Gilgamesh says is almost entirely lost (65-9) but he must be voicing his fears for the battle ahead, because Enkidu's reply is one of encouragement (70-80). The gist of his words is that in situations where one might fail a combined effort will surely succeed. As the text is reconstructed here, there follows a short lacuna in which Humbaba learns of the intruders' presence. In the Sumerian poems and the Hittite paraphrase the guardian of the cedar is roused to action by the noise of Gilgamesh and Enkidu following his precious trees.

The text resumes at a point that in the Babylonian manuscripts marked the transition from Tablet IV to Tablet V. Humbaba has confronted Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Perhaps knowing him for a king, Humbaba scorns Gilgamesh as a fool for taking counsel with an ignorant bumpkin such as Enkidu and asks why he has come to the Cedar Forest (85-6). Then he turns to Enkidu, whom he knows of old, accuses him of betrayal and announces his intention of casting Gilgamesh's dead body out as carrion (87-94). Again Gilgamesh expresses his fear to Enkidu (95-8) and again Enkidu seeks to embolden him with proverbial wisdom, telling him the time for swift action has arrived (99-108). The intervention of a lacuna robs us of the next twenty lines. The first line of the resumption is evidently direct speech but it is not possible to be sure who has been speaking (130). The parleying is finished, however, and battle commences (131-2). Such is the force of the struggle that the Cedar Mountain is given in two, so that from this moment it becomes the twin ranges of Lebanon and Sirara, the latter being Anti-Lebanon (133-4). This passage probably adapts an aetiological myth of Levantine origin. A different tradition appears in the Old Babylonian tablet from Nerebu, according to which the mountain appears to have been split asunder by Hujawa's yel (OB Ischihal 31). A new piece of evidence can be added here. The military raid conducted against northern Syria, the Cedar Forest and beyond by Sargon of Akkad is well known from Old Babylonian copies of his inscriptions. A recently published Old Assyrian pseudo-autobiography from a merchant's archive at Kültepe embellishes the historical evidence with a literary touch:

\[
\text{sa-du-a-am} \text{ hu-ma-nam a-li-ni-su am-hu-si-ma ki-ma si-ki-im i-hu-ri-su-ru ya-al-mi u-su-si-iz}
\]

Kt. jk 97, 47-59


I smote Mount Amanus in two and set up a representation of myself between them as a peg of ownership.

In this passage the sundering of the mountain is a metaphor for Sargon's conquest. The text reveals that the myth of the violent sundering of the mountains of cedar was already a literary topos in Akkadian in the very early second millennium.

Under a sky darkened by a storm of death the combat between Gilgames and Humbaba continues until Šamaš comes to Gilgames's aid, as Ninus had asked him to do. The thirteenth winds he sends against Humbaba duly blind the ogre with dust and immobilize him, thereby giving Gilgames the chance of striking at last the telling blow (135–43).

Then begins the long episode in which Humbaba pleads for his life. He starts by acknowledging his captor's divine descent and royal rank (144–8), and goes on to point out that a servant is more use to his master alive than dead, with the implication that he is prepared to become Gilgames's slave (149–50). The same argument is put forward in Marduk Hymn No. 1 by a sufferer seeking the god's mercy:

\[
\text{šá tī-[ti-ti]} \quad \text{i-mu-ú me-ne-ú nį-me-č-tu}
\]

One become like clay, what use is he?

\[
\text{ba-[nu-ma] a ar-du be-la-šu i-pa-ši-lû}
\]

Only a living slave can revere his master!


Humbaba offers to remain on his mountain to look after the timber, placing it all at Gilgames's disposal (151–5). The offer of timber is also known from OB Harmal and the end of Tablet I of the Hittite paraphrase.\(^8\) Enkidu chips in to warn Gilgames not to listen to Humbaba's entreaties (156–61). A lacuna intervenes to deny us knowledge of more than his opening words, but some idea of what he says can perhaps be had from the Sumerian poem of Bilgames and Huwawa, in which Bilgames is disposed to spare his captive as a demonstration, so it seems, of kingly mercy and Enkidu points out the important of destroying Humbaba before Enlil learns what is going on (185). As we know from the several warnings in Tablets II and III, it was Enlil who gave Humbaba the job of guarding the forest. He will not be pleased that his servant has been slaughtered; in fact Enkidu anticipates that all the gods will be angry, including the beneficent Šamaš, hitherto the heroes' protector (186–7). In the moment of triumph Humbaba appears to have thrown off the respect for the gods that marked his counsel in Tablet II. His advice now displays the same utter indifference to the great powers of the universe that informs the heroes' scorn of the goddess Ishtar in Tablet VI. Hubris on this scale is, it seems, justified by the end. The lines are damaged but Enkidu's closing point seems to be one made earlier in the narrative, that killing Humbaba will bring eternal fame, a theme that emerges most clearly in the Yale tablet.\(^9\)

Humbaba's reaction to Enkidu's demand for his death (190–1) is largely missing in a lacuna that intervenes here. When the text resumes it seems that Humbaba is making some retort, the import of which is lost (229). Humbaba's reply makes the point that Enkidu is Gilgames's servant (230–9). The implication is to ask what business it is of Enkidu's to give his master advice when he is only a hirling. The same motif occurs in the Sumerian poem:

\[
\text{̣u, wa \ en.ki du-ge-ru gû mu-na-dê}
\]

\[
\text{gâ, ra \ en.ki du-ge inim mu-na.ab-ûl-hu}
\]

\[
\text{u, ̣u, gû ã, gâ, ti im ma-ûn egr gaba ri ú-sa a-na-ã, tim inim mu-na-ab-ûl-hu}
\]


Huwawa spoke to Enkidu:

'O Enkidu, you use wicked words to him about me, a hired man is hired for rations, behind another such man he follows. Why use wicked words to him?'

In that text Enkidu is so infuriated that he kills Huwawa without more ado. Here he turns to Gilgames and repeats his exhortation to kill the ogre at once (240–5). Humbaba then curses both his captors (246–57). All that remains of what was no doubt a very portentous speech is the last lines. Neither hero shall grow old (256). This curse comes true for Enkidu literally, in that he will soon die in his prime, but also in a sense for Gilgames, in that he is fated to fall in his quest for immortality and to squander his chance of perpetual rejuvnation. Humbaba's final curse is a standard one. He warns that Enkidu will have no one except his friend to look after his funeral and rites post mortem (257). The implication is that he will remain without family.

Enkidu's response is not completely preserved, but it is clear that the curses worry him and he urges immediate action (258–61). At last Gilgames listens (262). Drawing his great dagger, he stabs Humbaba in the neck, while Humbaba opens him up, evincing him and then extracts his 'teeth' (263–7). By 'teeth' is meant tusks, for this line surely alludes to the plunder of Syrian elephants' tusks for ivory.\(^10\) Tusks add to the elephantine imagery that the poet uses of Humbaba, whose mighty bellowing can be heard far off in the forest (SBV 4 202–5) and who leaves such well-trod tracks in the undergrowth (SBV IV 4–5). We gather from the Old Babylonian account of the killing of Huwawa that the ogre's death was accompanied by a terrifying portent, an earthquake that shook the hills (OB Ishchi 32–3). In the late version another lacuna intervenes but two lines are partly preserved that suggest the portent here is some kind of meteorological phenomenon (SBV V 268–9). The lacuna ends in a

\(^8\) OB III 160 1/188: humma ku dur ū anitu lu-šīramu.

narrative section telling how Gilgamesh and Enkidu fell the cedar (289–91). From the tallest tree of all Enkidu then makes (or proposes to make) a great wooden door for the temple of Enlil in Nippur (292–8). The implication is that he hopes the gift will help to appease Enlil for the killing of the forest’s guardian and the desecration of its sacred groves. The penultimate couplet of Tablet V describes the lashing together of the logs for floating downstream (299–300). The last tells of the heroes’ tasks on their raft of cedar: Enkidu is crewman, while Gilgamesh does something with his new trophy, the severed head of his victim (301–2). Humbaba’s head plays no further role in the epic but in the Sumerian tale the heroic deed empties it out of their pack before Enlil in Nippur, who rebukes them for their sacrilege.92

TABLET VI

The reaction of Enlil is not yet of interest to the poet of the Babylonian epic, who has another triumph in store for Gilgamesh and Enkidu before nemesis catches up with them. Instead it is Istar, the goddess of Urkuk, who comes on the scene. As Gilgamesh washes himself and his equipment, Istar spies him and is seized with desire (1–6).93 She wishes to know the sweet pleasure of making love to Gilgamesh, figuratively expressed as ‘tasting his fruits,’94 and proposes marriage to him (7–9). Her words are an inversion of the conventional verba solemnia of a marriage proposal.95 Similarly, as if she were a young man courting his intended, she tries to win his heart with the promise of gifts. She offers to send to fetch him her personal war chariot, pulled by a fantastic ‘mule team’ of lion monsters (10–12). She invites him to enter her house amid the fragrance of cedar (13), a detail that recalls passages in which brides-to-be sprinkle the floor of their parents’ houses with resinous perfume in preparation for the bridesmaids’ visit.96 The very structure and furniture of Istar’s palace will welcome Gilgamesh as he enters (14–15). This idea is also found in the Dumuzi corpus.

93 A perceptive commentary on much of Tablet VI, from l. 6 on, has been provided by Foster, Essays Pope, pp. 34–7.
95 As recognized by S. Greenberg, ‘The Old Babylonian marriage contract,’ JAOS 89 (1969), p. 516. Such sexual role reversal is permitted of goddesses addressing those subordinate to them (i.e. Istar to Gilgamesh, Reshek to Inanna in Ed 357, 82), because the male superiority conventional in a patriarchy is reversed at the same time. As a literary device such ‘symbolic inversion’ is discussed and elaborated by Rikih Harris, ‘Images of women in the Gilgamesh epic’, Studies Mem., pp. 219–30.
96 In the composition known as Inanna and Iddin-Dagla the goddess herself prepares the welcome for her royal bridegroom to the sacred marriage ceremony: liim “eku na li am.nu.a” “she sprinkles the ground with perfumes of cedar” (L 184). Further references to the sprinkling of such substances are collected by W. H. Ph. Rietz in his edition of that text, SKIZ, pp. 191–2. Note that, in a text from the courthship of Inanna and Dumuzi, the line u5,ku-ur-ma a li de tel.trl.s: e: li-ib-il-li-ib (Tab M 39 III 25 rev. 9 // 11, gloss according to C. Wilcke, Kassitien, p. 27), interpreted by Jacobsen, Harpy, p. 11, as referring to the scattering of cedar perfumes, is understood by others to mean ‘our neighbour’s sprinkled water on the ground’ (C. Wilcke, AJFO 23 (1970), pp. 86–7; B. Alster, Studies Hallo, p. 22; Sefani, Love Songs, p. 195).
treachery and her destructiveness (33–41). The last of these metaphors, the ‘biting shoe’, is also a phrase full of ominous threat, because in divination abreaction from an ill-fitting sandal is seen as an event with potentially fatal consequences. The most famous victim of a lethal ‘shoe-bite’ was Amar-Suen of Ur.\(^{109}\) Gilgamesh then reflects that none of her lovers had lasted long and narrates the unfortunate histories of those whom she had already cast aside (42–4).\(^{102}\) Her first love was Dumuzi, his reward perpetual grief (45–7). Then came various bestial dalliances in which there is an element of aetiology: the alallu-bird, probably a hoopoe, whose wing Istar broke, resulting in its characteristic call (48–50), the lion, whose fate is to be hunted with traps (51–2), and the horse, which, to its mother’s grief, is broken in for the service of men and must muddy water before drinking it (53–7). Next is the shepherd, whose reward for faithful devotion was to be turned into a wolf and chased by his own dogs (58–63). Last, there is the longer account of Istar’s failed seduction of a date cultivator called Isilênu (64–78).

There is much mythology here, some of it known to us from other sources, some not. Istar’s courtship with Dumuzi, their wedding and his death are well-known topics. The reference to wailing is to an annual religious rite, the women’s lamentation for the dead Tammuz that spread from Sumer all over the ancient Near East.\(^{103}\) The myths of Istar and the bird and Istar and the lion are not extant, but there are references in Sumerian literature to the goddess’s liaison with the horse, namely in Ewe and Grain 144–5: za haze (Isilênu,gin; [anise],kur.ka ki im.a.â.gi, ‘you, like [holy] Inanna, loved the horse’, and l 61 of the hymn to Ninegal: anle.kur.ka ni âa.k.a.zu.dê, ‘when you share a bed with the horse’.\(^{104}\) The reason for Istar’s traditional love of the horse may be rabid. Of all animals an erect stallion looks best equipped to service the goddess of sexual love. Istar’s affair with the shepherd is unknown except as an echo of the tradition that Dumuzi was a shepherd. The shepherd’s fate, however, is a common motif, which several commentators have compared with the myth of the huntsman Actaeon in Pausanias and Ovid, Actaeon, turned into a stag by Artemis as a punishment for seeing her bathing naked, was chased and torn to pieces by his own hounds.

The longer passage reporting Istar’s attempted seduction of the gardener Isilênu, his spurning of her and what she does in revenge, acts as a doublet of Gilgamesh’s encounter with the goddess.\(^{105}\) Istar’s penchant for gardeners also finds expression in the Akkadian Sargón

\(^{109}\) See the references to sîlik Istar collected by A. Goette, ‘Historical allusions in the Old Babylonian cuneiform texts’, JCS 1 (1947), p. 261, nos. 29–31; further C4D N2, p. 282.

\(^{102}\) Istar’s capricious treatment of her favourites is also reflected in a Hittite hymn (E. Laroche, Catalogue des textes hittites, no. 717): the relevant passage is edited by Ilse Wenger, Gott und Kraft der Istar-Šarruuka in Kleinasië (AOAT 36; Kevelaer and Neuss-Züphen-Vilna, 1981), p. 49. I owe these references to the kindness of V. Haas.


\(^{104}\) Ed. B. Assur and H. Vartapoutian, 'Lahar and Ashshu', Acta Som 9 (1987), pp. 24 and 38; Belmit, Ninëgal, pp. 30 and 99–100; see already M. Civic, 'Notes on Sumerian lexicography', T, JCS 20 (1966), p. 122. There is also an Ugaritic fragment that associates Istar’s Syrian counterpart, Ashshu (Istarre), with the horse: Vidal-Codoñer, PRUN 158, 6.

\(^{105}\) See already the full discussion by Axausch, History of Religions 26 (1966), pp. 167–71.
Legend, when Istar falls in love with Sargon as he works in the date grove of his adoptive father, and in the Sumerian tale of Inanna and Šukallatuda. The relationship of this episode of the Babylonian epic to the Sumerian myth has been treated by Volk in his recent edition of the latter. Isilânu’s career differs from Šukallatuda’s in that in the Sumerian text Inanna had another reason for her vendetta against the gardener. Taking advantage of her extreme exhaustion, he had made love to her while she slept. Here Isilânu is guilty of refusing the goddess’s advances and insulting her. The myth of Istar and Isilânu provides a precedent for Gilgamesh’s response to Istar’s overtures, but it has an independent function, too, as an aetiology of the enigmatic *dallatu* (various interpretations of this word are considered in the commentary on VI 75).

Having subjected Istar to this long barrage of abuse, Gilgamesh asks her rhetorically whether he can expect to receive any different treatment at her hands (79). Her reaction is that of an angry child. She runs off to complain to her parents of the rough treatment she has had to endure (80–6). Her father, Anu, knows his daughter well, for he suspects at once she was at fault (87–91). Istar then demands the Bull of Heaven, the constellation Taurus, with which to kill Gilgamesh in revenge (92–5). In order to get her way she threatens to release the dead from the Netherworld so that they overwhelm the living and eat them (96–100). In modern times the stuff of low-grade motion pictures, the threat of the risen dead plays on a universal human fear. It is a well-known topic in Babylonian literature and the threat is traditionally Istar’s to make. The two couples 11.97–100 are very similar to lines of Istar’s Descent and Nergal and Ereškigal. The wording of the threat varies slightly from text to text to manuscript to manuscript, particularly as regards the first couplet:

```
a-mah-ha-as dal-tam sik-ku-ru a-sab-bir
a-mah-ha-as si-ip-pu ma u-dâ-bal-kât a-nâl-ti(ig)m1a
u-se-lu-a mi-tu-ti ikkal-tu(gu)m1a bal-tu-ti
el bal-tu-ti i-ma ’4-du mi-tu-ti
CT 15 45, 17–20: Istar’s Descent, Kuyunjik MS
I shall strike the door, I shall break the bolt,
I shall strike the door-jamb and throw down the door-leaves!
I shall bring up the dead to consume the living,
the dead will outnumber the living!
```

```
a-ma-hat si-ip-pa u-is-lab-ka-sa [m1a]dallatu
’4-lab-bir gi-nir-na-an-ma a-sa-[ha? ]kâ-ar-ra
[el-ha-ar-ti mìtût防]ma ik-bal [ko]l-tu-[ti]i
el me-tu-te i-ma ’4-du [bal-tu-ti]
KAR 1 obv. 15′–18′: Istar’s Descent, Ashtur MS
I shall strike the door-jamb, I shall throw down the door-leaves,
I shall break the door-beam and pull [of] the knob!
```

Anu counters with a ploy he hopes will give Istar time to relent. Knowing the havoc the fiery bull will wreak on the city’s harvest and water supply, he insists that Uruk first be allowed seven years of plenty as a buffer against famine (101–5). Istar has already seen to this condition and reiterates her intention of avenging her humiliation (106–12). Anu has no choice but to give in; the bull is hers (113–14).

In the Sumerian poem it appears that Inanna’s father, Anu, comes across his daughter weeping and asks the reason for her tears. She tells how Gilgamesh is behaving like an ox on the rampage in Uruk, an image that occurs at this same point in a version of the Babylonian epic from Boğazköy. Then she asks her father for the Bull of Heaven with which to kill Gilgamesh. This interpretation, very different from that of the text’s most recent editors, is justified elsewhere. Clearly she intends this as his punishment for scorning her advances. Anu’s reluctance to let her have the bull is articulated in his objection that the celestial bull would find no sustenance on earth, for it grazes where the sun rises. Inanna’s riposte is a threat to scream until heaven and earth collide. In the face of such a disaster Anu has no choice but to give his daughter the bull.

In the Babylonian epic Istar leads the bull down to Uruk, where its fiery presence withers the vegetation and evaporates the waterways (115–18). Each great snort of its breath makes a huge pit in the earth like a vast hunter’s trap, into which the city’s men fall in numbers, first one hundred, then two hundred, then (in one textual tradition) three hundred, and finally Enkidu himself (119–24). Being heroically large, Enkidu is easily able to climb back out of the pit, whereupon he wrestles the bull by its horns (125–7). While in this precarious position he calls out to Gilgamesh, invoking the heroes’ need to live up to the people’s expectations (128–31). Then he reveals his plan: he will move to the bull’s back end and immobilize it by holding its tail and stepping on its hind leg, thus giving Gilgamesh the opportunity to skewer its neck with his dagger (132–40). In iconography it is conventional for heroes to pin an enemy down by stepping on the back of the hock, calf or ankle. The exact technique in the case of bull-wrestling is illustrated by a Babylonian clay plaque from the early second millennium and later cylinder seals: the one who holds the bull’s tail pushes his foot down on the back of the bull’s hock (one example of the scene is given in Fig. 1, on p. 101).

106 MB Boğ, rev. vi 15′–16′: i-su-i nî 6m6 [ . . . ] ụlânu.
As it was said, so it was done (141–6). A similar tactic is employed in the Sumerian poem: Enlil's holds the bull's tail and shout encouragement to Gilgamesh, who despatches the animal by striking the crown of its head with his battle-axe. In the Babylonian account the heroes next remove the bull's heart, present it to Šamaš and, after the proper ritual of prostration, retire to rest (147–50). The dedication of a slaughtered bull's heart to the sun god is also found in one of the Sumerian narrative poems about Lugalgabandu:

| am. su | am.tur ri.ka | li. is.ila gin | im. ma. ab | (var. im. ma. ku | li. i.uru ma gin | im. ma | k-arum
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| lip. bi im.ta.an.an | uttu a-ra.re nu nu.an | org

Lugalgabandu Epic I 360–1

Like an athlete he chased after the red bull, the bull of the mountains, like a wrestler he subdued it, he tore out its heart, he set it before the rising sun.

The context there is the aftermath of the hero's wrestling a wild bull to the ground. It seems that the two passages report a customary practice in the ancient Mesopotamian art of bull-slaying. At least two Old Babylonian clay plaques survive that depict a man thrusting his hand into the thorax of a supine bull, presumably to pull out its heart. One is illustrated here (Fig. 14).""
womenfolk of Uruk. At that point in the story Gilgamesh did not enjoy the favourable opinion of his people; now, however, he does. So the reference emphasizes the contrast between then and now, between the hero as the oppressor of Uruk and the hero as its saviour.

We are back on firm ground with the last five lines. Gilgamesh holds a celebratory banquet and those that are not on watch fall asleep, Enkidu among them (179–81). Then Enkidu awakes, having had a dream (182–3).

**TABLET VII**

Since the beginning of Tablet VII remains to be recovered, the reader must refer for the missing episode to Fragment f of MB Boğ, and, more profitably, to the Hitite paraphrase. Enkidu tells his dream to Gilgamesh. In it he observed Šamaš and the great gods, Anu, Enlil and Ea, arguing over the heroes’ punishment for killing Humbaba and despatching the Bull of Heaven. One of the pair must die. Despite Šamaš’s protestations, Enlil decrees that it will be Enkidu. Enkidu laments his fate to Gilgamesh. At the resumption of the Babylonian epic we do indeed find Enkidu talking to Gilgamesh (28–36), but his thoughts appear to have moved on from sad contemplation to angry retribution, for already he mentions the door (32). This is the great door of Lebanese cedar he had made for Enlil’s temple in Nippur after Humbaba’s demise. Now he speaks to it directly, describing how he had fashioned it and dedicated it (28–46). The question arises as to where this scene takes place. The conventional view is that the judgement of Enlil has had immediate effect and that Enkidu, already in a delirious decline, never rises from the bed in Uruk in which his doom was communicated to him. Enkidu wishes that instead of giving the door to Enlil, his executioner, he had bestowed it on Šamaš to adorn his temple in Sippar, for Šamaš had been a true ally (47–58). Apparently unable to undo his handiwork himself, he curses the door in terms that exactly reverse the prayers of blessing conventional in building and votive inscriptions (59–64).

Gilgamesh weeps (65–7). The beginning of his reply to his friend is not well preserved. It seems to contrast Enkidu’s former, rational state of mind with the delirium that has made him speak as he has (68–71). In his view the dream of doom is to be cherished as remarkable (72–4). Gilgamesh fully understands that it signifies death, for he cites as a truism the received opinion that the true pain of death is the sorrow it brings to those whom the deceased leaves behind (75–6). He will pray for his friend’s wellbeing to Šamaš and the great gods (77–81). Evidently he hopes by this means to reverse their decree. Gilgamesh finishes by promising to make a statue of Enkidu using lavish quantities of gold (82–3). Later he will make the customary funerary statue of the costliest materials available but such an object is not the issue here, it seems. The purpose of a statue at this juncture would presumably be as a votive figure, set up before the gods to remind them of Enkidu’s plight and Gilgamesh’s petition. Enkidu tells him not to waste his time, for Enlil has spoken and, as everybody knows, he is one god who never alters his judgement: Enkidu will surely die before his time (84–9).

The subject matter of the next ninety-two lines is essentially that of MB Ur 90–133 // MB Ur 1–42, 151–71 // MB Ur 48–69). As dawn breaks Enkidu turns to the rising sun and curses the hunter (90–5). Evidently he saw this person, who first spied him in the wilderness, as an indirect instrument of his misfortune, for their initial encounter was the first link in the chain of events that led inexorably to his doom. The curses require that, like Enkidu, the hunter shall never emerge from the shadow of his friend’s success (96). Earning a pitance, he shall be dogged by bad luck (97–9). Next Enkidu curses the prostitute, Šâmîbâ (100–5). The text uses standard language. The sentiments expressed are articulated in similar fashion in Ḫattuša’s Descent to the Netherworld, on the occasion of the cursing of Aššu-namer by Ereškigal:

```
ai-ka "aššu-la-ac-mu-ris su-un-ka is-na raabal(gal)"
CT 15 47, 2: Nineveh MS
Come, Aššu-namer, I will curse you with a great curse!
```

Several of the curses that Enkidu lays on Šâmîbâ are also found in the same text:

```
gili(gissu) duri(bâd) /u-umu ma-za-zu-ka
as-hup-po-tu /lu mu-sa-bu-ki-ka
šab-ru-ul lu-sa-za-um la-zi-la-ku le-er-ka
CT 15 47, 5–7
```

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gili(gissu) duri(bâd) lu-umu ma-za-zu-ka
ak-su-po-tu lu-umu ma-za-za-ka
KAR 1 rev. 22–3
```

May the lee of the city wall be where you stand!
May the thresholds be where you stand!
May drunk and sober strike your cheek!

A similar couplet appears in an Old Babylonian incantation, with reference to a dog:

```
[k]ul-ki du-ri-im mu-za-za-zu-zi
as-ku-po-tum na-ar-la-zi-lo
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**SYNOPSIS AND EXEGESIS: TABLET VII**


For Foster, Enkidu’s address to a door, and one he cannot even see, is symptomatic of his loss of reason. (For Foster’s commentary, often very instructive, on episodes in Tablet VII see Essays, Paps, pp. 37–40). A dissenting view is that of Botéro, who restores ll. 28–32 to contain Enkidu’s proposal to go with Gilgamesh to Nippur, and their arrival at the entrance to the temple of Enlil (l. 31 = Borsû, Sippar, p. 136, 307’u l’enneri [du temple d’Enlil(?)]’, i.e. i-na na- [néb BE Ell...]). This remains highly uncertain. More text is needed.
The soul of the city wall is where he waits, the thresholds are where he lies.

Such curses were thus traditionally associated with human beings that were kept on the margins of society, outside the bounds of respectability, 121 and animals that were shunned as potentially dangerous. As an individual, Šamhat is the target of Enkidu’s anger most obviously because she was directly instrumental in bringing Enkidu to civilized society and eventually to his present predicament. His curses demand that she and her kind be denied all the usual pleasures of women in a traditional society—a comfortable home, children and the company of other respectable ladies—and that the finery the prostitute displays to signal her profession shall be dirtied in pleasing her clients (106–14). She shall be an outcast, forced to live and work in uncomfortable circumstances, 122 reviled by human society and persecuted by the law (115–20). The leaking rafters over her head shall attract the owl (121–2). The association of this bird and the prostitute is well known and replete with significance, for both were active by night, and the owl is traditionally viewed as a sad and solitary creature, as well as one of bad omen. 123 A short gap in the text deprives us of the last curses. When it resumes, Enkidu gives the reason for his virility: by seducing him in the wilderness, Šamhat deprived him of strength and purity (127–31). Enkidu’s anger with the prostitute thus originates from more than the part she played in the mechanics of the plot. It is also an expression of a common human emotion, the loss for the loss of innocence.

Šamhat hears Enkidu’s curse and rebukes him for using such harsh words against the woman who civilized him and gave him the opportunity to offend the magnificent Gilgamesh (132–8). He predicts that Gilgamesh will arrange a splendid funeral for him, laying him out in state on a funerary bed, placing a seat for him on his left at the funerary banquet and summoning the gods of the Netherworld to participate in the feast (139–43). 124

121 The implicit equation in these passages of Gilgamesh and Istar’s Descent of Apsû-namer, the prototype ārimu (Nineveh MS) or hekku’s (Alattu MS), with the prostitute is strong evidence, often cited, that the ārimu and his like were, among other things, male prostitutes. See most recently W. G. Lambert, ‘Prostitution’, in V. Haas (ed.), Äußere Macht und Ruhmstreben (Köln 32; Konstanz, 1992), pp. 148–53; and S. M. Mard, ‘Kurzweil und ārimu und ihr Stand in der babylonischen Gesellschaft’, ibid., pp. 159–71.

122 In Babylon the city wall traditionally afforded shelter to prostitutes, as is confirmed by an OB cult song in which Istar invites the city’s young men to an orgy there (W. von Soden, Ein spät-babylonisches jāhrm-Präsidium für Istar, Or pa 60 (1991), p. 340, 14): a-na šu-a-dî di-ir-im i-mi-šak, ‘let us go to the lee of the city wall’. See also the discussion of this text by N. A. Hurvitz, ‘An Old Babylonian enû-bāldeš’, Studia Orientalia, p. 552.


Two Semitic elements allude to funerary rituals in which a bed and chair are provided for the deceased, who is represented by an anthropomorphic figure or statue see D. Katz, ‘The messenger, Lullu and the cult of the dead’, RA 93 (1999), pp. 107–18. The related custom of reserving a chair for the ghost of the departed is described by J. A. Scarce, ‘Soul Emplacement in ancient Mesopotamian funerary rites’, in L. Girodo and J. Stadel (eds.), Magic and Divination in the Ancient World (Groningen, forthcoming). See also the grave inscription of Queen Muhammadu-mukinlall-Numu, which curse ni-ma-ur-ka-ud (II) šu-la-lu-ge-zi-ku (I)ra-la (a) pa-an eagam(a)(din)(in) ni-ša, ‘any future person who removes my chair from the congregation of ghosts’, i.e. from occasions when the shades gather for their offerings (Ahdallah Fadlallah, ‘Die Grabschrift der Muhammadu-mukinlall-Numu aus Nimrud/Kalhu’, Baghd. Mitt. 21 (1990), p. 473, 5–7; cf. p. 478). In funerary offerings to the shades of the dead such chairs were placed to the left of the ritual were (kr)u. Left is not normally a favourable direction, in Mesopotamia as elsewhere. Presumably the notion was that what had been lost the living would get to the dead.

125 Cf. SBVII 189 and parallels.
As Enkidu looked around him in the gloom, the first things that caught his eye were the crowns of dead kings lying stacked in a great pile and then the shades of those who had worn them (193–5). From the well-known Babylonian poem of Istar’s descent we know that all apparel was taken from the dead as they entered the infernal gates. The shades were naked. Stripped of insignia and clothing, kings and commoners looked all alike. Though kings when alive moved in the company of the great gods (196–7), their ghosts shared the pitiful existence of their former subjects. One can detect here the view that earthly power counted for nothing in the afterlife: the dominion of kings ended with death. Their crowns, no longer of use, lie discarded as vivid symbols of the impermanence of human authority. 136

Enkidu could also see the shades of others who enjoyed privilege and power on earth, epitomized by various types of priests and temple personnel (198–201). This passage is reminiscent of several other texts, leaving no doubt that dead priests were a traditional feature of the chthonic realm. See especially the Sumerian Death of Gilgamesh, where there are now two relevant passages. In the first: Enlil grants Gilgamesh a vision of his final journey:

\[ \text{ki en nù.a.še lagar nù.a.še} \]
\[ \text{la mush nú.dingir nù.a.še} \]
\[ \text{gu.dā tun.nù.a.še gada mun.ū.na.še} \]
\[ \text{nù.dingir nù.as gi.nu mun.un.na.še} \]

To where the en lies, where the lagar lies, where the homaḫu and the enu lies, where the guda lies, where the linen-clad priest lies, where the enu lies, where the "faithful one" lies.

Death of Bilgames M 104–7 // 194–7,
ed. Cavigneaux, Gilgamesh et La Mort, pp. 29, 32

In the second passage the following appear, listed after the gods of the Netherworld, as the recipients of funerary gifts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>enu</th>
<th>guda</th>
<th>enù.a</th>
<th>homaḫu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the dead [en, to the] dead lagar,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[to the dead] homaḫu and enu,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guda, linear-clad priest (and) [ ... ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar groups of dead priests occur in other Sumerian literature, where for example they share in welcoming the shade of the dead king in the Death of Ur-Namtu, and receive funerary offerings at the New Year in the Sumerian hymn to Ninugal. 138

Aside from the great congress of dead priests, Enkidu also noticed the shades of legendary kings like Etana and gods like Šakkan (202). His particular report of Etana may be a subtle allusion to the theme of the epic: here was a man who ascended to heaven but nevertheless remained mortal. So even before Gilgamesh sets out on his quest for the secret of Uta-napišti, Enkidu’s dream holds a cryptic signal that human beings can never attain the eternal life of the gods. The mention of Šakkan may also bear a hidden message, for this god is the ‘lord of wild herds’ (bēl bāti). Enkidu grew up among this deity’s animals and as one of their kind. Šakkan’s appearance in the Netherworld, singled out from all the other deities who might have been mentioned at this point, perhaps anticipates and symbolizes Enkidu’s own imminent demise.

Finally Enkidu came before Queen Ereshkigal and saw, sitting beside her, her scribe keeping tally of the shades (203–5). In a woman’s household the scribe is naturally female, a goddess called Belet-šeri. 139 Ereshkigal saw Enkidu and demanded to know who had sent him (206–8), but the continuation of Enkidu’s account of his dream and the text that followed is almost entirely lost in a lengthy damaged passage and lacuna. An isolated phrase, [tablet zumar]uš, ["I saw his person"] (221), clearly suggests that the missing passage included a report by Enkidu of individuals that he saw in the Netherworld, perhaps people known to him such as famous figures of legend (as in the Odyssey XI and the Aeneid VI). Given the presence in it of so many of the themes and episodes of the Sumerian poems, it does not seem likely that the eleven-tablet epic has failed to have included a scene in which Enkidu reports to Gilgamesh the fate of the dead. As a necromancy, the famous dialogue that terminates the Sumerian tale of Bilgames and the Netherworld and the prose Tablet XII, in which Gilgamesh asks Enkidu about the conditions encountered in the Netherworld by the

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136 Collection rules out the reading ši.ū.šu ba suggested by C. Wicke, CBUA 17, pp. 83–9, fn. 5.
138 Households headed by women typically employed women as clerks. Note the naddūnu woman’s use of female scribes in the OB doiter at Sippar and the several such scribes in the employ of queen’s households at Mari and in Assyria. See in general S. A. Meyer, ‘Women and communication in the ancient Near East’, JCS 41 (1987), pp. 540–7; for Mari in particular see N. Ziolkowski, Le haraut de Zimrû-Lim (Brussels: Bibliotheca marianum 4, Paris, 1999), pp. 91–3; at Nineveh note the six female scribes (A.K4.5)** in SAAVII 24 rev. 2, recorded among other women of a large household or other institution, presumably a royal harem; at Kalhu a woman Atûrû-palî appears as a “scribe of the queen’s household” in two late seventh-century documents from the Governor’s Palace archive (see now K. Rader (ed.), Protopography NA Empire I-I (Helsinki, 1998), pp. 235–6).
TABLE VIII

At dawn on the following day Gilgamesh initiates the rites of mourning with a great lament, apostrophizing his friend in words that recall Enkidu's early life among the herds of gazelles and wild donkeys (1-6) and calling on those who knew him and witnessed his life to grieve for him. The literary structure of the lamentation is deliberately conceived to present a crescendo of grief, progressing from the widest sphere of Enkidu's acquaintance to the anguished figure of his closest friend, Gilgamesh himself. The mourners are to include inanimate parts of the natural world, the 'paths of the Cedar Forest', by which is meant the tracks trodden by the untamed hero when still in the wild and retraced in the journey with Gilgamesh (10-28), and the mountains, meadows and rivers that also figured in his heroic

132 The two versions were analysed together by Landsberger, RA 62 (1968), pp. 132-5.

133 The lament has been studied from the formal literary point of view by H.-P Müller, 'Gilgamesch's Trauergesang um Enkidu und die Gärung der Tistenklage', ZA 68 (1978), pp. 233-20.

134 Gilgamesh's eulogistic familiarity with the Cedar Forest is mentioned in the Yale tablet (OB III 106-16), and is also implicit in Humbaba's reminiscence of their previous encounter (SBV 89).

Shades of various classes of person, takes the form of question and answer. Whether or not the dream report suspected in the present context shared that format, the Sumerian passage would nevertheless have been its ultimate inspiration.

The text resumes as Enkidu commends his memory to his friend (251-2), Gilgamesh can only reply with a dream, perhaps that it was unique (253). With that, Enkidu's strength gives out and he lingers for twelve days on his deathbed (254-61), an episode that is known in slightly different form from MB Megiddo. Then he summons Gilgamesh one last time to lament his misfortune (262-3). As the text tails off into a lacuna it appears that Enkidu compares his lot, no doubt unfavourably, with the death of those who fall in battle (264-7). This is a reappearance of the theme that a heroic death brings fame and glory. Dying in one's bed brings no such compensation. Similar thoughts occur to Gilgamesh in the same context in the Sumerian poem of Bilgamesh and the Netherworld, when he laments that Enkidu did not die in a conventional manner, of disease or old age or in battle, but was seized by the Netherworld:

ki nam.ni.a.ke, m.e. a nu.un.shub kur.re im.ma.an.dab;
(cf. XII 62 asar tāshē sūbē ti imquit erētu tābāsu)
Bilgamesh and the Netherworld 229 // 237

He did not fall in battle, the place of manly endeavour—the Netherworld seized him.

The missing end of the tablet presumably dealt with Enkidu's final moments. Humbaba's curses surely come true. Enkidu dies with none beside him but Gilgamesh.

The appeal to parts of the natural world finds an echo, perhaps deliberate, in a Neo-Assyrian text that gives a son's account in the first person of the burial rites of his father, who is very probably to be identified as King Esarhaddon. The text opens with the description of a landscape in mourning, lines that can be arranged as poetry:

ui-nam-ba-a li-ra-a-te i-ta-nap-pa-la a-tap-pe
la iš-giš [iš-giš] u inna(gurun) kāli (di-lu) li-mu 4 ud-di-ra pa-nu-li-un
ib-ka-u gi-3 pa-a-te₂ iš i-nu di-di-ta-[a]-dā₂₃
i-lar-ki-x x (x) x 3 ₃₃ gašṣappātī [kunu]₂₄ [es] ...
uru-ta-zu-er-i-mi₂₅ ...
₃₅₅ uš-ta [...]
dī[ta][b]₂₆ [es] [es] [es]
K 6323 + 1-11 (coll.), ed. TüLp, p. 85

The canals wailed, the ditches giving echo, all trees and fruit, their visages were darkened (with sorrow). The orchards wept, which in spring were so [fruitful].

The orchards wept, which in spring were so [fruitful].
(Thus) made the... the thresholds [...]
[... ] kept howling, [... ] kept [... [...]
the walls [...]

Gilgamesh also appeals to more animate beings, from the trees of the Cedar Forest and all the animals of the far country that Enkidu knew in his youth (14-17) to the people of Uruk that he knew in his maturity (9-10, 21-2), those who provided his food and comfort: the ploughman, herdsman, brewer, prostitute and others that attended to his needs (23-34). The lament then focuses, it seems, on Enkidu's intimate relations, beginning with a broken couple mentioning a wedding and a wife, continuing with people who are mourning as if they were his own brothers and sisters and concluding with his young wife (35-40).

The fact that Gilgamesh's lament mentions a wedding and a wife (whose if not Enkidu's?) and assumes that Enkidu had parents needs some explanation, because he was famously an orphan and, for Humbaba's curses to come true, remained without family. The solution is to suppose that a lament for a dead hero is a standard literary form and, accordingly, that
certain motifs will occur whether or not they are appropriate to the subject. In this view, it would be a matter of literary convention that the lament provides Enkidu with the human kith and kin that in the Babylonian epic his extraordinary origins denied him.

Finally the lament comes to the most important mourner, Gilgamesh himself. The hero speaks of his own grief, invoking an image of Enkidu as his most treasured possession, a trusty weapon, a choice garment that has been snatched from him by an invisible thief (41–5). Then Gilgamesh recalls the victories they won together and asks what kind of sleep has seized his friend now, that he no longer responds (50–6). The contrast between the dying man’s moribund state and his recent vigour is poignant. Though the relationship between the two passages is emotional rather than formal, a similar contrast informs the opening lines of the Sumerian poem we call the Death of Gilgamesh. As he ends his great lament, Gilgamesh feels his friend’s heart and, finding no pulse, covers the body and, walking around it, tears his hair and rends his clothes (57–64).

The next section begins again with the formula mimmutū tēri ina namāri. The repetition, here and at ll. 92 and 213, from this phrase from 1.1 probably marks the passage of the days established for Enkidu’s mourning and burial. As the text stands, the tablet can be interpreted as describing activities on four days: day one, the lament at the deathbed, already discussed (1–6); day two, the fashioning of the funerary statue and other preparations for the funeral (65–91); day three, the public display of the grave-goods, the prayers to the gods of the Netherworld and further ritual (92–212); day four, more rites (213–end). The text does not yet report when the body was interred, but burial could not have taken place before the display of grave-goods on the third day. Gilgamesh later recalls that he wept for Enkidu for seven days and nights before allowing burial. Though the circumstances of Enkidu’s death are very different, the seven days of grieving for Enkidu can now be seen to go back to the Sumerian poem of Gilgamesh and the Netherworld, where they occur in a passage that is not present in the Nippur sources. A mourning period of seven days and nights also occurs on the death of Nabonidus’ mother, Adad-guppi. However, it does not seem possible to impose on Tablet VIII, damaged though it is, as many as seven occurrences of mimmutū tēri ina namāri to mark the lapse of such a period. There is no need for the story to be absolutely consistent in such details. The expression ‘seven days and nights’ is formulaic.

139 C. Müller, SAA 68, p. 237.
140 The custom of adorning the body of a near one is reflected in many other Sumerian and Akkadian literary texts; see B. Alster, ‘The mythology of mourning’, Antike Welt 5 (1983), pp. 1–16.
141 The sequence of preparations and rituals that accompanied the burial of a notable, at least in seventh-century Assyria, is preserved in the well-known NA letter to Esarhaddon from his agent, Mari-Star, on the subject of the substitute king and queen (SM 1 352, cvb. 13–16); kemūtu(lu-ki-ia) ni-ta-pa-dāl-dan-mu-ge kaw-nu-ri tab-li-ta-ka-ru kāl-ka-ma-ri-ga-ru bu-kis-tul-si-5-ti-li-ga-pa, ‘we prepared the tomb; they were made to look good, treated with respect, their “dingly” was made, they were interred, dressed in the rite of burning (caska-inclusio) was performed.’
142 OB VA 9 BM ii 8, but 6 days and 7 nights in SB X [68] 135/235.
143 Gilgamesh and the Netherworld MS M 103, obv. 10–13, quoted in Ch. 4, the section on Enkidu.
144 C. J. Gadd, ‘The Harran inscriptions of Nabonidus’, ASR 8 (1958), p. 52, 26–7; 7 ni-ri-ri u 7 mu-ša-zi-zi. The period of mourning for someone newly deceased seems not to have been fixed, according to a source other Babluazah and his army went only three days for Adad-guppi (Chronicle 7 614).

Early on the second morning, Gilgamesh summons his craftsmen to make a funerary statue (or figurine) of Enkidu (65–72). A break in the text denies us complete knowledge of how this statue was to look, but all manner of very costly materials were involved. The purpose of the statue was apparently to represent the deceased at the funerary banquet and, after the interment of the body, either to act as the focus for the regular post mortem rites through which the Babylonians paid their respects to the dead or, as part of the interment, to provide a home for the deceased’s ghost. The magnificence of this statue is also reported in the bugus Letter of Gilgamesh, in which Gilgamesh threatens a foreign ruler with military action unless he provides a sumptuous tribute, including materials for Enkidu’s chest and necklaces. When the text resumes Gilgamesh repeats Šamaš’s earlier prediction (SB VII 140–7) that Enkidu will lie in state amid full honours and national mourning and that afterwards Gilgamesh will take to the wilderness (84–91).

At dawn on the third morning Gilgamesh chooses the gold treasure that will be interred with Enkidu. The first part of this section has long been known (92–115), but the damaged state of the text means that it yielded little beyond the knowledge that the grave-goods must have been described here. The end of this section has now been recovered on MS M 103, which, though itself also damaged, goes a long way towards filling the extensive lacuna that existed between columns iii and iv on MS V, providing a sequence of 53 lines not witnessed by any other source and a further eleven lines overlapping with MS RV. The text reveals more clearly the extraordinary opulence of the items selected for the grave (117–30).

The choosing of the grave-goods ends with the slaughter of animals to provide meat for a funerary banquet offered to the gods of the Netherworld (131–5). In other literature this aspect of funerals is known from the Sumerian poems of the Death of Gilgamesh, where a feast is provided for the chthonic deities, and the Death of Ur-Nammu, in which Ur-Nammu sacrifices oxen and sheep in large numbers on his arrival in the Netherworld. Accounts of first-millennium royal funerals agree with the literary texts. The Assyrian text that describes the funeral of (probably) Esarhaddon reports the delivery of large numbers of animals, horses, oxen and especially sheep. No doubt the oxen and sheep were destined for slaughter and consumption. The slaughter of sheep was part of the rites that attended the burial of Adad-guppi. The notion of the dead king serving a banquet in the Netherworld

144 On this see Scouloudi, ‘Souil emplacements’ (fn. 124), who favours the latter explanation.
145 On the Letter of Gilgamesh see the eponymous sub-section of Ch. 3, where the relevant passage is quoted.
146 Carigræce, Gilgamesh et la Mère, pp. 29 and 32: M 103 // 193 (v. 28): kalam ga n.xa.nu (ma.la), ni. dinger galgar duu.ta, duu.ta ba [ba], ‘to the great Anunnak gods sit down to the funerary banquet. The context of the meal is the moment when Gilgamesh descends to the Netherworld, so ki.ši.gi ( = kiapa) here refers to a ritual offering made at the time of interment.
147 Ur-Nammu A 81–2 (ed. Püttler-Hawker, Ur-Nammu, p. 116): kugal-e gu-us ma-ab-gaz-e udu ma-ab-lâr re / jar/or lâa lâr duu.ta ga-lu-ga.na, ‘the king was slaughtering oxen, providing abundant sheep, they (or the shades) were sitting (with) Ur-Nammu at great feasts.’
148 K 6333+ ii 25–5’10 ankle.loum 30 gu-us, 3 mu udâdu [nur] kám-la-la-lâr lâr (or bâšû), ‘(numerous items as grave-goods, then) ten horses, thirty oxen, three hundred sheep, all this (from) the king of Babylos’ (less probably Uaratum; copy: John; A. D. 941 ii 6–9, ed. MacGinnis, SAA 11 f. 1987, p. 3, ii 4–5, Naṣrabad, Basarsangaṇi, pp. 24–5 with photograph).
is, of course, a literary conceit. In practical terms the funerary banquet of the Netherworld gods, dead royal predecessors, priests and other notables took the form of offerings of food and libations of drink.\textsuperscript{147} The offering of meat to the chthonic deities is implied in a ritual from \textit{Bītu namri}, in which the exorcist brings forward sacrificial lambs and various jointed parts of meat, makes libations to Ea, Šamaš and Marduk and presents \textit{hišpu} offerings to the Anunnaki.\textsuperscript{148} In the present passage, the carrying of the meat to the Netherworld deities evidently implies that joints of meat were placed in the tomb for Enkidu to take with him and present on his arrival.\textsuperscript{149}

The next section describes the ritual display of those items among the grave-goods that are dedicated to the gods, in turn to Eštar, the moon god, Ereshkigal and the deities of the chthonic court (134–203). The passage exhibits a formal pattern: first the funerary gift is described (often it is an object appropriate to the character or function of its recipient), then the deity to whom the gift is dedicated, along with the statement that the object was displayed to Šamaš, and finally a stereotyped prayer expressing the wish that in turn the deity welcome Enkidu and help his shade on its way. The display of the grave-goods before the sun god (i.e. in the open air) was a customary ritual at funerals, as we know from the Neo-Assyrian account of a royal burial quoted above. After the funerary goods are listed and the body is laid to rest the text closes with the following passage:

\begin{quote}
\textit{ā-um-ut šur-tha(kī.šul.tuk) ḫaspī(kī.šab.bar) min-na tar-sti-it kišiška(gī.kī.māt) ri-mat be-lu-ti-lī ša i-rām-mu ma-har šamaš(ūtu) ī-bal-lim-ma i-ti a-bi(ad) ba-ni-a a-na kīšiška akkūn} {\textit{kī日晚}}\textsuperscript{150} {\textit{wa}a-ta-ta a-na mal-ki a-um-na-ki i-tāni(diŋgīr)} {\textit{wa}a-bi-ut uter(kī)} {\textit{wa}a-qā-a-ti} K 6323+ rev. ii 13’–24\textsuperscript{151}
\end{quote}

Items of gold and silver, every requisite for the tomb, the trappings of his lordly estate that the father who sired me loves, I displayed before Šamaš and placed in the tomb with him. I bestowed gifts on the Princes, the Anunnaki and the gods that reside in the Netherworld.

There the Princes are the rulers of the realm of the dead, if not simply a title of the Anunnaki.\textsuperscript{152} The technical term for the display of the grave-goods to the sun god was \textit{zak-limtu}, ‘display’,\textsuperscript{153} cognate with \textit{kulluma}, the verb used in \textit{Tablet VIII} and the Assyrian text to describe the process.\textsuperscript{154} The ritual took place on the same day that the body was laid out on its bed of honour. The evidence of both texts demonstrates that some, if not all, the goods intended with a body were considered gifts for the immortal denizens of Hades.\textsuperscript{155}

The pattern of I. 135–203 is in other respects very reminiscent of the Sumerian Death of Ur-Nammu, where first the object to be deposited in the grave is described, then the relevant deity is named and finally a stereotyped prayer of dedication is offered.\textsuperscript{156} However, this elaborate structure is not shared by the much more concise worded list of funeral offerings in the Death of Gilgamesh.\textsuperscript{157} A listing of the deities cited in these three texts (see table below) shows a lack of complete agreement in the identity of the chthonic deities and the order in which they appear, but there is accord between the two later texts in the sequence immediately following Ereshkigal.\textsuperscript{158}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Death of Gilgamesh & Death of Ur-Nammu & SB Gilgamesh VIII \\
\hline
Ereshkigal & Nergal & Ittar \\
Namtar & Bilgames (Gilgamesh) & Namra-at \\
\textit{dim.pl.kiš} & Ereshkigal & Ereshkigal \\
Bittī & Dumuzi & Dumuzi \\
Ningishzida & Namtar & Namtar \\
Dumuzi & Šu-ilisig & Šu-ilisig \\
ancestors of Enil & Ningishzida & Qaṣṣa-ibītu \\
Šu-ip & \textit{dim.pl.m.ka} & Nīṣilah-utilūtimma \\
Šakkan (šu.ru, gān) & Nīnīzīna & Bibbu \\
Ninḫursag & & [several more deities] \\
Anunnā & & \\
Igli (šum.gal.e.ne) & & \\
dead priests and priestsess & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{List of Deities}
\end{table}

The list in \textit{Tablet VIII} opens with two decidedly celestial deities, Eštar and Šin as Namra-šīt.\textsuperscript{159} As Venus and the moon, these two have no permanent place in the Netherworld. One can only speculate that, as they sank below the horizon in the west, Eštar and her father were

\begin{quote}
sak-ša-mu, without him (so the sun god) being present a display cannot be made for one descending to the grave’ (so Akk., Sumer.; ‘the ones coming forth (from the Netherworld cannot find food’).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{147} On such offerings, made to the Anunnaki at intervals during the year as well as at the funeral itself, see A. Tsuchimochi, \textit{Untersuchungen zur Tongdokasse: Keşipum im allm. Mesoopotamia} (AOAT 216, Kardesser Neukiriemen-Vuyu, 1985), pp. 184–200; also the passage of the Sumerian hymn to Nisrēgal cited above in fn. 128.

\textsuperscript{148} \textit{BBR} 26 iv 32–52, ed. Tsuchimochi, op. cit., p. 195. Such meat was doubtless provided by the \textit{udū kī šul ga = imāmer kī šul ga}, ‘sheep of the funerary offerings’, listed in 11th X.MIII.153 (MSLIV 1, p. 20).

\textsuperscript{149} The recovery of animal bones from human burials in archaeological excavations at \textit{Teppe Chamsafar}, \textit{the Royal Cemetery of Ur} (pig, sheep and goats) and other early Mesopotamian sites corroborates this conclusion.


\textsuperscript{151} See Ch. 13, the commentary on \textit{SB VII} 143.

\textsuperscript{152} See J. A. Scarce, \textit{Taklima: a display of grave goods?}, \textit{NABU} 1991/3; Nārābādi, \textit{Bana-nūtugīn}, pp. 62–4. \textit{SB VIII} shows that this was not only an Assyrian custom. The need for public display is encapsulated in a bilingual hymn extolling Šamaš best known from a \textit{LB} copy from \textit{Uruk}. There it is written (Falkenstein, \textit{UVB} 15 (1939), p. 36 and pl. 32, 13): u-šur-gal-ka a-nī ša-nū-niš-giš-gu n(a) u-ma-pa u-šur-gal-ka a-nī ša-nū-niš-giš-gu n(a) u-ma-pa u-

\textsuperscript{153} So also the text that describes the funerary rituals of a Neo-Assyrian royal personage (see above, fn. 124), which begins (I. 1): \textit{brēškanu} i-rā-ru radak-tar a-hal-līnu, ‘they set up the bed, they make the display’.

\textsuperscript{154} So already J. S. Cooper, ‘The fate of maššinni: death and afterlife in ancient Mesopotamia’, in H. Ovadiah (ed.), \textit{Death and the Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religion} (Westport, Const., 1991), p. 24: ‘grave goods . . . were intended both for the deceased’s personal use and for sacrifice to the deities that control the world he is about to enter’.


\textsuperscript{156} Caviglia, \textit{Gilgamesh and the Dead}, p. 23, 9–22.


\textsuperscript{158} For this as the Akkadian equivalent of Sumerian \textit{Alūm-babbar} see the incantation CT 16 15 = \textit{元旦} IV v 19–20: šon-ur-iš-kum.babbar ca keššu / šiš-šu-ta-num-na-ši, also \textit{BAb X} 1, p. 103, no. 23, 5–6.
perceived to accompany the shades of the dead to the Netherworld. The deity that follows would be expected to be the senior deity of the Netherworld. This is Ereshkigal, as in the Death of Bilgams but in contrast with the Death of Ur Nammu, where Nergal takes precedence. Nergal’s ascendency over Ereshkigal became the norm from the Old Babylonian period on, but Ereshkigal’s former paramountcy is also preserved in other Babylonian literature, for example in Ishtar’s Descent. The presence of Ereshkigal there and in Tablet VIII suggests, not surprisingly, that both texts rely on Old Babylonian traditions. The most significant omissions in Tablet VIII are of Ningirsu, the ‘chamberlain’ (gazali) of the Netherworld, and his family. Also missing is the gatekeeper, Bitti (or Bidu). Perhaps they appeared in the broken section, ll. 184ff., although this would place them after Ereshkigal’s more menial servants.

The end of the section describing the gifts to the gods is poorly preserved, with two short lacunae interrupting the sequence of lines. As the second lacuna begins, or shortly afterwards, the subject changes. A few broken lines of direct speech are preserved, which mention the speech ‘Judge of the Anunnaki’ (207–10). The significance of these lines is still unclear. Tablet VIII is, to some extent, modelled on the pattern of the Sumerian Death of Bilgams, in which the hero is told in a dream of his post mortem role as judge of the Netherworld. In the Babylonian epic, however, it seems to me unlikely that this knowledge would have been revealed to Gilgamesh (though Ninurta reveals it to the audience in Tablet IV), least of all at this point in the story. The focus of ll. 207–10 must be on the treatment of Enkidu’s shade—or the shades of men generally—in the Netherworld. The section ends with a narrative couplet (211–12) that perhaps can be elucidated from the Death of Bilgams. There, the people of Uruk dam the River Euphrates and build Bilgams’s tomb in its bed, here it may be that Gilgamesh plans the same security for Enkidu’s tomb. However that may be, the text continues on the fourth dawn with Gilgamesh setting out dishes of syrup and ghee before the rising sun (213–19). Presumably this display is some further funeral rite, perhaps a preliminary to the excavation of a tomb and Enkidu’s burial. The final interment is expected at the end of Tablet VIII, but at present all we have of the last thirty or so lines are a bare two words (229–30).

**TABLET IX**

Of all the tablets of Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh, this one has benefited least from new discoveries of text. Column i of MSS D // J still presents considerable problems of interpretation. When the text begins, Gilgamesh is wandering in the wilderness mourning his friend, just as Šamaš had predicted and as he himself had vowed to do (ll. 1–2). Suddenly the narrative turns into a report in the first person singular, articulating first the hero’s horror that, like Enkidu, he too must die and then the purpose of his wandering, to find the legendary Uta-napišti (3–7). The monologue then turns to a new topic, telling how the speaker has encountered some lions in a remote place, far from help. He was afraid of them and prayed for his safety to the moon god and some other nocturnal deity or deities (8–12). The prayer closes the monologue and the narrative resumes in the third person. Gilgamesh awakes suddenly, startled by a dream (13). Opinions are divided as to the function of this line: for some it merely reports Gilgamesh’s waking from the dream, for others it serves to introduce an account of the dream. If the former it would seem that the hero himself must be the subject of the following line, despite the fact that the phrase išezu balātu, ‘he grew happy to be alive’, does not match his anguished mood; if the latter, some other being can be its subject.

An insight into this question may be gained by comparing l. 13 with a standard line of Sumerian poetry that, though perhaps not exactly equivalent, is very closely related:

\[
\text{PN i.im.zi mú.mu.da i.im.bu.lu.ú.ú.sá.ga.á.m}
\]

Bilgams and Ḫuwwa A 71 // B 78–9 // Dumuzi’s Dream 17 //

Lugalbanda 1 356 // Death of Bilgams M 126–7

\[
\text{PN arose—it had been a dream; he shuddered—it had been a deep sleep.}
\]

An older version of the line appears in Gudea’s hymn on cylinders:

\[
\text{gú.de.a i.zi ú.sá.ga.á.m / i.lu.lu.ma.mu.dam}
\]

Gudea Cyl. A xii 12–13, ed. Edzard, *RIMB* 3/1, p. 76

Gudea arose—it had been a deep sleep; it shivered—it had been a dream.

The comparison suggests, first, that our line begins with the name of the hero and, second, that to match the Sumerian the first verb should be read išezu, ‘he arose’, rather than the conventional ittī. Second, it gives us a clue as to whether and where we should expect an account of Gilgamesh’s dream. When a dream account appears in the Sumerian passages, it immediately precedes the standard line of waking quoted above (as in Lugalbanda) or


140 Including his wife, Ereshkigal’s scribe, Ninazu inu.Bī-tīrī: cf. SB VII 204.


142 On this see further Ch. 15, the commentary ad loc. The motif of the tomb in the river-bed had a wide currency in antiquity: see the evidence adduced by Cavignaux, *Gilgamesh et la Mort*, pp. 5–6.

143 Without emendation certainly not plural, ‘they grew happy to be alive’, as some translators have supposed.

144 The first four are quoted individually in *PSD B*, p. 168; cf. further B. Alster, *Dumuzi’s Dream*, pp. 88–9. For the Death of Bilgams see Cavignaux, *Gilgamesh et la Mort*, p. 30.

145 The agreement zi = išezu would raise the question of whether the Sumerian and Akkadian lines correspond in the matter of the second verb, išezu. Akkadian nəgētu does not feature in the extant bilingual lexical and literary texts and so one cannot confirm its equivalence to either bulūtu or šu-iddina (bulūt = bulūt). Both Sumerian verbs can be translated by galātu, ‘to switch, to restless’, which in some contexts can mean ‘toss and turn’ while asleep and is then not so far from nəgētu, ‘to wake suddenly, wake with a start; cf. in OB apodosis (Nag-sargil, R 44 (1950), p. 43, 15) iš-su-un i-na ti- 

146 it ma-a-a-lù-a-si-ga-lu-us; ‘the king will toss and turn in his bed-chamber’, and a line of an enlilagina-type text (Maul, *Herrnhuterugschälichen*, p. 332, 6–7) ú ma-m mà-d a tu bù lu lu và en nu mar // šu-iddina ti-nu šu- 

147 pipa ši-lú-si-ga-lu-us; ‘and when dreaming tossing and turning are his habit’. The phonetic similarity between parts of galātu and nəgētu might have
follows it at some remove, after further narrative describing the dreamer’s recourse to a second party in search of advice (as in Dumuzi’s Dream and the Death of Gilgamesh). The implications for our passage are that Gilgamesh has woken starrled in the middle of the night and that īṣākālu bālitū (1.14) should relate a narrative development—Gilgamesh’s immediate reaction—rather than a dream interlude.

The dream itself might be sought in the lines of monologue preceding our line—perhaps the encounter with the lions was a nightmare—or following it after the dreamer’s reaction. However, the subsequent lines describe how Gilgamesh drew his weapons, fell on an enemy and scattered them (15–18). It is hard to suppose that his opponents are not the lions. The Hittite version of this episode reinforces this view. There the moon god Sin speaks to Gilgamesh before daybreak and instructs him to bring into his temple two lions he has killed. It seems most likely that the two passages of Tablet IX that enclose the lines of waking and reaction (13–14) represent the start and finish of a single encounter and, accordingly, relate to waking moments and not a dream. Let us assume that Gilgamesh, rising from sleep in joyful mood, drew his weapons, fell on the lions that he had feared the previous evening and killed them. The continuation is very poorly preserved (19–29), but the two names mentioned in ll. 22–3 would logically be those of the two lions or, more likely, of the images of them made in ll. 21 (for Sin’s temple). The prayers that follow are presumably directed to Sin again, as a thanksgiving (24–6). After that the text is hopeless.

In this analysis one ends up with no dream but instead with the impression that there is something missing between Gilgamesh’s prayer in l. 12 and his waking in l. 13. Whatever Gilgamesh saw in the dream that woke him, it dispelled his fear and made him feel happy and ready for the fray. Perhaps an older version of the text had Sin appearing in a nocturnal vision to answer Gilgamesh’s prayer and give him courage to tackle the lions. This would not be the only place where lines appear to be missing from the Standard Babylonian text.

When the text of Tablet IX resumes Gilgamesh has come to the mountain of the sunrise, obviously a mountain in the far east (37–9). Its name, Muššu, ‘Mount Twin’, can be taken to imply either that it had two peaks or that it was one of a pair of mountains. For reasons that will become clear, I opt for the latter. The text tells us these twin mountains are the home of monstrous beings, half human, half scorpion, and informs us in due course that they guard the sun god at the place of his setting as well as at the place of his rising (40–5). The rising and setting of the sun is commonly conceptualized in ancient Mesopotamia as Šamaš passing in and out of cosmic gates situated at the horizon. In the present passage the mountain that guards the rising sun is logically the location of the sun’s eastern gate. The existence of twin mountains with cosmic functions at opposite extremities of the earth is attested in suggested to Babylonian scholars a semantic relationship, whether or not there is any real etymological connection between the roots pīš and yāš.\footnote{KUB Xvii 3 ii 2–6, ed. J. Friedrich, ZA 39 (1930), p. 20. R. Stefanini wonders whether two eagles are involved as well, JNES 28 (1969), p. 46.}

\footnote{See 81 1936, where the text of MB Nippur, should be interpolated.}

\footnote{This passage has been discussed by A. L. Oppenheim, who thought (unnecessarily) that the sense would be better served if 45 was placed between ll. 42 and 43 (Mesopotamian mythology II, Ory no 17 (1948), p. 46). See also W. Heimpel, ‘The sun at night and the doors of heaven in Babylonian texts’, JCS 58 (1986), pp. 140–3; Horowitz, Cosmic Geography, pp. 97–8.}

Babylonian thought, for mountains of sunset and sunrise occur as a pair in several texts. Since the scorpion-men are envisaged as sentries and, as we discover later, as male and female pairs, we can assume that one couple is stationed at each of the two mountains to guard the doorways through which the sun enters and leaves the visible sky.\footnote{See already the surveys of Heimpel, JCS 38, p. 145, and especially Horowitz, Cosmic Geography, pp. 331–2. In Sumerian literature note Inanna and Šukaldattu 101–2 // 149–50 // [271–2], where Šukaldattu looks downstream and upstream and perceives the sky at the mountains of sunrise and sunset respectively (kur utu 1, kū suh.ul:šak. see Horowitz, Cosmic Geography, p. 249); and the OB incant. GT 42 26 (pl. 39) obv. 26 (ed. Cohén, Lamassuins, p. 359): kur šuma al sūl ṣuhišša šak, ‘from the mountain of sunrise to the mountain of sunset’, expressing the totality of Earth’s dominion over the earth. In bilingual Uruk XV the two mountains are the birthplace and playground of demons (GT 16 44, 84–7, 98–101 // von Welters, Ur III 1 ii 2–5, 16–19; note also the similar passage KAR 24, 2–7 = MA Uruk XVI-VII, same tablet as BM 130660, ed. M. J. Geller, Iraq 42 (1980), pp. 23–51). The bilingual inscription equates the Dark and Light Mountains (Sum. šu.sag//kuriš.gal, ga, šu.sag//kuršu) babbar.ru with the mountains of sunset and sunrise (Akk. šu 1 šar Šamšu, šaš iš šanika). Other names for the mountains of sunrise and sunset are discussed in Ch. 13, the commentary on SB IX 36–9.}

The moment of Gilgamesh’s arrival at the mountain of the sunrise is marked by a pause in the narrative, for a succession of qualifying clauses suspends the progress of the story between the line in question (38) and the verbs that report Gilgamesh’s terror at the sight of the mountain’s eerie inhabitants (46). This suspension is perhaps a literary device, marking the hero’s delay as he reaches, in utter exhaustion, the end of the first stage in his quest and sees before him, impeding his onward passage, the vast mountain and its deadly sentinels. When finally he summons up the courage to approach the scorpion-men, they converse in words that show they immediately know him for a king, made of more godly stuff than ordinary humans, and for a being that is part divine and part mortal (47–51). The male of the pair inquires of Gilgamesh how he came to reach the mountain and also asks the purpose of his journey (52–9). With that, the text again fails us. At its resumption Gilgamesh is in mid-reply, telling how he seeks Šuḫ-napišti in order to learn the secret of immortality (75–7). To find him he must evidently take the path guarded by the scorpion-men, for although the text is damaged, enough remains to be sure that the male’s response is to warn Gilgamesh that nobody has ever been this way before (78–81). These lines are closely related to Šiširi’s warnings about the passage over the sea in SB X 79–82. She acknowledges Šamaš as the single exception to the ban on its crossing; in the present episode the text is too broken to know whether the scorpion-man mentions the sun god at this point, but Šamaš’s use of the path is explicit from what follows. At this point begins the scorpion-man’s description of the journey into darkness that Gilgamesh must make (82–90). This route, with its cosmic functions
least ten leagues or double-hours, probably twelve.\textsuperscript{176} Twelve double-hours is very suggestive, being of course a whole Babylonian day; this is a period determined then, as now, by the perceived motion of the sun: Šamaš travels his path in exactly twenty-four hours. If we are dealing in double-hours the most attractive interpretation, were it not for one particular that I shall come to later, would be that Gilgameš must complete the Path of the Sun within one full day. What we would have in this episode would then be an epic race with the sun. Sunrise and sunset take place at the opposite ends of the earth and, if the Path of the Sun means the route between the two extremes, this race must have been equal in length at least to the full diameter of the world-disc, an astonishing feat of endurance even for the greatest of heroes.

In some particulars the text confirms that, however long it was, Gilgameš's journey was indeed imagined as a race against time. How do we explain the lines that repeatedly record his inability to discern what was behind him except as the hero checking that the sun was not catching up with him?\textsuperscript{174} And when at long last Gilgameš issues forth from the darkness, the text states explicitly that he does so before the sun does (170).\textsuperscript{177} Gilgameš has beaten Šamaš to the far end of the Path of the Sun, and all is well.

Whether the race is measured in distance or time, this interpretation comes up against a problem, however, in that it conflicts with a detail noted earlier in the story. When Gilgameš sets out on the Path of the Sun he is at the mountain of the sunrise, not at the mountain of the sunset. Since the journey starts in utter darkness it follows that it took him in the opposite direction from the sun, backwards along the hidden path the sun takes before dawn. Over a course extending from sunrise to sunset he will meet the sun long before the tenth double-hour arrives, let alone the twelfth. Even if the race is over the shorter distance measured in leagues, the temporal phrase 'before the sun' still sits awkwardly with a notion that the sun was travelling in the opposite direction. An apparent solution to this problem is to reverse the direction of Gilgameš's travel by assuming an error in the text at I. 39 and exchanging his starting point, the mountain of the sunrise, for its westerly counterpart, the mountain of the sunset.\textsuperscript{175} But this solution falls foul of a further difficulty.

Other evidence held by the poem regarding Gilgameš's journey to Uta-napišti should be considered here. According to the résumé of the journey given in Tablet I Gilgameš crossed the 'wide sea to the sunrise' before reaching his goal.\textsuperscript{178} In an Old Babylonian fragment of the epic the hero describes the route that brought him to the mountains to the ocean as the 'hidden road where the sun rises'.\textsuperscript{179} Both statements agree with the old tradition that

\textsuperscript{175} However one restores II. 169–70, 12 in the figure given already in I. 82.
\textsuperscript{176} The phrase palita arkanu (II. 141 and parallel) replaces the previously received reading pāmāsa arkanu. Note that back in the 1870s George Smith already read the signs correctly, for he translated 'he was not able to look behind him' ('Chaldean Account of Genesis, p. 351').
\textsuperscript{177} A key point here is that the word lami is a proposition of time, not of place.
\textsuperscript{178} Note that this is where many commentators understood the journey to begin: Jacobsen, Studies Mem., p. 240 (quoted above, fn. 172); Heimpel, JCS 38, p. 142, and B. Alster, 'Dilmun, Bahrain, and the alleged paradise in Sumerian myth and literature', in D. Potts (ed.), Dilmun (BBVO 2; Berlin, 1983), p. 54.
\textsuperscript{179} SB 1 38: šip-rqabba tâmath mātrat abē dē Šamiš.
\textsuperscript{180} ÖBAÁ 8 13: abēm rēqimmu waqūdā Šamiš.
the Flood hero was settled by the gods in the 'land of Dilmun, towards the sunrise'\(^{193}\). An easterly direction for the final stage of the quest is therefore unquestionable, but this has no bearing on the direction taken at the start. If we admit the emendation we can suppose that Gilgames\(\varepsilon\) came to the mountain of the sunset in the far west and, racing to complete the Path of the Sun just in time, emerged a few moments before dawn at the mountain of sunrise in the far east. If we do not allow it, then we must assume that the first part of Gilgames\(\varepsilon\)'s wandering also took him east and that the Path of the Sun brought him from the hither side of the mountain of sunrise to the far side.

As we know from Tablet X the hero then journeys through a jewelled landscape to the seashore and thence across the ocean, previously crossed only by the sun, to \(\Uta-napi\(\iota\)\(\varepsilon\)\(\tilde{s}\)\)'s realm. The impression given is that his journey is taking him ever further from Uruk. An interesting question arises, whether or not the emendation of l. 39 is allowed: how could it be that the mountain of sunrise (or, emended, the mountain of sunset) was not at the end of the world? How could it be sited on the hither side of an ocean explicitly described as possible only by \(\Shama\(\tilde{s}\)\) and itself fringed by further regions?

There was an old tradition in which the sun rose in the Cedar Mountains to the east.\(^{192}\) Because the eastern Cedar Mountains seem to have been located somewhere in southern Iran, this tradition of the sunrise reflected a very limited view of the earth's extent, one that was probably prehistoric. The later people of Mesopotamia obviously knew full well that the world extended far beyond the mountains of Iran, across far oceans and the distant lands beyond them, but in the early second millennium they probably had little accurate information about the most remote regions. The famous Map\(\kappa\) Mundi, though extant as a copy made in the late first millennium BC, a time when the Babylonians knew very well that the world comprised much more than their immediate surroundings, reflects just such a situation. On it Babylon and its immediate neighbours are encircled by an ocean, beyond which lie various remote and mythical regions. Where would the sun rise and set on such a map? At the edge of the central landmass, or beyond the surrounding ocean, or even further off, beyond the furthest regions?

In my view the geography envisaged by the poet of the Gilgames\(\varepsilon\) epic draws on the old tradition of the place of the sunrise, while acknowledging that the world was much vaster than that tradition allowed. Such a view would assume that the sun actually rose far, far in the east, in some uncharted location, passed over the unvisited territory where lived \(\Uta-napi\(\iota\)\(\varepsilon\)\(\tilde{s}\)\) and his wife, continued across the Waters of Death and the hither ocean, and, coming to a mountain so vast that it reached to the height of heaven (so SB IX 40), passed through it by means of a tunnel to emerge above the wild uplands that stretched east from Babylonia. Not only would this course tally with the old idea that the sun rose from the Iranian highlands, and with the traditional location of \(\Uta-napi\(\iota\)\(\varepsilon\)\(\tilde{s}\)\) in some remote location in the east beyond the reach of men, but it presents a geography consistent with the epic's time and place. The people of second-millennium Babylonia knew that there were high mountains to the east, in southern Iran, but also that in roughly the same direction lay the familiar waters of the Gulf and, beside them, various trading ports reported by intrepid sailors, such as Dilmun and Makkan. Across the more hostile waters of the Indian Ocean were unvisited places still remoter and less known, the shores of Baluchistan and India.

This response to the siting of the mountain entered by Gilgames\(\varepsilon\) works if it was the mountain of sunrise but not if l. 39 is emended to read 'mountain of sunset'. It is frustrating not to be able to resolve the problems relating to the places of sunrise and sunset, the Path of the Sun and Gilgames\(\varepsilon\)'s race against time. Though the geography of the hero's wanderings is imaginary, one might expect it to show a consistency of detail that was susceptible to logical exegesis. However, it may be that the inconsistencies observed were not present at the beginning of the epic's life but accumulated over time, as the text was transmitted down the generations. For the moment I think it is clear that in the geography of Tablets IX and X there are two different motifs present: (a) a journey to the most remote east, across the world ocean to the uncharted lands beyond, (b) a race against time along the hidden path of the sun. The inconsistencies observed in Tablet IX seem to have arisen when the two motifs were incorporated in a single episode.

The scene that greets Gilgames\(\varepsilon\) as he emerges from the mountain fills the remainder of the tablet almost completely, though the text remains damaged and split by a lacuna into two disconnected parts. Gilgames\(\varepsilon\) finds himself in a magic landscape, perhaps a 'garden of the gods', where the trees are made of precious stone and their fruits are jewels (171–94).\(^{194}\) As has been observed before, this wondrous orchard, set between a vast mountain reaching to the sky and the great encircling ocean, is in its fruit and its location reminiscent of Greek mythology's garden of the Hesperides, the daughters of Atlas, whence Hercules took the golden apples as his eleventh labour.\(^{196}\) Though that garden was most certainly in a mythical land of the sunset to the far west, and though it and other details of Hercules' experiences in the west may echo the story of Gilgames\(\varepsilon\), the garden's western location may be a Greek invention with no bearing on the sitting of the jewelled trees Gilgames\(\varepsilon\) found.\(^{195}\) The motif of the jewelled garden at the foot of a cosmic mountain also occurs in the Arabian Nights, where it may be an echo of the stories of Hercules as well as of Gilgames\(\varepsilon\).\(^{186}\)


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\(^{194}\) On this passage see also Horowitz, *Cosmic Geography*, pp. 100–2.

\(^{195}\) See above, fn. 133.

\(^{196}\) See S. Tolley, 'Gilgames\(\varepsilon\) in the Arabian Nights', *JBRASNS* 1 (1991), p. 10, where she wisely observes that 'these themes could perhaps be regarded as part of the Arab story-teller's repertory rather than indicating direct connections'.

\(^{193}\) Sumeroi flood story, PBS V 1, 260 (quoted below, in the introduction to Tablet XI).

As Gilgameš walks about the fantastical garden someone is watching (195–6). The subject of the line, at least as it is restored here, is not likely to be Gilgameš, who is engaged in marvelling at the bejewelled landscape. More probably it is Šıduri, who, as restated in SB X 10, has been watching him from a distance. Her identity is held back until the next line, i.e., the beginning of Tablet X, perhaps as a literary device to promote suspense.

**TABLET X**

The first two couplets introduce Šıduri: she kept a tavern by the edge of the ocean but hid her face, apparently, behind a veil (1–4). This detail is a little incongruous, for normal Babylonian ale-wives were probably not respectable enough to go veiled. Women who frequented taverns were typically prostitutes and such women, along with slaves, were forbidden the veil, at least in Assyria, where the veil was clearly a mark of respectability. The veiling of married women in Babylonia is less unambiguously attested but seems very probable. 188 The veiling of Šıduri, if that is what the text reports, is probably related instead to her function as a mysterious goddess of wisdom. She observes in the distance the sorry figure of Gilgameš and, taking him for a big-game hunter—evidently the kind of rough customer she has no desire to entertain—she bars her door and, as we now learn from the new fragment of MS f, takes refuge on the roof (5–16). Having heard Šıduri’s noisy preparations for a siege, as it were, Gilgameš approaches and, looking up at her, asks why she defends herself in this way (17–21). He threatens to force the entrance to her inn (21–4). Šıduri’s reply is fragmentary but it is clear that she concludes by asking him what business has brought him to her gate (25–8). Much of what follows is intelligible because the fragments of text on MS b can confidently be restored from the parallel lines later in Tablet X. Gilgameš introduces himself by relating a synopsis of his and Enkidu’s exploits (29–34). Šıduri counters, asking how it is that such a great hero could look so wasted and desolate, wandering the wilderness in all extremes of weather clad only in a lion’s skin (35–45).

A lacuna intervenes as Gilgameš replies (46), for on MS K the bottom of the column and the beginning of the next are lost, leaving a gap of about fourteen lines of tablet that can again be easily reconstructed from later in the tablet (47–60). Gilgameš responds that there is every reason for his dreadful appearance and desolate despair: his stalwart friend Enkidu is no more (47–57). He had delayed the burial until the corpse’s putrefaction drove home the bitter truth and now, overcome with grief at his friend’s fate, he is wandering the wild country (58–62). The realization that he, too, must die has filled him with such terror that he cannot stay quietly at home (63–71). Instead he is driven forward on a relentless quest, for, after the narrator intervenes to restore a standard line reporting Gilgameš as the speaker (72), 189 the hero demands to be told how to continue his search for Utanapišti, whom he must reach if he can (73–7).

Šıduri’s reply outlines the obstacles that lie in Gilgameš’s way: first the ocean itself, uncrossed by any being except the sun and, then, at some point on the passage across, the Lethal Waters of Death (78–87). But it seems she suddenly thinks of a possible solution, for she tells the hero to seek out Uršanabi, who happens to be in a forest nearby, cutting timber with the Stone Ones (88–91). Uršanabi is Utanapišti’s ‘boatman’ and skippers a vessel, powered by the Stone Ones, that is capable of crossing the ocean and the Waters of Death. Probably he makes the journey regularly, ferrying supplies to his master. Gilgameš wastes no time on thought but immediately rushes into the forest with weapons drawn, ready to do battle with Uršanabi and his company (92–7). Uršanabi grabs an axe with which to defend himself but is quickly overpowered (98–101). Meanwhile the Stone Ones are no longer in the forest, for, newly supplemented by Assyrian MS z, reports them back at the ferry landing, recaulking the boat—evidently a job that needed doing before each ocean crossing (102–3). The following lines are still very damaged but it is now clear that, arriving at the water’s edge, Gilameš subdues any resistance, smashes the Stone Ones and throws the broken pieces into the river (104–6). 189 That done, he does something to the boat, sits down on the bank and addresses Uršanabi, damage prevents us knowing fully what he does and says in these lines (107–11).

The next passage can be restored after the parallel speeches earlier and later in the same tablet: Uršanabi asks Gilameš why he looks so wretched (112–18) and Gilameš explains how Enkidu’s death awoke in him a dreadful realization of his own mortality (119–148). After a pause (149) he demands that Uršanabi help him continue his quest for Utanapišti (150–4). In a passage that parallels the Old Babylonian tablet reportedly from Sippur (OB VA + BM col. iv), Uršanabi responds by informing Gilameš that his own rash action in smashing the Stone Ones has made his journey all the harder (155–8). To make amends he must go back to the forest with an axe and cut 300 enormous poles, each thirty metres long, and fit them with rounded end-caps for putting the boat across the ocean, a task that he duly does (159–68). Some points of interpretation concerning this episode arise here, relating to the Waters of Death, Uršanabi’s job and the Stone Ones and their functions. These will be considered before returning to the narrative.

In the geography of the epic, the Waters of Death form the most hazardous part of the great ocean that lies between the edge of the known world and the uncharted region in the far east where the gods settled Utanapišti. By virtue of their name, it is difficult to disassociate these lethal waters from the body of water that the dead traditionally crossed on their way to the Netherworld. The chthonic water is often identified as a river, called the

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188 See Gn. 5, the notes on the Pennsylvania tablets, OB II 155.

189 This interruption divides the lines in which Gilameš reports how he came to meet Šıduri from those that express what he requires of her. It perhaps functions as a kind of pause, so likewise SB III 100, X 149 and X 249.

190 Evidently the ferry landing did not occupy an exposed position on the sea shore but lay in the shelter of an estuary. The situation reflects the ancient reality, in which ocean-going ships came upstream to moor.
The location of this river is nowhere given precisely, other than that it lay at the gates of the Netherworld. The entrances to the Netherworld are several in Babylonian sources, for different and conflicting traditions were extant. One entrance was in the far west, where the sun (and other celestial deities) left the world by the gate of sunset. For this reason one might look for the Hubur in the same location. In Babylonian geography, journeys to the extremes of the earth came eventually to the great encircling ocean, and anyone seeking to go further, for example to the place of the sunset, had to cross that ocean. It seems reasonable to suggest accordingly that the lethal river and the encircling ocean, both of which stood in the way of a passage to the far west, could be identified with one another. The Waters of Death that Gilgamesh must cross are then easily seen as another name for the Babylonian Styx. The fact that the Hubur is usually encountered in the far west, while Gilgamesh encounters the Waters of Death on his journey to the opposite end of the earth, does not constitute a problem if the Waters of Death encircled the earth as part of the great ocean.

According to an ancient text that relates a dream of the Netherworld, often known as the Underworld Vision of Kunnû, the land of the dead had its own boatman, a grotesque monster called Humut-tabal, ‘Carry Off Quickly!’ It is a logical deduction that this, in one tradition, was the Babylonian Charon, whose job was to ferry across the waters the shades of the dead descending to the Netherworld. Since Uršanabi’s job is to cross the Waters of Death, Utanapišti’s boatman might be considered another such figure. Although his name, which was traditionally interpreted as ‘Man of the god Ea’, suggests that, strictly, he was a creature of Ea not of Ereškigal, the distinction between the cosmic domains of these two deities was often blurred. At least some Babylonian geographers considered earth, Apsû and the Netherworld to stand in vertical relation, being the three superimposed levels comprising the lower part of the cosmos. In such a cosmos the dead necessarily had to pass through the watery Apsû to reach the Netherworld, a situation which would easily permit an equation of Ea’s domain with the chthonic river. While it lay in the far east of the world, Utanapišti’s final resting place can be considered at the same time part of Ea’s cosmic domain, the Apsû, so it seems that a ferry across the Waters of Death could link the world of men with two other cosmic domains, the Apsû and the Netherworld.

Later in the story Uršanabi is dismissed from his position as Utanapišti’s boatman because he allowed Gilgamesh to cross with him, so the absence of his name from texts that report the various denizens of the Netherworld need not surprise us. The newly discovered tradition that Gilgamesh also ferried the shades of the dead over the Hubur plainly derives from the episode under discussion. As a hero who, when alive, had made the traverse of the Waters of Death, so after death one of his roles in the Netherworld was regularly to repeat that feat.

This brings us to the Stone Ones (šītu abû) and the questions of what they were doing in the forest and how they propelled Uršanabi’s boat. As is clear from ll. 156–8 and, particularly, the extant Old Babylonian version of this episode (OB VA + BM iv 21–4), the Stone Ones were necessary for safe passage across the ocean and the Waters of Death. The Hittite Gilgamesh preserves a tradition according to which they were Uršanabi’s crew, comprising a pair of stone statues. Though the Stone Ones have been interpreted as amulets, whose function was apotropaic or magical, it is nevertheless possible that these were anthropomorphic. Other opinions are that they were items of nautical tackle but made of stone, either rudder-oars, sails, gunwales, punting poles, or, more cogently, anchor stones or ‘kegdes’.

The question of whether the Stone Ones were sailors or items of equipment is settled, in my opinion, by consideration of the activity described in ll. 88, urmu qaṭqa. This phrase is unlikely to be inconsequential: it should denote something essential to the proper function of the ferryman, Uršanabi, and his boat, which is to cross the Waters of Death. There are
two words urnu. (a) some sort of snake,207 which is not a convincing object of qaṭṭpu, ‘to pick, trim’, and (b) a timber-bearing tree, probably a kind of Syrian cedar, that could reach a considerable height.208 We know from later in Tablet X that the boat is propelled across the Waters of Death by the use of very long punting poles (L. 174–80). The point must be that Ur-šanabi is here engaged in cutting timber—and, indeed, we learn from l. 99 that he has an axe to hand, which he uses to defend himself against Gilgamesh’s attack. More particularly, it seems that he is dressing the boughs of an urnu-tree for use as oars or punting-poles.209 That a new set is being prepared implies that, so dangerous are the Waters of Death, each oar or pole can only be used once, even by the Stone Ones. Later, after Gilgamesh has smashed the Stone Ones, Ur-šanabi points out to him that ‘the urnu is not [stripped or some other verb implying a state of readiness]’ (l. 158) and, in order to make the passage over the ocean, sends him to make the punting poles himself. Thus it is the urnu tree that provided the instruments of propulsion and the Stone Ones are identified, by default, as the crew who wielded them. The new detail, that the Stone Ones maintained Ur-šanabi’s boat in seaworthy condition (l. 102), confirms their function as sailors.

Having made the 300 poles and being himself the substitute crew, Gilgamesh boards the boat with Ur-šanabi and they somehow traverse the ocean with epic speed, arriving on the third day at the Waters of Death (169–72). It is here that the special poles are needed, for Ur-šanabi now instructs Gilgamesh to begin punting, taking care not to splash himself with the lethal water (173–5). Once used, each pole must be discarded, for the ferryman goes on to tell Gilgamesh to take up the first twelve poles one after another (176–9). In this way they travel forward a good distance, but evidently not far enough to reach safety, for at this point Gilgamesh improvises a sailcloth from the ferryman’s garment and holds it aloft to catch the wind (180–3).210 The evidence currently available in antiquity boats which relied on sail plied the sea routes of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. On the rivers of ancient Mesopotamia punting poles and paddles were the characteristic instruments of propulsion; sail motoring might be used in addition, but its lack of flexibility on the narrow confines of a meandering river made it an unsuitable source of power.211 The implication of the narrative, that

Ur-šanabi’s ferry was not equipped with mast and sail, suggests that the epic here preserves a story of the first use of sail. In this analysis the episode recounted here is a mythical account of the invention of the sailing-boat, as it were an etiology of sail and the consequent expansion of the nautical capabilities of ancient sailors. Gilgamesh is trying to cross a vast expanse of ocean which no mortal man has navigated before. His improvisation of a sail, in order to complete the journey when punting becomes impracticable, is an accurate reflection of what must have been an historical truth: that sail had to be invented before true ocean voyages could be made. Since Gilgamesh was a legendary traveller on the eastern ocean, who would be better than him, in Mesopotamian eyes, as the inventor of sail?212

Watching his ferry approaching his shore, Šu-šapišti ponders the strange sight, for instead of the customary crew a man unknown to him is aboard (184–9). The text becomes fragmentary as col. iv of MS K tails off, but it is clear from the newly discovered Assyrian MS Z that the incredulous Šu-šapišti repeats to himself several more times the observation that the boat is crewed by a stranger (190–200). The lines that hold the conclusion of his ruminations are very fragmentary (201–3). Narrative resumes with a brief description of Gilgamesh’s landfall, also badly damaged (204–6). Gilgamesh’s words of greeting to the ancient sage are also poorly preserved (207–11). They contain more than one reference to the great Flood he survived. If there was some kind of self-introduction, it is now missing entirely. By way of response Šu-šapišti asks why his visitor presents such a wretched appearance, using the words already spoken by Šiduri and Ur-šanabi (212–18). He receives the same reply as they did (219–48).

After a pause (249) Gilgamesh goes on to tell how he wandered the world looking for Šu-šapišti (250–3). These and other lines of Gilgamesh’s wandering find an echo in a Neo-Assyrian prophecy that describes the devotion of the goddess Istar to King Aššurbanipal.

[ba-lā]-ta-ka er-lā-hu-ma a-nap-pa-da šer-er(e) (e) [e]r ša-bi-ni(š)u₂₄₅ ek im-mīn₂₄₆ [e]r Šu-ša-ni-iš-šu sād-šu₂₄₇ iš₂₄₈-lā-ni e₂₄₉ ša₂₅₀-ni-bi-ni ša-ni₂₅₁ (e) kī₂₅₂-si-a₂₅₃ e₂₅₄-lā-nu₂₅₅ kī₂₅₆-si-a₂₅₇ e₂₅₈-lā-nu₂₅₉-kī₂₆₀-si-a₂₆₁ lā₂₆₂ a₆₃-ni₂₆₄ a₆₅-ni₂₆₆ a₆₇-lā₂₆₈ a₆₉-ni₂₇₀ a₇₁-ni₂₇₂ a₇₃-lā₂₇₄ a₇₅-ni₂₇₇ a₇₈-ni₂₇₉ a₈₀-lā₂₈₂ a₈₄-ni₂₈₄ a₈₅-ni₂₈₆ a₈₇-lā₂₈₉ a₉₀-ni₂₉₂ a₉₁-ni₂₉₃ a₉₂-lā₂₉₄ a₉₅-ni₂₉₆ a₉₇-ni₂₉₉ a₉₈-lā₂₉₁ a₉₉-ni₂₉₄ a₁₀₀-lā₂₉₃ a₁₀₁-ni₂₉₄ a₁₀₂-lā₂₉₅ a₁₀₃-ni₂₉₆ a₁₀₄-lā₂₉₇ a₁₀₅-ni₂₉₉ a₁₀₆-lā₂₉₉ a₁₀₇-ni₂₉₁ a₁₀₈-lā₂₉₂ a₁₀₉-ni₂₉₄ a₁₁₀-lā₂₉₃ a₁₁₁-ni₂₉₄ a₁₁₂-lā₂₉₄ a₁₁₃-ni₂₉₅

SAA IX 9 obv. 8–15

Out of desire for your [well-being] I shall roam the wild, I shall keep crossing rivers and oceans, I shall keep traversing mountains (and) highlands, I shall keep crossing all rivers! Sunshine and frosts will keep consuming me, attacking my beautiful form (until) I am weary and my body is exhausted on your behalf.

Saḫštā. From a Mesopotamian point of view sailing was a technique specifically associated with the Gulf traders, who, at least in this part of the world, pioneered this method of propulsion. According to Aššur, representations on seals of ‘Dilmun boats [rigged with a single square sail] represent the earliest beginning of the history of sailing technique’ (in Potts, Dilmun, p. 71).

The purported discovery of sailpower by Gilgamesh thus fits the conventional pattern in which important advances in technology and other areas are attributed to legendary figures from remote antiquity (see further Ch. 3, the subsection on Crossing the Ocean).
This passage has been identified as a 'clear allusion' to the text of the epic but a direct link between the two texts is uncertain. The topos of non-stop toil undiminished in the face of all obstacles is symbolized by climbing mountains and fording rivers in other literature, and these figures may have been well-worn clichés.

Gīlgameš continues in similar vein, recalling how he deprived himself of sleep in relentless pursuit of his goal and killed every kind of wild animal for food and clothing (254–61). The two couplets that conclude his speech are still damaged but are clearly concerned with a contrast between sorrow and fun (262–5). Even without restoration it is evident that Gīlgameš yearns for an end to grief, wishing for the doors to be closed on that episode in his life, and looks forward to a future of pleasure. Read so, the passage confirms what is everywhere implied: Gīlgameš expects his misery to end when he finds Uta-napišti, for then, encoupled with everlasting life, he will be able permanently to resume the good life in Uruk.

Uta-napišti’s reply fills the rest of the tablet (266–322). It is the first part of a long monologue that continues almost uninterrupted until SB XI 209. Here, surely, lies the essence of the poet’s message. The climax of the old man’s speech is the famous story of the great flood and how he became immortal as a result (SB XI 11–206). The lines that precede that story, those that conclude Tablet X, have not enjoyed the same attention, partly because the important late Babylonian manuscripts that complement the Kuyunjik tablet are relatively recent discoveries. Now that the text is more fully known, the beginning of Uta-napišti’s homily can be treated to a more detailed exegesis.

The first thirty lines remain badly damaged. Uta-napišti begins by contrasting Gīlgameš’s present appearance with his unique birth: son of a god and a king, a mixture of god and mortal, nevertheless he squanders his life in misery (266–9). Then Uta-napišti directs Garlgameš’s attention to a different contrast, that between king and ‘fool’ (270–5). Gīlgameš is blessed with high birth and physical perfection and enjoys the trappings of royalty, but the ‘fool’, evidently a kind of village idiot, is not so fortunate, making do with inferior food and rough clothing. The contrast is germane, for Gīlgameš, in his pitiful condition and ragged attire, looks more like fool than king and, at the same time, is behaving like a fool in pursuing his unattainable goal. Uta-napišti continues, it seems, by observing that because the fool lacks guidance in his affairs, he is not to blame for his predicament; the responsibility for his care lies with the king—who, by contrast, is proverbially well counselled (276–9). This duty of kings, to care for those in the kingdom who cannot provide for themselves, is fundamental to the ideology and practice of Mesopotamian kingship.

Another duty of kings appears to be the subject of the following lines, preserved only on the Late Babylonian source, MS b. Though the passage is very broken, a provisional exegetis is possible. The mention of the moon and stars (‘gods of the night’) and, if I interpret the fragmentary lines correctly, the fact that they shine through the night according to the functions established for them in the remote past—all this suggests a reference to the celestial cycles, lunar and solar, that mark the passage of the Babylonian year (280–5). Uta-napišti urges Gīlgameš to think on these things (286) as an example, perhaps, of the regular patterns of a universe in which the king plays the pivotal role between gods and men. As part of the essential contract of mortal kingship, the gods come to the aid of the king in his enterprises (287) and in return expect their sanctuaries to be properly provisioned (288–9). The maintenance of the cult centres is ordained to follow a pattern of regular offerings and festivals established by the cycles of the moon and the constellations, so Uta-napišti’s earlier reference to these is an apt preface to his exhortation of a king’s duties to the gods.

Uta-napišti’s long monologue thus begins with a homily on the twin duties of kingship. It is clear to him and to his interlocutor that, by wandering the world on his futile quest, Gīlgameš is fulfilling neither. The old man’s reproachful words underline the plot of the whole latter half of the epic, in which Gīlgameš strenuously tries to escape his destiny but finally must learn to accept it. What comes next is for the moment extant only in isolated words (290–4), but the topic may still be that of temple maintenance (zānina in l. 294).

With col. vi of MS K a new topic is at issue, the nature of the human condition. This subject, which fills the rest of the tablet, very probably begins with the mention of ‘mankind’ in l. 295.737

Having mentioned mankind in general, Uta-napišti apparently then tells of a specific instance when ‘they’ (the gods of the Netherworld?) took to his doom a specific individual (295–6). Next he tells Gīlgameš again that his relentless quest in search of immortality has achieved precisely the opposite, sapping his energy and shortening his life (297–300). He then turns to ruminate on the fragility of mortal men, who die with no forewarning, often in their prime, snapped like reeds harvested in a thicket (301–3). Death, the reaper of mankind, comes silently and invisibly (304–7). And yet human life goes on through the
generations, with new households establishing themselves, flourishing and dividing in a never-ending cycle (308–11). In these lines Ūa-napišti offers Gilgameš an illustration of everyday experience that is itself a metaphor for the impermanence of the human condition. People are always building families, but in due course every family splits up as the sons go their own way. A change in tense introduces a new perspective, which is bound to the previous lines by the common use of inmatima as opening word. Ūa-napišti’s sermon on mortality now presents the metaphor of the mayfly, a life-form carefully chosen for its particularly transient existence. These familiar insects have been borne along on the river’s flood since time immemorial and, like men, individuals among them disappear after their short time in the sun suddenly, without warning and in large numbers (312–15). The message is that just as the mayfly species survives each decimation and always will, so is it with men: mankind’s immortality does not rest in the individual’s existence. The imagery of this beautiful passage is thus bound together by a common allusion to the transience of a man’s life in the eternal existence of the human race.

The last part of Ūa-napišti’s homily presents considerable problems of interpretation. My view is that the poet emphasizes the finality of death with observations on the gulf that divides the worlds of the living and the dead. The first line compares the dead man with one who has been abducted, that is, taken prisoner of war and enslaved in a foreign land (316). Like such a one, the shades of the dead are locked away in a place remote and inaccessible, beyond any communication. The word ‘abductee’ (jallu) also evokes the vivid metaphor used in l. 303: there death takes men and women off in the prime of life, like an enemy raiding party seizing people from their houses; here jallu is a reminder of the potential suddenness and finality of death. The line that follows also refers back to an earlier part of Ūa-napišti’s lesson: one cannot draw the likeness of death (317); because being not of this world it goes unseen and unheard (cf. ll. 304–6). It is not clear whether the subject of the line is the ‘abducted and the dead’ or impersonal. The line that follows is bedevilled by textual variants (318). The Late Babylonian manuscripts seem to me to make better sense than the Kuyunjik source, which splits the line into two halves and may be corrupt. The line as it was preserved in Babyionia elaborates a contrast between the abducted and the dead: the abductee may one day come back from the dead, as it were, by escaping his foreign servitude and making his way home, but a dead man will never again walk with the living. There can be no intercourse between the two worlds. The first part of the line as given on the Kuyunjik tablet is easily understood: mortal man is ‘locked up’, as it were, a prisoner in life with no power over his entrance and his exit. The second part, which is suspiciously short, is usually understood as referring to the circumstances that preceded the matter reported in ll. 319–22, but there are good grounds for rejecting this view.222

The last two couplets of Tablet X bring the first part of Ūa-napišti’s monologue to its climax. Having talked of the suddenness of death for individual men and women, of the immortality of the human race and of the unbridgeable gulf that separates the living and the dead, he gives the reason why men die: the great gods and the mother goddess once held an assembly at which they distinguished, evidently for the first time, between mortal and immortal. They decided that only gods would live forever; men were to die and the time of their death would be unpredictable (319–22). A very similar message was imparted to Gilgameš in the Old Babylonian epic by the wise ale-wife:

balūtam ša tabaṭṭušu ma la tutta
inma ša irari aštītam
mitan itšerū aš aštītīm
balūtam ina qāritānu ṣeqātē

You cannot find the life that you seek: when the gods created mankind, for mankind they established death, life they kept for themselves.

OB VA + BM iii 2–5

The point is that man must die, because such is the fate determined for his kind by the gods. According to the passage just quoted, death was the doom of mankind from its first creation, but there is another tradition in which death was imposed on the human race later. The matter was decided in an assembly convened at the end of Tablet III of the poem of Atra-šāši, after the gods decide the fate of the survivor of the Flood. Enki speaks to Ninurta:

[at-ti u-a-š]-nī-ru ba-ni-a-at ū-ma-ti
[mu-ta ša-ul-ni]-a-na ni-ti

[You, O mother]-goddess, who creates destinies, [assign death] to the people!

OB Abram-šāši III vi 47–8, as restored by W. G. Lambert, CARRA 26, p. 58

The accuracy of this restoration now seems confirmed by the Sumerian Gilgameš. In the Death of Gilgamesh Enki speaks to An and Enlil:

pu-um ru₄m a ma ru₄ ba₄nir (sar₄ bu₄) ra₄ta
numun nam₄ lu₄lu₄ ha₄ la.me₄ de₄ ed₄ nam₄
murub₄, me₄ a z i₄ sag₄ dili₄ me₄ en nam₄ ti₄lam
zi₄ um₄ (aud₄) (ser₄ di₄ ru₄) mu₄ nam₄ lu₄lu₄ nam₄ ti₄lam
u₄ bi₄ ta₄ zi₄ an na₄ zi₄ ki₄ a mu₄ un₄ pa₄ da₄ nam₄
u₄ bi₄ ta₄ nam₄ lu₄lu₄ ur₄ mu₄ un₄ ti₄lam mu₄ ni₄ pa₄ (da₄ nam₄)

Death of Gilgamesh M 72–7 // 162–7, ed. Caviglia, Gilgameš et la Mort, pp. 28, 31

After the Deluge swept over everything, so we could destroy the seed of mankind, in our midst a single life still was alive, Ziusudra, offspring of mankind, still was alive! Then, swearing by the life of heaven and the life of earth, we swore to mankind that from that day it would not have (eternal) life.

222 See, in detail, Ch. 13, the commentary on SB X 318.
The Standard Babylonian epic, it seems, holds to the other view: that the doom of man was imposed on him at his creation, as the ale-wife remarks in the older text. This is clear from the end of Ūta-napišti’s monologue in Tablet XI, when he describes how, after he has survived the great Flood, Enlil blesses him:

_ina piša Ūta-napišti amēlauma_
_enimmāma Ūta-napišti u sitimšušu iš emi kiša iš nāšma_

SB XI 202–3

In the past Ūta-napišti was one of mankind, but now Ūta-napišti and his woman shall become like us gods!

The plain implication of these words is that Ūta-napišti was formerly mortal but, as of the moment Enlil spoke, became immortal. The Flood hero’s transformation does not fit the situation described in Atra-šaši and the Sumerian Gilgamesh, in which the antediluvian race, Ūta-napišti included, was not subject to the doom of postdiluvian man.

Gilgamesh’s heroic adventures culminate in his visit to Ūta-napišti. The Flood hero, the creature of Ea, god of wisdom, has the role of a venerable sage, imparting profound and ancient truths to the only man who ever dared to find him and was capable of doing so. The old man’s teaching is the wisdom for which Gilgamesh is celebrated in the epic’s opening lines. Embedded in the climax of the story, his words convey the poem’s central message. Even the greatest of men and the mightiest of kings must accept that their lives are subject to the whims of still mightier forces, for it is not within the power of any human being to escape man’s place in the divinely ordained scheme of things. All who live must also die.

**TABLET XI**

It is not this, however, that Gilgamesh has come to hear. He is amazed to find that the immortal survivor of the Flood is no different in bodily shape and size from any other man (11–14). He had expected, perhaps, some mighty giant, whose secret could only be wrested from him by the sword. Hitherto, Gilgamesh’s resistance to any hindrance has been to draw his weapons. Such was his response when Šūrūm barred the door of her tavern and again, in the episode of the Stone Ones, when he sought to gain passage across the ocean. Thus too he expects to use violence in forcing Ūta-napišti to surrender the secret of eternal life. In the first part of the epic, feats of arms win Gilgamesh glory but in the second half they are no longer effective. In the old man’s presence, however, Gilgamesh feels no longer impelled to violence (5–6), either because Ūta-napišti is not the enemy he thought he would be or because he is already mending his ways. Still, he wants to learn how Ūta-napišti joined the ranks of the immortals (7). This is a tale that Ūta-napišti gladly tells his visitor, though it is a ‘secret matter’, a ‘mystery of the gods’ (8–10). These phrases mean that by divulging his story he makes Gilgamesh privy to knowledge outside a man’s normal attainment. This is logical, for the full history of Ūta-napišti had vanished from the earth after his translation and removal to the end of the world. Those who repopulated the earth remembered only his extraordinary destiny.

The tale that Ūta-napišti tells is the famous myth of the great Flood that, early in human history, had almost wiped out mankind. This myth is the subject of a very considerable literature that this introduction will not greatly enlarge. The Flood was a popular metaphor of human destruction in Sumer and Babylonia. Many generations of men experienced the terrible consequences of widespread flooding in an alluvial plain like southern Mesopotamia. Such a background was fertile ground for the development of the myth of a universal flood. A tradition of such a flood was certainly current in the late third millennium but it finds its fullest expression in Sumerian and Babylonian literature in the Old Babylonian period. This was a time when changing riverbeds in Babylonia meant that catastrophic flooding was commonplace, and the myth accordingly held a special relevance to human experience.

From the point of view of the plot, the incorporation in extenso of the myth in the epic of Gilgamesh is unnecessary, for its purpose in the development of the story is to show that Ūta-napišti gained immortality in circumstances that would never be repeated, either for Gilgamesh or for anyone else. That much could have been stated in a few lines. But the tale of the Flood has another function, for it serves to expand the climax of the poem—the end of hero’s quest—into a more complex episode. The poet’s audience is kept in the magical presence of the legendary Ūta-napišti far longer than it was in the presence of lesser figures, Ajīmubaba, Šāru and Ur-šanabi. The technique of telling a tale within a tale is a common literary device. Here in a tale of long ago is a story of even longer ago, told in a place beyond the bounds of mundane experience. The audience is transported to another place and another time.

Briefly, the myth of the Flood, as retold by Ūta-napišti, is this. A long time ago in the city of Šurūp, when the gods dwelt among men, they decided to bring about a great Flood (11–14). No justification is given in the epic for this drastic course of action, for the reason is not relevant to Ūta-napišti’s discourse. In the older version of the myth, as told in the poem of Atra-šaši, the Flood is Enlil’s solution of last resort to the problem of human noise. The gods swore not to tell anybody of their plan, but while taking the oath the cunning Ea, who cared for man and his ways, contrived to divulge the gods’ decision to the walls of the house...
of his favourite, Úta-napišti, a man also known by the epithet Atra(šu)-šašiš, 'Surpassing Wise' (15–20).225 Úta-napišti was well known to educated Babylonians as the last of the antediluvian kings. He had reigned in Šuruppak. The walls communicated Ea's instructions to their owner: he was to tear down the palace and build an ark, leaving all material goods behind and caring only to preserve life in all its variety (21–7). The boat should be a cube, and roofed over, like the sweet-water Apsû (28–31), to keep out the Deluge. In Babylonian cosmology the subterranean Apsû is roofed over by the earth but the use of this particular imagery may have a secondary function, for it provides the hearer with a clue to the origin of the message. Úta-napišti is not slow to recognize the words of Ea.226

Though Úta-napišti understood what had to be done, he was uncertain how best to explain the strange boat to his counsellors and townsfolk (32–5). Ea replied that he was to answer that he had fallen out with Enlil, the lord of the earth, and must flee to the Apsû to live with Ea (36–42). All would accept that a unique kind of boat was needed to make such a journey—indeed, a sort of submarine. Ea's words not only provide Úta-napišti with an excuse but also act as a prophecy: after the Deluge Úta-napišti did indeed go to live in the Apsû with Ea, for Dilmun, where he was settled in the Sumerian tradition, is a land much associated with Enki in Sumerian mythology. There is evidence also for a local syncretism of Ea and Enzak in Dilmun.227 And, as Ea's realm, Dilmun is famous for its fresh water, which came from the Apsû, like all sweet water. This is the background of SB XI 289, where Gilgames visits down to the Apsû in order to gain the magic plant of rejuvenation.

Úta-napišti was to add that, in return for their king's abdication and flight, someone would reward the people with a 'rain of plenty' (43–7). The subject of the verbs of this famous passage is usually understood as Ea, following the older version of the story, which is unambiguous on this point.228 Since the lines in question serve as a cryptic warning of the coming deluge it is possible that in Gilgames the third person refers instead to Enlil, the author of the catastrophe. The description of the fateful rain has attracted much comment on the ambiguity of its words and imagery. It is most recently discussed by Millard, who gives a history of the attempts of older commentators to read words-plays into the language.229 He maintains that, as understood by earlier scholars, 'the word-play has lost its basis. Ea is simply promising apparently favourable, but really misleading signs: a shower of birds and fishes, a morning rain of loaves, and an evening rain of wheat.' He goes on to stress the long-observed parallels in meteorological omens, in which ominous rains of such things as wheat, lentils, chaff and cardamon seeds (Entemá Anu Enlil), and posthers, nagalatu220 and frogs (Summa àlu II) are observed, and concludes: whoever was responsible for the [Gilgames] passage in its present form would seem to have known about the sorts of omens listed above, or, which is less convincing, the compilers of the omen texts drew upon the Epic for some of their entries. It is also possible that both arose from some common ground.230 Finally, he documents actual occasions on which fish and birds have been dropped by storm-winds, and suggests that the present passage, as a famous occasion on which extraordinary precipitation heralded the onslaught of catastrophe, is the 'aetiology' of the association in Babylonian omen literature of such portents with disaster.

I have cited Millard’s article at length because it presents an important new insight into the passage under consideration. Several incidents in the epic, at least in its late version, can be seen to serve as aetiological purpose. But I am not convinced that the language is altogether without ambiguity. Tornadoes may well suck up wheat and lentils from the threshing floor or silo, birds from roofs and trees, fish from the sea, frogs from ponds, and posthers from rain-mounds—these are things naturally exposed in large quantities. But where will a tornado obtain kukku loaves (I. 46)? Or, if this particular rain is simply seen as a supernatural miracle, with no connection to ordinary experience, are kukku loaves the kind of object one would expect to be singled out for mention? Why not simply bread? In my view this particular word is chosen for its similarity to kukku, 'weapon; warfare', which represents the coming 'battle'231 and also means 'ominous sign', as in extispicy. Possibly there is also an allusion to the imminent demise of mankind, for, as Millard noted without further comment, kukkā, 'the Dark', is a name of the Netherworld, the realm of the dead.

The 'rain of wheat', šamū kibāti (I. 47), is open to two approaches, phonetic and lexical. On the one hand the phrase conjures up the sound of 'heavy rain', šamūtī kibītī.232 On the other it offers, in the kind of academic etymological speculation practised by Babylonian scholars, the possibility of reinterpretation as 'rain of misfortune' through a Sumerian equivalence held in common (kibītu = gi̯ = maru, 'ill', whence marānūtu, 'misfortune'). I suspect there is wordplay in the earlier lines also. The sound of nūhītu, 'plenty', is not far removed from nūhīnuwa, 'sobbing'. The word ūbu (I. 44) means not simply 'abundance' but also 'yield', in the sense of what is produced by something. The 'yield' of birds is eggs, of course, and this is visual imagery which suggests that the phrase may be a veiled warning of an immense hailstorm. The ambiguity of šummu, 'to send rain' and 'to provide with food', has already been noted by Lambert in his comments on the Old Babylonian version of the story.233 Thus entire phrases are loaded with double meaning, not just the objects of the verbs, and can be understood to contain favourable and unfavourable predictions (see below).

220 Though written girmu, this must be 'shoulder-blades', figurative for large posthers, rather than Millard’s 'razors'.
221 Note gi̯ as a metaphor of the Deluge, SB XI 110, 130 in MS J.
223 Lambert and Millard, Ama-šašiš, p. 159.
It was enough for the poet to report Ea's counsel; the course of action he advised is taken as read.

Work on the king's curious vessel started at dawn on the following day (48). A passage that has benefited considerably from the recent recovery of a small fragment from Aššur (MS e.) describes how, in the customary manner, the people of Šuruppak gathered in the morning at their lord's gate, the workmen carrying their tools and the others, young and old, rich and poor, bringing raw materials (49-56). On the fifth day the structure began to take shape—hull and roof were fixed together, forming a perfect cube (57-9). Then the interior space was divided by decks and partitions: six decks divided the space between the floor and the roof, making for seven stories (60-2). The interior space was further partitioned into nine and then the belly of the hull made watertight with plugs, if that is the right understanding (63-4). This secondary division means that each deck area was divided by three walls along each axis, producing in all sixty-three chambers.

The configuration of this strange boat was obviously not drawn from practical experience. Instead it is probably symbolic, for its interior subdivisions in miniature the cosmos in its most elaborate structure: six decks stacked vertically, as in the compendium KAR 307 and other texts. Since Ulta-napišti's ark must contain all that will be needed to repopulate the world, it would be appropriate symbolism if the boat's nine subdivisions on the horizontal plane matched a cosmic pattern in the way that its decks did. Glassner thought they did,237 citing the nine regions of the world that occur in the myth Enki and Ninâur.238 However, that list is far from a comprehensive compilation of the main regions of the world known to Sumer in the late third millennium. As the context makes clear, it is an enumeration of Dilman's trading partners. The canonical lists of the divisions of the earth in the Babylonian geographical compendium, Hh XXI, differ in length according to recension, from nine to considerably more.240 The shortest, which begins with the equation ma.239 = ma-a-tum (Hh XXI:9-25'), sets out nine lands as follows: Sumer, Sumer and Akkad, Emutbal, Subaru, Elam, Gutium, Border of Gutium, Upper Land and Lower Land. Even so, it is again not certain that this list of nine regions represents the entire earth. Where, for example, is Anuurr?

A more successful line of enquiry is Glassner's comparison of Utana-pishi's boat with the ziqqurat of Babylon, E-temen-aniki. As described in the E-sagil Tablet Marduk's ziqqurat is a structure with the same overall dimensions (area of base, length, breadth and height) as the ark, and the same sevenfold division in the vertical plane; a ninefold division in the horizontal plane is also implicit in the notation of the dimensions of the ziqqurat's first stage as 3 x 3 sūqēn, and explicit in the nine chambers listed for its seventh stage.241 The fact that both ziqqurats (where the king of the gods resided between heaven and earth) and ark (which held representatives of all creation) have in common a dimensional scheme is very likely to be explained in terms of cosmic symbolism, even though the exact significance of number nine in the cosmic pattern cannot yet be determined.

Next the boat was provided with equipment and caulked with bitumen; finally large quantities of oil were supplied for various purposes (65-70).242 While the ark was built Utana-pishi kept his work force well supplied with meat and drink (71-5). His description of the carnival atmosphere that attended the boat's construction recalls a passage of Nabonidus, in which similar festivities were enjoyed by the workman rebuilding the temple of Šamaš at Sippar:

236 For Bonnet the bringing together of 'bread loaves' and 'wheat' is itself a wordplay, one that presupposes for the passage a Sumerian linguistic background (Zêbaû, p. 186, fn. 3. gêg = babbu, gêg = hubu).
237 As already observed by Schott and von Soden, Realms? p. 88, fn. 8.
239 See also Horowitz, Cosmic Geography, p. 5-19.
242 See Horowitz, Cosmic Geography, pp. 322-4.

On the next morning the finishing touches were completed, so that the vessel was ready before sundown on the sixth day (76–7). This left time for manœuvring the boat down the river bank on rollers (78–80) and for loading the cargo: all Uta-napišti's riches were put aboard, despite the earlier instruction to abandon them, all his family, and, in order to preserve antediluvian life and society, the various species of animal and people skilled in different crafts (81–6). This was all done by a deadline set by the sun god, which duly expired (87–90). At first sight the mention here of Šamaš looks like an intrusion. It was Ea who gave Uta-napišti the instructions to build the boat, so Ea would have appointed the time when it should be ready. The Gilgamese epic is silent about the background of these lines. The older version of the story, however, explicitly describes how Ea (Enki) set the time of the Deluge's onset 'for the seventh night' (OB Atram-baššu III 37). Thus it was sunset at the end of the sixth day that was the deadline for the ark's completion. Šamaš's place in this was to signal the expiration of Ea's deadline by his disappearance from the sky. As the sun went down Uta-napišti, remembering the ambiguous words of Ea's warning, observed the evening sky for signs of the coming storm; what he saw terrified him (91–3). He disappeared into his ark, leaving his remaining possessions to the shipwright who closed the hatch from the outside (94–6). This man's name is conventionally read as Puzur-Amurru, a name that identifies the bearer as enjoying the 'Protection of the god Amurru'. As such the name is a detail without consequence in the story. It takes on a different character, however, if one reads Puzur-Enlil, for in Uta-napišti's story Enlil is the Flood hero's purported enemy and the author of mankind's imminent destruction. The name Puzur-Enlil is thus one full of ill portent.244

In the Flood story as told in Atra-ḫaššu the downpour apparently started in the evening, as Ea (Enki) had warned, for in that account there is no talk of more time elapsing before the onset of the storm.245 In Uta-napišti's account, there is a delay: dawn broke on the seventh day before threat of a storm turned into reality (97). The description of the storm's approach and arrival overhead is well drawn and is certainly the finest metaphorical description of a meteorological event anywhere in Babylonian literature. The storm god, rumbling on the horizon, was preceded by a convoy of violent gods, each contributing to the mayhem. The murderous duo Sullat and Ḥani arrived first as Adda's vanguard, probably as personifications of the gale (98–101). They were swiftly followed by Errakal and Ninurta, who tore boats from their moorings and drove waterways to burst their banks (102–3). Then came those unspecific members of the pantheon termed collectively the Anunnaki, brandishing flashes of lightning to herald the storm (104–5). The scene evoked must have been seen often on the great waterways of lower Mesopotamia, when a sudden gale forced a surging flood of water downstream until the cresting waves found weak spots in the banks that constrained them, and the strengthening winds, rugging loose the mooring poles, set fishing boats and ferries adrift on the racing current.


245 The key word here is ar-qaš in OB Atram-baššu III 39; however one restores the preceding word, it is hard to avoid translating arqaš as 'the new moon'. A new moon is visible just after sunset. The storm begins 9 lines later, at III 48, as Atra-ḫaššu's family enjoy their first supper on the new vessel.
T could in theory be almost anything. However, it can be restored as seven in the light of (a) the well-known literary sequence \( n, n + 1 \) and (b) the two certain occasions where the late version’s ‘six days and seven nights’ correspond to an Old Babylonian text’s ‘seven days and seven nights’.

On the other hand MS J’s ‘six days and nights’ fits the convention, also found in Ugarteic and biblical poetry and in Homeric epic, that ‘something goes on for six days and on the seventh there is a new development’. A lapse of six days and nights makes for a more consistent account, for it fits the text’s report that the Deluge began on one morning (XI 97) and ended on the seventh (XI 130).

Feeling the calming of the waters, Utanapishti dared at last to open a hatch in his ark and look out. As the sun’s rays pierced the departing clouds he saw the water extending across the entire plain and no trace of other survivors (134–7). He broke down and wept (138–9).

In the far distance he could see mountain peaks rising out of the water like islands and in due course the ark ran aground on one, Mt Nimrus (140–2). This mountain, formerly read Nisir, also appears in inscriptions of Asšur-nasirpal II, and the topographical information given there makes the most obvious identification of the peak as that now known as Pīr Omar Gudrun, near Sulaimaniyā in Iraqi Kurdistan. In scibral tradition Mt Nimrus was the mountain of Gutium. This confirms its location in the Zagros range. It is worth repeating in this connection that, in the biblical account of the Deluge, the Hebrew phrase \( \\text{al hārē} \, \text{Nimra} \) (Gen. 8: 4) means ‘on the mountains of \\text{Urartu}’ (i.e. northern Kurdistan), not, anachronistically, ‘on Mt Ararat’.

Another seven days passed before Utanapishti felt sure his ark was securely beached (143–7). Then begins the famous episode of the birds, famous because it is one of those details held in common that proved the shared origin of the tales of Utanapishti and Noah. Utanapishti released in turn three birds, a dove (or pigeon), a swallow and a raven (or other member of the crow family; 148–56). The dove and swallow returned to the ark, having found no place to land; the raven, however, saw the waters receding, found food and did not return. The episode has been much discussed. Here, comment will be confined to the order of the birds in the respective accounts. Heidel compared the Babylonian version unfavourably with the account in Genesis, supposing that ‘by releasing the raven first, Noah

. . . displayed greater wisdom than Utanapishṭi, who . . . sent the raven out last’. This statement, based as it was on a theory of bird behaviour extrapolated from the biblical account and thence applied unaltered to the cuneiform tradition, is methodologically suspect. The Babylonian order of birds may have had a different rationale from that which informed the Hebrew story. It became more likely that this was in fact the case when a connection was proposed with the use of birds in traditional maritime navigation, though the detail was not pursued at the time. When it was, the conclusion emerged that the order dove—swallow—raven in Gilgamesh was still false, being a confusion resulting from an ignorance of maritime practice. The proponent of this theory, David Freedman, believes that correct practice is reflected in the biblical narrative, in which Noah releases only two birds, first a raven and then, on several occasions, a dove. His consequent inference that ‘poet [of Gilgamesh] borrowed a Hebrew \\text{topar}’ is sufficiently provocative to need reply. Freedman supposes that (a) ravens were used to scout for landfall and (b) doves were employed to find out ‘if land is habitable’. As presented in his discussion, the evidence for (a) is plentiful, but there is none whatsoever for (b), despite the dove’s ‘famed domesticity’. Of this bird Freedman writes further, ‘when mariners use doves, it is to guide them through straits, or to gauge the weather, not to scout for land’. However, he overlooks evidence for sailors in different parts of the world releasing doves with exactly the last aim. On both counts his hypothesis of the different employment of doves and ravens in maritime navigation fails, and with it the assumed priority of the ‘Hebrew \\text{topar}’.

I find it more to the point that it is in the nature of doves to return but of ravens to fly away. Like doves and pigeons, swallows and martins are also happy to nest in an urban environment and can thus be seen as birds which cleave to man. Though the primary function of the episode of the release of the three birds is to mark the gradual ebbing of the waters, the passage also serves as an aetiology of the different habitats of these birds, the dove and swallow on the one hand, the raven (or crow) on the other. It is very plausible that these birds were considered to behave as they do because their habits were conditioned by the varying fortunes their remote ancestors experienced as the floodwaters of the Deluge receded. The order of the birds in Genesis obscures such an explanation. On these grounds—quite apart from the wider problem Freedman’s inference raises for the history of literary transmission—I reject his argument that the Babylonian account is derivative of the Hebrew. Rather, those in the West who inherited the story of the birds gave it a different rationale. In doing so they altered some details—as well as confusing the birds’ order, they left out the swallow—and, missing the aetiology entirely, failed to appreciate the motif to the full.

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254 On both points see Ch. 13, the commentary on SB I 194, and note X 58 // 135 // 233 and XI 208.
255 *Wen, East Face of Helicon*, p. 175, where this motif is documented and discussed.
256 The reading ni-mu-la instead of ni-ur was proposed as more probable by Lambert, who found the defiled mountain in an OB personal name, i.e. Nīsir, W. G. Lambert, *Nimru or Nimrus*, RA 80 (1986), pp. 185–6. A. Amuq, NABU 2000/68, has drawn attention to a passage of the Hypostasis of the Archons from Nāg Hammādi that has Noah instructed to build his ark ‘upon Mount Sīr’, commenting that ‘it is a strong argument for reading the mountain’s name in the Babylonian Flood story as Nisir, and not Nimrus’. I do not agree. The mountain of the ark crops up differently named in different traditions. Further examples are the mountains of the *Kurdistani* of Arzān (Berossus), i.e. classical Corderi, and Judi *Daqī (Jehīl Al-Jādī) in the Koran and elsewhere, both of which may be the same peak. There is accordingly no necessity to explain ‘Mount Sīr’ as a variant of the name of the mountain in Gilgamesh. More likely it is a form of Mt Sīryan, the Anti-Lebanon range.
257 *Now Grayson, RIMA 2*, pp. 204, 34–9; 245, 3.
262 R. D. Freedman, ‘The dispatch of the reconnaissance birds in Gilgamesh’, *ANJS* 5 (1973), pp. 123–9; for other bibliography relating to this episode see his fn. 2.
263 As with Akkadīan *aráhu* (or *arītu) and summu, the Hebrew words *šīrāh* and *šērūh* can be rendered more prosaically as ‘crow’ and ‘pigeon’.
264 In Cyprus and Iceland; see West, *East Face of Helicon*, p. 492, fn. 162.
Once the raven's independent survival had assured Ša-napišti that it was safe to unload his ark, he ventured forth to make a sacrifice to the gods (157–60). The ritual was a conventional one: Ša-napišti deposited aromatic substances around the bases of libation jars and the sweet smell wafted up to heaven. The effect was immediate: the gods caught scent of their food and quickly crowded around it (161–3). These three lines grow steadily longer in length and complexity, a literary device that neatly captures the intensifying accumulation of gods at the gathering. The simile used to describe the gods' arrival is famously the image of hungry flies buzzing around a piece of food. This imagery implies a somewhat cynical view of gods, even more disrespectful than the earlier simile likening them to cowering dogs (SB XI 116). The same figure is found in the poetic narrative K 3200:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lukir} & \text{  \lukir} \text{  \lukir} \\
\text{is-tu-ru a na zu-sun-bi e i-\b 6a-bu-ba ina ri-\b 6a-ti} \\
\text{Thompson, Gilgamesh, p. 59, 11–12}
\end{align*}
\]

The gods of Uruk-the-Sheepfold turned into flies buzzing about in the streets.

Though the situation described, a siege of Uruk, is very different from the present one, this couplet perhaps alludes to the Flood story as told in the epic; the phrase 'Uruk-the-Sheepfold' suggests familiarity with Gīlgalas.573

With the mother goddess's arrival at the incense (164) the motif of the flies is extended. Lifting up the fly-shaped beads that Anu had given her when courting, she promised to wear them thenceforth in a necklace so as never to forget the catastrophe the gods had caused (165–7). Fly-shaped beads strung on necklaces as amulets are common in the ancient Near East.574 The mythological allusion is to a time when the mother goddess and Anu were new lovers. These deities are earth and heaven respectively, whose sexual congress was observed when rain fell from the sky and impregnated the fertile earth, causing her to bring forth vegetation. Anu's old gift of flies was henceforth to take on a new symbolism: as beads strung around the mother goddess's neck they would remind her of the hungry gods buzzing around Ša-napišti's sacrifice, and ultimately of her special responsibility to her human children. The mention here of her necklace of flies may have dual significance. As Lambert suggests, it may be a detail recorded to explain why statues of the goddess wore a necklace of fly-shaped beads, i.e. an artistry of cultic jewellery. A study of this passage in the light of parallel imagery makes an additional point, drawing attention to the fly as a symbol of war and, more appropriately for the present context, death; it further proposes that, through the fact that a fly's wings throw light into the colours of the spectrum, the necklace of flies may also stand for a rainbow, the very phenomenon that marks the end of the Flood in the biblical narrative.575


578 CT 22.48 obs. 10', ed. Horowitz, Cosmic Geography, p. 36.
to discount the present passage as evidence in the discussion of the location of Dilmun, Alster has written that ‘the setting [of the Flood story in Standard Babylonian Gilgamesh] is a mixture of geography and cosmology alien to the Sumerian forerunner, and the two stories should be kept strictly apart’. It is of course unnecessary to reconcile exactly the old and the late traditions, especially since the latter has entered the realms of fantasy. However, it would be surprising if the tradition of the later text brought the Flood hero nearer to Babylonia: the general expectation would be that, the more recent the story’s telling, the further away he ought to be.

In fact, it would seem that there is a way of reconciling what appear to be the conflicting traditions of the Sumerian and Babylonian tales. In discussing the concept of the ‘mouth of the rivers’, Albright long ago drew attention to incantations in which this phrase is almost a by-name for Ea’s cosmic domain, the Apsû. This could mean that anywhere especially associated with Ea and the Apsû might be considered, as his domain, to be the ‘mouth of the rivers’. The phrase also suggests a belief that all rivers, having once risen from the Apsû, eventually returned there. Albright also noted the received wisdom, attested in Arabic and classical sources, that the waters of the Euphrates, having largely disappeared into the marshes of what is now lower Iraq, flowed beneath the sea to reappear in southern Arabia (so Pliny) or Bahrain, where they supplied the famous freshwater springs that bubble up offshore and onshore. What no one at that time was in a position to add is that Sumerian mythology may well confirm this belief as very ancient. In the myth known as Enki and Ninhiursag Enki solves the problem of lack of water in Dilmun by supplying it from the waters flowing underground: ka a ki.du.du.ta a.dig ki.ta mu.na.ra.gin, ‘from the mouth of the water flowing in the Netherworld he made the fresh water flow out from the ground for her’. The passage undoubtedly supposes a belief that, through Enki’s intervention, water flowing underground came to the surface in Dilmun. Since the Euphrates, in particular, loses most of its water in the marshes rather than to the sea, it would seem logical to imagine that the fresh water of the subterranean Apsû was replenished in exactly this way, from the rivers that flowed into the marshes. The Apsû and the rivers are one and the same body of water, constantly recycled.

In discussing Ea’s advice to Štuka-napišti earlier in Tablet XI, namely to explain his building of the boat by saying that he was going to live with Ea, it has already been observed that Dilmun is a land much associated with Enki in Sumerian mythology. The belief that his domain was accessible from Štuka-napišti’s home is attested not only in that passage but also later in Tablet XI, when Gilgamesh dives in search of the plant of rejuvenation and reaches the Apsû (I. 290). The sitting in Dilmun of the ‘mouth’ of the subterranean waters in the myth of Enki and Ninihursag very much suggests that what is meant by ina pi nāšti is the place where river water rose again from the Apsû. Therefore I see the use of this phrase in the passage under comment as a reference to the cosmic domain of Ea.

Other details reported about Štuka-napišti’s home, especially in the diving episode, seem indeed to derive from the area of the Gulf around Bahrain. Given the tradition that Ziusudra lived in Dilmun and the later view that the springs of Bahrain were the mouths of Mesopotamian rivers, it may be that the ancients would have made the connection also in this text. But even if they understood the ‘mouth of the rivers’ implicitly to refer to this extraordinary foreign island, the use of the cosmological phrase rather than the geographical name places this land at the same time firmly beyond the explored world, in the realm of fantasy.

Štuka-napišti concludes his story by asking a rhetorical question: who will convene a divine assembly to immortalize Gilgamesh? The answer, of course, is nobody. Štuka-napišti possesses no secret of everlasting life. He had immortalized thrice in his unique circumstances, never to be repeated. The assembly that granted Štuka-napišti eternal life also determined that no other man should become immortal and that the proper destiny of men was death. It must also have accepted Ea’s advice never again to send such a flood. So Gilgamesh’s doom is already fixed and no opportunity will arise for him to escape it.

Finally Štuka-napišti suggests that Gilgamesh try to stay awake for a week (209). This ordeal is, perhaps, a rite of passage that the old man surely knows his visitor cannot complete. The hero did without sleep in quest of his goal but now, at last, he cannot keep his eyes open a moment longer and falls immediately into a deep slumber that lasts the whole week of the test (210–11). Unlike previous episodes of sleep, this one is undisturbed by dreams, for now that the end of Gilgamesh’s adventures is near at hand, premonition has no role to play. Štuka-napišti calls his wife to observe the man who so aspired to immortality and she is inclined to wake him and send him home (212–18). But there is another lesson to be learned. Not only is man at the mercy of sleep—he is also a born liar (219–20). Mankind’s natural propensity for untruth is also acknowledged in the Thecdoy:

sar-ku ana a-me-lu-ti a-gl-gu-ru da-ba-ba
sar-ra-zi-ti u la kia-na tisti ru-ku-zi a-an-tak-ku
Lambert, BWSL, p. 88, 279–80

Having given to mankind crooked speech,
(the gods) bestowed on them constant lying and dishonesty.

So Štuka-napišti’s wife bakes bread daily and Gilgamesh’s portion is left lying beside his recumbent body, while she makes a mark on the wall for each day he sleeps (221–9). On

According to one of the two differing traditions cited in the introduction to Tablet X.

This advice is given in the LB fragment of Atra-hasis to be published by W. G. Lambert in CTMMA. The passage is quoted below (rev. v 13–14).

This passage was studied in detail by A. L. Oppenheim, ‘Mesopotamian mythology II’, Or 81 (1948), pp. 55–8.
the seventh morning, as she bakes the last bread of the week, Utá-napišti wakes Gilgameš (230). His reaction is immediately to deny having slept for more than a moment (231–3). But Utá-napišti steers his gaze to the row of bread that lies nearby, each portion displaying a different degree of staleness, and to the tally of days his wife has marked on the wall (234–41). Gilgameš is exposed to his face as a slave of sleep but not of truth. Thus confronted with his human limitations, he realizes that if he cannot withstand sleep, he has no hope of conquering death. He knows at last that he cannot escape the doom of men; already the angel of death has hold of him and wherever he goes death will be lurking in the shadows (242–6).

After this instructive experience the plot moves quickly on. Utá-napišti curses Ur-šanabi, banishing him from his shore and relieving him of his duties as ferryman (247–9). His crime was certainly to bring Gilgameš across the Waters of Death, a barrier that was plainly meant to be impassable by mortal men. The possibility is thereby excluded of any future wanderer repeating Gilgameš’s feat and visiting Utá-napišti’s unworldly realm. The old man’s reaction recalls Humbaba’s anger at, and eventual cursing of, Enkidu for leading Gilgameš to the Cedar Forest (Tablet V). But before he departs for the last time from Utá-napišti’s presence, Ur-šanabi is instructed to take Gilgameš to the washing-place so the hero can soak the dirt from his hair and the grime from his skin, thence to emerge with body beautiful and new attire for head and body, apparently having cast his old lion’s skin into the sea (250–8). There is nothing in the text that indicates the washing-place is a fountain of youth—the adjective ‘sweet, fair’ applied to Gilgameš’s body cannot be pressed into such service—though some have supposed that it was. Nevertheless, in a land closely associated with the Apsû of Ea the washing-place may have had special properties of purification. Certainly, it dissolved all trace of the marks left on the hero by his long and arduous quest. However that may be, the new garment that Gilgameš is given will stay magically clean for the entire duration of his journey home to Uruk (259–61). Utá-napišti’s realm is clearly pervaded by at least some of the supernatural powers that might be expected in a place fit for an immortal. His knowledge of the whereabouts of the magic plant of rejuvenation demonstrates that he is himself privy to mysteries unglimpseed by mortal men. As an exile residing in a place of enchantment, the Flood hero is a kind of ancient Mesopotamian Prospero.

In the famous passage of the ale-wife’s advice in the Old Babylonian epic, Gilgameš is advised to abandon his quest and ensconce, as one of the simple joys of domestic life, to wear fresh clothing and keep his body clean. In washing his guest and giving him new attire Utá-napišti is preparing Gilgameš for the life that he must lead now that his adventures are over. The clean body and spotless garment are symbolic of Gilgameš’s new state of mind and of the fresh start he must make in life.

Utá-napišti’s instructions are repeated as narrative and Ur-šanabi duly performs his master’s bidding for the last time (262–70). He and Gilgameš then board his ferry to begin the journey home (271–2). Utá-napišti’s wife intervenes, asking her husband whether he has remembered to give their departing guest the farewell gift evidently required of good hospitality (273–5). Gilgameš overhears her question and, having come away with nothing, puns the boat back back to the shore in eager expectation (276–7). Acknowledging Gilgameš’s heroic endurance of hardship, Utá-napišti makes good this oversight. He has one last mystery to reveal. If Gilgameš can find a certain thorny plant that resembles the amurardinu plant (probably a dog-rose), then . . . (278–86). The crucial last line of his speech is still missing but, given what comes next, it is certain that the old man tells Gilgameš that the plant has the property of rejuvenation. There are two ways of understanding why Utá-napišti shares this secret with Gilgameš. Either he genuinely wishes to compensate Gilgameš with the prospect of a return to youth, no substitute for true immortality but a fine gift, nevertheless; or he knows what will happen and wants Gilgameš to experience final proof of his human weakness.

Utá-napišti gives no explicit instructions as to how to find the magic plant but Gilgameš somehow knows what to do. He ‘opens’ a ‘channel’ and, weighting his legs with stones, jumps in and is dragged down to the Apsû (287–90). There he wrenches the plant from its roots and, discarding the weights, finds himself cast up on the seashore, where Ur-šanabi awaits him (291–3). The text remains damaged in these lines so important details may be missing in regard to exactly how Gilgameš achieved this feat. The word ‘channel’ is typically a depression or trough hollowed out of the ground to contain liquid, for example to form a rough ingot mould or to serve as an irrigation channel.

In this passage it has caused translators considerable difficulty, often because they have taken the ‘channel’ to be some kind of structure, a ‘pipe’ leading underground or beneath the sea. My understanding of the passage is that Gilgameš has disembarked to hear what Utá-napišti has to tell him. He digs a shallow pit in the beach and soon reaches the water table. The fact that he makes the hole on land, not at sea, becomes clearer later, when he complains that he cannot rediscover it because the tide will have washed away any trace. The water table is the uppermost level of the cosmic domain of Ea, which in Utá-napišti’s realm is particularly accessible. Consequently the pit gives him immediate access to the subterranean Apsû. He dives down into

275 For rûru in bronze smelting see SB V 103 and commentary. Another usage of rûru is for the runnels that carried libations in temples, probably channels let into the floor (see GAD R, p. 220).
276 So most recently W. G. Lambert, ‘The Apsû’, in L. Muñoz et al. (eds.), Landscapes: Territories, Frontiers and Horizons in the Ancient Near East 3 (CRRA 44III; Padua, 2000), p. 77. Speiser speculates that this rûru was ‘a pipe connecting with a source of sweet waters which would nourish the miraculous plant’ (ANET, pp. 96–7, fn. 232), comparing it with the biblical account of creation (CT 13 35, 11); see a.s. Ina.Ki, lka na-nam = lka Ina.Ki ra-tam ra-nu-nu, ‘the spring in the midst of the ocean was a channel’. This line has no bearing on the present issue, however, for it signifies only that, once upon a time, the great well-spring of the ocean was just a little trough in the ground.
THE STANDARD BABYLONIAN EPIC

the water, finds the plant but does not return the way he came. Instead he rises from the Apšu by way of the sea and, emerging just offshore from Ur-šani, is carried back to land by the surf.279

In a series of articles During Caspers has sought to illuminate details of this episode by reference to what is known of ancient Bahrain.280 She refers to the famous submarine wells situated off the coast of Bahrain, which were the island's principal supply of fresh water until modern times and account for the old tradition, mentioned above, that the Euphrates rose again off Bahrain. These wells were known in antiquity.281 Dilmun, the home of the Flood hero in Sumerian tradition, was accordingly a place with a special relationship to the Apšu and for this reason a playground of Enki in mythology. The connection between Dilmun and fresh water explains how Gilgamesh was able so easily to reach the Apšu from Šumāpāši's realm.282 It has long been known that Gilgamesh, in tugging to his feet to reach deep water, employs the customary practice of divers in search of pearls, sponges and coral.283 One could read the passage as actually giving to Gilgamesh the credit for the discovery of this technique, as it were an aetiology of seafaring diving, much like the sailing episode in SB X 181–3.

With regard to the nature of the magic submarine plant, During Caspers compares it with tree-shaped forms of marine life and brings attention to an idea first proposed by Burrows,284 that it was a kind of sharp coral. She develops this idea by surveying the various kinds of coral and suggests that specifically ‘Antipatharia or black coral (“Thorny coral”)’ or Gorgonacea fit best what is known of the magic plant.285 She notes that such corals are traditionally known for healing properties, at least in the East Indies. What is not yet known is whether these corals and their medicinal use were known in the Gulf in antiquity, for the very words for coral in Akkadian are not securely identified.286 Though this particular identification cannot for this reason be upheld, the existence of spiny corals of therapeutic value that in shape resemble plants is certainly very suggestive and one is inclined to accept as correct the general interpretation of Burrows and During Caspers, that the poet had in mind a type of coral when he wrote of the prickly plant retrieved by Gilgamesh from the watery Apšu.

279 On the connections between the Apšu and the sea see Horowitz, Cosmic Geographies, pp. 340–1, where this passage is one of several adduced as evidence; also Lambert, CRRA 44(2), pp. 77.
282 During Caspers proposes that ‘Gilgamesh was pulled down via the pipe or shaft, which could well be a column of fresh water, [that] he had made into the water mass, to the bottom of the sea, which was the entry to Enki’s Apšu’ (Persica 12, p. 66). This seems too elaborate an explanation, however.
285 During Caspers, Persica 12, p. 85. Her concluding proposal, that amurrumus is itself such a coral, rests on a misunderstanding of the imagery of this passage, for nowhere is an actual equation of amurrumus and the magic plant the issue.
286 According to R. C. Thompson’s outdated work, DBCG, pp. 165–6 and 172–3, coral is known in red and white varieties, respectively also baji and aqaym. AL 111 repeats these identifications but CAD is more sceptical: there the former is left untransliterated and the latter is understood as some kind of bell.

SYNOPSIS AND EXEGESIS: TABLET XI

Gilgamesh shows the plant to Ur-šani and tells him of its magic ability to rejuvenate (294–6). He does not entirely believe his own words, however, for he announces his intention first of taking the plant back to Uruk, where he will test it on an old man; only then will he try it himself (297–300). This seems straightforward enough, but a close reading reveals a problem. As usually understood, the passage has Gilgamesh giving the plant not one but two names, ‘Plant of Heartbeat’ and ‘The Old Man Has Grown Young’.288 Does the plant really receive one name when first recovered and another when proved effective? In the light of the uncertainty that attends the reading of the vital first word of I. 299, other interpretations are possible. First, reading llammu, ‘its (or his) name’, the possessive pronoun does not necessarily refer to the plant. Instead it can stand in for the old man, who then acquires the name ‘The Old Man Has Grown Young’ as the guinea pig in Gilgamesh’s successful experiment.289 An alternative solution is more radical, in that it rejects llammu in favour of llamma, ‘it’.290 The result is no name at all, but a conditional clause in the future perfect, ‘if the old man grows young (again), I will eat some myself...’. It is to be hoped that future discoveries of text will bring an end to the uncertainty that dogs the interpretation of this line.

Armed with the future prospect of repeated rejuvenation, Gilgamesh sets out with Ur-šani on the journey home to Uruk (301–2). On the way he sees a pool of cool water and refreshes himself with a bath (303–4). While he is engaged in the pleasure of the moment, a cunning snake emerges from its hole, gets wind of the magic plant and carries it off in its mouth (305–6). As it slithers away it discards its old skin and becomes young again (307). This is one of the most obvious and best-known aetiologicals in the epic and a myth that had a wide currency in antiquity.291 It appears for the first time in Gilgamesh but was not necessarily a Babylonian story by origin. Seeing at one and the same time the effectiveness of the plant confirmed and its possession irretrievably denied him, Gilgamesh is utterly distraught.

287 A recent discussion of the epic makes much of this passage as revealing a newly developed altruism in Gilgamesh, but the exegesis is based on an old error of decipherment (bab-Šaq bill-Šaq) and a consequent mistranslation of XI 298 harēša šamaša llammu luduk as ‘I will give it to them to eat, divide among them’ (N. Vulte, ‘Once and the unity of the Gilgamesh epic’, JNES 53 (1994), p. 281). The verb Šaq means ‘divide in pieces’ only in Neo-Assyrian. Far from being born of a desire to share the magic plant with his people out of a ‘sense of common humanity’—and the plant is not the secret of ‘eternal life’ (ibid), but a finite resource for rejuvenation—Gilgamesh proposes to take it back to Uruk because he cannot trust it until he has proved its efficacy on a human guinea-pig. Testing medical prescriptions on inferiors was an accepted practice at the Assyrian royal court in the seventh century, according to a letter of Adad-Suma-urIA, Esarhaddon’s eunuch. He recommends that a potion intended for the crown prince should first be tested on slaves (ŠAQ X 191, ed. 11–11v).&amp; (gall-gall) ammu-tes til-ra-ri-ul ni-ili-qil ba-ru-me-nu maš (damos) lame (lammu) ilis-iti, we shall give (the medicine) to those slaves first and then later let the crown prince drink (it).’
288 For a justification of my understanding of the first name, llammu ninni, see Ch. 13, the commentary on SB XI 295. The latter phrase, ilīšu inādir annimu, has sometimes been held to allude to the hero’s Sumerian name, bill-ga. Men. It should be pointed out that the ancient lexical lists do not explicitly equate bill-ga and ilīšu nor men and Šaq. The supposed connection may only be obvious to modern commentators.
289 This idea stems from Benjamin F. Foster’s new translation, which he generously permitted me to see before publication. The Epic of Gilgamesh (New York, 2001), p. 94.
290 I owe this observation to J. N. Postgate in a private communication.
291 A Greek version is told by Nicander and Aelian (see West, Best Face of Hekaton, p. 118), whereas it found its way into the writings of Voltaire (C. Virelaud, ‘De quelques survivances de la legende babyloniens concernant la plante de vie’, Journal asiatique 239 (1951), pp. 127–32).
(308–9). Turning to Ur-šanišbi he sobs bitterly that all his labours have come to naught, the only benefit of his toil and pain accruing to a lowly reptile (310–14). What is more, there is no chance of repeating his dive to the Abīṣu in search of another plant. The tide has risen far and wide and, careless as always, in triumph he threw away the tools he used, leaving no prospect of finding again the place where he dug or the means of digging (315–17). He wishes he had never crossed the ocean, for all it has brought him is threefold disappointment (318). Īta-napišti had no secret of immortality for him to learn. He could not conquer sleep. He failed to keep secure the precious plant of rejuvenation. The limitations of his own mortal condition are thus cruelly and incontrovertibly revealed to him.

Gilgamesh and Ur-šanišbi continue their journey and arrive at last in Uruk (319–21). There the hero points out to his companion the great wall and urges him to climb on to it, there to gaze out over Uruk, a great city of houses, date-groves, open spaces and, of course, the sanctuary of Ḫullu (322–8). In this way Gilgamesh’s story is rounded off by the very words that introduced it (SB I 18–23). These closing lines function as an epilogue. It is often supposed that they reveal in Gilgamesh an acceptance that he will make do with the immortal renown brought him by building the city’s wall. That is too specific a view. For while the epilogue begins by taking the audience in their imagination up on to the wall once more, the last two lines make it clear that the poet fixes our gaze firmly on what the wall encloses. The wall is thus a vantage point from which one may observe the comings and goings of men in the city below. The line in question (323) is adapted with similar purpose in a famous satirical composition of the late second or early first millennium:

ɛ-la-ma ina maḫḫa(u) ṭālān(du)[lu]-e3 labirūn(ilibir.ta) ɪnal-ak
a-mur gu-lu-še Ša arākši(egir) ɪnu pa-ma-oc-ti
a-a-u be-el le-ma-tim-ma a-a-u be-el ū-ta-a-ti

Dialogue of Pessimism 76–8, ed. Lambert, BWZ, p. 148

Go up on to the old ruin-mounds and walk around,
see the skulls of the lowly and the great:
which did ill and which did good?

There the poet uses the line to invite reflection on the dead. In Gilgamesh the interest is on the living. Before our eyes stretches the great expanse of the city of Uruk, the seat of ancient civilization, the place where, according to an old tradition, the arts of urban life first flourished in Sumer after Enki inadvertently gave them away to Inanna.292

As noted in Chapter 3, Gilgamesh was held responsible for the revival of civilization after the Deluge. In that respect the last two lines of the epilogue relate to him in person, for the cultural supremacy of Uruk could be viewed as a personal achievement that matched the building of the wall. But in a poem with such a profound interest in the nature of man, the

292 The Sumerian mythological text that tells this story, now known as Enki and Inanna, effectively functions as a charter for Uruk. Thanks to Enki’s gift of the men to Inanna, Uruk became heir to the traditions of Eridu, and thus the centre of the civilization held to emanate ultimately from Enki’s venerable sanctuary at Eridu. The myth shows that the ancients correctly understood their history: Uruk was the greatest city of prehistoric Babylonia but not the oldest cult centre.

individual figure of Gilgamesh has often been a vehicle for reflection on the human condition. Here, at the close, the same is true. For the Babylonians the city was the one institution without which civilization was impossible. It was also eternal, built by the gods and inhabited by men, more ancient than memory and enduring into an unknown future. Uruk, vast in expanse and manifestly ancient, is a symbol of the archetypal Babylonian city. The fourfold division of Uruk set out in the lines that frame the eleven-tablet epic is pregnant with meaning. By this means the poet symbolizes with sublime skill the four areas of activity that most preoccupy human life on earth. The city proper (ḫall) denotes the built-up areas, the domestic dwellings where men establish their households and raise their families; the date-groves (kīna) represent with their archetypal crop the agricultural activity and produce that nourish the human race; the clay-pits (eṣšī), whence came the clay for making mud bricks and modelling rough terracotta figurines and plaques,293 symbolize man’s creativity as builder and craftsman; and the great temple precinct of Īta stands for man’s spiritual and intellectual endeavours. These four activities express the whole of human life: recreation, food production, manufacturing and mental activity. All are enclosed within the great city’s walls.

In my view the epilogue of the epic tells its audience a self-evident truth: gaze on the city, consider the generations that surround you and learn that human life, in all its activities, is collective and not individual. The symbol of that life is the great city that we contemplate from the wall. Individual cities, of course, could rise and fall but their human populations lived on. The gods had promised that there would be no more Deluges, no more threat of wholesale extinction of the human race. This belief, famously articulated in the Hebrew bible as God’s covenant with Noah in Gen. 9: 8–17, can now be seen to stem from Babylonia, like the Flood myth that provides its context. It informs Ea’s counsel at the end of the poem of Atra-hasis, as revealed in a Late Babylonian fragment now in New York. There, having advised Enlil that the Deluge was too blunt an instrument for the purpose to which he put it, Ea concludes with a plea for a more secure future (courtesy W.G. Lambert):

is-ēn[a]-mi an-ni]-[^im a-a]-tā]-lu-ṣa-k ū-nī-hu-t[a]
ā-ni-ṣu-ug[a] ɪnlu-ṣa ɜ-ur-ni a-i-na da-r[a]

MMA 86.11.378A rev. v 13–14', ed. Lambert, CTMMA 2 forthcoming

From this day no Deluge shall take place,
and the human race [shall] endure for ever!

The plain implication is that though men are mortal, mankind is immortal. Against this background the epilogue can be understood to reiterate in briefer and more allusive terms the message conveyed by the elaborate imagery that closed the first part of Īta-napišti’s homily at the end of Table XI. Indeed, from this final vantage point the whole of the latter part of the poem can be seen to convey the same truth. A man makes a long journey. Pur-
sued by death he is able, uniquely for a mortal, to bypass its watery gateway. Beyond the world he comes face to face with an immortal ancestor. Then he must go home. The mortal Gilgameš represents the individual Everyman, though one who has been singled out for an extraordinary experience. The immortal Ūna-napišti—already ancient at the time of the Deluge and blessed with a future of infinite years—symbolizes the human race. By his quest’s end what Gilgameš has learnt at first hand, alone among mortals, is this: at the end of life the individual perishes in the passage to death’s realm, but beyond that point in his existence, and necessarily outside his personal experience, stretches the eternal past and future of mankind.

The climax, epilogue and plot combine to provide a simple conclusion to the poem’s grandest theme. No man can live for ever, not even the greatest of heroes or mightiest of kings, but there will always be men on this earth, for life itself is eternal.

TABLET XII

As a piece of literature Tablet XII is not part of the epic proper. The questions of when and why the extra material was added to the eleven-tablet epic have been discussed above, in Chapter 1.

Told briefly, the story related in Tablet XII is this. Gilgameš has cut down a haunted tree and turned it into furniture for the goddess Inanna. As payment for his services he has received some left-over wood, which he has made into playthings, a stick and ball. With these he has exhausted the young men of Uruk, so that their womenfolk have complained to the gods. The gods have opened a hole in the ground and the playthings have fallen through into the Netherworld. At this point the Akkadian translation begins. Gilgameš laments the loss of his playthings (1–5). Enkidu volunteers to retrieve them (5–9). Gilgameš counsels him regarding proper behaviour in the presence of the shades of the dead (10–12). He must not present a clean, well-groomed appearance, he must not exhibit violent and threatening behaviour, he must not make a noise, he must not acknowledge the ghosts of dead kith and kin (13–27). It has been suggested that these are taboos born partly of the need for a proper show of mourning and partly of a ‘negation of normal life’. In the presence of the dead a lack of display and the maintenance of silence are, indeed, desiderata, in Babylonia as elsewhere, but the larger point is that if Enkidu hopes to come back from the Land of No Return he must steal into it unobserved and draw no attention to himself while he is there. This means avoiding all behaviour that would alert the ghostly residents—and their guardians—to his presence. If noticed he will be taken captive and brought before the

‘mother of Ninnazu’, who lies deathly pale and bare-breasted in perpetual mourning (28–30). This is the queen of the dead, the great goddess Ereshkigal, and the implication is that in her presence his name will be entered in the tally of the dead, an act which will detain him permanently and irrevocably.

Enkidu ignores Gilgameš’s warning, does all he was warned not to, and in due course is taken before the goddess (31–50). When he fails to come back it is clear that, though he has not perished in any normal way—of disease, of old age or in battle—nevertheless the Netherworld holds him captive (51–4). Gilgameš, waiting in vain for his favourite’s return, bewails him (55). He seeks help from Enlil and Sin in turn but neither will aid him and he goes finally to Ea (56–72). Ea is more sympathetic and instructs Šamaš, the sun god (not Nergal, as previously supposed), to bring Enkidu’s ghost out of the Netherworld through a crevice, which Šamaš duly does (73–87). As one who daily makes the journey from the Netherworld to the land of the living, the sun god is uniquely able to open such a hole. Enkidu’s shade duly escapes through a chink in the wall like a pigeon flying from its nook. Gilgameš embraces the shade of his friend and is eager to learn of the existence men lead after death (88–91). Enkidu knows that the knowledge will pain his friend but, being pressed, tells how worms consume someone’s mortal remains as they turn slowly into dust (92–9). These lines are still damaged in Tablet XII but the discovery of MS rr, a new source for BN 250–3, allows a better understanding of this passage, which differs in its Sumerian and Akkadian versions. The Akkadian translation of Enkidu’s speech probably reports the corruption of his own body, using language that alludes in the most graphic terms to sexual intimacy with his friend. This explicit language is restored from the Sumerian, where, by contrast, it is the fate of the body of a female lover that is described. Thus informed of the physical reality of death by the decay of those nearest him, Gilgameš throws himself to the ground, prostrate with grief and horror (100–1).

295 On these lines and their several parallels as descriptive of Ereshkigal in mourning see B. Alster, ‘The mythology of mourning’, *ZA* 55 (1985), pp. 1–6. Here the epithet ‘mother of Ninnazu’ perhaps signals for whom she weeps; in Inanna’s Descent, however, it is her husband, Gugalanna, who has died (II. 86–9). In another passage of that poem Ereshkigal bears num dumu ne.ka-ši (I. 230), ‘on account of her children’ (see Alster, op. cit., pp. 7–8, 10–11). These are the dead of all humanity, the countless shades that populate her great subterranean city. Mourning, it seems, is the inescapable fate of the queen of the Netherworld.

296 The reception of the dead before Ereshkigal and her secretary is described in Enkidu’s dream of the Netherworld, SBVII 203 ff.

297 The audience with Sin is absent from the Sumerian poem, as we have it, but is no doubt a relic of a fuller text. This assumption is supported by comparison with the similar episode in the Descent of Inanna. There, when Inanna fails to come back from the Netherworld, her minister, the goddess Ninhursag, visits Enlil, Nanna and Enki in turn. As here, the first noun to leam is hlep but each is responsive.


299 J. Trower has cogently argued that the word in question, *ša.ballātu* // Akk. *wabānu* signifies a small opening in the city wall of the Netherworld; see his article: ‘Beschwörungen’ des Enkidu? Anmerkungen zur Interpretation von GEN 240–243 // *Gig. XII, 79–84*, WF 17 (1986), pp. 19–24. One may add that the imagery is still more allusive. The dead shades were often perceived as bird-like in form (cf. SBVII 189 and parallels); the word *ša.ballātu* is most commonly encountered in Sumerian literature as a roosting place of pigeons (see *PISD* A2, p. 146).

300 See further Ch. 13, the commentary on SB XII 96–9.
Then begins the long session of question and answer that fills the remainder of the tablet in an unvarying pattern. Gilgameš asks whether Enkidu has seen a certain individual; Enkidu replies in the affirmative and describes how that individual fared. These are not named individuals but anonymous representatives of different categories. The section begins with men with progressively more sons, from one to seven (102–16). The lesson is clear: the more sons a man leaves behind, the more comfortable his shade will be in the afterlife. Attention is then turned to eunuchs and others who cannot leave sons, but only the beginning of this section is recovered in the Akkadian version (117–19). The logic that underlies this passage is well known. The greater the number of a man’s descendants, the more likely it is that someone will honour his memory with the libations of water for which the captive shade thirsts and with other commemorative rites. People who have no offspring can have no expectation of comfort in the afterlife.

After a long gap the text continues with those who have died violent or sudden deaths and those who die naturally of old age (144–9). Only the last enjoys any comfort. The text terminates with two specific cases in which no funerary and memorial rituals are possible, either because the body has not been recovered or because there is no descendant to carry out the necessary rituals (150–3). The text ends abruptly there, much as do copies of the Sumerian text from Nippur and Mē-Turan, though they end on a slightly different note, with those who have been burned to death. A tablet from Ur, however, is witness to a recension of the Sumerian poem in which the conclusion draws a moral from the preceding story. Shoked by what Enkidu’s ghost has imparted, Gilgameš institutes proper memorial rites for his parents, rites which involve the funerary statues and libations of water that we know were necessary for correct commemoration.

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303 See the exegesis of the Sumerian poem by J. Bauer, ‘Der “schlimme Tod” in Mesopotamien’, Studia Sjöberg, pp. 21–7. On the parallels between this exchange and the Odyssey XI, see West, East Face of Helicon, pp. 41–5. 16.
304 On the eunuch see George, ‘Sumerian tu-du = “eunuch” ’; NABU199797; note earlier Bauer, Studia Sjöberg, p. 23: ‘der Zusammenhang könnte auf einem Eunuchen weisen’.
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<td>Y3</td>
<td>79-7-8, 342</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z1</td>
<td>K 8590</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z2</td>
<td>K 19325</td>
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<td>Z3</td>
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<td>K 8591</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB1</td>
<td>K 9865+80-7-19, 306</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
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<td>BB2</td>
<td>BM 98900 (Ki 1904-10-9, 19)</td>
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**Edition of the Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Tablet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>K 18183</td>
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<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>Sm 1754</td>
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<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>Sm 2132</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td>Rm 964</td>
<td>XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJ</td>
<td>80-7-19, 305</td>
<td>IX</td>
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<tr>
<td>KK</td>
<td>BM 135909 (1973-6-18, 1)</td>
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**Assur**

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- b: VAT 10586 | XI
- c: VAT 11000 | XI
- d: VAT 11294 | 
- d: VAT 11576 | VI

**Sulaiman**

- e: S.U. 51/7 | VIII
- f: S.U. 51/129A | VII

**Nimrud**

- z: IM 67564 (ND 4381) | X–XI
- g: IM 67577 (ND 4405/4) | I

**Babylonia**

- a: BM 30559+32418 (S 76-11-17, 286+2152) | XII
- b: BM 34160+34193+35174+35348+35413+35628 (Sp 265+299+Sp II 726+922+998+Sp III 140) | X
- c: BM 34191+41835 (Sp 297+81-6-25, 454) | III
- d1: Rm 785+956+1017+BM 34248 (Sp 355)+34357 (Sp 472) | I
- d2: K 15145 (Rm) | 
- e: BM 34449 (Sp 573) | II
- f: Rm 751+BM 34853 (Sp II 357)+35546 (Sp III 52) | X
- g: BM 34873 (Sp II 380) | VII
- g2: BM 35245 (Sp II 812) | 
- g3: BM 46002 (81-7-6, 446) | I
- h: BM 34916+35419 (Sp II 451+1006) | 
- i: BM 35079+35103 (Sp II 614+645) | III
- j: BM 35380 (Sp II 960) | XI
- k: BM 35567 (Sp III 74) | II
- m1: BM 36909+37023 (80-6-17, 660+767)+F 235 | VIII
- m2: BM 37189 (80-6-17, 942) | 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Tablet</th>
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<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>BM 37163 (80-6-17, 913)+F 234</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>BM 38538 (80-11-12, 422)</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>BM 38833 (80-11-12, 718)</td>
<td>II</td>
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<td>q</td>
<td>BM 41862 (81-6-25, 482)</td>
<td>XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>BM 45883 (81-7-6, 314)</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>BM 72719 (82-9-18, 12726)</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
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<td>t</td>
<td>BM 93052 (83-1-21, 1788)</td>
<td>IV</td>
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**Table of Manuscripts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Bibliography of cuneiform texts and previous editions*</th>
<th>Lines preserved on obverse†</th>
<th>Lines preserved on reverse‡</th>
<th>Plate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B₁</td>
<td>K 913+2756E+2756F+6541+81-7-27, 93</td>
<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrodos</em> nos. 1 c (K 2756), 1 c (K 2756E +) 2756F; C</td>
<td>36–40</td>
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<td>1891 P. Haupt in A. Jeremias, <em>Sumerian Literature</em>, pls. 2–4: C (81–7–27, 93, showing join to K 2756)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B₂</td>
<td>K 2756A+2756B+13874</td>
<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrodos</em> nos. 1 d (K 2756 A), 1 b (K 2756 B): C</td>
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<tr>
<td>B₃</td>
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<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrodos</em> no. 1 a: C</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i 1–2 (B₃), 3–18 (B₃)</td>
<td>iv 149–63 (B₃), 179–200 (B₃)</td>
<td>36–40</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii 48–51 (B₃), 100–101 (B₃)</td>
<td>v 202–251 (B₃), 252–253 (B₃)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii 107–20 (B₃), 142–148 (B₃)</td>
<td>vi 250–300, colophon (B₃)</td>
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<td>F₁</td>
<td>K 2756D+20778</td>
<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrodos</em> no. 2: C (K 2756D only)</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>F₂</td>
<td>K 7017</td>
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<td>K 8584</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1891 <em>ibid.</em> no. 43: C</td>
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<td>F₄</td>
<td>K 12000Q</td>
<td>1930 R. C. Thompson, <em>Gilgamesh</em>, pl. 8: C</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>i 3–14 (F₄)</td>
<td>iv 168–76 (F₄), 180–205 (F₄)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ii 63–74 (F₄)</td>
<td>v 242–5, 252–66 (F₄)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii 160–167 (F₄)</td>
<td>vi 299–300, colophon (F₄)</td>
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</table>

* In this table and all those that follow, the style of previous publication is indicated by the following abbreviations: C = copy, P = photograph, T = transcription, Tr = translation. Lower-case abbreviations (c, p, t, tr) signify partial treatments.
† Bold figures in the line extents denote lines that fall at the beginning and end of columns on the tablet in question.
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</table>

**Nimrud**


**Babylon**


| d₂  | K 15145 (Rm) | i 1–17 (d₂)<br>ii 56–73 (d₂) | v 211–17, 228–9, 235–43 | 47 |

| h   | BM 34916+35419 | 1965 T. G. Pinches, *CT* 46 no. 17: C (BM 34916 only)<br>i 7–53<br>ii 80–111 | vi 259–300 | 48, 49 |


**Composite cuneiform texts and editions**

1876 G. Smith, *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, pp. 198–205: B₁, parts of B₁ and B₂ (at least K 2756, 2756A, 2756B and 13874), parts of F (K 2756D and 7017), and part of P (K 4465)

1900 P. Jensen, *KBVI* 1, pp. 116–35: B₁, F₁ and parts of B₁, B₂, and F₁ (all as copied by Haupt in Haupt 1884 and 1891, Jeremiah 1891), and P (lacking K 22153 but including 9245 from unpublished copies of C. Bezold and C. H. W. Johns)

1930 R. C. Thompson, *Gilgamesh*, pp. 11–18, pls. 1–8: B₁ (K 913+2756+81–7–27, 93 and K 2756B+2756F+6541, unjoined), B₂, B₃, F₁ (K 2756D only), F₂, F₃, P (lacking K 22153), d₁ (BM 34248 only), h (BM 34916 only), C T

1997 S. Parpola, *SA6 Gilg.,* pp. 3–8, 71–4: all MSS represented except d₂ partially present: F₁ (K 2756D only), P (lacking K 22153), d₁ (lacking BM 34357 and Rm 956), h (BM 34916 only), n (BM 37163 only) and cc (rev. only) C T
Text

B₂,₃ₐ,ₐ 1 [sá naq-ba i-মু-ru .tsv]-di ma-a-ti
B₂,₄₁,₄₂ 2 [x x x-ti i-du]-mu 3 ka₃-la-ma ša-as-[s]₁[₃]
B₂,₄₃ 3 [šu₃-gim₃-maš ša n]aq₂ bo₁ i-মু-ru ši-di ma₃ [a]-š[ ]
B₂,₄₄ 4 [x x x-ti] i-du-ši ka-la-mu ša-a-[s-tu]
B₂,₄₅ 5 [x x x]-ma mi₃-ša₃-r₃ ša₃-x[ ]
B₂,₄₆ 6 [naq₂]-ša₃ ša₃ ka-la-ma ma₃-ti [ša]-u₃ [šu₃-šu₃]
B₂,₄₇ 7 [ni₃]-šir-ta i-mur₃ ma₃ ka₃-ti₃ [ša]-t]²[ ]
B₂,₄₈ 8 [u₃]-ša₃ ša₃-ša₃ ma₃ ša₃ a₃-bu₃-b[ ]
B₂,₄₉ 9 [u₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ša₃ ša₃ a₃-bu₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₅₀ 10 [ši₃]-ša₃ b₃₃₃-t₄[ša₃] ma₃ ma₃ ša₃-ša₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₅₁ 11 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃-[ša₃] ma₃ ma₃ ša₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₅₂ 12 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃-[ša₃] ma₃ ma₃ ša₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₅₃ 13 a₃-ma₃ du₃-[ša₃] ša₃ ti₃₃₃₂[ša₃] i₃₂₃[ša₃]
B₂,₅₄ 14 i₃₂₃[ša₃] ma₃ sa₃-[ša₃] [ša₃] sa₃ [ša₃] ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₅₅ 15 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₅₆ 16 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₅₇ 17 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₅₈ 18 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
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B₂,₆₂ 22 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₆₃ 23 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
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B₂,₆₅ 25 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
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B₂,₇₁ 31 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]
B₂,₇₂ 32 [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]

Translation

1 [He who saw the Deep, the] foundation of the country,
2 [who knew ...] was wise in everything!
3 [Gilgamesh, who] saw the Deep, the foundation of the country,
4 [who ...] was wise in everything!
5 [...] equally [...]]
6 he [learned] the totality of wisdom about everything.
7 He saw the secret and uncovered the hidden,
8 he brought back a message from the antediluvian age.
9 He came a distant road and was weary but granted rest,
10 [he set down on a] stele all his labours.
11 He built the wall of Uruk-the-Sheepfold,
12 of holy Eanna, the pure storehouse.
13 See its wall which is like a strand of wool,
14 view its parapet which nobody can replicate!
15 Take the stairway that has been there since ancient times,
16 and draw near to Eanna, the seat of Ishtar,
17 that no later king can replicate, nor any man.
18 Go up on to the wall of Uruk and walk around,
19 survey the foundation platform, inspect the brickwork!
20 (See) if its brickwork is not kiln-fired brick,
21 and if the Seven Sages did not lay its foundations!
22 [One šar is] city, [one šar] date-grove, one šar is clay-pit, half a šar is the temple of Ishtar:
23 [three šar] and a half (is) Uruk, [its] measurement.
24 [Find] the tablet-box of cedar,
25 [release] its clasps of bronze!
26 [Open] the lid of its secret,
27 [Hi] up the tablet of lapis lazuli and read out
28 all the misfortunes, all the misfortunes, all Gilgamesh went through!
29 Surpassing all (other) kings, hero endowed with a superb physique,
30 brave native of Uruk, butting wild bull!
31 Going at the fore he was the leader, the leader of kings,
32 going also at the rear, the trust of his brothers!

2 o.] [ša₃]-ša₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ ma₃ [ša₃]

1 So MS B; MS H: 'comes'.
2 Or, 'grab the slab'.
3 As a unit of surface measure the Neo-Babylonian šar is 108 šēl, equivalent to a little over 1.5 square miles.
A mighty bank, the protection of his troops,
a violent flood-wave that smashes a stone wall!
Wild bull of Lugalbanda, Gilgamesh, perfect of strength,
Puckling of the exalted cow, Wild-Cow Ninsun!*
Gilgamesh so tall, perfect and terrible,
who opened passes in the mountains;
who dug wells on the hill-flanks,
and crossed the ocean, the wide sea, as far as the sunrise;
who scoured the world-regions ever searching for life,
and reached by his strength the Far-Away;
who restored the cult-centres that the Deluge destroyed,*
and established the proper rites for the human race!
Who is there that can be compared with him in kingly status,
and can say like Gilgamesh, 'Is I am the king?'
Gilgamesh was his name from the day he was born,
two-thirds of him god but a third of man human.
Bēlet-ili drew the shape of his body,
Nudimmud brought his form to perfection.

[^1]: So MS g; MS h: (inferior): "cow of Wild-Cow Ninsunannana".
[^2]: Or, 'through great danger'.
[^3]: So MS g; MS h: 'overthrew'.
the locks of his hair growing [thickly as Nissaba's.]
(As) he grew up he was perfect in [his] beauty,
by human standards [he was] very handsome.
He goes [about] in the sheaffold of Uruk,
lording it as a wild bull, [head] held high.
He has not any equal, [his] weapons being ready,
his companions are kept on their feet by the ball.
The young men of Uruk are wrongfully vexed,
Gilgamesh lets no son go free to [his] father.
Day and night he behaves with fierce arrogance,
[King] Gilgamesh, [who guides the numerous people,]^9
who is shepherd of Uruk-the-Sheepfold!
[ Gilgamesh] lets no [daughter go free to] her mother,^9
[the women . . .] their [ . . .] soon,
[their] complaint [ . . .] before [them;]
[Powerful, pre-eminent, expert, [ . . .]]
[ Gilgamesh] lets [no] girl go free to [her bride-groom,]
The warrior's daughter, [the young man's bride,]
the goddesses were listening to their complaint.
The gods of heaven, lords of initiative,
[to Anu . . .] . . . .
[Have you bred, indeed, a savage wild bull in Uruk-the-Sheepfold?]
He has not any equal, his weapons being ready,
his companions are kept on their feet by the ball.
He has wrongfully vexed [the young men of Uruk],^10
Gilgamesh lets no son go free to his father.
Day and [night he behaves] with fierce [arrogance,]
who is shepherd of Uruk-the-Sheepfold!
[King] Gilgamesh, [who guides the] numerous [people,]^10
he is their shepherd and their [ . . .] . . . !
Powerful, pre-eminent, expert, [ . . .]
Gilgamesh lets no girl go free to [her] bride-groom.'
The warrior's daughter,^11 the young man's bride,
[Anu] was listening to their complaint.
They summoned Aruru, the great one:
You, O Aruru, created [man:]
now create what he suggests!^12

^1 Lit. 'by the standard of the earth'.
^9 So MS P; MS d: 'his'.
^9 So MS P; MS d omits the entire line.
^9 So MS d; MS P omits the entire line.
^9 So MS P; MS d: 'wife'.
^12 Lit. 'his idea'. Alternatively, 'now create one like him (i.e. Gilgamesh).'
Let him be equal to the storm\(^{12}\) of his heart,
78 let them rival each other and so let Uruk be rested.\(^{13}\)
79 When Aruru heard this, she fashioned Anu's\(^{14}\) idea in her heart.
80 Aruru washed her hands,
81 in the wild. When she created Enkidu, the hero,
82 she took a pinch of clay, she threw it down in the wild.
83 Her offspring of silence,\(^{15}\) knit strong by Ninurta.
84 All his body is matted with hair,
85 he is adorned with tresses like a woman:
86 the locks of his hair grow as thickly as Nissaba's,
87 he knows not at all a people\(^{16}\) nor even a country.
88 He was clad in a garment like Šakkán's,
89 feeding on grass with the very gazelles.
90 Fostling at the water-hole with the herd,
91 he enjoyed\(^{17}\) the water with the animals.
92 A hunter, a trapper,\(^{18}\)
93 came face to face with him by the water-hole.
94 One day, a second and a third, he came face to face with him by the water-hole.
95 The hunter saw him and his expression froze,
96 [he\(^{19}\) and his herds—he went back to his lair.\(^{19}\)
97 [He\(^{20}\) was] troubled, he grew still, he grew silent,
98 [his mood was unhappy\(^{21}\), his face clouded over.
99 There was sorrow in his heart,
100 his face was like one who has travelled distant [roads].\(^{22}\)
101 The hunter opened [his mouth] to speak, saying [to his father:]
102 'My father, [there was a] certain fellow who came [by the water-hole].
103 Mighnest in the [land, he possesses] strength,
104 [his strength] is as mighty [as a lump of rock] from the sky.\(^{23}\)
105 [He wanders] over the hills [all day].
106 [constantly] with the herd [he feeds on grass.]

---

\(^{12}\) So MS P; MS h differently. In MS n the whole line perhaps reads 'let his heart be a [match for the storm].'
\(^{13}\) So MS P; MS h = 'staff'.
\(^{14}\) So MS P; MS h ('inferior') = 'death'.
\(^{15}\) Or, 'frumpy'. So MSS RP, MS h is 'god' or 'gods'.
\(^{16}\) Lit: 'his heart grew pleased'.
\(^{17}\) i.e. Enkidu.
\(^{18}\) Lit: 'he went into his house'.
\(^{19}\) Or he the hunter.
\(^{20}\) Or, 'is distant [read]'.
\(^{21}\) Lit: 'lump of Antu', i.e. meteoric iron.
[Constantly] his feet [are found] by the water-hole,
[I am afraid and so I do not go up to him.]
[He has filled in the] pits that I dug,
[he has uprooted my snare that I laid,
[He has set free from my grasp] the herd, the animals of the wild,
[he will not let me] do the work of the wild.'

[His father opened his mouth to speak,] saying to the hunter:
'[My son, .......] Uruk, Gilgamesh.
[...... ] into his presence,
[his strength is as mighty [as a lump of rock from the sky.] 23]
[Take the road, set] your face [toward Uruk,]
[...... ] the strength of a man

[Go, my son,] bring [with you Šamhat the harlot,
[...... ] like a mighty man!

[When the herd comes] down [to] the water-hole,
[she should strip off] her [clothing to reveal] her charms.
[He will see] her and will go up [to] her,
[his herd will be estranged from him, [though he grew up] in its presence. 24

The advice of his father [.....] 25
To the hunter who went off [.....] 26
He took the road, he [set his face] toward Uruk,
[to] the king, Gilgamesh, [.....] 27
There was a certain fellow who [came by the water-hole,
mightiest in the land, [he possesses strength,
[his strength is] as mighty as a lump of rock from the sky.
He wanders over the hills [all day],
constantly with the herd [he feeds on grass.
Constantly his feet [are found] by the water-hole,
I am afraid and so I do not go up to [him.]
He has filled in the pits that I dug,
He has uprooted my snares [that I laid,
He has released from my grasp the herds, the animals [of the wild,
he will not let me do the work [of the wild.]
Gilgamesh said to him, to the hunter:
'Go, O hunter, 28 take with you Šamhat the harlot.
When the herd comes down to the water-hole,
she should strip off her clothing to reveal her charms.
He will see her and will go up to her,
but his heart will be estranged from him, though he grew up in its presence.  
He went out to the road, then he started the journey.  
On the day they arrived at the destination,  
the hunter and the harlot sat down to wait.

One day, a second day, they sat by the water-hole,  
then the herd arrived to drink at the water-hole.
The animals arrived, they enjoyed the water,
and also Endiku himself, whose birthplace was the hills.

Feeding on grass with the very gazelles,
joying at the water-hole with the herd,
he enjoyed the water with the animals.

(Then) Šambat saw him, the man-savage,
a murderous fellow from the midst of the wild.
This is he, Šambat! Unravel your bosom;
bare your sex so he may take in your charms!
Do not show fear, take in his scent!
He will see you and he will come up to you.
Spread your clothing so he may lie on you,
treat the man to the work of a woman!
His ‘love’ will caress and embrace you.

his herd will be estranged from him, though he grew up in its presence.
Šambat let loose her skirts,
she bared her sex and he took in her charms.
She showed no fear, took in his scent.
she spread her clothing and he lay upon her.
She treated the man to the work of a woman,
his ‘love’ caressed and embraced her.

For six days and seven nights Endiku, erect, did couple with Šambat.
After he was sated with her delights,

Or, less probably, ‘though he grew up in its presence’.  
1 Lit. ‘the territory of the appointed place’.  
2 Lit. ‘their heart grew pleased’.  
3 So MSS Ps; MS P: ‘drinking at’.  
4 Lit. ‘his heart grew pleased’.  
5 Possibly also, ‘treat him to the sensuous work of a woman’.  
6 So MSS BPs; where this line is exchanged with 187; MS x: ‘let your “love” caress and embrace him’.  
7 So MSS BPs; MS x: ‘the herd’.  
8 Possibly also, ‘she treated him to the sensuous work of a woman’.  
9 MS x possibly; ‘[her] “love” caressed and embraced [him]’.  
10 So MS B; MSS Ps: ‘was coupling’.  

172 x: balši, šašša  172-3 F1: it-tal-bu-lu-baš-ša  175 x: itašša  175-6 F1 in one line
187 F1: û-nam šašša-ša  188-9 F1 in one line
196 he turned his face toward his herd.
197 The gazelles saw Enki and they started running,
198 the animals of the wild moved away from his person.
199 Enki had defiled his body so pure,
200 his legs stood still, though his hero was on the move.38

201 Enki was diminished, his running was not as before,
202 but he had reason, he [was] wide of understanding.
203 He came back and sat down at the feet of the harlot,
204 watching the harlot, (observing) her features.39
205 Then his ears heard what the [harlot] was speaking,
206 [as the harlot] said to him, to Enki:
207 'You are handsome, Enki, you are just like a god,
208 why do you roam the wild with the animals?
209 Come, I will lead you to Uruk-the-Sheepfold,
210 to the sacred temple, the dwelling of Anu and Istar.40

211 where Gilgames hes perfect in strength,
212 and lords it over the menfolk like a wild bull.'
213 She talked to him and what she said found favour,
214 his heart (now) wise was seeking a friend.
215 Enki said to her, to the harlot:
216 'Come, Šamhat, take me along41
217 to the sacred temple, the holy dwelling of Anu and Istar,
218 where Gilgames is perfect in strength,
219 and lords it over the menfolk like a wild bull!
220 I, myself, will challenge him, mighty . . .
221 [I will vanquish myself in Uruk, (saying) I am the mightiest!]
222 . . . . . . I shall change the order of things,42
223 [the one] born in the wild is mighty, he has strength.
224 'Let [the people] see your face,
225 . . . . . . that exists I know indeed.43

38 So MSS F; A. MS B (inferior): 'was seized with fear' or 'made himself jump'.
39 So MSS P; MS B: 'had gone'.
40 So MS P; MS B: possibly 'the harlot observing his features'.
41 So MSS P; MS B: 'en mi'-ma 'Eni-a', and Istar' and has instead an extra couplet (l. 219a-b):
42 [ ] into Uruk the sheepfold,
43 Lit. 'invite me'.
44 Lit. 'destiny'.
45 Or: 'I wish I knew'.
THE STANDARD BABYLONIAN EPIC

Go, Enkidu, to Uruk-the-Sheepfold,
where the young men are girt with waistbands.
Every day [...] a festival is held,
where the drums are repeatedly beaten,
and the harlots are comely of figure,
graced with charm, full of joy.
The Nobles are driven from their beds at night!
O Enkidu, [who do not yet] know life—
I will show you Gilgamesh, the man so merry,
look at him, regard his face!
He is fair in manhood, he has dignified bearing,
his whole person is graced with charm.
He has a strength more mighty than you,
his sleep is unsleeping by day and by night.
He, as for Gilgamesh, Samal loves him.
Anu, Enlil and Ea broadened his wisdom:
even before he came from the uplands,
Gilgamesh in Uruk was having dreams about you:
Gilgamesh arose to reveal a dream, saying to his mother:

"O mother, the dream that I saw** in the course of this night—
the stars of the heavens appeared before me,
like lumps of rock from the sky** they kept falling** towards me.
I picked them up but it was too much for me,
I kept trying to roll it but I could not dislodge it.
The land of Uruk was standing around [it],
the land was gathered** about it.
A crowd [was jesting] before [it],
the menfolk were* thronging around it.
They were kissing its feet [like a little] baby’s;
[I loved it] like a wife and I coveted and embraced it.
[I picked it up and] set it down at [your] feet,
and [made it equal].**
[The mother of Gilgamesh] was clever, she was wise,
she knew everything, she said to her son:

** So MSS BP, MS x: 'by night and by day'.
** So MSS Ps, MS B (inferior): 'his'.
* Or, reading lamata uma, "I saw a dream".
Lit. 'a lump of Anu’, i.e. a meteorite.
So MS B, MS F: probably: 'one full'.

552
EDITION OF THE TEXT: TABLET I
553
[Wild-Cow] Ninsun was clever, she was wise,\(^49\)
she knew everything, she said to Gilgamesh:

261 “The stars of heaven [appeared] before you,
262 [like a] lump of rock from the sky\(^80\) one fell toward you.
263 You picked it up but it was too much for you,
264 you kept trying to roll it but you could not dislodge it.
265 You picked it up and set it down at my feet,
266 and I, I made\(^31\) it your equal,
267 you loved it like a wife, caressing and embracing it.\(^52\)
268 A mighty companion will come to you, the saviour of (his) friend:
269 he is the mightiest in the land, he has strength,\(^49\)
his strength is as mighty as a lump of rock from the sky.\(^80\)
270 You will love him like a wife, caressing and embracing him,\(^44\)
271 he, being mighty, [will] often save\(^50\) you.
272 [Favourable and precious] was your dream!”\(^44\)
273 He saw a second dream,\(^46\)
274 he arose and entered before the godess, his mother.\(^17\)
275 Gilgamesh said to her, to his mother,
276 “And again, O mother, I have seen a second dream.
277 [In a street of] Uruk-Main-Street,
278 an axe was lying and people were gathered around it.
279 The land [of Uruk] was standing around it,
280 [the land] was gathered about it.
281 [A crowd] was jostling before it,
282 [the menfolk were] thronging around it.\(^57\)
283 I picked it up and set it down at your feet,
284 [I loved it] like a wife and I caressed and embraced it,
285 [and you, you] made\(^31\) it my equal.”\(^51\)
286 The mother of Gilgamesh was clever, she was wise,
she knew everything, she said to her son;
287 Wild-Cow Ninsun was clever, she was wise,
she knew everything, she said to her son.

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\(^{49}\) So MSS Ph; MS F renders ll. 259–60 in one line.
\(^{50}\) Lit: “jump of Aunu”, i.e. a meteorite.
\(^{80}\) So MS h; MS B: “I shall make”.
\(^{51}\) Or: “You will love it like a wife, caressing and embracing it.”
\(^{44}\) So MS h; MS B (inferior): “He is the mightiest in the land in strength.”
\(^{50}\) So MS h; MS B: “[You loved him like a wife and] caressed and embraced him.”
\(^{51}\) So MS B; MS h: “will save.”
\(^{57}\) The two lines given as ll. 273–3a are variants, from MS B and MS h respectively.
\(^{31}\) So MS h; MS B omits the entire line.
\(^{51}\) So MS h; the composite text opposite follows MS B: “you will make.”
"My son, the axe you saw is a man,"

you will love him like a wife, and will caress and embrace him,
and I, I shall make him your equal."

A mighty companion will come to you, the saviour of (his) friend:
he is the mightiest in the land, he has strength, his strength is as mighty as a lump of rock from the sky."

Gilgames said to her, to his mother,
"O mother, by Counsellor Enlil’s command may it befall me I will acquire a friend, a counsellor, a friend, a counsellor, I will acquire!"
[Thus] he has seen his dreams.

After Šamhat told Enkidu the dreams of Gilgames, the two of [them were making] love together.

[Enkidu] was sitting before her.
# TABLET II

## Table of Manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Bibliography of cuneiform texts and previous editions</th>
<th>Plate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lines preserved on obverse</td>
<td>Lines preserved on reverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Niniveh</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X₁</td>
<td>K 8574</td>
<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrudplos</em> no. 25: C (obv. only)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1900 P. Jensen, <em>KBV</em> 1, pp. 136–7: T'Tr (obv. only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1930 R. C. Thompson, <em>Gilgamesh</em>, p. 17, pls. 9–10: C (obv. and rev.)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T (obv. only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X₂</td>
<td>Rm 2891</td>
<td>unnumbered</td>
<td>54, 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1876 G. Smith, <em>Chaldaic Account of Genesis</em>, pp. 211 (col. ii) and 213 (col. v): TTr (unnumbered fragment only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrudplos</em> no. 9: C (unnumbered fragment only)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1891 Ibid. no. 45: C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1900 P. Jensen, <em>KBV</em> 1, pp. 152–7: T'Tr</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1930 R. C. Thompson, <em>Gilgamesh</em>, pp. 17–18, pls. 9–10: C'T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i 42–53 (X₂)</td>
<td>iv 170–88 (X₂)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii 59–66 (X₂), 59–115 (X₂)</td>
<td>v 218–37 (X₂), 288–291 (X₂)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii 162–169 (X₂)</td>
<td>margin 292 (X₂)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi not extant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Babylon</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>BM 34449</td>
<td>v 233–42</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vi 290–57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>BM 35567</td>
<td>v 221–8</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vi (unplacd)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>BM 38833</td>
<td>iv 182–201</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[obv. not extant]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>BM 72719</td>
<td>vi 289–300</td>
<td>55</td>
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## Composite cuneiform text and edition

1997 S. Parpola, *SAI* 23, pp. 9–14, 75–8: X₁, X₂, z, bb and cc C'T

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1 In the Iraq Museum the number W 23018 identifies a fragment of birth omena that bears 9 lines of text and 1 line of colophon (3.8: 'Iš qāqār (ki) ʾān-i-nā, adab (ān-ta) milīm-dumum, amānu ša laqi dīshu/T'). The true number of the Gilgames tablet catalogued and published as W 23018 is very probably W 23013, as originally given on the label in the photograph (private communication, E. von Weiher). However, the tablet bearing the number W 23013 was unavailable for study when requested in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2001, and consequently it has not yet been possible to verify its identity at first hand. Accordingly, MS ee has not been collated and some readings taken from it are provisional.
The incipit of Tablet II is preserved only as the catch-line of Tablet I and in the colophon of MS o:

B₄G₄o 1 [en-ki-dû] a-[ilî] ma-šar-ta [. . .] n-qu

There follows a gap of about 25 lines, as calculated from the curvature of MS bb; from here on the line numbering is accordingly provisional.

bb 26 [x] x [ . . . . . . ]
bb 27 [x] x [ . . . . . . ]
bb 28 na-anši-x [ . . . . . . ]
bb 29 am-mi-ni itti(ki) n[am-]ma-[š]-e-e ta-nap-pu-ud še-ra
bb 30 mit-šu-ka ra-ma-ni šu-x [ . . . . . . ]
bb 31 ina pû-mi-šu-ma r[a?š]-tu? [ . . . . . . ]
bb 32 mu-du-û ši-ba-šu-ma [. . . . . . ]
bb 33 ūa lam-ba [. . . . . . ]
bb 34 isšu(1) umu-hu-ba r-a-man-ta [. . . . . . ]
bb 35 ū ša-na-a lu-ba-ta ša-a-lúk [ši ša-šu-bû]
bb 36 lab-ta-as-su ma ki-ma tu-i(šigiri) mas [i-ra-de-ba]
zb 37 a-na gu-up-pi šâ-[a]-ṭa(nšu) a-sar tar-aš-ta
zb 38 ū-šu-ta(nšu)-a-šu pu-uš-ga-rat a-li(u)-tu
zb 39 ina tê-mi-šu-nu ma ina ra-ma-ni ši-šu-ma
zb 40 itu(guruš) a-na naš-giš-gim-maš ki-i ma-ti la-a-n[te]
zb 41 la-a-nu ši-[šu] na-bar-râš ša-[r]-šu-Xbb
zb 42 min-de-e-ma a-lid ina ša-d-[a]-I[. . . . . . ]
zb 43 min-de-ma nuk-ti-ba ša-ta-tu ša-d-[u]-um-ma
zb 44 a-na lu da-nu [a]-nu nu-er[n]-ga-[a]-šu
zb 45 a-ka-bu iš-ka-nu [a]-šu
zb 46 uš-lab a-kal [en-ki-dû] is-te-gi i-dag-gal
x 47 [akala? ana akali? la]-um-mu(?)-ma
x 48 [šišar] a-na ša-tu [en-ki-dû ul] [. . . . . . ]
x 49 [štarimu šàšsma is-karkara] ana [en-ki]-dû
x 50 [. . . . . . . . ] ši
x 51 [. . . . . . . . ]-a-ma-[š]-te
x 52 [. . . . . . . . ]
x 53 [. . . . . . . . ] x x-ri

MS X lacks a further 5 or 6 lines to the end of its col. i. All that remains of the text are the signs preserved at the ends of the last 7 lines of col. i of MS k, which apparently overlap with the first few lines of MS X col. ii:

37 z: a-[a]-gu-up-pi 38 z: pu-uš-[anšu]-I[. . . . . . ]
bb: šâ[I-ši-šu] 39 z: ra-am-ši-šu-ma 40
zb: ana-[š]u-[gim-maš] 41 bb: ši-[š]-ši 42 [60]
43 z: [a-ka-bu] ši-šar-nu 44-5 Xbb in one line 45 z: ši-[š]-šar-nu 46 z: naš-giš-gim-maš

Translation

1 [Enkidu] was sitting before her, [. . . . . . ]

Lacuna

When the text resumes Šamhat is talking to Enkidu:

29 "Why [do you roam the wild] with the [animals?]"
30 Taking his own counsel [. . . . . . ]
31 by his own counsel [. . . . . . ]
32 His heart (now) wise [. . . . . . ]
33 of Šamhat [. . . . . . ]
34 The first garment [she put on herself,]
35 and with the second garment [she clothed] him.
36 She took him (by the hand), [leading him] like a god,
37 to the shepherds' camp, the site of the sheep-pen.
38 The band of shepherds was gathered around him,
39 of their will and by himself.
40 'This fellow—how similar to Gilgamesh he is in build,
41 he is tall in stature, majestic as a battlement.
42 For sure he was born in the hills,'
43 his strength is as mighty as a lump of rock from the sky,'
44 They put bread before [him],
45 they put ale before him.
46 Enkidu did not eat the bread, he looked intently as he viewed (it):
47 [how to eat bread he had never] even [been taught,]
48 [how to drink ale Enkidu did not know].
49 [The harlot said to him, to] Enkidu,
50 'Eat the bread, Enkidu, the staff of the [people],
51 [drink the ale, the destiny of the] land!'

Lacuna
59 His heart [now wise . . . .]  
60 [he would] massacre wolves and [chase] away [lions.]  
61 [As] the senior herdsmen lay sleeping,  
62 Enki[du] was his herdsmen, [a] wakeful man.  
63 [A certain] fellow [was invited] to a wedding,  
64 [into] Uruk the sheepfold for . . . .  

Lacuna

Lacuna

ii 1' King [ . . . . . . . . . ]
ii 2' husband [ . . . . . . . . . ]
ii 3' And [ . . . . . . . . . ]

Lacuna

100 [He stood] in the street of Uruk [the sheepfold.]
101 [ . . . i parted, strength [ . . . . . ]]  
102 he blocked the path [of Gilgamesh.]  
103 The land of Uruk was standing [around him.]  
104 the land was gathered [about him.]
105 A crowd was jostling before [him.]  
106 the menfolk were thronging [around him.]  
107 They were [kissing his feet] like a little baby's;  
108 already the man . . . . . . . . .
109 For Išara a bed of [ . . . . . . ]  
110 for Gilgamesh, like a god, a substitute was in place.  
111 Enkidu with [his] feet blocked the doorway of the wedding house,  
112 not allowing Gilgamesh to enter.  
113 They took hold of each other in the doorway of the wedding house,  
114 they joined combat in the street, the Main-Street-of-the-Land.  
115 The door jambs quaked, the wall shook.

Lacuna, then Gilg|amesh introduces Enki|du to his mother:

Lit. 'to the house of the father-in-law.'
"He is the mightiest [in the land, strength he possesses,]

[his strength is as mighty as a] lump of rock from the sky,

tall in [status, majestis as a battlement.]"

The mother of Gilgameš [opened her] mouth [to speak,]
saying to [her son,]

Wild-Cow Ninsun [opened her mouth to speak,]
saying to Gilgameš:

‘My son... [ . . . ]

bitterly you [ . . . ]

Two lines lost

You hold [ . . . ]

in his gate [ . . . ]

Bitterly he weeps [ . . . ]

Enkidu does not have [ . . . ]

Loose-hanging hair... [ . . . ]

he was born in the wild and nobody [ . . ]'

Enkidu being present, he heard [what she said,]

thinking it over, he sat [down weeping.]

His eyes filled with [tears,]

his arms fell limp, strength [ . . ]

They took hold of each other and together [ . . . ]

they [ . . ] their hands and like [ . . . ]

Gilgameš...

[to] Enkidu he said a word, [saying:]

"Why, my friend, [did your eyes] fill [with tears,]
your arms fall limp, [strength?]"

Enkidu said to him, [to Gilgameš]

‘My friend, my heart was made to ache... [ . . ]

Through sobbing do quake [my . . . ]

terror has entered my heart.

[ . . . ]

Gilgameš opened his° mouth to speak, saying [to Enkidu:]

‘As if, my friend, to... [ . . ]

is imminent [ . . . ]

But as for us, wrestling [ . . . ]

him, the days [ . . ]

beside you... [ . . . ]

So now, my friend, [ . . . ]

° Tablet: her!
The standard Babylonian Epic

When the text resumes in col. v Gilgamesh is still speaking:

ee 212  x[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
ee 213  la-x[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
ee 214  li-[ri]-na[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
ee 215  a-šam-ta-a-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
ee 216  4en-ki-du pa-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] šu-ipal-ma ḫub-bi izakkar ana 4iš-gim-ma[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
ee 217  ki-i ni-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] l-ib-ri a-na ḫūsīš ḫērēni[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ 218a  aš-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] šu-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] mu ḫērēni[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ 219a  ana pul-ša-a-ti ī šu-nī[. . . . . . . . . . . .] šu-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ūn-li[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
ee 218b  ḫārāmīnu (kaskal) min ši-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] [ul ša a-la-ki [. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
[ec] 219b  [. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
ee 220  na-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ḫūsīš (ṭūr) ḫērēni[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ur-ri-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] šu-pa-ša[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₁ kee 221  ḫūm-ba-ba ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ni-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ kek 222  pi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ši-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ur-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ma-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₁ kec 223  ḫem-me-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ma-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] 60-šu-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ kee 224  man-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ša-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ši-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
kee 225  ḫud-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] šu-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
eel 226  man-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ša-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ūn-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ kee 227  aš-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] šu-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] mu ḫērēni[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ kek 228  ana pul-ša-a-ti ī šu-nī[. . . . . . . . . . . .] šu-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ūn-li[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ zee 229  ur-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ši-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ūn-li[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
Z 230a  aš-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ḫūsīš (ṭūr) pa-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ma-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] i-qab-bi izakkar (mu)[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
Z 230b  ḫūsīš (ṭūr) pa-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ma-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] i-qab-bi izakkar (mu)[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
z 231  ak-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ zee 232  am-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ša-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ zee 233  ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ zee 234  ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ zee 235  ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ zee 236  ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  
X₂ zee 237  ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .] ṭi-[. . . . . . . . . . . .]  

Edition of the Text: Tablet II

200  [, . . . . . . . . . . . .] in the land we [, . . . . . . . . . . . .]  
201  [, . . . . . . . . . . . .] Humbaba [, . . . . . . . . . . . .]  

Lacuna

213  ‘Let [, . . . . . . . . . . . .]  
214  May they smash [, . . . . . . . . . . . .]  
215  the whirlwinds [, . . . . . . . . . . . .]  
216  Enkida [opened his] mouth [to speak, saying to Gilgamesh]  
217  ‘How can we [go, my friend, to the Forest of Cedar?]  
218a  In order to keep the cedars safe,  
219a  Enil made it his destiny to be the terror of the people?  
218b  That journey [is not one for the making,]  
219b  [that man is not one for the seeing,]  
220  He who guards [the Forest of Cedar, his . . . are wide,]  
221  Humbaba, his voice is the Deluge,  
222  his speech is fire, his breath is death.  
223  He hears the forest’s murmur for sixty leagues;  
224  who is there that would venture into his forest?  
225  Adad is the first, but he is the second!  
226  Who is there among the Igigi that would oppose him?  
227  In order to keep the cedars safe,  
228  Enil made it his destiny to be the terror of the people.  
229  And he who ventures into his forest, feebleness will seize him!  
230a  Gilgamesh opened his mouth to speak,  
230b  saying [to Enkido:]  
231  ‘Come [, . . . . . . . . . . . .]  
232  Why, my friend, [do you] speak like a weakling?  
233  With your feeble talk [you vex] my heart!  
234  As for man, [this days] are numbered,  
235  all that ever he did was [tumbled.]  
236  . . . do not exist [, . . . . . . . . . . . .]  
237  You were born and grew up in the [wild.]

\* No single manuscript has every line of the passage. 218-234, though MS S (ll. 221-8) and \(e\) (ll. 233-4) could have done when more complete. The couplet II: 218-19 and the line introducing Gilgamesh’s speech (I: 230) exist in two alternative versions (a and b); otherwise MS X omits 220, 225-6, 231 and 234; MS Z omits I: 234; and MS ee omits 231.

* Instead of this couplet MS X has simply (230b): ‘Gilgamesh [said] to him, [to] Enkido.’

\* Lit. ‘And your mouth went limp.’
238 Lion took fright of you, [you experienced all.]
239 grown men, too, fled 10 [from your presence.]
240 Your heart, well tried, [is tested in] combat;
241 come, my friend, [I will go] to the forge!
242 [To the forge [they went,...]]

Lacuna of several lines

The text resumes with a description of the smiths:

247 They [were sitting] down exchanging views, to [.....]
248 'Let us cast axes [.....]
249 hatchets of seven talents each, [.....]
250 Their swords of seven talents each,
251 [.....] [.....] Scribal annotation: [new] break
252 Their belts of one talent apiece,
253 the belt of [.....]
254 [.....] [.....] Scribal annotation: new break, new break
Scribal annotation: five lines skipped

The lacuna ends as Gilgameš begins speaking:

260 'Listen to me, O young men (of Uruk the sheepfold!)
261 O young men of Uruk, expert [at.....]
262 I have grown so bold as to travel the [distant] path [to where Humbaba is.]
263 I shall face a battle that I do not know,
264 [I shall ride] a road [that I do not know.
265 Give me your blessing, so that I may go,
266 [so that I may see your] faces [(again) in safety],
267 and come in through Uruk's gate [glad at heart!]
268 I will return and [perform] the akku festival [twice] in the year,
269 the akku I will perform [twice] in the year.
270 Let the akku take place and the merriment begin,
271 let the drums be beaten in [the presence of Wild-Cow] Ninsuns!
272 Enki-du [gave] advice to the elders,
273 to the young men of Uruk, expert [at.....]
274 'Tell him 11 that he must not go to the Forest of Cedar,
275 that journey is not ended.
276 That man [is not one for] the seeing,
277 he who guards the Forest of Cedar, his [.....] are wide.

10 So MS ee; MS e: 'hastened'.
11 Table: 'her'!
278 Humbaba, [his voice is the Deluge,]
279 [his speech is fire,] his breath is death;
280 [He hears] the forest's murmur [for sixty leagues;]
281 [who is there that would venture] into his forest?
282 [Adad is the first, but he is the second!]
283 [Who is there] among the Igigi [that would oppose him?]
284 [In order to keep the cedars safe,]
285 Enlil made it his destiny [to be the] terror of the people.
286 [And] he who ventures into his forest, feebleness will seize him!
287 The senior advisers arose,
288 [one] expressed in return [their] opinion to Gilgames:
289 'You are young, Gilgames; carried away by enthusiasm,'
290 and the thing that you talk of you do not understand.' "
291 Humbaba, his voice is the Deluge,
292 his speech is fire, his breath is death.
293 He hears the forest's murmur for sixty leagues;
294 he who ventures into his forest, feebleness will seize him!
295 Who is there who would venture into his forest?
296 Who is there among the Igigi that would oppose him?
297 Adad is the first, but he is the second!" "
298 In order to keep the cedars safe,
299 Enlil made it his destiny to be the terror of the people."

Remainder lost (cf. Assyrian MS γ, obv. 18'–24')
### TABLE III

**Table of Manuscripts**

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<thead>
<tr>
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### EDITION OF THE TEXT: TABLET III

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#### Composite cuneiform texts and editions

| 1891 | P. Haupt in *A. Jeremia*, *Iṣubab–Ninurta*, pl. 1: col. ii using the known parts of M₁, M₂, and BB₁ |
| 1900 | P. Jensen, *KBI VI I, pp. 144–53: text as known to Haupt 1884 and 1891, Jeremias 1891* |
| 1930 | R. C. Thompson, *Gilgamesh*, pp. 30–1, pls. 11–12: cols. i (M₁ // BB₂) and ii (M₁ // BB₁ // Sm 2097 of M₂) |
| 1997 | S. Parpola, *SA4 Gilg.*, pp. 15–18, 79–81: all MSS represented except i. Partially present: c (BM 34191 only) and a (obv. only) |

#### Urk

| aa | IM 76873 (W 23130) | 66, 67 |
| | 1993 E. von Wehner, *Urak IV no. 124: C (obv. only)* |
| ii | 43–69, 79–80 | iv 120–44 |
| iii | 81–116 | – |
Text

BB₂ 1 [a]: na [ka-a-ri lá] uruk[š][ti-ša-a ina šul-mi]
M₂BB₂ 2 [l]a ta-tak-kiš[š]-gilš-gim-ma-as na'gi-mir-ši-mu-qi-ka
M₂BB₂ 3 [š]-na-ka ši-ba-a mi-ši-ša tu-bi[š]
M₂BB₂ 4 [š]-lik mah-ri ta-pá [tab.bá] ü-ša-es-z[ob]
M₂BB₂ 5 ša šu-di i-di-ta ši-bi-ti ši-pu[š]
M₂BB₂ 6 [š]-ši-tiš-ša ina pa-na-ša
M₂BB₂ 7 [š]-de ši-ba-ta [kšalš]-ka ša ša-giš-tiš (tir) ši-ši-ša (seri)
M₂BB₂ 8 [š]-ša-za a-mi-ša gub-šu ku-la-[š]
M₂BB₂ 9 [en]-ki-diš ina šu-ta ši-sa-ta ta-pa-ša a šal-ša-
M₂BB₂ 10 a-na ši-r(ši) ku-na-ša ta-gar-ti ša ša-
M₂BB₂ 11 i-na pu-tiḣ-ri-ša-ša ni-ša-pi-qa-dak-ša ša[ra]-t[a]
M₂BB₂ 12 tu-ta-tam ma ta-paq-ša-dan-na-ša ši ša[ra]-t[a]

M₂BB₂ 13 ši-ši-ša ina pa-na-ša ša[ra]-t[a]
M₂BB₂ 14 ša ši-ša ina pa-na-ša ša[ra]-t[a]
M₂BB₂ 15 a-na ma-ša ša ši-ša ina pa-na-ša ša[ra]-t[a]
M₂BB₂ 16 a-na ma-ša ša ši-ša ina pa-na-ša ša[ra]-t[a]
M₂BB₂ 17 ša ši-ša ina pa-na-ša ša[ra]-t[a]
M₂BB₂ 18 a-na ma-ša ša ši-ša ina pa-na-ša ša[ra]-t[a]
M₂BB₂ 19 a-na ma-ša ša ši-ša ina pa-na-ša ša[ra]-t[a]
M₂BB₂ 20 a-na ma-ša ša ši-ša ina pa-na-ša ša[ra]-t[a]

Translation

1 ['Come back in safety'] to [the quay of] Uruk!
2 Do not trust, O Gilgameš, in the fullness of your strength,
3 let your eyes be satisfied, strike a blow to rely on!
4 "He who goes in front saves (his) comrade,
5 he who knew the road protected his friend."
6 Let Enkidu go in front of you,
7 he knows the way to the Forest of Cedar!
8 He is tried in battles and experienced in combat,
9 let Enkidu protect (his) friend and keep safe (his) comrade!
10 let him bring his person back to his own!
11 In this our assembly we hereby give the king into your care:
12 you will ensure (his) return and give the king into our care.'

13 Gilgameš opened his mouth to speak,
14 saying to Enkidu:
15 'Come, my friend, let us go to Egal-maḫ,
16 into the presence of the great Queen Ninsun!
17 Ninsun is clever, she is wise, she knows everything,
18 she will set in place for our feet tracks of (good) counsel."
19 They took each other hand in hand,
20 Gilgameš and Enkidu, as they went to Egal-maḫ,
21 into the presence of the great Queen Ninsun,
22 Gilgameš arose and entered before the [goddess, mother, his mother].

23 Gilgameš said to her, to [Ninsun]:
24 'O Ninsun, I have grown so bold [as to travel]
25 the distant path to where Ḫumbaba is.
26 I shall face a battle that I do not know,
27 I shall ride a horse that I do not know.
28 I hereby beseech you, give me your blessing, so that I may go,
29 so that I may see your face (again) in safety,
30 (and) come in through Uruk's gate glad at heart!
31 I will return and perform the akītu festival twice in the year,
32 the akītu I will perform twice in the year.

So MS BB; MS M: 'come'.
4 So MS BB; MS M: 'a straight [track]'.
5 So MS BB; MS M: 'to'.
6 So MS c; MS BB omits the entire line.
Let the akitu take place and the merriment begin,
44 ’let the drums be beaten in your presence!’
35 [Wild-Cow] Ninsun was listening in sorrow
36 to the words of Gilgamesh, her son, and Enkidu.
37 She went into the bath-house,
38 [she cleansed] herself in water (perfumed with) tamarisk and soapwort.
39 [She dressed in] a fine garment, the adornment of her body,
40 the adoration of her breast.
41 [... ] was put in place and she was wearing her crown,
42 [... ] the harlots [...]
43 She leapt [up] the staircase, she climbed on to the roof,
44 she climbed on to the roof, she set up a censer before Šamaš,
45 she scattered incense before Šamaš, she lifted her arms:
46 ‘Why did you assign (and) inflict’ a restless spirit on [my] son Gilgamesh?

47 For now you have touched him and he will travel
48 the distant path to where Humbaba is.
49 He will face a battle that he does not know,
50 he will ride a route that he does not know.
51 During the days that he travels there and back,
52 until he reaches the Forest of Cedar,
53 until he slays ferocious Humbaba,
54 and annihilates from the land the Evil Thing that you hate,
55 by day when you [... ] the boundary [...]
56 may she not fear you, may Aya the Bride remind you:
57 “As for him, place him in the care of the watches of the night!
58 At eventide [... ]”
59 [......... ]
60 [.......... ] to
61 [.......... ]
62 [.......... ] to shine.
63 You have opened, O Šamaš, [... for the going] out of the livestock,
64 for [... ] you came forth on the land.
65 The uplands [...], the heavens growing [bright,]
66 the herds of the wild [... ] your ruddy light.

---

33 M; n-gi-[ja] 34 M; li-ir-ta-ag-ji-na ina 35 c: dumu-ti 35-6 c in one line
37 M; [i]-ru-ub 40 M; -li-me 41 M; -la[n]a 42 M; kar-[ki] 46 BB; sa-[i] ina: sa-[i] ina BB,aa om. te-mid-su 48 BB; ruqa-tum 49-50 aa in one line
51 BB; om. i M; i-te-ra aa: -ru 53 M; [i]-na-ru 54 M; ta-se-ru 56 BB; a-[a] ša 57 BB; a[j]a 61 i: [x]-ir-ri 62 i: [a]-ma-[i]-a

* So MS M; MSS BBs omit ‘inflict’.
* So MS M; MS BB omits the entire line.
67 [. . .] waited for [. . .] them,
68 the animals [. . .] you,
69 [. . .] I am offering you,
70 [. . .] the dead man [. . .] life.
71 To the [. . .] your head,
72 at the coming forth [of your rays the] crowds are gathered.
73 The Anunnaki wait intent [on your light.]
74 May she not fear you, may Aya the Bride remind you !
75 "As for him, [place him] in [the care of the watches of the night!]
76 The road which [. . .] .
77 touch and [. . .] .
78 Because [. . .] .
79 the journey [. . .] .
80 And [. . .] .
81 while Gilgameš travels to the [Forest] of Cedar,
82 let the days pass, let the nights be short,
83 let his loins be girt, let him [stride along!]?
84 At dusk let him pitch camp for the night,
85 a stay overnight [. . .] they will lie down."
86 May she not fear you, may Aya the Bride* remind you!
87 On the day that Gilgameš, Enkidu and Humbaba come face to face, send against Humbaba, O Šamaš, the great stormwinds: 70
88 South Wind, North Wind, East Wind, West Wind, Blast, Counterblast, Gale, Tempest, Typhoon, Hell-Wind,
89 Icy Blast, Hurricane, Tornado.
90 Let (these) thirteen winds arise so the face of Humbaba darkens,
91 and the weapon of Gilgameš catches Humbaba!
92 After your very own . . . are kindled,
93 at that time, O Šamaš, turn your face to the reverent one!
94 Let your swift mules you,
95 let a restful seat, a bed . . . (scribal annotation: broken) be laid out for you
96 a seat of [. . .] 71
97 May the gods, your brothers, give you food that you . . .
98 may Aya the Bride* wipe your face with her clean garment-fringe!"
Again Wild-Cow Ninsun repeated (her) behest before Šamaš:

106 ‘O Šamaš, will Gilgameš not ... the gods?
107 Will he not share the heavens with you?
108 Will he not share the heavens with you?
109 Will he not become wise with Ea of the Apsû?
110 Will he not rule the black-headed race with Irima?
111 [Will he] not dwell in the Land-of-No-Return with Ningišzida?
112 Let me make him, O Šamaš, ...]
113 may he not ... may he not ... the Forest of Cedar.
114 ... may he not reach ... your [great] divinity.

Lacuna

115 ‘[...] ... like the people themselves,
116 [...] ... you as [you] commanded,∗
117 to the ... of Humbaba you are making him enter.'
118 After Wild-Cow Ninsun had delivered (her) behest to Šamaš,
119 Wild-Cow Ninsun was clever, [she was wise, she knew everything.]
120 ... Gilgameš ...]
121 she smothered the censer and she ...]
122 She summoned Enkidu to declare (her) intention:
123 ‘O mighty Enkidu, you are not the offspring of my womb,
124 but now your brood (will be) with the oblates of Gilgameš,∗
125 the priestesses, hierodules and temple girls.
126 She placed the symbols on Enkidu’s neck:
127 ‘The priestesses hereby take in the foundling,
128 and the Divine Daughters will bring up the foster-child.
129 I myself hereby adopt Enkidu, whom [I love], as a son,
130 let Gilgameš in [brotherhood] treat Enkidu with favour!
131 ... ...
132 And [...] ...
133 while [you] travel [with Gilgameš] to the Forest of Cedar,
134 let [the days be] long, let the nights be short!
135 [Let your loins be girt, may] you stride [along!]∗∗
At dusk pitch camp for the night!

[...] let him protect!

Lacuna

The text resumes with narrative:

By the command of Šamaš you will attain [your desire],
in the Gate of Marduk [...]
on the surface of the water [...]
back [...]
in the Gate of Cedar [...]
Gilgamesh [...]
and Enkidu [...]

Lit. 'breast'.
"So MS c; MS M omits."
173 ‘At twenty leagues [you should break bread]!’

Lacuna. When the text resumes, Gilgamesh is speaking to high officials of Uruš:

202 ‘[During the days that we travel there and] back,
203 [until we reach the Forest of] Cedar,
204 [until we] stay [ferocious ]Humbaba,]
205 [and annihilate] from [the land the Evil Thing that Śamaš hates,]

206 [.............]
207 May you not acquire [...........]
208 [. . .] must not assemble the young men in the street.
209 Judge the lawsuit of the weak, seek out . . . .
210 until, like little babies, we attain our desire,
211 until we plant our [weaporns] at Humbaba’s gate!’
212 The officers stood there paying him homage,
213 in a crowd the young men of Uruk were running behind him,
214 and the officers were kissing his feet:
215 ‘Come back in safety to the quay of Urûk!
216 Do not trust, O Gilgamesh, in the fullness of your strength,
217 let your eyes be satisfied, strike a blow to rely on!
218 “He who goes in front saves (his) comrade,
219 he who knows the road should [protect] his friend.”
220 Let Enkidu go in front of you,
221 he knows the way to the Forest of Cedar!
222 He is tried in battle and [experienced] in combat,
223 to the mountain passes: [...........]
224 Let Enkidu [protect] (his) friend [and keep safe (his) comrade!]
225 [let him bring his person] back to his wives!
226 In this our assembly [we hereby give the king into your care:]
227 you will ensure (his) return and give [the king into our care.]’
228 Enkidu [opened] his mouth [to speak,]
229 saying [to Gilgamesh]
230 ‘My friend, turn [them back . . . . .]
231 a journey not for [...........]

Remainder lost
### TABLE IV

#### Table of Manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Plate</th>
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**Nineveh**

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The placing of MS S in Tablet IV is provisional.

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MSS AA and CC may belong together.

**Babylon**

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<td>1999 A. George, <em>The Epic of Gilgamesh</em> (Penguin), p. 31: C</td>
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<td>1929 A. Schott, 'Die inschriftliche Quellen zur Geschichte Eannas', <em>UJB</em> 1, p. 63, no. 32: C</td>
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**Babylonia**

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<td>[obv. not extant]</td>
<td>iv 158–65</td>
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* MSS u and w (almost certainly), and probably also the other Babylonian MSS, belong to a recension of the text in which the division between Tablets IV and V falls much later than in the Ninevite tablet. The Assyrian division is adopted here, so that the fragments of text preserved in cols. v and vi of MSS u and w are edited as parts of Tablet V.*
Composite cuneiform text and editions

1968 B. Landsberger, "Zur vierten und siebenten Tafel des Gilgamesch-Epos", RA 62, pp. 99–101, 116: ll. 1–21 and parallels (parts of w₁, w₂, Y₁, t and u), etc. tr

1997 S. Parpola, SAG Gilg., pp. 19–23, 83–5: all MSS except Y₃, C₃, t and v CT

Text

1 [a-na 20] bēr(danna) iš-su-pu hu-su-a-pu
2 [a-na 3]0 bēr(danna) uš-ku-mu nu-bat-tum
3 [50 bēr(dan[na]) uš-li ku ku u-su-mu
4 [ma-lak ar] ti(ti) u šapatti(ud.15.kam) ina taš-ta uš₄₄ mu iš-hu-ū ana šadμ(kur) la-nu-nu
5 [a-na pān][ig]i[s] šam[iš](unu) uš-ša-tu uš-nu [du-ša-

The middle of the column is restored from the parallel passages in cols. ii and iii:

6 [mā(a)n[i] . . . uš-k[u]-nu i-na - . . . pa]
7 [i-li-ma igrš-gim [maš ina muḫ-ki ša-di-ti]
8 [maškati'il,mad,ša]-a uš-ša-q-a anā ša-r-ta[a-m]
9 [šaš(d)u(kur)] bi-di-la ša-ša-tu a-maštātu lā-mur
10 [ša-nu]ŠaŠ-ti uš-nu[a] . . . ša-ti[u]
11 [šašš(išša) kar-bi-il-la ša-ti-ti iša bābi(kā)-šu]
12 [uš-ša-ni il-taš ma iša ša-pa-ti . . . ū-ša-
13 [uš šaš mašša[maššu . . . ša-uš-a-ti ša bābi(kā)-šu]
14 [šaš-gim-maš ša-hi ša-maššu ša-taš-me-da šu-ša-q-ta]
15 [šašš(išša) šašša ša-ša] šu-ša-q-ta šu-ša-q-ta
16 [šašš(išša) šašša ša-ša] šu-ša-q-ta šu-ša-q-ta
17 [šašš(išša) šašša ša-ša] šu-ša-q-ta šu-ša-q-ta
18 [šašš(išša) šašša ša-ša] šu-ša-q-ta šu-ša-q-ta
19 [šašš(išša) šašša ša-ša] šu-ša-q-ta šu-ša-q-ta
20 [šašš(išša) šašša ša-ša] šu-ša-q-ta šu-ša-q-ta
21 [šašš(išša) šašša ša-ša] šu-ša-q-ta šu-ša-q-ta

Translation

1 [At twenty] leagues they broke bread,
2 [at] thirty leagues they pitched camp.
3 [Fifty] leagues they travelled in the course of a day,
4 a month and a half's [march] by the third day,
5 [they dug] a well.

6 [they put fresh water in . . .]
7 [Gilgamesh went up on to the top of the mountain,]
8 [he made his offerings of masharu flour to the hill.]
9 "O mountain, bring me a dream, let me see a message of good fortune!"
10 [Enkidu made for him a 'house of Zaqqū',]
11 [he fixed a storm-door in its doorway.]
12 [He made him lie down in a circle . . . design,]
13 [and himself, like a net he . . . and lay in its doorway.]
14 [Gilgamesh rested his chin on his knees,]
15 [the sleep that spills over people fell upon him.]
16 [In the middle watch (of the night) he reached his sleep's end,]
17 [he arose to talk to his friend.]
18 "[My friend, did you not call me? Why am I awake?]"
19 [Did you not touch me? Why am I in confusion?]?
20 [Did a god not pass by? Why is my flesh blemubed?]?
21 [My friend, I have seen a dream,]
22 [and the] dream that I saw [was completely confused.]
23 [In a mountain valley . . .]
24 [the mountain] fell down . . .
25 [and we, like . . .]
26 [The one who] was born in the [wild was able to give counsel,]
27 [Enkidu spoke to his friend, making his dream meaningful to him.]
28 'My friend, [your] dream is favourable, . . . it first,
the dream is precious [. . . .]

My friend, the mountain that you saw [was . . .]

[We shall capture Humbaba, we [shall slay him,]

and we shall [cast down] his corpse on the field of battle.

And in the morning [we shall see a favourable message [from Šamaš].]

At twenty leagues they broke [bread,]

at thirty leagues they pitched [camp].

Fifty leagues they travelled in the course of [a day,]

a [month and] a half's march by the third day,

drew near to Mount [Lebanon].

Facing the sun they dug a well,

[they put fresh] water [in . . .]

Gilgamesh went up on to the top [of the mountain,]

he made his offerings of maṣṣagātu flour [to the hill,]

'O mountain, bring me a dream, [let me see a message of good fortunes!]

Enkidu made for him [a house of Zaqūq'.]

[he fixed a storm-door in its doorway.]

[He made him lie down in a circle . . . design,]

[and himself, like a net he . . . and lay in its doorway.]

Gilgamesh rested his chin on his knees,

the sleep that spills over people fell upon him.

In the middle watch (of the night) he reached his sleep's end,

[he arose to talk to his friend:]

'My friend, did you not call me? Why am I awake?

[Did you not touch me? Why am I in confusion?

[Did a god not pass by? Why is my flesh blemished?

'My friend, I have seen a second dream,

[and the dream that I saw was completely confused.']

Only a small fragment of the second dream has survived, which appears to be from Enkidu's explanation:

'[, . . . .] was Ḫumbaba.

[, . . . .] . . . whose length was short,

[, . . . .] . . . wide and narrow.
Humbaba will become like a child,
over him.'

Lacuna

[And at morning tide we will see a favourable message from Šamaš.]
[At twenty leagues they broke bread.]
[At eighty leagues they pitched camp.]
[Fifty leagues they travelled in the course of a day.]
[a month and a half's march by the third day.]
[they drew near to Mount Lebanon.]
[Facing the sun they dug a well.]
[they put fresh water in...]
[Gilgamesh went up on to the top of the mountain,]
[he made his offerings of mašatu flour to the hill.]
['O mountain, bring me a dream, so I may see [a message of good fortune!]
[Enkidu] made for him [a] 'house of Zaqqum',
[he fixed] a storm-door in its doorway.
[He made him lie down in a circle...]
[and] himself, like a net [he... and] lay in its doorway.
[Enkidu rested his chin on his knees,
the sleep that spires over people fell upon him.
[In the] middle watch of the night] (he reached his sleep's end,
he arode to talk to his friend:
'My friend, did you not call me? Why am I awake?
Did you not make me aware? Why am I in confusion?
Did a god not pass by? Why is my flesh benumbed?
My friend, I have seen a third dream,
and the dream that I saw was completely confused.
The heavens cried aloud, while the earth was rumbling,
the day grew dim, darkness went forth.
Lightning flashed down, fire broke out,
[flames] kept flaring up, death kept raining down.
The fire so bright dimmed and went out,
[after] it had diminished little by little, it turned into embers.
[You were] born in the wild, can we take counsel?
Enkidu [heard the words of his friend,]
making his dream meaningful to him, he said to Gilgamesh:
109 ‘My friend, your dream is favourable, . . .’ is fine.’

Lacuna

The explanation of the dream is lost. After the break the fourth march begins:

120 At twenty leagues they [broke bread.]
121 at thirty leagues they pitched [camp.]
122 Fifty leagues they travelled [in the course of a day,]
123 a month and a half’s [march] by the third [day,] 3
124 they drew near to Mount Lebanon.
125 [Facing] the sun they dug [a well,]
126 they put [fresh water in . . . . . . . .]
127 Gilgamesh [went up] on to the top [of the mountain,]
128 [he made his] offerings of [mas'hatu flour] to [the hill,]
129 ‘O mountain, bring me a dream, [let me see a message of good fortune!’
130 [Enkidu made for him a ‘house of Zaqqu’,]
131 [he fixed a storm-door in its doorway,]
132 [He made him lie down in a circle . . . design,]
133 [and himself, like a net he . . . and lay in its doorway,]
134 [Gilgamesh rested his chin on his knees,]
135 [the sleep that spills over people fell upon him,]
136 [In the middle watch (of the night) he reached his sleep’s end,]
137 [he arose to talk to his friend;]
138 ‘My friend, did you not call me? Why am I awake?’
139 [Did you not touch me? Why am I in confusion?]
140 [Did a god not pass by? Why is my flesh bemumbed?]
141 [My friend, I have seen a fourth dream,]
142 [and the dream I saw was completely confused.’]

Short lacuna, followed by:

3 Instead of this line MS t reads ‘where . . .’ (iii 6'). The remains of MS t iii 7°-9' are similarly incompatible with ll. 124-6 on MS r.
A fragment of MS Y contains part of one of Enkidu's explanations and probably falls soon afterwards:

\[
\begin{align*}
Y_3 & \quad v1' \quad x[\ldots] \ldots \\
Y_3 & \quad v2' \quad ša \; pt\text{-}i\text{-}šu \; x[\ldots] \ldots \\
Y_3 & \quad v3' \quad ētu(\text{guru}) \; ša \text{-} ta\text{-}mu\text{-}ru \; [\ldots] \\
Y_3 & \quad v4' \quad ina \; u\text{-}me\text{-}šu\text{-}ma \; [\ldots] \\
Y_3 & \quad v5' \quad i\text{-}šab\text{-}bat \; kap\text{-}i\text{-}šu \; [\ldots] \\
Y_3 & \quad v6' \quad i\text{-}na\text{-}āl\text{-}ša\text{-}q[u \ldots] \\
Y_3 & \quad v7' \quad a\text{-}na\text{-}ku \\
\end{align*}
\]

Lines 177-83 can be restored after the pattern of previous episodes.

Lacuna. A fragment of dream-explanation probably fits here:

\[
\begin{align*}
2' & \quad \text{The one whose mouth }[\ldots] \\
3' & \quad \text{The man you saw }[\text{was }\ldots] \\
4' & \quad \text{at that time }[\ldots] \\
5' & \quad \text{He will take hold of [its] wings }[\ldots] \\
6' & \quad \text{they will kiss }[\ldots] \\
7' & \quad I [\ldots] \\
\end{align*}
\]
When the text resumes it appears that Enkidu is still speaking to Gilgamesh:

190 ['[.] . . .] going [. . . .] 
191 [O offshoot sprung from] Uruk's midst, [. . . .] 
192 [. . . .] stand and [. . . .] 
193 O Gilgamesh [the king], offshoot sprung from Uruk's midst, [. . . .] 
194 [Samaš] heard what [he] had spoken, 
195 [straight] away a voice [cried to him from the heavens:] 
196 'Hurry, stand against him! He must not [enter his forest], 
197 [he must not] go down into the grove, he must not [. . . .] 
198 he [must not] wrap himself in his seven cloaks! [. . . .]' 
199 [One] he was wrapped in, six he had divested, 
200 they [. . . .] 
201 Like a fierce wild bull, horns locked [. . . .] 
202 he bellowed once, and it was (a bellow) full of terror. 
203 The guardian of the forests was bellowing, 
204 [. . . .] 
205 Humbaba was [thundering] like the Storm God. 

After a lacuna Gilgamesh and Enkidu are again in conversation:

210 '[. . . .] have been born [. . . .]' 
211 Gilgamesh [opened his] mouth [to speak, saying to Enkidu:] 
212 'My friend, [have they] not [. . . .]?' 
213 Have they not sired sons [. . . .]?' 
214 Enkidu opened his mouth [to speak, saying to Gilgamesh:] 
215 'My friend, the one to whom we are going, [he is something very strange]' 
216 Humbaba, to whom we [are going, he is something very strange]' 
217 Gilgamesh opened his mouth [to speak, saying to Enkidu:] 
218 'My friend, I would [slay . . . .]' 
219 [. . . .] to [. . . .]' 

After a short lacuna the conversation continues:

194 AA: ı̂-ma]-a] 194-5, 199-200, 203-4, 227-8 AA in one line
[Enkidu] opened his [mouth] to speak, [saying to Gilgamesh]

[...] have come down [......]

[......] and [my arms] grow stiff'

[Gilgamesh] opened his mouth to speak, saying [to Enkidu:]

'[Why,] my friend, are we [speaking] like weaklings?

[We, who] came across all (those) mountains,

[did not ...]..... before us?

Before we have withdrawn [......]

My [friend,] experienced in combat,

who ... battle [......]

[...] you kept touching and (so) you do not fear [......]

[......] like a very dervish, change [......]

Let [your shout] boom loud [like] a kettledrum,

let the stiffness of your arms depart and feellessness go forth [from your knees!]

Take hold of me, my friend, we shall [go on] as one,

[let] your mind dwell on combat!

Forget death and [seek] life!

[......] ... the careful man.

"[He who] went first protected his person, let him bring the companion to safety!"

It is they who have established a name [for] future [time!]

[At the] distant [......] they both arrived,

[they stopped] their conversation, they came to a halt.

[A] They stood marvelling at the forest.
TABLE V

Table of Manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Bibliography of cuneiform texts and previous editions</th>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Lines preserved on obverse</th>
<th>Lines preserved on reverse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nineveh

| H | K. 3252 + 8561 | 72, 73 |
|   |                |       |
| 1876 | G. Smith, *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, pp. 214, 215–16: | |
|       | Tr (K 3252 only) | |
| 1884 | P. Haupt, *Nimrud epics* no. 11: C (K 3252 only) | |
| 1900 | P. Jensen, *KBU* 1, pp. 158–61, 164–7: TT Tr (K 3252 only) | |
| i 1–18 | v 253–260 | |
| ii 53–80 | vi 297–302, colophon | |

Babylon

| u | Rm 853, rev. | 71 |
|   |             |   |
| 1965 | W. G. Lambert, *CT* 46 no. 21: C | |
| obv. see Tablet IV | vi 74–7 | |

Text

| HAA | 1 | is-išu-ma-šu-nap-pal-at-tu (Šiša-tirša) |
| H   | 2 | ša-[erēn] (eren) ša-us-nap-la-su mi-lā-ša |
| H   | 3 | ša-Šīqiš (šiša) ša-us-nap-la-su nē-re₉-b₉u |
| H   | 4 | a-ta-ḫu₉-bam-ba₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) ša-tel-la₉-kī₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) ša-tel-la₉-kī₂₉ |
| H   | 5 | ša-ra₉-na₂₉-a-tu₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) ša-ra₉-na₂₉-a-tu₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) ša-ra₉-na₂₉-a-tu₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) ša-ra₉-na₂₉-a-tu₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) |
| H   | 6 | ša-ra₉-na₂₉-a-tu₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) ša-ra₉-na₂₉-a-tu₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) ša-ra₉-na₂₉-a-tu₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) ša-ra₉-na₂₉-a-tu₂₉ (šem-ba₂₉) |

Translation

1 They stood marvelling at the forest,
2 observing the height of the cedars,
3 observing the way into the forest.
4 Where Humbaba came and went there was a track,
5 the paths were in good order and the way was well trodden.
6 They were gazing at the Cedar Mountain, the dwelling of the gods, the throne-dais of the goddesses,
7 [on the] very face of the mountain the cedar was proffering its abundance,
8 sweet was its shade, full of delight.
9 [All] tangled was the thorny undergrowth, the forest was a thick canopy,
10 [... ] cedar, balliku₉-tree [... ]
11 [... ] one league each [... ]
[TEXT]
Humbaba opened his mouth to speak, saying to Gilgamesh:

'Why, my friend, do you speak like a weakling?

With your feeble talk you vex my heart!'
Lacuna of about half a column

When the text resumes after a long lacuna, battle is about to commence:

130 ['[......] may they be banished!'

131 He heard them [(..) from] a distance,

132 he smote the very ground, . . . he squared up to him.

133 At the heels of their feet the earth was splitting apart,

134 as they whirled around Sirara and Lebanon were sundered.②

135 White cloud turned to black,

136 death raining down upon them like a mist.

137 Šamaš roused against Humbaba the mighty stormwinds:

138 South Wind, North Wind, East Wind, West Wind, Blast,

139 Counterblast, Gale, Tempest, Typhoon,

140 Hell-Wind, Icy Blast, Hurricane, Tornado.

141 Thirty winds rose up and the face of Humbaba darkened—

142 he cannot charge forwards, he cannot kick backwards—

143 and then the weapons of Gilgameš did catch Humbaba.

144 Pleading for his life, Humbaba said to Gilgameš:

145 ‘You are young, Gilgameš, (as when) your mother bore you,

146 but you are the offspring of [Wild-Cow Ninsun]. . . .

147 By command of Šamaš also the mountains. . . .

148 An offshoot sprung from Uruk’s midst is King Gilgameš!

149 [. . .], Gilgameš, a dead man cannot. . . .

150 [a slave] alive [can . . . .] for his lord.

151 O Gilgameš, spare my life [. . . .]

152 let me dwell here for you in [. . . .]

153 Trees as many as you command from me [. . . .]

154 I will guard for you the myrtle, the [. . . .]

155 timber that is the pride of a palace [. . . .]

156 Enkidu opened his mouth to speak, [saying to Gilgameš]

157 ‘My [friend], do not listen to what Humbaba says,

158 [. . . .] his supplications. [. . . .]’

Lacuna. When the text resumes, Humbaba is speaking:

175 ‘You are experienced in the ways of my forest, the ways [. . . .]

176 also you know all the (best) things to say.

② Or, ‘they sundered Sirara and Lebanon’.

③ Or, reading 4šúμum) šad, Šamaš, lord of the mountains’
Had I only picked you up and hanged you from a sapling at my forest's entrance, had I only fed your flesh to the "locust" birds, the ravening eagles and vultures.

Now, Enkidu, [my] release rests with you:

... speak to Gilgameš so he spares my life."

Enkidu opened his mouth to speak, saying to Gilgameš:

"My friend, Humbaba, guardian of the Forest of [Cedar,]

... finish him, slay him, do away with his power!

Humbaba, guardian of the Forest of [Cedar],

... before Enlil the foremost has learned (about it)!

The [great] gods could be angry with us,

Enlil in Nippur, Šamaš in [Larsa...]

Establish an eternal [...].

how Gilgameš [slept] Humbaba [...]

Humbaba heard [what Enkidu said.]

Humbaba lifted up his head and [...]

After a long break, the text resumes with the end of a speech, probably by Enkidu:

"Whither [...?]

Humbaba heard [what Enkidu said.]

Humbaba lifted up his head and [...]

The end of Humbaba's reply:

"... counsellor [...]

and the one who dwells in his house [... hostileities.

You sit before [him] like a shepherd,

... and like one at his beck and call [you [...]

Now, Enkidu, [my release] rests with you, and [...]

... speak to Gilgameš so he [spares] my life."

Enkidu opened his mouth to speak, saying [to Gilgameš]

"My friend, Humbaba, guardian of the Forest of [Cedar,]

... finish him, slay him, do [away with his power,]

before [Enlil] the foremost has learned (about it)!

The [great] gods could be angry with us,

Enlil in Nippur, Šamaš in [Larsa...]

Establish an eternal [...].

5 The text reads: 'at the entrance to a sapling of my forest', and is no doubt corrupt.

6 Lit. 'the hiring of his mouth'.
how Gilgaleš slew Humbaba [...].

Humbaba heard. [...] and. [...] 

After a short gap the text resumes with Humbaba’s cursing of his captors:

May they not [...] 
May the pair of them not grow old, 

apart from his friend Gilgaleš, may Enkidu have nobody to bury him!

Enkidu opened his mouth to speak, 

saying to Gilgaleš: 

‘My friend, I speak to you but you do not listen to me! 

Until the curses [...] 
[... of his friend, 

he drew forth [the dirk] at his side. 

Gilgaleš heard the words] in the neck, 

Enkidu [...] until he pulled out the lungs. 
[... jumps up, 

[from] the head he takes the tusks as booty. 
[...] plenty fell on the mountain, 
[...] plenty fell on the mountain.

Lacuna. When the text resumes Gilgaleš and Enkidu are telling nuber:
[... of] they cut off, 
[...] one-fifth of a cubit was the... of their (cedar) shavings. 

As Gilgaleš cut down the trees, Enkidu was seeking out the best timber.

Enkidu opened his mouth to speak, 
saying to Gilgaleš: 

‘My friend, we have cut down a lofty cedar, 

whose top abuts the heavens. 

I made a door—six rods is its height, two rods its breadth, one cubit its thickness, 

two of its top pivot and its bottom pivot are all of a piece. 

Let the river Euphrates carry it to Nippur,*

* Or corrupt for lipu, ‘I will make’.
H 298 [li-šu-ú-ta [at-man [nippuri(nibru)]]

dd 298-8 ana nippuri(nibru)\(^{[2]}\) li-bi-lu \(^{[2]}\) pu-lat-[um um-man? / nippuri\(^{[4]}\) [i-li-du?]

H 299 [...][iš-nur min a-di [...]

dd ha-r[u-mu am-mu la-[u-ú...] [...]

Hdd 300 it-ta[s-su a-mu it-ta-du]\(^{[1]}\) [...]

H 301 [...]-i[u] min uk-kis[mu mat\(^{[4]}\) en-ki-bi[...]

Hdd 302 "en-ki-di\(^{[4]}\) ru-kib [...]

Hdd 302 u\(^{[4]}\)giš\(^{[3]}\) gim\(^{[1]}\) maš qaqqali(sag,du) \(^{[4]}\)hum-ba\(^{[2]}\) la\(^{[1]}\) x[...]

Hdd VI 1 im-su ma-le\(^{[1]}\) bi-ša -bi-ba [iš-le-bi]

---

EDITION OF THE TEXT: TABLET V

298 let Nippur's [people rejoice!]\(^{[9]}\)

299 ... branches [... ] cypress [...]

300 they bound together a raft, they laid [...]

301 Enkidu was steering [...........]\(^{[10]}\)

302 and Gilgameš [.....] the head of Humbaba.

VI 1 He washed his matted hair, he cleaned [his equipment.]

\(^{[9]} \) So MS dd; MS H probably corrupt: 'let rejoice' the sanctuary [of Nippur].

\(^{[10]} \) So MS dd; MS H differently: '[.....] Enkidu [.....]'
**TABLE VI**

**Table of Manuscripts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Bibliography of cuneiform texts and previous editions</th>
<th>Lines preserved on obverse</th>
<th>Lines preserved on reverse</th>
<th>Plate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>K 231</td>
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<td>78–81</td>
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<td>A₂</td>
<td>K 5335</td>
<td>79, 81</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrodëpos</em> no. 17: C</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>iv 122–28 (A₀), 125–32 (A₀)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ii 45–84 (A₀)</td>
<td>v 145–71 (A₀)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iii 92–104 (A₀), 102–12 (A₀)</td>
<td>vi 172–82, colophon (A₀)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>O₁</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrodëpos</em> nos. 13 (Rm 578), 19 (K 4579 + DT 2), 20 (K 3990): C</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sm 2112 + DT unnumbered</td>
<td>82–4</td>
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<td>iv 121–39 (O₁), 139–43 (O₁)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ii 44–58 (O₂)</td>
<td>v 152–169 (O₁)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iii 83–94 (O₂)</td>
<td>vi 170–83, colophon (O₁)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Q₁</td>
<td>K 4579A + 8018</td>
<td>86–8</td>
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<td>K 14945 (Rm unnumbered)</td>
<td>86, 88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1914 H. W. King, <em>CT 34</em>, pl. 17: C</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1884 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrodëpos</em> nos. 16 (Sm 401), 18 (Sm 2194): C</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>iv 112–21 (Q₂), 127–135 (Q₂)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ii 34–53 (Q₂), 52–4, 58 (Q₂)</td>
<td>v 146–51 (Q₂), 153–164 (Q₂)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iii 80–98 (Q₂)</td>
<td>vi 176–182, colophon (Q₂)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This MS exhibits a slightly different line numeration, with a decimal marker placed at 1.159 instead of 160.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Bibliography of cuneiform texts and previous editions</th>
<th>Lines preserved on obverse</th>
<th>Lines preserved on reverse</th>
<th>Plate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Assur**

| | | | | | |
| a₁ | VAT 9667 (Ass 21600r) | 89–91 | | | |
| | 1919 E. Ebeling, _KAR_ no. 115: C | | | | |
| a₂ | A 122 + 123 | 90, 91 | | | |
| | 1999 A. George, _The Epic of Gilgamesh_ (Penguin), p. xiv: C (a₁, obv. only) | | | | |
| | i 1–21 (a₁) | iv 110–27 (a₁) | | | |
| | ii 37–73 (a₁–3) | v 139–162 (a₁–3) | | | |
| | iii 79–104 (a₁) | vi 180–183, colophon (a₁) | | | |
| | Possible unplaced fragments of a are A 124B and A 124C | | | | |
| d | VAT 11576 | 87 | | | |
| | 1923 E. Ebeling, _KAR_ no. 320: C | | | | |
| | ii 61–65 | [rev. not extant] | | | |

**Composite cuneiform texts and editions**

| | | | | | |
| 1875 | G. Smith, _IV R_ 1, pls. 48–9: A₁, O₁ (K 3990, K 4579 + DT 2 only), Q₁ (K 8018 only) | C | | | |
| 1876 | G. Smith, _Chaldean Account of Genesis_, pp. 217–25: A₁, A₂, O₁ (K 3990, K 4579 + DT 2 only), O₂, Q₁ (K 8018 only), Q₂ (K 8018 only), Q₃ (Sm 401 only) | Tr | | | |
| 1877 | H. F. Talbot, "'Ishtar and Izdubar, being the sixth tablet of the Izdubar series", _TS BAB_ 5, pp. 97–121: text as Smith 1875 (cols. i and ii only) | CTr | | | |
| 1884 | P. Haupt, _Nimrodëpos_ no. 22: A₁, A₂, O₁ (K 3990, K 4579 + DT 2, Rm 578: unjoined), O₂, Q₁ (K 8018 only), Q₂ (Sm 401 only) | C | | | |
| 1891 | T. G. Pinches, _IV R_ 2, 41–2 no. 1: text as Haupt 1884 with the addition of K 4579A (part of Q₁) and Rm II 197 (part of O₁) | Tr | | | |
| 1900 | P. Jensen, _KBT_ 1, pp. 166–79: text as Pinches 1891 | CTr | | | |
| 1930 | R. C. Thompson, _Gilgamish_, pp. 38–42, pls. 20–6: A₁, A₂ rev., O₁, O₂, Q₁, Q₂, a₁, a₂ | CT | | | |
| 1997 | S. Parpola, _SAAG_ _Gil_: pp. 29–33, 91–3: A₁, A₂, O₁, O₂, Q₁, Q₂, a₁, a₂ | CT | | | |
| | (as published by Frankena). | | | | |
Text

Translation

1 He washed his ho ald hair, he cleaned his equipment,
2 he shook his locks down over his back.
3 He cast aside his dirty things, he clothed himself with his clean things,
4 he wrapped himself in cloaks, tied with a sash.
5 Gilgames put on his crown.
6 The lady Eštar looked covetously on the beauty of Gilgameš.
7 ‘Come, Gilgames, you be the bridegroom!’
8 Grant me your fruits, I insist!
9 You shall be my husband and I will be your wife!
10 Let me harness you a chariot of lapis lazuli and gold,
11 whose wheels are gold and whose horns are amber.
12 You shall have in harness ‘storm-lions’, huge mules.
13 Come into our house with scents of cedar!
14 When you come into our house,
15 doorway and throne shall kiss your feet.
16 Kings, courtiers and nobles shall be bowed down beneath you,
17 they shall bring you tribute, [all the] produce of mountain and land.
18 Your nanny-goats shall bear triplets and your ewes twins,
19 your donkey foal under load shall outpace a mule.
20 At the chariot your horse shall gallop majestically,
21 at the yoke your ox shall acquire no rival.*
22 [Gilgames] opened his mouth to speak,
23 [saying] to the lady Eštar:
24 ‘[If indeed I were] to take you in marriage,
25 [.....] myself and my clothing,
26 [.....] my food and my sustenance?
27 [Will you feed me] bread fit for a god?
28 [Will you pour me ale] fit for a king?
29 [.....] should I bind,
30 [.....] should I pile high?
31 [Would]... [wrap]..... [in a cloak?
32 [Who]..... take you in marriage?
33 [You]..... does not solidify] ice,
34 an archaios-door [that does not] block breeze and draught,
35 a palace that massacres [.....] warriors,
36 an elephant [that.....] its coverings,
37 bitumen that [soil] him who carries it,
38 a waterskin that [seeks] him who carries it,
39 a block of limestone that [.....] a wall of stone,
40 a battering ram that destroys the [rolls of] the enemy land,
41 a shoe that bites the foot of its owner!
42 What bridegroom of yours endured for ever?
43 What brave warrior of yours is there [who] went up [to heaven?
44 Come, let me count [the numbers] of your lovers.10
45 As for him of [.....] his arm.11
46 To Dumuzi, the husband of your youth,
47 to him you have allotted perpetual weeping, year on year.
48 You loved the speckled alalula-bird,
49 you struck him and broke his wing,12
50 (now) he stands13 in the woods crying, “My wing!”
51 You loved the lion, perfect in strength,
52 seven and seven pigs you have dug for him.14
53 You loved the horse, famed15 in battle,
54 to him you have allotted whip, spurs16 and lash.
55 To him you have allotted a seven- league gallop,
56 to him you have allotted muddy water to drink.17

Lit: ‘feet’.
So MS A; MS O: ‘bridegrooms’.
Or, ‘his wages’.
So MSS Aa; MS Q: ‘wings’.
So MS Aa; MSS Qa: ‘sins’.
So MS A; MSS Qa: ‘pin you have dug for him, seven and seven’.
Or, ‘steady’.
Lit: ‘muddying and drinking’.

[Images of cuneiform text]
57 To his mother Sili, you have allotted perpetual weeping.

58 You loved the shepherd, the grazer, the herdsman,

59 who regularly piled up for you (bread baked in) embers,

60 slaughtering kids29 for you every day.

61 You struck him and turned him into a wolf,

62 so his own shepherd boys drive him away,

63 and his dogs take bites at his thigh.19

64 You loved Issilánu, your father’s gardener,

65 who regularly brought you a basket of dates,29

66 daily making your table gleam.

67 You looked at him covetously31 and went up to him:

68 “O my Issilánu, let us taste your power!

69 Put out your hand24 and strike our vulva!”

70 Issilánu spoke to you:

71 “Me! What do you want of me?23

72 Did my mother not bake? Did I not eat?

73 Am I one that eats bread of insults and curses24

74 Shall I let rushes be my covering against the cold?”

75 You heard what he had to say,

76 you struck him, you turned [him] into a dwarf.

77 You sat him in the midst of his labours,19

78 he cannot go up to the . . ., he cannot go down to the . . . .

79 And you would love me and [change me] as (you did) them?

80 When Ištár [heard] this,

81 Ištár was furious and [went up] to heaven.

82 Ištár went28 [weeping] before her father, Anu,

83 her tears flowing before Anu, her mother.

84 “O father, Gilgames has been heaping abuse on me,”27

85 Gilgames kept recounting things that insulted me,
86 things that insult and revile me."
87 Anu opened his mouth to speak,
88 saying to the lady Istar:
89 'Ah, but did you not provoke28 King Gilgamesh,
90 so then Gilgamesh recounted things that insult you,
91 things that insult and revile you'29

92 Istar opened her mouth to speak,
93 saying to the lady Anu:
94 'Of father, give me, please, the Bull of Heaven,
95 that I may slay Gilgamesh in his dwelling.
96 If you will not give me the Bull of Heaven,
97 I shall smash the underworld together with its dwelling-place,
98 I shall raze the nether regions to the ground.
99 I shall bring up the dead to consume the living,
100 I shall make the dead outnumber the living.

101 Anu opened his mouth to speak,
102 saying to the lady Istar:
103 'If you will ask of [me] the Bull of Heaven,
104 for seven years let the widow of Uruk gather chaff,
105 [and the farmer of Uruk] grow hay.'

106 [Istar opened her mouth] to speak,
107 [saying to] her father, Anu:
108 ['[.] . . . . . ] I stored up,
109 ['[.] . . . . . ] I made grow.
110 [For seven] years the widow [of Uruk] has gathered chaff,
111 the farmer [of Uruk has] grown hay.
112 At the wrath of the Bull of Heaven I shall (make) him [ . . ]'

113 Anu heard this speech of Istar,
114 [and] he placed in her hands the nose-ropes of the Bull of Heaven.
115 Istar [ . . ] and was leading it on:
116 when it reached [the] land of Uruk,
117 it dried up the woodland, the marshland and the reeds,'
it went down to the river, (the level of) the river was reduced by seven cubits.  
At the snort of the Bull of Heaven a pit opened up,  
a hundred men of Uruk all fell into it.  
At its second snort a pit opened up,  
two hundred men of Uruk all fell into it.  
At its third snort a pit opened up,  
Enkidu fell in up to [his] waist.  
Enkidu sprang out and seized the Bull of Heaven by [its] horns,  
the Bull of Heaven spat slaver at his face,  
with the tuft of its tail [...]  
Enkidu opened his mouth [to speak],  
saying to Gilgamesh,  
'My friend, we vaunted ourselves (…) in our city,  
how shall we gain the dense-gathered people?  
My friend, I have experienced the might of the Bull of Heaven,  
 [...] its strength [and] learning its mission.  
I will once again [experience] the might of the Bull of Heaven,  
behind [the Bull] of Heaven I shall [...]  
I will seize [by the tuft of its tail],  
I will set [my foot on the back of its hock],  
[...]  
Then [you] like a [butcher (…), brave and] skilful,  
press home your knife between the yoke of the horns and the slaughter-spot.  
Enkidu circled round behind the Bull of Heaven,  
he seized it by the [tuft] of its tail.  
[He set] his foot on [the back of] its hock,  
[...]  
Then Gilgamesh like a butcher (…), brave and skilful,  
[pictured] his knife between the yoke of the horns and the slaughter-spot.  
After they had slain the Bull of Heaven,  

---

119 Q: ina ni-ip-ši-s[lu] 120 Q: gurušme 121 a; ina Q: ina ni-ip-ši-s[lu] [x x x] 122 Q: gurušme 123 a; ina Q: ina ni-ip-ši-s[lu] 124 a; ina Q: ina ni-ip-ši-s[lu] [x x x]
125 Q: 126 a; ina Q: ina ni-ip-ši-s[lu] [x x x]
127 Q: 128 a; ina Q: ina ni-ip-ši-s[lu] [x x x]
148 they took up its heart and set it before Šamaš.
149 They stepped back and prostrated themselves before Šamaš,
150 both of them (then) sat down together. 33
151 Ḫar’sar went up on to the wall of Uruk-the-Sheepfold,
152 she hopped and stamped, she uttered a woeful wail:
153 “Woe to Gilgamesh, who vilified me, (who), killed the Bull of Heaven!” 34
154 Enkidū heard this speech of Ḫar’sar,
155 he tore a haunch off the Bull of Heaven and threw it down before her. 35
156 ‘You too, had I caught you, I would have treated you like you like it!
I would have dropped its guts on your arms!’
157 Enkidū assembled the courtiers, prostitutes 40 and harlots,
158 she instituted mourning over the Bull of Heaven’s lair.
159 Gilgamesh summoned the craftsmen, all the smiths, 41
160 for the craftsmen to praise the thickness of its bones.
161 Thirty minutes of lavish feasting each was their mass,
162 two minas 42 each their rims,
163 six kors of oil was the capacity of both.
164 He dedicated (them) for the anointing of his god, Lugabandā, 43
165 he took (them) in and hung (them) in his bed-chamber.
166 They washed their hands in the River Euphrates,
167 they took each other (by the hand) 44 to go forward.
168 As they drove along the street of Uruk,
169 the people of Uruk were gathered to look [at them.]
170 Gilgamesh spoke a word to the serving girls 45 of [his house:]

171 ‘Who is the finest among men?
172 Who is the most glorious of fellows? 173
173 ‘Gilgamesh is the finest among men
174 [Gilgamesh is the most] glorious of fellows!’

33 A reading  34 MSS Aa; MSS Qa: ‘Gilgamesh has killed the Bull of Heaven, he that vilified me!
35 So MSS Aa; MSS Qa: ‘buddri it her’, MS Q: ‘cast it down before her’.
36 So MSS Aa; MSS Qa: ‘made’.
37 So MSS Aa; MSS Qa omit this word.
38 So MSS Aa; MSS Qa: ‘The craftsmen were gathered, the smiths, all of them’.
39 So MSS Qa; MSS Aa, perhaps corrupt ‘two finger-sticks’.
40 So MSS Qa: ‘for Lugabandā, his god’.
41 So MSS Aa, MSS Qa: ‘holding (each other)’.
42 So MSS Aa; MSS Qa: ‘corruptly: “detracor”’.
176 [... whom we knew in our fury!]
177 [...] in the street he has none that defames him,
178 [...] way of his [...]

Gilgamesh made merry in his palace.

180 The men were lying down, that were asleep on beds for the night, 46
181 Enkidu was lying down, 47 seeing a dream.
182 Enkidu arose to reveal the dream,
183 saying to his friend: 48

VII 1 ‘My friend, for what reason were the great gods taking counsel?’

46 So MSS AQa, MS Q: ‘The men were asleep on beds (for the night.)’
47 So MSS Qa; MS O: ‘sleeping’.
48 So MSS Qa; MSS AQ omit the entire line.
### Tablet VII

#### Table of Manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Bibliography of cuneiform texts and previous editions</th>
<th>Lines preserved on obverse</th>
<th>Lines preserved on reverse</th>
<th>Plate</th>
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#### Nineveh

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<td>K 3389</td>
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<td>94, 95</td>
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<td></td>
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* Smith's II. 35-49 are the Pable of the Willow, K 8566 = Lambert, B&W, pl. 44.
Composite cuneiform texts and editions

1900 P. Jensen, *KIB VI*1, pp. 186–93: cols. iii (E₁ // Z₁), iv (E₁ // Z₁ // L₂), and vi (L₂ // GG)


1997 S. Parpola, *SA 4 Gilg.*, pp. 35–9, 95–8: all MSS except E₁ and Z₂

Translation

1 'My friend, for what reason were the great gods taking counsel?'

Lacuna of 25 lines

1 28 Enki said (to his god),
29 saying, 'Gilgameš, my friend...
30 Come, my friend, ...
31 in ...
32 The door ...
33 because ...

Lacuna of 2 lines

36 in ...
37 Enki opened his mouth to speak ...
38 talking with the door like ...
39 'Or door of the woodland, not being ...
40 I have understanding, which you have not.
41 For twenty leagues I sought out your timber ...
until I saw a tall cedar [...]

44 six rods is your height, two rods your breadth, one [cubit] your thickness, your pole, its top pivot and its bottom pivot are all of a piece; I made you, I raised you up, in Nippur I hung you upright.

47 Had I but known, O door, that this would be your [reward],

48 had I but known, O door, that this would be your bounty,

49 I would have picked up an axe, I would have cut down,

50 I would have shipped you by raft to E-babbarra.

51 [To] E-babbarra, the temple of Šamaš, I would have brought [you],

52 I would have set [up] the cedar [in the ... of] E-babbarra.

53 [At] its gate I would have stationed Anzu [...]

54 [. . .] your entrance I would have [. . .]

55 I would have [. . .] the city [. . .] Šamaš,

56 and in Uruk [...]

57 because Šamaš heard what I said,

58 in [... [. . .] he [gave] me a weapon.

59 Now, O door, was I who made you, I who raised [you] up?

60 Can I [...] can I tear you out?

61 May either a king who comes after me abhor you,

62 or a god [. . .] may he hang you up?¹

63 May he remove my name and set up his own!

64 he tore out [. . .] he threw down.

65 As he was listening to his words,

66 swiftly and soon his [tears were flowing].

67 As Gilgameš was listening to the words of Enkidu, his friend,

swiftly and soon his tears were [flowing].

68 Gilgameš opened his mouth to speak,

saying to Enkidu:

69 "[My friend, ...] [. . .] manifest,

70 [who] has understanding and sense, [. . .] profanities?¹

71 Why, my friend, did your heart talk profanities [. . .]?

72 [the dream] was precious and the apprehension was much.

73 [. . .] were many, the dream was rare.

74 "To the one who survived griefing was left,

75 the [deceased] left sorrow to the one who survived."³

¹ So MS f, MSL offers a shorter line: 'and that this would be your bounty'.
² Perhaps read isu šu-geš, 'in time of'.
³ Or, reading šu-ter-ša-ši, 'may he hide (you)!'
[I will] beseech the great gods and entreat them,
I will seek out [Šamašt], I will appeal to your god.
I still pray [to Anu], the father of the gods [...]
[May] Enil, the great counsellor, [hear my] prayers in your presence,
may [my entreaty] ... to Ea.
I will make a statue of you in gold without limit,
[...] [...].

[My friend,] you must not give silver, you must not ... gold,
[you must] not [...]
What Enil] commanded is not like that of the gods of [...]
"[What he] commanded, he did not [erase] again,
[what] he proclaimed, he did not erase again."
My friend, [my destiny it] drawn,
people do go prematurely to their fate.
At the very first light of dawn,
Enkidu lifted up his head, lamenting before Šamašt,
his tears flowing before the rays of the sun:
"[I appeal] to you, O Šamašt, on account of my life so precious!
As for him, [that] hunter, the trapper-man,
who did not let me be a match for my friend,
may the hunter not be a match for his friend!
Destroy his income, diminish his earnings!
[May] his share of the profits be [cut] in your presence!
May [...] where he enters go out" by the window!
[After] he had cursed the hunter to his heart's content,
he decided to curse [the harlot] Šamašt [also].
"Come, Šamašt, I will determine a destiny for you,
a destiny that will not end for all eternity:
I will curse you with a great curse,
and] my curses shall afflict you swiftly and soon!
[May you not] found a household to delight in,
[you not] to reside ... of your young one!
[May you not] sit in the young woman's [chamber!]
May the ground define your fine looking [garment!]

* Or perhaps 'gods'.
* So MS f; MS g omits 'my'.
* So MS Z; MS g: 'may his income be lost!'
* So MS Z; MS g: 'make (him) go out'.
May [the drunkard] smear [with dust your festive gown!]

May you not acquire a house with . . . and lovely things,

May [the potter] delight in be a bench!

May [the junction] of the highway be where you sit!

May [the ruined houses be] where you sleep! May the lee of the city wall be where you stand!

May [thorn and] briar skin your feet!

May [drunk and] sober strike your cheek!

May [ . . . ] be plaintiff, may she claim against you!

May the builder not plaster [the roof of your house!]

[ . . . ] may an owl roost!

[ . . . may no] banquet [take] place!

A lacuna of 3 lines

[' . . . ] purple raiment 

[ . . . ] of the defiled lap 

[ . . . ] whose lap is defiled . . .

Because [you made] me [weak], me [who was pure!]

And me who was pure, [you made] me [weak] when I was in the wild.'

Šamaš heard [what] he had spoken,

straight away a [voice] was crying to him [from] the heavens:

'Why, O Enkidu, do you keep cursing the harlot Šamhat, who gave you bread to eat, fit for a god,
gave you beer to drink, fit for a king, clothed you in a great garment,
and let you have for a comrade the fine Gilgames? 

Now Gilgames, your friend and brother,
[will] lay you out on a great bed,
[On] a bed of honour he will lay you out,
[he will] set you on a restful seat, the seat to (his) left,
[the princes] of the earth who will kiss your feet.

[I will make] weep for you the people of Uruk, he will make them sob for you,

E₂, Z₂, f₆₁ 110 [lu-bar i-sin-na-ti-kī šak-ru ina tur-bu-] f. ʿū li-bal-līl

E₂₂ 111 [e tar-ši-i bit? . . . ] u ba-na-a-a-tū

E₂, Z₂, f₆₂ 112 [. . . . . . . . . . ja-mu-ta pa-ḥa-ri

E₂, Z₂, f₆₃ 113 [. . . ] x ri bi kī mim-ma e tar-šī-i

E₂, Z₂, f₆₄ 114 [. . . ta-na-a] f. paššāri(banšur)ā ša-muḫ nīti(ūg)wa a-a in-na-dī ina biti(ē)-ki

E₂, Z₂ 115 [di-in-mu-ukī ši ʾa-le-ma lu-ū dāk-ka-nu

E₂, Z₂, f₆₅ 116 [i-pal-lu-ur-ta] ša šarrīni(kasakal) lu-u mu-sā-bi-ku

Z₂, f₆₆ 117 [ḥur-ba-tum lu-u mā-qal-lu-ka šīlī(gissu) dāri(bād) lu-ū man-sa-zu-ki

Z₂, f₆₇ 118 [ba(i)-dul(i)bi] u ṣašša(kišši), li-qal-li-pu šēši(gir)miš-ba-ki

Z₂, f₆₈ 119 [šak-ru u ū][a-mu-ū li-im-ha-šet-ki

Z₂, f₆₉ 120 [. . . ] ʾuš be-lit-di-nī ma[i] (ešu)-ugu-ki šil-si

Z₂, f₇₀ 121 [ši ʾa-ri-ki? iš a i-se-i ši-im-nu

Z₂, f₇₁ 122 [. . . ] ši-ir-bi-i qa-du-ū

Z₂, f₇₂ 123 [. . . ] a-a ši ʾuš-ka giš-e-tum

A lacuna of 2 lines is expected here, equivalent to MB Ur 34–5
the people [so bony] he will fill full of grief for you.

[And he, after you are gone he will have himself bear the matted hair of mourning,  
[he will don] the skin of a lion and go roaming the [wild].]

148  Enkidu [heard] the words of Šamaš the hero,
149  [... ] his angry heart grew calm,
150  [... ] his furious [heart grew] calm.

151  'Come, [Šamhat, I will determine a destiny for you,]
152  [my] mouth [that cursed you shall return and bless you:]
153  May [governors] and noblemen* love you,
154  may he [that is one league (distant)] slap his thigh!
155  May he [that is two leagues (distant)] shake out his hair,
156  may no soldier [be slow] to undo his belt for you!
157  May he [give you] obdian, lapis lazuli and gold,
158  multiple ear-(rings) shall be your gift!

To a man whose household [is tumbled], whose storage bins are heaped high,
159  may Ibar, [the most able] of the gods, send you in!
160  [On your account may] the first wife be deserted, the mother of seven!’
161  [As for Enkidu], his mind was deranged.

162  He was lying on his own [thinking],
163  was what on his mind he told to his friend:

164  ‘Quite something, my friend, (was) the dream I saw during the course of the night,
165  the heavens thundered, the earth responded,
166  with me standing (there) between them.
167  There was a man, his expression was grim,
168  his face was that of an Aman bird.

169  His hands were a lion’s paws, his claws an eagle’s talons,
170  he took hold of my hair, he was too strong for me.
171  I struck him so he sprang back like a skipping-ropes,
172  he struck me and capsized me like a raft.
173  Like a mighty wild bull he trampled over me,
174  poison he ... [ ] my body.
175  ‘Rescue me, my friend! [ ]’
176  ‘But you were afraid of him and [ ]’
177  You ... [ ]’

Short lacuna

A short lacuna is placed at this point, though a slight overlap between MSS E₁ and E₂ cannot be ruled out.

153  "u-bi-ú u šakkanakku?" 165  g₃: [u]-na-ar 166  g₃: qaṣ qa-ra 167  g₂: az-za-zu 168  g₂: ṭu-ku-ú pa-n[i-] 169  g₂: [a]na L₁: an-zi-[i pa-mu]-šu 170  g₂ in two lines g₂: ri-[a]-šu, ṭu-pur-ra-[šu] 171  g₁: ć[j]-i 172  L₁: at-ta ta[l-] 

² So MS L₁: MS g probably: ‘noblemen [and governors].’
183 E; is-qi]-ri
184 E; mu-laš-ir-kal-la

185 E; e-ri-bu-sù]
186 E; a-lak-ta-šu
187 E; a-li-bu-sù
188 L; a-bi-ti
189 E; [u] Li; na-ra
E; im-ni-a-ra
190 Z; pa-ni;
191 E; im-ni-a-ra
192 Z; pa-ni;
193 E; [u] Li; na-ra
194 E; im-ni-a-ra
195 Z; pa-ni;
196 E; [u] Li; na-ra
197 Z; im-ni-a-ra

198 L; a-bi-ti
199 E; im-ni-a-ra
200 Z; pa-ni;
201 E; im-ni-a-ra
202 Z; im-ni-a-ra

203 Z; ša-ša
204 L; a-bi-ti
205 E; im-ni-a-ra
206 Z; pa-ni;
207 E; im-ni-a-ra
208 Z; pa-ni;
209 E; im-ni-a-ra
210 Z; pa-ni;
211 E; im-ni-a-ra
212 Z; pa-ni;
213 E; im-ni-a-ra

182 "[He struck] me, he turned me into a dove.
183 [He bound] my arms like (the wings of) a bird,

184 to lead me captive to the house of darkness, the seat 10 of Irkalla:
185 to the house which those who enter cannot leave,

186 on the journey whose way cannot be retraced;
187 to the house whose residents are deprived of light,

188 where they do not know, where they do not see what they are doing.

189 They are clad like birds in coats of feathers,
190 and they cannot see light but dwell in darkness.

191 On the door [and bolt the door lies thick],
192 on the House [(of Dust) a deathly quiet is poured.] 12

193 On the House of Dust that I entered,
194 On the House of Dust that I entered,
195 I looked and (saw) the crowns stowed away:
196 there sat [kings], the crowned heads who had ruled the land since days of old,

197 who used to serve roasted meat [at the] tables of Anu and Enlil,
198 who used to serve baked (bread), to pour chilled water from skins. 13
199 In the House of Dust that I entered, 14
200 there sat en priests and lagaš priests; 15
201 there sat purification priests and lumasbi priests,
202 there sat the gudapšu priests of the great gods,

203 there sat Esana, there sat Šakkan,
204 [there sat the] queen of the Netherworld, Ereškigal,

205 Before her was squatting [Bēlet]-šērī, the scribe of the Netherworld,
206 holding a tablet and reading aloud in her presence.

207 [She raised] her head, she saw me:

208 "[Who was it] that fetched this man here?
209 [Who was it] that fetched this man here?
210 [made ready,

211 [ ]] tomb."

Lacuna. Ekiškud continues relating what befell him in the Netherworld:

183 E; is-qi]-ri
184 E; mu-laš-ir-kal-la
185 E; e-ri-bu-sù
186 E; a-lak-ta-šu
187 E; a-li-bu-sù
188 L; a-bi-ti
189 E; [u] Li; na-ra
190 E; im-ni-a-ra
191 E; im-ni-a-ra
192 E; im-ni-a-ra
193 E; im-ni-a-ra

194 E; im-ni-a-ra
200 Z; pa-ni;
201 E; im-ni-a-ra
202 Z; im-ni-a-ra
203 Z; ša-ša
204 L; a-bi-ti
205 E; im-ni-a-ra

18 So MS Z; MS E; 'abode'.
19 So MS Z; MS E omits.
20 LL 191-2 occur in MS L only.
21 So MS E; MS Z; 'give water to drink from cool skins', MS g; 'keep pouring water from cool skins'.
22 So MSS EZ; MS g (superior); 'enter'.
23 So MSS EZ; MS g (corruptly); 'la magāri', 'disobedience'.

10 10 10
214 [......] Ereškigal.
215 [......] the deluge.

Another short lacuna occurs between MSS L₃ and E₂.

E₂ 220 [......] x x
E₂ 221 [......] a-[a]-mar zumur(su)-šū
E₂ 222 [......] -a-ti
E₂ 223 [......] x-kī
E₂ 224 [......] x-ta
E₂ 225 [......] x-ta
E₂ 226 [......] -bi

221 ‘[......] I saw his person.’

A longer lacuna follows, of about 30 lines. When the text resumes Enkidu is speaking to Gilgames:

251 ‘(Me) who [endured] all hardships [with you],
252 remember [me], my [friend], lest [you forget] all I went through.
253 ‘My friend saw a dream which [will] not . . . [ . . . ]’
254 ‘The day he saw the dream [his strength] was exhausted.
255 Enkidu was cast down and (lay) sick for one day, [a second day.]
256 Of Enkidu, on his bed, [......]
257 A third day and a fourth day, [of Enkidu . . .]
258 a fifth, a sixth and a seventh, an eighth, a ninth [and a tenth (day).]
259 Enkidu’s sickness [......]
260 an eleventh and a twelfth day, [......]
261 Enkidu on the bed [......]
262 he called to Gilgames and [......]
263 [My god] has spurned me, my friend, [......]
264 like one who in the midst of battle [......]
265 I was afraid of combat [......]
266 my friend, he who in combat [ ......]
267 I, in [combat . . . . . .]’

The remainder of Enkidu’s agony is lost.

Approximately 31 or 32 lines are missing to the end of the tablet, including the catch-line and colophon.

253 GG: ı-ta-ma
254 L₃: u₄-mu
255 L₃: ıt₄
257 L₃: ıt₄
258 L₃ in two lines, 6-ţa [ţa]
259 L₃: mur-šu
260 L₃: ıt₄-ţa ı-t₄-ţa

So MS L₃ MS GG: ‘[has] seen’.
### Tablet VIII

#### Table of Manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Bibliography of cuneiform texts and previous editions</th>
<th>Plate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lines preserved on obverse</td>
<td>Lines preserved on reverse</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>K 6899 + 8564 + 9716 + Rm II 262</td>
<td>1876 G. Smith, Chaldean Account of Genesis, pp. 257-8, 258-9: Tr (K 9716, cols. iv, iii, ii only; K 8564 with K 8565 col. ii of V₂ and K 3382 col. v of K₂)</td>
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<td>1891 Ibid. no. 47 (K 8564), 48 (K 9716): C</td>
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<td>1900 P. Jensen, KBVI/1, pp. 136-43, 196-9: T Tr (K 9716 + Rm II 262, col. iii with L₁; K 8564, with V₂)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1930 R. C. Thompson, Gilgamesh, pp. 48–9, pls. 32–3: CT (lacking K 6899, col. i variant only, col. ii with V₂)</td>
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<td>1960 W. G. Lambert, in P. Garelli, Gilgamesh, p. 54: C (K 6899)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>i 2–6 iv 170–177</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ii 45–67 v 207–219</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iii 85–97 vi colophon</td>
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<td>V₁</td>
<td>K 8281</td>
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<td>103</td>
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<tr>
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<td>e</td>
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<td>1953 N. Gökçe and O. R. Gurney, Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi 11/1, p. 112 ff., pl. 7: P</td>
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<td>1954 O. R. Gurney, “Two fragments of the Epic of Gilgamesh from Sultantepe”, JCS 8, pp. 90–5: CT Tr</td>
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<td>1957 O. R. Gurney, STTI no. 15: C</td>
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<td>1999 A. George, The Epic of Gilgamesh (Penguin), p. 64: C (obv. only)</td>
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<td>obv. 1–39 rev. 39–72</td>
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<tr>
<td>m₁</td>
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<td>1960 D. J. Wiseman, in P. Garelli, Gilgamesh, pp. 124, 135: CT</td>
<td>104, 105</td>
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<td>1965 W. G. Lambert, CT 46 no. 27: C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>i 37–44 (m₂) iv 150–80 (m₁)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ii 90–7 (m₁) v 199–206, 213–15* (m₁)</td>
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<td>iii 117–149 (m₁) vi not extant</td>
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</table>
At the very first light of dawn,

Gilgamesh [was mourning] for his friend:

'Oh Enkidu, [whom] your mother, a gazelle,

and your father, a wild donkey, [created,]

whom the wild [asses] reared with their milk,

and the animals [of the wild taught] all the pastures!

May the paths, O Enkidu, [of] the Cedar Forest

[mourn] you, and not ... by day or night!

May the elders of the populous city of Uruk-the-Sheepfold mourn you!

May the crowd who would give blessings behind us [mourn you!]

May the high [peaks] of hills and mountains mourn you,

[pure].

May the pastures lament like your mother!

May [boxwood] cypress and cedar mourn you,

through whose midst we crept in our fury!

May the bear mourn you, the hyena, panther, cheetah, stag and jackal,

the lion, wild bull, deer, ibex, the herds and animals of the wild!

May the sacred River Ušušk mourn you, along whose banks we would walk so lustily!

May the holy Euphrates mourn you,
which [we used] to pour in libation (as) water from skins;!

May the young men of Uruk-the-Sheepfold² mourn you,

who watched our battle, as we slew the Bull of Heaven!

May the ploughman on [ ... ] mourn you,

who will extol your name with his sweet work-song!

May the ... of the spacious city of Uruk-the-Sheepfold mourn you,

who will extol your name³ [with] the first ... !

May the shepherd mourn you [ ... ]

who ... [milk] and junket [in your mouth]⁴

May the shepherd boy mourn you [ ... ]

who used to place ghee on your lip!⁵

May the brewer [ ... ] mourn you,

who used to place ale in your mouth!

May the [bariol] ... mourn you,

who ... anointed the crown of your head with sweet-scented oil!

May [ ... ] the house] of the marriage ceremony mourn [over you],

who you a wife [ ... ]!

May [ ... ] mourn over you!

May [ ... ] mourn you [as if they were] your brothers!

May their tresses be loosed [down their backs] as if they were your sisters!

May they weep for Enkidu, your mother and father, [as if ...]

[On that] very [day]! I [myself] shall mourn you!

So MSV, MS w.: a skin'.

So MSV, MS w.: 'the young men of the populous city, Uruk-the-Sheepfold'.

So MSV w.: MS w.: 'send forth [ ... ]'.

So MSV, MS w.: who placed milk and ghee in your mouth'.

So MSV, MS w.: corruptly: 'below you'.

So MSV, MS w.: corruptly: 'on his steppe'.

So MSV, MS w.: 'a skin'.
42 Hear me, O young men, hear [me!]
43 Hear me, O elders [of the populous city, Uruk,] hear me!
44 I shall mourn Enkidu, my friend,
45 like a professional mourning woman I shall lament bitterly.
46 The axe at my side, in which my arm trusted,²
47 the sword of my belt, the shield in front of me;⁴
48 my festive garment, the girdle of my delight:
49 a wicked wind has risen up against me and robbed me.

50 O my friend, a mule on the run, donkey of the uplands, panther of the wild,
51 my friend Enkidu, a mule on the run, donkey of the uplands, panther of the wild!
52 We (it was) who joined forces and climbed the [uplands,]
53 seized the Bull of Heaven and [killed it,]
54 destroyed Humbaba, who [dwell in the Cedar Forest,]⁹
55 Now what sleep is it that has seized [you?]
56 You have become unconscious¹⁰ and cannot hear [me!]
57 But he, he would not lift [his head;]
58 he felt his heart, but it was not beating any more.
59 He covered (his) friend, (veiling) his face like a bride,

¹ Lit., ‘the trust of my arm.’
² MS e adds (4.47a): ‘who held [. . . ]’.
³ So MS R; MS e: ‘mighty king of the Cedar Forest’.
⁴ So MSS RV; MS e, corruptly: ‘You! Come back to me!’
The text breaks off, resuming after a gap with the beginning of col. iii of MS R. This tablet held 42 lines in col. i, so the first line of col. iii should be about l. 85:

60 circling around him like an eagle.
61 Like a lioness who is deprived of her cubs,11
62 he kept turning about, this way and that.12
63 He was pulling out his curly [tresses] and letting them fall in a heap,
64 tearing off his finery and casting it away, [... like] something taboo.

65 At the very first light of dawn,
66 Gilgamesh sent forth a call to the land:
67 ‘Forgemaster! [Lapidary!] Coppersmith! Goldsmith! Jeweller!
68 Make my friend, [... . . . !]’
69 [... he fashioned a statue of his friend:
70 ‘The limbs of my friend [are of ...]
71 your eyebrows are of lapis lazuli, your chest of gold,
72 your body [is of . . . .].’

Lacuna. When the text resumes Gilgamesh is still speaking:

84 ‘I shall lay you out on a great bed,
85 on a bed [of honour I shall lay you out.]
86 I shall set you [on a restful seat, the seat to (my) left,
87 the princes of the earth [will kiss your feet.]
88 I shall make weep for you the people [of Uruk, I shall make them sob for you:
89 the people so bonny [I shall fill full of grief for you,
90 And I, after you are gone [I shall have] myself [bear the matted hair of mourning,
91 I shall don the skin of a [lion] and [go roaming the wild.]’

92 At the very first light of dawn,
93 [Gilgamesh arose and entered his treasury.
94 He undid his locks, he inspected the jewellery:
95 obsidian, carnelian, [... alabaster.
96 [...]. . . . [ ... worked.

11 So MS R; MS e ‘whose cubs (are) in pits’.
12 Lit., ‘before him and behind him’.
RV
97 [...... he provided for his friend.
98 [...... he provided for his friend.
99 [...... of x] + 10 minas of gold he provided for his friend.
100 [...... of x] minas of gold he provided for his friend.
101 [...... of x] minas of gold he provided for his friend.
102 [...... of x] minas of gold he provided for his friend.
103 [......]
104 [......] between them, mounted in thirty minas of gold,
105 [...... was their [...] he provided for his friend.
106 [...... was their [...] he provided for his friend.
107 [...... was their thickness,
108 [...... was their [...] he provided for his friend.
109 [......] large
110 [......] he provided for his friend.
111 [......] of his waist
112 [......] he provided for his friend.
113 [......] he provided for his friend.
114 [......] he provided for his friend.
115 [...... he provided for his friend.

Short lacuna

117 [......] he provided for his friend.
118 [......] of his feet, he provided for [his friend.
119 [...... of x] talents of ivory . . .
120 [......] its handle [was x minas] of gold, he provided for his friend.
121 [...... mighty . . . of his arm, he provided for his friend.
122 [......] its quiver [was . . . ], its handle a talent of gold, he provided for his friend.
123 [......] the mace in his hand was ivory,
124 [......] its handle was forty minas of gold, he provided for his friend.
125 [......] its . . . three cubits was its length,
126 [......] its thickness, he provided for his friend.
127 [......] . . . of fine gold,
128 [......] of carnelian, red of iron,
129 [......] holder was a wild bull,
130 [......] for his friend,
131 [fat oxen] and fattened sheep he slaughtered, he piled them up for his friend.
132 ['......] . . . of my friend!'
...they carried all the meat to the princes of the earth.

Istar, the great queen.

[A throne] stick of the pure wood,

[for] Istar, the great queen, he displayed to Šamaš.

[May] Istar, the great queen, let this receive,

may [she] welcome my friend14 [and so walk at his side]!

...[ ]

[for Namra-[sīt, ...], he displayed to Šamaš.]

'May [Namra-sīt, ...], receive this,'

[may he] welcome [my friend and so walk at his side]!

A flask of lapis lazuli, 14, 14...

...[ ]

for Ereškigal, the queen of the Netherworld, he displayed to Šamaš.

'May Ereškigal, the queen of the populous Netherworld, receive this,

may [she] welcome [my friend and so walk at his side]!

A flute of carnelian, 14...

for Dumuzi, the shepherd beloved of Istar, he displayed to Šamaš.

'May Dumuzi, the shepherd beloved of Istar, receive this,

may he welcome my friend and [so walk at his side]!

A throne of lapis lazuli, a steer, ...[ ]

a staff of lapis lazuli, 14...

for Namtar, the vizier of the Netherworld, he displayed to Šamaš.

'May Namtar, the vizier of the populous Netherworld, receive this,

[may he welcome my friend and so walk at his side]!

...[ ]

for [Ḫusbišag, the stewardess of the Netherworld, he displayed to Šamaš.]

'May [Ḫusbišag, the stewardess of the populous Netherworld, receive this,

[may she welcome my friend and so walk at his side]!

He had (them) make, ...[ ]

a clasp of silver, bangles of copper, ...[ ]

for Qēssā-tābat, the sweeper of Ereškigal, he displayed to Šamaš.

'May Qēssā-tābat, the sweeper of Ereškigal, receive this,

may he welcome my friend and [so walk at his side]!

May my friend not ... nor become sick at heart!

...[ ]

of alabaster, the inside of which was inlaid with lapis lazuli and carnelian,

[depicting an image] of the Cedar Forest,

[14] lit. 'be happy at the face of my friend'.

15 So MS R; MS m 'lapis lazuli'.
171 for Ninshuburḫuanna, the cleaner of the house, he displayed to Šamaš:
172 'May Ninšulḫuḫuanna, the cleaner of the house, receive this,
173 may she welcome my friend and so walk at his side!'
173a [May she ... ] before my friend,'
174 may my [friend] not [ ... ] nor become sick at heart!'

175 A double-edged dagger with a haft* of lapis lazuli,
176 ... of the holy Euphrates,
177 for Bbüu, the butcher of the Netherworld,* he displayed to Šamaš:
178 'May Bbüu, the butcher' of the populous Netherworld, [receive this,]
179 [may he] welcome [my friend] and so walk at his side!'
180 ... a Slice of alabaster
181 [for Dumu-asu, the] scapegoat of the Netherworld, he displayed to Šamaš:
182 [May Dumu-asu]-abzu, the scapegoat of the populous Netherworld, [receive this,]
183 [may he welcome my [friend] and so walk at his side!]
184 [ ... ] the top of which was lapis lazuli,
185 [ ... ] inlaid with carnelian,
186 [for ... he displayed to Šamaš]
187 'May ... receive this,'
188 [may he (or she) welcome my friend and so walk at his side!']

Lacuna

199 'May he (or she) welcome my friend and so walk at his side!'
200 ... of cedar
201 [for ... the great ... ] he displayed to Šamaš
202 'May ... the great ... receive this,
203 [may he welcome my friend and] so walk [at his side!']

Lacuna of two lines

206 ... of cedar

Lacuna. When the text resumes it appears that someone is speaking to Gilgamesh:

208 ' ... which we ... '
209 [ ... their [ ... ], their names [ ... ]
210 [ ... ] judge of the Anunnaki [ ... ]'
211 When Gilgamesh heard this,
He conceived [in his heart] the damming of the river.

At the very first light of dawn,

Gilgamesh opened [his gate.]

He brought out a great table of clamaku-wood,

he filled with syrup a dish of carnelian.

He filled with ghee a dish of lapis lazuli,

he decorated [...] and displayed it to Šamaš.

[. . . . . . . .] he [displayed to the sun.]

Lacuna

a gold disk [. . . . . . . .]

He himself [. . . . . . . .]

Remainder lost
### Table IX

#### Table of Manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Plate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>D</td>
<td>K 2360 + 3060</td>
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<td>W. St Chad Boscawen, &quot;Notes on the religion and mythology of the Assyrians&quot;, <em>TSBA</em> 4, pp. 269–70: c1tr (l. 1–7 only)</td>
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<td>i</td>
<td>1–29</td>
<td>iv 125–142</td>
</tr>
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<td>37–59</td>
<td>v 148–176</td>
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<td>iii</td>
<td>74–93</td>
<td>vi 184–196, colophon</td>
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#### Composite cuneiform text and edition

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<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Plate</th>
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<td>102</td>
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<td>P. Haupt, <em>Nimrodopea</em> no. 46: C</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>R. C. Thompson, <em>Gilgamesh</em>, p. 50, pl. 34: C T (obv. only, with MS D)</td>
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<td>i</td>
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#### Text

| DJJ | 1 | 4\(\text{iš-gin-maš} a-na 4\text{en-ki-}dū i\-b\text{-ri-}lu |
| DJJ | 2 | šar-piš i-bak-ki-ma i-rap-pu-ud ši-ra (edlin) |
| DJJ | 3 | a-na-lu a-mat-ma u\(\text{li}\)-i 4\text{en-ki-}dū-\text{ma-a} |
| DJJ | 4 | ri-\(\text{is} l-a-tu ītu-\text{tum a-ri-ru} \text{in a-kar} \text{ši-}a |
| DJJ | 5 | mu-\(\text{ta} a-p\text{-lū} l\-ma a-rap-pu-ud ši-ra (edlin) |
| DJJ | 6 | a\(\text{na} le-\text{et} u\(\text{u} u\-napišt}i\text{zi} mūr\(\text{dum} \text{u} \text{ubara}-\text{tu} tu |
| DJJ | 7 | ur-\(\text{ba ša} t\-\text{a} ku-ma ū\(\text{a-an} \-\text{ti} lal-\text{ak} |
| DJJ | 8 | a-na nē-re-bē\(\text{e} \-\text{e} t\-i ša \text{šadi} \(\text{kara} \text{ša}\-\text{tā} \-\text{a-sad} mu-\text{ši-tam} |
| DJJ | 9 | nē-\(\text{ur} \-\text{na} \text{ba} \text{ma a-um-ma a-ter-lā} \text{a} \text{na-lu} |
| DJJ | 10 | dū-\(\text{šī} re-\(\text{šī} \text{ia} a-na \text{\text{ām}2} \text{30} \text{a-ku-rab} |
| DJJ | 11 | a-na \(\text{\(\text{ā} x (x) na} \text{\text{ā}m2} \text{30} \text{a-ku-rab} |
| DJJ | 12 | i\(\text{\(\text{ūn 2} \text{30} \text{a-ku-rab} |
| D | 13 | [\(\text{\(\text{a} i\(\text{\(\text{ūn 2} \text{30} \text{a-ku-rab} |
| D | 14 | [\(\text{\(\text{ūn 2} \text{30} \text{a-ku-rab} |
| D | 15 | [\(\text{\(\text{ūn 2} \text{30} \text{a-ku-rab} |

6 JJ: *mana*

#### Translation

1 For his friend Enkidu Gilgamesh
2 was weeping bitterly as he roamed the wild:
3 'I shall die, and shall I not then be like Enkidu?
4 Sorrow has entered my heart.
5 I became afraid of death, so go roaming the wild,
6 to Utanapishti, son of Ubār-Tutu,
7 I am on the road and travelling swiftly.
8 I arrived one night at the mountain passes,
9 I saw some lions and grew afraid.
10 I lifted my head, praying to Sin,
11 to [. . ., the] light of the gods, my supplications went:
12 "O [Sin and . . .,] keep me safe!"
13 [Gilgamesh] arose, he awoke with a start: it was a dream!
14 [. . . in the] presence of the moon he grew happy to be alive.
15 He took up his axe in his hand,
16 he drew forth [the dirk from] his belt.

1 Or, reading it-či, 'he lay down to sleep'.

---

*THE STANDARD BABYLONIAN EPIC*
Like an arrow he fell among them,
he smote the [lions, he] killed (them), he scattered (them).

Then . . . . . .

He cast off . . . . . .

He drew [two . . . . . .]

the name of the first [was . . . . .]
the name of the second [was . . . . .]

He lifted [his head, praying to Sin,]
to [ . . . , the light of the gods, his supplications went:]
'O [Sin and . . . . . .]

let [ . . . . . .]

How [ . . . . . . ?]

[Sin . . . . . ]

The name of the mountain was Māšu.¹
When [he] arrived at Mount Māšu,
which daily guards the rising [of the sun,—]
their tops* [about] the fabric of the heavens,
their bases* reach down to Hades—
there were scorpion-men guarding its gate,
whose terror was dread and glance was death,
whose radiance was terrifying, enveloping the uplands—
both sunrise and sunset they guard the sun—
Gilgamesh saw them and covered his face² with fear and dread;
he collected his wits and drew near their presence.
The scorpion-man called to his female:
'He who has come to us, flesh of the gods is his body.'
The scorpion-man's female answered him:
'Two-thirds of him are god but a part of him is human.'
The male scorpion-man called out,
saying a word [to King Gilgamesh,] flesh of the gods:
[How did you come here,] a far road?
[How did you get] here, into my presence?
[How did you ford the many rivers], whose crossing is perilous?
[ . . . . ] [let me learn of your . . . ]
[ . . . . ] [where] your [face] is set,
[ . . . . ] [let me] learn [of your journey].’

¹ The name means 'Twin'.
² I.e. the tops of both the twin mountains.
³ Lit., 'their breast'.
⁴ Or, reading i-e-ši, 'his face grew dark'.

The end of col. i is lost, leaving a gap in the text of lines at the most.
Lacuna. When the text resumes Gilgamesh is explaining his mission:

75 "[I am seeking] the [road] of my forefather, Úta-napišti.
76 He who stood in the assembly of the gods, and [found life,]
77 of death and life [he will tell me the secret.]
78 The scorpion-man opened his mouth [to speak,]
79 saying to Gilgamesh:
80 "There was not [ever], O Gilgamesh, [...] like [you,]
81 [no] one ever [...] of the mountain.
82 For twelve double-hours its interior [...]  
83 the darkness is dense and [light is] there none.
84 For the rising of the sun [...]  
85 for the setting of the [sun] [...]  
86 For the setting of the [...]  
87 they sent forth [...]  
88 [...]  
89 and you, how [will you ...]?  
90 Will you go [in ... …?]

Long lacuna. The text resumes towards the end of Gilgamesh’s reply:

125 "Through sorrow [………]  
126 by frost and sunshine [my face is burnt.]
127 Through exhaustion [………]  
128 now you [must …]’
129 The scorpion-man [opened his mouth to speak,]
130 [saying a word] to King Gilgamesh, [flesh of the gods:]
131 ‘Go, Gilgamesh! […]
132 May the mountains of Māšu […]  
133 The mountains and hills […]  
134 in safety may […]  
135 The gate of the mountain […]  
136 [When] Gilgamesh [heard this,]
137 to what [the scorpion-man] had told him […]  
138 he [took] the path of the sun […]  
139 One double-hour* […] […]

* In this passage (ll. 139–69) ‘double-hour’ can also be translated ‘league’.
the darkness was dense, [and light was there none:]

it did not [allow him to see what was behind him.]

Two double-hours [ . . . . . . . . ]

the darkness was dense, [and light was there none:]

it did not [allow him to see what was behind him.]

Three double-hours [ . . . . . . . . ]

[the darkness was dense, and light was there none:]

[ it did not allow him to see what was behind him.]

Four double-hours [ . . . . . . . . ]

[the darkness was dense, and light was there none:]

it did not [allow him to see what was behind him.]

Five double-hours [ . . . . . . . . ]

the darkness was dense, [and light was there none:]

it did not allow [him to see what was behind him.]

When [he reached] six double-hours,

the darkness was dense, [and light was there none:]

it did not allow [him to see what was behind him.]

On reaching seven double-hours [ . . . . . . . ]

the darkness was dense, and [light was there none:]

it did not allow [him to see what was behind him.]

At eight double-hours he was hurrying [like [ . . . ]]

the darkness was dense, and light was [there none:]

it did not allow [him to see what was behind him.]

Nine double-hours [ . . . . . . . . ] the north wind,

[ . . . . . . . . ] his face,

[the darkness was dense, and] light was [there none:]

[it did not allow him to see what was behind him.]

When he reached [ten double-hours,]

[ . . . . . . . . ] was very near.

[At eleven double-hours . . . . a journey] of one double-hour,

[ . . . . . . . . ] he came out before the sun.

[ . . . . . . . . ] there was brilliance:

upon seeing . . . , the trees of the gods, he went straight (up to them).

A carnelian (tree) was in fruit,

hung with bunches of grapes, lovely to behold.

A lapis lazuli (tree) bore foliage,

in full fruit and gorgeous to gaze on.

Short lacuna

[ . . . ] cypress [ . . . . . . . . ]
185 [... ] cedar [... ]
186 its leaf-stems were of papparidū [stone and ... ]
187 Sea coral [ ... ] sāsu-stone,
188 instead of thorn and briar [there grew] an.za.gul.me stone.
189 He touched a carob, [[it was]] abalmu stone,
190 ṣubī stone and haematite [... ]
191 Like [... ] and [... ] the plain,
192 like [... ] turquoise.
193 Of [... ] sea-shell,
194 it had [... ]
195 As Gilgamel [... ] walked about,
196 she lifted up [her head to] watch him.

X 1 Šiduri [was an ale]-wife who lived by the sea-shore.

* Or, reading "šumnu(zi)", "obsidian".
TABLET X

Table of Manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
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<th>Plate</th>
</tr>
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<td>Lines preserved on obverse</td>
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**Nineveh**

K₁  K 3382 + Rm 621
1876 G. Smith, *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, pp. 254–6, 258–9: Tr
(K 3382 only, col. v with K 8564 of R and K 8565 col. ii of V₂)
1884 P. Haupt, *Nimrodpeos* no. 34: C
1930 R. C. Thompson, *Gilgamesh*, pls. 38–43: C

K₂  K 8579
1876 G. Smith, *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 254: Tr
1884 P. Haupt, *Nimrodpeos* no. 37: C
1930 R. C. Thompson, *Gilgamesh*, pl. 40: C

K₃  K 8589+Sm 1681
1876 G. Smith, *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, pp. 253, 260–1: Tr
(K 8589 only, without col. v)
1884 P. Haupt, *Nimrodpeos* no. 33: C (K 8589 only)
1930 R. C. Thompson, *Gilgamesh*, pls. 38, 43: C (K 8589 only)
1965 W. G. Lambert, *CT* 46 no. 33: C (Sm 1681, showing [oin])

i 1–30 (K₁, K₂)
ii 61–111 (K₁)
iii 112–25 (K₂), 131–172 (K₃)
iv 296–322, colophon (K₃)

**Nimrud**

Z  IM 67564 (ND 4381)
1996 J. A. Black, *CYNIV* no. 153: C
i // 63–112 v variant text, see Chapter 7
ii // 196–230 vi // XI 304–287

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<th>Plate</th>
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**Babylon**

b  BM 34160 + 34193 + 35174 + 35348 + 35413 + 35628
1900 P. Jensen, KBV 1, pp. 198–201: TTr (BM 34193 only, from unpublished copies of J. N. Strafaier and F. Kechler). On p. 228 variants from Sp II 726 = BM 35174 are cited from an unpublished copy of Strafaier.
1930 R. C. Thompson, *Gilgamesh*, p. 56, pl. 42: C (BM 34193 only)
1960 D. J. Wiseman, in P. Garelli, *Gilgamesh*, pp. 128–35: C TTTr (BM 34193 + 35413 and BM 35174 + 35628 only)
1965 W. G. Lambert, *CT* 46 no. 30: C
i 19–46 v 260–94
ii 68–109 vi 311–322, colophon

f  Rm 751+BM 34853 + 35546
1960 D. J. Wiseman, in P. Garelli, *Gilgamesh*, pp. 124, 131: CT (BM 35546 only)
1965 W. G. Lambert, *CT* 46 no. 32: C (rev. only, lacking BM 34853)

i 1–17 v 239–61
ii traces of 2 unidentified lines vi 292–322, colophon

**Composite cuneiform texts and editions**

1900 P. Jensen, KBV 1, pp. 212–29: K₁, K₂, K₃ (K 8589 only), b (BM 35174, variants only)
1930 R. C. Thompson, *Gilgamesh*, pp. 55–9: K₁, K₂, K₃ (K 8589 only), b (BM 34193 col. i only)
1997 S. Parpola, *A44 Gilg.*., pp. 49–55, 103–7: all MSS represented except z; BM 34853 of f known only from variants cited by Lambert 1980

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**Tr**
Text

DKf
1 ṣi-du-ri sa-bi-tum šá ina sa-ṭan tam-ū āt-bat
Kf
2 āt-bat-ma [. . .] x [x]
Kf
3 iš-šu-ši kan-nu iš-šu-ši x [. . .]
Kf
4 ku-tu-mi ku-tu-mat-ma x [. . .]
Kf
5 ṣa-tš-im-ta ša-ṭan-gi-ša[m]-ma x [. . .]
Kf
6 maš-ka la-biš pu-[u] ṣi-tu[m x (x) x]
Kf
7 iš-ši ša-tam [. . .] ṣa-ṭan-gi-ša[m]-ma x [. . .]
Kf
8 iš-šu-ši kan-nu iš-šu-ši x [. . .]
Kf
9 a-na a-na a-na a-na ml-ša maš-[š]-la
Kf
10 sa-bi-tum ana ru-qi i-na-i[n] a-ša maš-[š]-la
Kf
11 ul-ša-tum ana la-biš ša-ṭan-gi-ša[m]-ma x [. . .]
Kf
12 Ša-bi-tum ana ru-qi i-na-i[n] a-ša maš-[š]-la
Kf
13 Ša-bi-tum ana ru-qi i-na-i[n] a-ša maš-[š]-la
Kf
14 Ša-bi-tum ana ru-qi i-na-i[n] a-ša maš-[š]-la
Kf
15 Ša-bi-tum ana ru-qi i-na-i[n] a-ša maš-[š]-la
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31 Ša-bi-tum ana ru-qi i-na-i[n] a-ša maš-[š]-la
Kf
32 Ša-bi-tum ana ru-qi i-na-i[n] a-ša maš-[š]-la
Kf
33 Ša-bi-tum ana ru-qi i-na-i[n] a-ša maš-[š]-la

Translation

1 Šiširu was an ale-wife who lived by the sea-shore,
2 there she lived, and [. . .]
3 Potstands she had, [. . .] she had,
4 she was covered with a shawl, and [. . .]
5 Gilgamesh wandered, and [. . .]
6 he was clothed in a pelt, [he was imbued with] menace.
7 He had the flesh of the gods in [his body,]
8 but there was sorrow in [his heart.]
9 His face was like one who had travelled a distant road;
10 the ale-wife was watching him in the distance.
11 Talking to herself she spoke a word,
12 taking counsel in her own mind.
13 'For sure this man is a slayer of wild bulls;
14 whence did he make straight for my gate?'
15 The ale-wife saw him and barred her gate,
16 barred her gate and went up on the roof.
17 But he, Gilgamesh, had (good) hearing [. . .]
18 he lifted his chin and turned towards her.
19 Gilgamesh [spoke] to her, [to the ale]-wife:
20 'Ale-wife, why when you saw [me did you bar] your [gate]?
21 You barred your gate [and went up on the] roof.
22 I shall strike the door, I shall [break the bolt.]
23 [. . .] my [. . .]
24 [. . .] in the wild.'
25 [The ale-wife spoke to him, [to Gilgamesh:
26 [. . .] I barred my gate,
27 [. . .] I went up on [the] roof.
28 [. . .] [. . .] let me learn of [your . . .]
29 [Gilgamesh spoke to her, [to the ale]-wife:
30 [My friend Enkidu and I, . . .]
31 [We it was who joined forces and climbed the mountain] country,
32 [seized the Bull of Heaven and killed the Bull of Heaven,]
33 [destroyed Ḥumbaba, who lived in the] Cedar [Forest,]
The text of the Standard Babylonian Epic is fragmented and difficult to decipher. This section appears to be a continuation of a narrative, possibly describing a battle or a confrontation between two parties. The text includes lines about lions being killed in the mountains, and a reference to Gilgamesh speaking to his wife. The text is a mix ofakkadian and is presented in a linear fashion, indicating it is part of a larger epic work. The annotations and translations provided are attempts to clarify the meaning of the text, but the overall context and meaning are not fully clear due to the fragmented nature of the text.
64 [so on a distant road I roam the] wild.
65 The case of [my friend] Enkidu [was too much for] me to bear, 
66 [so on a distant path] I roam the wild.
67 (For) I, [how could I stay silent]? How could I stay quiet?
68 [My friend, whom I love, has turned] to clay,
69 my friend Enkidu, whom I love, has [turned to] clay.
70 [Shall not I be like] him and also lie down,
71 [never to rise] again, through all eternity?

72 Gilgamesh spoke to her, to the ale-wife:
73 'Now, ale-wife, what is the road to Ûtu-napistī?
74 What is its landmark? Give it to me!
75 Do give me its landmark!
76 If it may be done, I will cross the ocean!
77 if it may not be done, I will roam the wild!'

78 The ale-wife spoke to him, to Gilgamesh:
79 'There never was, O Gilgamesh, a way across,
80 and since the days of old¹ none who can cross the ocean.
81 The one who crosses the ocean is the hero Šamaš:
82 apart from Šamaš, who is there who can cross the ocean?²
83 The crossing is perilous, its way full of hazard,
84 and in between are the Waters of Death, that lie across the passage forward.³
85 So besides, Gilgamesh, (once) you have crossed the ocean,
86 when you reach the Waters of Death, what will you do?
87 O Gilgamesh, there is Ur-šanabi, the boatman of Ûtu-napistī,
88 and the Stone Ones are with him as he steers a cedar in the midst of the forest.⁴
89 Go then, and let him see your face!
90 if [it may be] done, cross with him,
91 if it may not be done, turn around (and go) back!
92 When Gilgamesh heard this,
93 he took up (his) axe in his hand,
94 he drew forth the dirk [from his] belt,
95 he crept up and rushed down on [them].
96 Like an arrow he fell among them,
97 (his) shout booming through the midst of the forest.
98 Ur-šanabi saw the bright star,
99 he took up an axe and rushed [towards] him.
100 But he, Gilgamesh, struck his head [.....] 
101 he seized his arm and [.....] pinned him down.
102 And the Stone Ones would seal the boat,
103 who did not fear the Waters of Death.
104 [.....] the wide ocean,
105 at the water he [.....] he held back.
106 He smashed the Stone Ones, he dropped them into the river,
107 [.....] the boat,
108 and then [..... he sat] down on the bank.
109 [Gilgamesh spoke to him,] to the boatman Ur-šanabi:
110 [.....] you are trembling,
111 [.....] you.
112 [Ur]-šanabi spoke to him, to Gilgamesh:
113 ‘Why are your cheeks hollow, [your face] sunken,
114 your mood wretched, [your features wasted?]
115 (Why) is there sorrow [in your heart,]
116 and [your face like one] who has travelled a distant road?
117 [(Why is it) your face is] burnt [by] frost and sunshine,
118 [and you] roam the wild got up like a lion?’
119 [Gilgamesh] spoke to him, to [the boatman Ur-šanabi]
120 ‘[Why should] my cheeks [not be hollow, my face] not sunken,
121 my [mood not wretched, my features] not wasted?
122 [Should there be] not sorrow [in my heart,]
123 [and my] face [not be like one who has travelled a distant road?]
[Should] not [my face be] burnt [by frost and sunshine,]
[and] should I not [roam the wild got up like a lion?]
[My friend, a mule on the run,]
[donkey of the uplands, panther of the wild,]
[my friend Enkidu, a mule on the run,]
[donkey of the uplands, panther of the wild,]
[we it was who joined forces and climbed the mountain country,]
[seized the Bull of Heaven and killed the Bull of Heaven,]
[destroyed Humbaba, who lived in the Cedar Forest,]
[killed lions] in [the mountain passes,]
[My friend [whom I love so deeply,]
[who with me went through every danger,]
[my friend Enkidu, [whom I love so deeply,]
[who with me went through every danger,]
[the doom of mankind] overtook [him,]
[for six days [and seven nights I wept over him,]
[I did not give him up for burial,]
[until [a maggot fell from his nostril,]
[Then I was afraid ........... ,]
[I grew fearful of death and so roam the wild,]
The case of my [friend was too much for me to bear,]
so on a distant road I [roam the wild,]
The case of my friend Enkidu was too much [for me to bear,]
so on a distant path [I roam the wild,]
[For I], how could I stay [silent? How could I stay quiet?]
My friend, whom I love, [has turned to clay,]
[my friend Enkidu, whom I love, has turned to clay,]
Shall not I be like him and also lie [down,]
[never to rise again, through all eternity?]
Gilgamesh said to him, to Ur-[Sannab, the boatman];
'Now, Ur-sannab, what [is the road to Utanapišti?]
What is its landmark? Give it to me!
Do give me its landmark!
If it may be done, I will cross the ocean!
if it may not be done, [I will roam the wild!']
Ur-šanabi spoke to him, to Gilgamē:

"Your own hands, Gilgamē, have prevented [your crossing."

You have smashed the Stone Ones, you have dropped [them in the river,]

the Stone Ones are smashed and the cedar is not [stripped."

Take up, Gilgamē, the axe in [your] hand, go down to the forest and [cut me three hundred] punting-poles, each five rods long. Trim and furnish (each) with a boss, bring [them to ......]"

When Gilgamē [heard] this, he took up the axe in his hand, he drew [forth the dirk from his belt,]

he went down to the forest and [cut him three hundred] punting-poles, each five rods long.

He trimmed and furnished (each) with a boss, he took [them to ......]"

Gilgamē and Ur-šanabi boarded [the boat,]

they launched the craft and [crewed it] themselves,

By the third day they had travelled a month and a half's journey,

then Ur-šanabi arrived at the Waters of [Death.]

Ur-šanabi [spoke] to him, [to Gilgamē]: '.... Gilgamē, take [the first punting-pole!]

.... do not let your hand be touched by the Waters of Death, (for) you will [lame it!]

Take a second, a third and a fourth punting-pole, Gilgamē!

take a fifth, a sixth and a seventh punting-pole, Gilgamē!

Take an eighth, a ninth and a tenth punting-pole, Gilgamē!

take an eleventh and a twelfth punting-pole, Gilgamē!' At one hundred and twenty double-furlongs Gilgamē ran out of punting-poles, then he, [Ur-šanabi,] undid his clothing.

Gilgamē stripped off [his] garment, out of his arms he made a high yard-arm.

Ču-napīṣti was watching [him] in the distance, talking to himself he [spoke] a word.

He [was taking counsel] in his own mind:

"Why are the boat's [Stone Ones] smashed, and aboard it [one who is not its master?]

He who comes is no man of mine,

but on the right .... [......]

I am looking—he is no [man of] mine,

I am looking—he is no [......]

I am looking[......]"
K₃ 194 [x x x ] a-ši [ . . . . ]
K₃ 195 [x x x ] x [ . . . . ]

The remainder of col. iv, about 25 lines of tablet, is missing, leaving a gap of at least that in the text. Much of it is filled by Assyrian MS z col. iii, perhaps with some overlap. Up to l. 211 the line divisions are provisional, for they do not necessarily coincide with the beginnings and ends of lines on MS z.

194 [. . . ] me [ . . . . ]

Short lacuna

196 ‘No [man] of mine [ . . . . ]
197 caused to roam [ . . . . ]
198 The boatman [ . . . . ]
199 the man that I am [watching is not . . . The man]
200 that I am watching is not [ . . . . ]
201 maybe the wilderness [ . . . . ]
202 [ . . . . ]
203 the pine [ . . . . ]
204 Gilgamesh drew [near] to the quay [ . . . ]
205 he sent down [ . . . . ]
206 and he, he came up and be [ . . . . ]

207 Gilgamesh said to him, [to Utanapishtim]
208 ‘[Long] live Utanapishtim, son of Ubar—[Tutu . . . ]!
209 . . . after the Deluge which for [ . . . ]
210 the Deluge, what for . . . [ . . . ]
211 . . . [ . . . ]

212 Utanapishtim spoke to him, to Gilgamesh
213 ‘[Why are] your cheeks [hollow, your face] sunken,
214 [your mood] wretched, [your features] wasted?
215 (Why) is there sorrow in [your heart,]
216 [and your face like] one who has travelled a distant road?
217 [(Why is it) your face is burnt] by frost and sunshine,
218 and [you roam the wild] got up like a lion?’

219 Gilgamesh [spoke] to him, to Utanapishtim:
220 ‘Why should [my cheeks be not hollow, [my face not sunken,]
221 my mood not wretched, my features not wasted?
222 Should there not be sorrow [in] my heart,
223 and [my face] not be like one who has travelled a distant road?
224 [Should not] my face be [burnt] by frost and sunshine,
225 and [should I] roam the wild got up like a lion?’

Gilgamesh, a mule on the run, [donkey of the uplands], panther of the wild,
227 [my friend Enkidu,] a mule on the run, [donkey of the uplands, panther of the wild:]

226 My friend, a mule on the run, [donkey of the uplands], panther of the wild,
228 [we it was] who joined forces [and] climbed the mountain country,
229 [seized] the Bull of Heaven [and] killed the Bull of Heaven,
230 destroyed [Humbaba, who] lived [in the] Cedar Forest,
231 killed lions [in the mountain passers.]
232 [My friend, whom I love so deeply,]
233 [who with me went through] every danger,
234 [my friend Enkidu, whom I love so deeply,]
235 [with whom] went through every danger;
236 [the doom of mankind] overtook him,
237 [for six days and seven nights] I wept over him.
238 [If did not give him up for] burial,
239 [until a maggot fell from] his [nose tip.]
240 [Then I was afraid . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .]
241 I grew [fearful] of death, [and so roaming the] wild.
242 The case of [my friend was too much] for me [to bear],
243 so on a distant road [I roam the] wild.
244 The case of my friend Enkidu [not too much] for me to bear,
245 so on a distant path [I roam the wild.]
246 [For I,] how could I stay silent? How could I stay quiet?
247 My friend, whom I love, has turned to clay,
248 my friend Enkidu, [whom I love, has turned to clay.]
249 [Shall] not I be like him and also lie down,
250 [never to rise again, through all [eternity]?]

Gilgamesh said to him, to Ŭtu-napišti:
250 'I thought, "I will go and find Ŭtu-napišti the Far-Away, of whom people talk,
251 again I went journeying through all the lands.
252 I passed time and again over arduous mountains,
253 and I crossed time and again all the seas.
254 My face did not have enough of sweet sleep, a
255 I scourged myself by going sleepless.
256 I kept filling my sinews with pain;
257 what have I achieved by my toil? 10
258 I had not reached as far as the ale-wife and my clothing was worn out.
259 [I killed] bear, hyena, lion, panther, cheetah,
deer, ibex, the animals and game of the wild,

to eat their meat and lay their pelts.

May they bar the gate of sorrow,

may [they seal its doorway] with bitumen and asphalt!

Because of me [they] shall not [...], the dancing,

because of [it], happy and carefree, they will [...].

Üta-napišti spoke to him, to [Gilgamesš]

"Why, Gilgamesš, do you constantly [chase] sorrow?

You, who are [built] from the flesh of gods and men,

whom they [made] like your father and your mother!

Did [you] ever, Gilgamesš, [...] to the fool?

They placed a throne in the assembly and [told you], "Sūš".

What is given to the fool is [beer] sludge instead of [...] ghee,

[he chews] bran and grit instead of [...].

He is clad in a maštana-garment, instead of [...]

instead of a belt, 13 a cord of [...]

Because he has no advisors [...]

(because) he has no words of counsel [...]

have thought for him, Gilgamesš, [...]

[...] their master, as many as [...]

[...]

[...] the moon and the gods [of the night; [...]

[At] night the moon travels [......]

the gods stay awake and [......]

Wakeful, unsleeping, [.....]

from olden times it is established [......]

Now consider [......]

your aid [.....]

If, Gilgamesš, the temples of the gods [...] provisioner,

the temples of the goddesses [.....]

They [....], the gods [.....]

for [.....] he made [.....]

[.....] for a gift he [.....]

[.....] they will throw down [.....]

Short lacuna?

11. So MS K; MS b omits "because of''

12. So MS K; MS b: 'and him, instead of a belt, [...]'
The text of MS b breaks off here. About 17 lines of tablet are missing between the end of MS K col. v at l. 277 and its resumption in col. vi, into which must be fitted MS b v 19'–35' and MS f v 1'–4'. Since MS K is now less constrained for space it is unlikely to have doubled up many lines of poetry, and it is probable that we must assume there to be an overlap between the fragmentary end of MS b col. v and the equally poorly preserved first extant lines of MS f col. vi.

When the text resumes Ūtu-napišti is still speaking:

293' [. . . . . . .] his heart,

294' [. . . . . . . . . . .] provisioner,

295' [. . . . . . . . . . .] mankind,

296' [. . . . . . . . . . .] they took to his destiny.

297' [Yo, you kept toiling sleepless (and) what did you get?]

298' You are exhausting [yourself with] ceaseless toil,

299' you are filling your sinews with pain,

300' bringing nearer the end of your life.

301' Man is one whose progeny is snapped off like a reed in the canebrake:

302' the comely young man, the pretty young woman,

303' all [too soon in] their very [prime] death abducts (them).

304' No one sees death,

305' no one sees the face [of death],

306' no one [hears] the voice of death:

307' [yet] savage death is the one who hacks man down.

308' At some time we build a household,

309' at some time we start a family,

310' at some time the brothers divide,

311' at some time feuds arise in the land.

312' At some time the river rose (and) brought the flood,

313' the mayfly floating on the river.

314' Its countenance was gazing on the face of the sun,

315' then a sudden nothing was there!

316' The abducted and the dead, how alike they are!

317' They cannot draw the picture of death.

318' They do not see the man in the land.17

319' The Anunnaki, the great gods, were in assembly,
320  Mammišum, who creates destiny, made a decree with them.\footnote{So MS K; MSS bf read: "Mammišum, who creates (MS b: his) destiny, made a decree."}

321  death and life they\footnote{So MS K; MS b: "she."} did establish,

322  the day of death they did not reveal.\footnote{So MS K; MSS bf append a scribal note: "Alternatively "they did (not) make known."".}

XI 1  Gilgamesh spoke to him, to Ŭta-napišti the Far-Away.
### TABLET XI

#### Table of Manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Museum number</th>
<th>Bibliography of cuneiform texts and previous editions</th>
<th>Lines preserved on obverse</th>
<th>Lines preserved on reverse</th>
<th>Plate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>118–23</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K 2252 + 2602 + 3321 + 4486 + Sm 1881</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1891 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrudoplos no. 56</em> and p. 124, bottom</td>
<td>(unnumbered joining fragment): C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i 1–19, 54–57</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>ii 58–63, 70–3, 80–5, 92–108</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii 113–27, 129–164</td>
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<td>K 3375</td>
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<td>124–7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1891 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrudoplos no. 57</em>: C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i 1–41 (W₁)</td>
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<td>ii 57–101 (W₁)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>iii 143–62 (W₂,W₃), 165–171 (W₃)</td>
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<td>Rm 616</td>
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<td>124</td>
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<td>1891 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrudoplos no. 59</em>: C</td>
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<td>i 1–23 (J₁)</td>
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<td>ii 56–107 (J₁)</td>
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<td>iii 110–166 (J₁)</td>
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<td>T₁ 7752 + 81-2-4, 245 + 296 + 460</td>
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<td>128–30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1891 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrudoplos nos. 64 (81-2-4, 296), 67 (K 7752)</em>: C</td>
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<td>1893 P. Haupt, 'On a modern reproduction of the eleventh tablet of the Babylonian Nimrud Epic and a new fragment of the Chaldean account of the Deluge', <em>JPOS</em> April 1893, p. xi (81-2-4, 460): C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T₂ Sm 2131 + 2196 + Rm II 383 + 390 + 82-5-22, 316</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>128, 129</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>1883 P. Haupt, <em>Die akkadische Sprache</em>, p. vii (Rm II 383 and 390 only): C</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1891 P. Haupt, <em>Nimrudoplos nos. 61 (Rm II 390)</em>, 62 (Rm II 383), 63 (82-5-22, 316), 68 (Sm 2196): C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i 29–64 (T₁)</td>
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<td>ii 65–105 (T₁), 108–123 (T₁)</td>
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<td>iii 124–50 (T₁)</td>
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<td>1996 J. A. Black, CTN IV no. 153: C</td>
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<td>i // X 63–112</td>
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<td>ii // X 196–230</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text

1875  G. Smith, *IV R* 1, pls. 50–1: as Smith 1874, but with less of C (lacking K 2252, 4486, Sm 1881 and possibly some further unnumbered fragments)

1876  G. Smith, *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, pp. 263–78: revision of Smith 1874

1885  F. Delitzsch, *AL* 1, pp. 101–9: C (as Smith 1874), J 1, J 2, T 1 (K 7752 only), T 2 (lacking Sm 2131), W (lacking K 8569), W 6, W 8

1891  P. Haupt, *Nimrodpepe* no. 70: as Delitzsch 1885, with the addition of the unnumbered fragment of C col. v and 81–2, 496 (part of T 1)

1891  T. G. Pinches, *IV R* 1, pls. 43–4: as Haupt 1891

1900  P. Jensen, *KBY* 1, pp. 228–55: as Haupt 1891

1922  A. T. Clay, *YORV* 3, pp. 72–81: as Haupt 1891, ll. 1–205 only

1930  R. C. Thompson, *Gilgameš*, pp. 60–7, pls. 44–54: C, J 1, J 2, T 1, T 2, W (lacking K 8569), W 6, W 8, (K 16024)

1953  T. Bauer, *Akkadische Lesestücke* I, pp. 38–45: Bauer’s autograph version of Thompson’s cuneiform text, ll. 1–47, 56–76, 80–296, 300–1 only


Translation

1 Gilgameš spoke to him, to Utana-papišti the Far-Away:

2 ‘As I look at you, Utana-papišti,

3 your form is not different, you are just like me,

4 you are not different at all, you are just like me.

5 I was fully intent on doing battle with you,

6 [hand] in your presence my hand is stayed. 1

7 How was it you attended the gods’ assembly, and found life?

8 Utana-papišti spoke to him, to Gilgameš

9 ‘I will disclose to you, Gilgameš, a secret matter,

10 and I will tell you the mystery of the gods.

11 The city of Šuruppak—a city you yourself know,

1 Lit. ‘my arm is cast down’.
the city that is situated on the banks of the Euphrates—

that city was old and the gods were within it,

(when) the great gods decided to cause the Deluge.

Their father Anu took the oath,

counselors, the hero Enlil;

their chamberlain, Ninurta,

their inspector of waterways, Ennugi.

With them the Prince Ea was under oath likewise,

(but) repeated their words to a reed fence:

"Reed fence, reed fence! Brick wall, brick wall!

Listen, O reed fence! Pay heed, O brick wall!

O man of Suruppak, son of Ubir-Tutu,

demolish the house, build a boat!

Abandon riches and seek survival!

Spurn property and save life!

Put on board the boat the seed of all living creatures!

The boat that you are going to build,

her dimensions shall all correspond:

her breadth and length shall be the same,

cover her with a roof, like the Apû.

I understood and spoke to Ea, my master:

"I hereby concur, my master, with what you told me thus.

I have paid attention; I shall do it.

How should I answer the city, the crowd and elders?"

Ea opened his mouth to speak,

saying to me, his servant:

"Then also you will say to them as follows:

For sure Enlil has conceived a hatred of me!

I cannot dwell in your city!

I cannot tread [on] Enlil's ground!

[If I shall] go down to the Apû, to live with Ea, my master;

he will rain down upon you plenty!"

[An abundance] of birds, a riddle of fishes!

[...] riches (at) harvest-time!

Corrupt, gupsu or gûllû, 'sheriff'.

Here and in li 46–7 the verb can also mean 'he will see that you are provided with'.
In the morning he will rain down on you bread-cakes,
in the evening, a torrent of wheat.\(^*\)

At the very first light of dawn,
the population began assembling at Atra-šašu's gate.
The carpenter was carrying [his] axe,
the reed-worker was carrying [his] stone,
[... was carrying his] agášiku axe.
The young men were [...].
The rich man was carrying bitumen,
the pauper brought the [...] tackle.
On the fifth day I set in place her [outer] surface:
one "acre" was her area, ten rods each of her sides stood high,
ten rods each, the edges of her top were equal.
I set in place her body, I drew up her design:
I gave her six decks,
I divided her into seven parts,
I divided her interior into nine,
I struck the water pegs into her belly.
I found a punting-pole and put the tackle in place.
Three\(^*\) times a myriad\(^*\) (buckets) of bitumen I poured into the furnace,
three times a myriad of asphalt [...].
three times a myriad was the oil that the workforce of porters was fetching:
apart from the myriad of oil that libation consumed,
there were two myriads of oil [that] the shipwright stowed away.
For the workers I butchered oxen,
every day I slaughtered sheep.
Beer, ale, oil and wine
I gave my workforce [to drink], like the waters of a very river!\(^*\)

They were celebrating as on the feast-days of the New-Year itself!
At sun-[rise to] the oiling I set my hand;
[before] sundown the boat was fast.
Then, the man who sealed the boat, the shipwright, Puzur Eanna, said:

"Samsi had set me a deadline—

In the evening he will rain down bread-cakes.

The calm of the storm, God pleased across the sky,

setting the land aglow with their brilliance.

The Animals bore torches aloft,

all that was bright was turned into gloom.

Like an ox they trumped the land to be smashed flat near by.

The weather was lightning to behold.

I went into the boat and sealed my match.

In the evening he will rain down bread-cakes.

To the man who sealed the boat, the shipwright, Puzur Eanna,

I gave the place with all its goods.

They loaded the boat wherever they found gold. I loaded aboard whatever I found. I loaded it aboard in whatever boat I found, giving things each and every one.

At my end and at my end, the boat:

I sent abroad animals of the wild creatures of the wild persons of every skill and craft.
136 The flood plain was level like a roof.
137 I opened a vent and sunlight fell on the side of my face. 29
138 I fell to my knees 30 and sat there weeping,
139 the tears streaming down the side of my face. 29
140 I scanned the shores, the edge of the sea, 31
141 in fourteen 32 places emerged a landmass.
142 On Mount Nimmus the boat ran aground,
143 Mount Nimmus held the boat fast and did not let it move.
144 One day, a second day, Mount Nimmus held the boat fast and did not let it move,
145 a third day, a fourth day, Mount Nimmus held the boat fast and did not let it move,
146 a fifth, a sixth, 33 Mount Nimmus held the boat fast and did not let it move.
147 When the seventh day arrived —
148 I brought out a dove, setting it free:
149 off went the dove ... 34
150 No perch was available for it and it came back to [me.]
151 I brought out a swallow, setting it free:
152 off went the swallow ... 35
153 No perch was available for it and it came back to me.
154 I brought out a raven, setting it free:
155 off went the raven and it saw the waters receding.
156 It was, (buuuuu, oo doo doo, down) it did not come back to me.
157 I brought out an offering and sacrificed to the four corners of the earth, 36
158 I strewed incense on the peak 37 of the mountain.
159 Seven flasks and seven I set in position,
160 below them I heaped up (sweet) reed, cedar and myrtle.
161 The gods smelled the savour,
162 the gods smelled the sweet savour,
163 the gods gathered like flies around the sacrificer.
164 As soon as Bēlet-ili arrived,
she lifted aloft the great flies that Anu had made when he wooed (her):  
166 "O gods, let these be lapis lazuli (beads) around my neck,  
167 so that I remember these days and never forget them!  
Let the gods come to the incense,  
168 (but) may Enlil not come to the incense,  
169 because he lacked counsel and caused the Deluge,  
and delivered my people into destruction."  
170 As soon as Enlil arrived,  
171 Enlil saw the great and very angry.  
172 He was filled with rage against the Igigi gods:  
"[From] where escaped (this) living creature?"  
173 "No man should survive the destruction!"

174 Ninurta opened his mouth to speak,  
175 saying to the hero Enlil:  
176 "Who, if not Ea, can accomplish (such) things?  
177 For Ea alone knows (how to do) all tasks."

178 Ea opened his mouth to speak,  
179 saying to the hero Enlil:  
180 "You, the sage of the gods, the hero,  
181 how could you lack counsel and cause the deluge?  
182 On him who commits a sin," inflict his crime!  
183 on him who does wrong, inflict [his] wrong-doing!  
184 Slack off, lest it be snapped! Pull taut, lest it become [slack!]

185 Instead of the Deluge you caused,  
186 a lion could arise to diminish the people!  
187 Instead of the Deluge you caused,  
188 a wolf could arise to diminish the people!  
189 Instead of the Deluge you caused,  
190 a famine could happen to slaughter the land!  
191 Instead of the Deluge you caused,
The Standard Babylonian Epic

Edition of the Text: Tablet XI

195 Erra could arise to slaughter the land;43
196 I did not myself disclose the great gods' secret;
197 I let Atra-šaši see a dream and so he heard the gods' secret.
198 And now, consider what is to be done with him."
199 Emili44 came up into the boat,
200 he took hold of my hands and brought me out.
201 He brought out my woman, he made her kneel at my side,
202 he touched our foreheads, standing between us to bless us:
203 "In the past Utanapishi was (one of) mankind,
204 but now Utanapishi and his woman shall be like us gods!
205 Utanapishi shall dwell far away, at the mouth of the rivers!"
206 They took me and settled me far away, at the mouth of the rivers.
207 But now, who will bring the gods to assembly for you,
208 so you can find the life you search for?
209 Come, for six days and seven nights do not sleep!"  
210 As soon as he sat down on his haunches,
211 sleep was wasting45 over him like a fog.
212 Utanapishi spoke to her, to his wife:
213 "See the fellow who demanded life!"
214 Sleep is wasting45 over him like a fog.
215 His wife spoke to him, to Utanapishi the Far-Away:
216 "Touch him, let the man awake!"
217 (By) the road he came let him go back in safety,
218 (by) the gate he came out let him return to his land!"
219 Utanapishi spoke to her, to his wife:
220 "Being deceitful, mankind will deceive you.
221 Go, bake his daily rounds of bread, line them up by his head,
222 and mark on the wall the days that he slept.
223 She baked his daily rounds of bread, she lined them up by his head,
224 and on the wall noted for the days that he slept.
225 His first round of bread was dried up,
226 the second was leathery, the third was soggy;
227 his fourth flour-cake had turned white,
228 the fifth had produced a (mouldy) stain;
229 the sixth was fresh-baked,

195 J: milli(u) and biliš 196 C: ana-ku ul el[p- 198 C: mi-lik-f] 198-9 J, in one line
199 b: *ka-sarru(u)gal C: 'a-na 200 b: ut-te-la-a[n-ni 204 C: hi-i 206 C: pi-i

43 See MS C, MS J: 'the people'.
44 See MS J, MS B, corruptly: 'King Ea'.
45 Lit. 'breathing'.
230  the seventh was on the coals: he touched him and the man awoke.

231 Gilgamesh spoke to him, to Ŭta-napišti the Far-Away:

232 ‘No sooner than sleep spilled over me,

233 than forthwith you touched me and roused me’

234 Ŭta-napišti [spoke to him,] to Gilgamesh:

235 Come, Gilgamesh, count me your rounds of bread,

236 and may [the time that you slept] be made known to you.

238 Your [first] round of bread [was dried up,]

239 the second was leathery, the third was soggy;

240 your fourth flour-cake had turned white,

241 the fifth had produced a (mouldly) stain, the sixth was fresh-baked;

241 [the seventh was on] the coals, and then you awoke.’

242 Gilgamesh spoke to him, to Ŭta-napišti the Far-Away:

243 ‘How should I go on, Ŭta-napišti? Where should I go?

244 The Thief has taken hold of my [flesh,]

245 In my bed-chamber Death abides,

246 and wherever I might turn [my face], there too will be Death.’

247 Ŭta-napišti spoke to [him,] to the boatman Ur-šanabi:

248 ‘Ur-šanabi, may the quay reject you, may the ferry scorn you!

249 You who used to walk on its shore, suffer absence from it!

250 The man that you led here,’

251 whose body is tussled with matted hair,

252 the beauty of whose flesh the hides have ruined,

253 take him, Ur-šanabi, get him to the washrub,

254 let him wash his matted hair as clean as can be!

255 Let him cast off his hides and the sea carry them away (them away)!

256 Soak his body so fair!

257 Let the kerschief of his head be renewed!

* So MSS CTW; MS J: ‘and then I touched you’.

* Lit. ‘ahead of whom you came’.

* So MSS CW; MS J: ‘let his body so fair be soaked’.

* So MSS CTb; MS W: ‘kerschief’. This is a cloth worn on the head, especially when travelling. Modern Iraqis call it a chaqiyah.
Let him be clad in a royal robe, the attire befitting his dignity!

Until he goes (home) to his city,

until he arrives at (the end of) his road,

let the robe show no stain but stay brand new!

Ur-šanabi took him and got him to the washtub.

He washed his matted hair as clean as can be,

He cast off his hides [and] the sea carried them away.

His body so fair was soaked,

the [kerchief of] his head was renewed,

he was clad in a royal robe, the attire befitting his dignity.

'Until he goes (home) [to his city,]

until he arrives at (the end of) his road,

let [the robe] show no stain but stay brand new!

Gilgamesh and Ur-šanabi boarded the boat,

they launched the [craft] they crewed it themselves.

His wife spoke to him, to Šedu-napišṭi the Far-Away:

'Gilgamesh came here, toiled, exercised himself,

what have you given him as he goes back to his land?'

And he, Gilgamesh, raised the punting-pole,

he brought the boat close to the shore.

Ur-napišṭi [spoke] to him, to Gilgamesh:

'You came here, Gilgamesh; toiled, exercised yourself,

what have I given you as you go back to your land?

I will disclose, Gilgamesh, a secret matter,

and [I will] tell you a mystery of [the gods,]

It is a plant, its [appearance] is like box-thorn,

its thorn is like the dog-rose's, it will [prick your hands.]

If you can gain possession of that plant,

[. . . . . . . . . . ]

When Gilgamesh heard this,

he opened a [channel . . . . . .]

Heavy stones he tied [on his feet,]

258 W; te-di-ga T; ša 258–9 C in one line 258–60 B in one line, om. either 259 or 260? 259 J; aṣaši(maši(kur)ša) 259–60 J; 260 W; a-na 260–1 C in one line 261 j; ta-a W; e-de-ta-a 262 W; a-na 262–3 B in one line 263 T; ma-le-šu C; 264–5 265 C; ta-a-ša W; ta-a-šu-ša C; 265–6 W, in one line 266 (or 267?) B; šu 266–7 C, in one line 266–8 B in one line, probably om. 267 267–8 W, in one line 268–9 C, in one line 268–70 J, om. 269 C om. a-di 269–70 W, B in one line 271–2 W, in one line 272 B; šu-šu 273 B; i-ṣaš-kal-ka-ra 275 W; mi-na 276 W; uš 276–7 W, in one line 278 W; te-di-ga anša 281–2 C in one line 285–6, 287–8 C in one line

50 So MSW; MSS CT; 'robes'.
51 So MSW CW; MSJ; 'homeland'.
52 So MSS CB; MSJ; 'let the robe show no stain, let it stay brand new!'
53 MSJ omits the three repeated lines, 268–70.
they dragged him down to the Apsû [. . .]
He, he took the plant and pulled [it up . . .]
he cut loose the heavy stones [from his feet.]
The sea cast him up on the shore.

Gilgamesh spoke to him, to Ur-šānabi the boatman:

"Ur-šānabi, this plant is the "plant of heartbeat", by which means a man can recapture his virility.

I will take it to Uruk the Sheepfold,
I will feed some to an old man and put the plant to the test."

Its (or his) name will be "The Old Man Has Grown Young",!

I will eat some myself and go back to how I was in my youth!

At twenty leagues they broke bread,
at thirty leagues they pitched camp.

Gilgamesh found a pool whose water was cool,
he went down into it to bathe in the water.
A snake smelled the fragrance of the plant,
[slently] it came up and bore the plant off;
as it turned away it sloughed a skin.

Then Gilgamesh sat down weeping,
the tears streaming down the side of his face.

[. . .] [He spoke] to Ur-šānabi the boatman:
[For whom] of my (kind), Ur-šānabi, did my arms grow exhausted,
for whom of my (kind) ran dry the blood of my heart?
Not for myself did I establish a bounty,
[for] the "Lion of the Earth" I have done a favour.
Now for twenty leagues the tide has risen
When I opened the channel I abandoned the tools:
what thing would I find that was placed (to serve) for my landmark?
I had only turned away, and left the boat on the shore.
At twenty leagues they broke bread,

at thirty leagues they pitched camp.

They arrived in Uruk the Sheepfold.

Gilgameš spoke to him, to Ur-šanabi:

'Go up, Ur-šanabi, on to the wall of Uruk and walk around,

survey the foundation platform, inspect the brickwork!

(See) if its brickwork is not kiln-fired brick,

and if the Seven Sages did not lay its foundations!

One šar is city, one šar date-grove, one šar is clay-pit, half a šar the temple of Istar:

three šar and a half (is) Uruk, (its) measurement.'

"Today, had I only left the ball in the carpenter's workshop!"
# Table XII
## Table of Manuscripts

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## Assyria

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## Composite cuneiform texts and editions

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Text

CNW₁ 1 u-a ma pu-uk-ku ina bi[t(ê)₅] naggârî(nagar) lu-t e-z[iš]\n
N 2 [aššak na-qa-ra ša ki-i um-ni]\³ ıa-li₃-ti-ša lu-šu₃ [e-zib] \n
NHH 3 m[aššat(dumu.munu’mus) bna-ga-ri ša ki-i a₃ ıa]-ša₃-ti-ša lu-[u uši₃] \n
NHHa₃ 4 ūma(u₃) pu-uk-ku ina erēṣti(ki)₅₂ im₃₅ q[u-tan-ni (ma)] \n
NHHa₄ 5 mi-šk-ke a-na erēṣti(ki)₅₂ [um-qu-tan-ni (ma)] \n
Na 6 [ê]n-ki-di₃ ¿šš-gim-ma₃ [i-pal-šu] \n
NHHa₅ 7 be-li mi-na (a₄) tab-[k]₅ ši-ba-ka [ke-mun] \n
NHHa₆ 8 ūma(u₃) pu-uk-ku ina-šu₂ erēṣti(ki)₅₂ ana-šu₂ [e-ši₄] \n
G₂NHHa₉ 9 mi-šk-ke e-šu₂ erēṣti(ki)₅₂ ana-šu₂ [e-ši₄] \n
G₂NHHa₁₀ 10 ¿šš-gim-ma₃ [en-ki-di] [i-pal-šu] \n
G₂NHHa₁₁ 11 sum-ma a-na erēṣti(ki)₅₂ [sur-rad] \n
G₂NHHa₁₂ 12 a-na a-si-ir-ti₃ [iš] [lu-ta-lad-da-ad] \n
G₂Na₁₃ 13 šu-bal-a za-ka-a [la tab-bal-biš] \n
G₂N₁₄ 14 ki-ma ū-ba-ra-ta-ma ū₃-ad-[šu] [u-ka] \n
G₂N₁₅ 15 ša-man pu-šu₁₃ ra-a₃-ba la tap-pa₃-ti₃ [iš] \n
G₂N₁₆ 16 a-na i-ri₃-[ši₃] [i₃]-pa₂₂-[šu₂₂]-ru-ka \n
G₂N₁₇ 17 til-pa₃-na a-na erēṣti(ki)₅₂ la ta-na₃-suk \n
G₂N₁₈ 18 ša-i₃ na-ta-pa₃-ma ma₃-su₂ [i₃]-lam-mu₃ [ka] \n
G₂N₁₉ 19 ¿šš-bi₃-ta a-na qad₃₃-ti₃ [ka] la ta-na₃-si₃ \n
G₂N₂₀ 20 e-[šem]-ma i-ar₃-[šu₂₂]-ru₂ [ka] \n
G₂N₂₁ 21 le-ši₃ na šak₃-[šu₂₂]-ma₃ [la] ta-šen-ni \n
G₂N₂₂ 22 ri₃-[šem]-ma ina erēṣti(ki)₅₂ la ta-lak-kan \n
G₂N₂₃ 23 aš₃-[šem]-ka ša ta-ram-mu ma₂₂ [la-na₃-[ši₃]] \n
G₂N₂₄ 24 aš₃-[šem]-ka ša ta-zu₂₂ [la ta-ma₃]-[ši₃] \n
G₂N₂₅ 25 ma₂₂-[šem]-ka ša ta-ru₃ [la ta-na₃]-[šu₂₂] \n
G₂N₂₆ 26 ma₂₂-[šem]-ka ša ta-zu₂₂ [la ta-ma₃]-[ši₃] \n
G₂N₂₇ 27 ta-[šu₂₂]-zi₃-im₂₃-tu₂₂ erēṣti(ki)₅₂ [i₃]-[šu₂₂]-ab₂₃-[šu₂₂]-ka \n
G₂N₂₈ 28 ša [šal₃]-lat₃ [ša [šal₃]-lat₃ um-mu₃ min-a₃-[šu₂₂] ša [šal₃]-lat₃ \n
G₂N₂₉ 29 bu₂₂-da₂₂-[šu₂₂]-al₃-[šu₂₂]-s-a₃-[šu₂₂]-mu₃ ḫu₂₂-[šu₂₂]-ma₂₂ \n
G₂N₃₀ 30 i-na-sa ḵk-šu₂₂-[šu₂₂]-ma₃ [ka] ša₃-[šu₂₂]-at \n
G₂Q₃ 31 [ê-šem]-du₃ a-na erēṣti(ki)₅₂ [ur-rad] \n
G₂Q₄ 32 [a-na a-si-ir-ti₃ ¿šš-gim-ma₃] [šu₂₃]-šu₂₃-su₂₂ \n
G₂U₃_Q₃ 33 [u₂₂]-ba₂₂-[šem]-a₃ [a₃]-či₂₂ \n
G₂U₂_Q₃ 34 ki-[šu₂₂]-bi₃-[šu₂₂]-ma₃ [šu₂₂]-šu₂₂-[šu₂₂]-ku \n
Translation

1 ‘Today, had I only left the ball in the carpenter’s workshop!  
2 [O carpenter’s wife who is like the mother] who bore me! Had I only [left it]  
3 O [carpenter’s daughter who is like my] little sister! Had [I only left it]  
4 Today [the] ball fell down to the Netherworld,  
5 my mallet fell [down] to the Netherworld!’  
6 Enkidu [answered] Gilgameš.\²  
7 ‘My lord, why did you weep, your heart being vexed?  
8 Today I myself shall [bring you] the ball up from the Netherworld,  
9 I myself shall [bring you] your² mallet up from the Netherworld!’  
10 Gilgameš [answered] Enkidu:  
11 ‘If [you are going to descend] to the Netherworld,  
12 [you should pay heed to] my instructions!  
13 [You must not dress in] a clean garment,  
14 they will identify you as a stranger!  
15 You must not anoint yourself with sweet oil from the flask,  
16 at the slightest touch they will gather around you!  
17 You must not hurl a throwstick at the Netherworld,  
18 those struck by the throwstick will surround you!  
19 You must not carry a staff in your hand,  
20 the shades will tremble before you!  
21 You must not wear sandals on your feet,  
22 you must not make a noise in the Netherworld!  
23 You must not kiss the wife you love,  
24 you must not strike the wife you hate,  
25 you must not kiss the son you love,  
26 you must not strike the son you hate,  
27 the outcry of the Netherworld will seize you!  
28 The one who lies, the one who lies, the mother of Ninazu who lies,  
29 her gleaming shoulders are not draped in a garment,  
30 her breast, uncovered, (is) like a jar of stone.’  
31 [Enkidu,] descending [to the Netherworld,]  
32 paid no heed [to the instructions of Gilgameš]  
33 he dressed himself in [a clean garment,]  
34 they identified him as a stranger.

¹ MS HH omits the entire line.  
² Table: ‘my’.
35 He anointed himself with sweet oil from the flask,
36 at the smell [of it] they gathered around him.
37 He hurled a throwstick at [the Netherworld] and
38 the shades trembled,³
39 those [struck] by the throwstick surrounded him.
40 He carried a staff in [his] hand and
41 [the shades] trembled.⁴
42 [He wore] sandals on [his feet],
43 [He made] a noise in [the Netherworld],
44 [He kissed] the wife he hated,
45 he [kissed the] son he loved,
46 he [struck the] son he hated,
47 the outcry of the Netherworld seized him!
48 The one who lies, the one who lies, the mother of Ninazu who lies,
49 her gleaming shoulders were not draped in a garment,
50 her breast, uncovered, (was) like a flask of stone.
51 Then Enkidu (did not come up) from the Netherworld to the (world) above.
52 Namtar [did not] seize him, Asakku did not seize him, the Netherworld [seized] him!
53 The pitiless sheriff [of Nergal] did not seize him, the Netherworld [seized] him!
54 He did not fall where men [do battle], the Netherworld seized him!
55 Then [the] king, son of Ninsun, weeping for his servant, Enkidu,
56 went off alone to Ekur, the house of Enlil:
57 'O Father [Enlil], today the ball fell into the Netherworld,
58 my mallet fell into the Netherworld!
59 Enkidu, who [went down] to bring [them up, the Netherworld seized him!]
60 Namtar did not seize him, Asakku did not seize him, the Netherworld seized him!
61 The pitiless sheriff of Nergal did not seize him, the Netherworld seized him!
62 He did not fall where men do battle, the Netherworld seized him!
63 Father Enlil answered him not a word.
64 He went off [alone] to Ur, the house of Sin:
65 'O Father Sin, today the ball fell into the Netherworld,
66 my mallet fell into the Netherworld!
67 Enkidu, who [went down] to bring [them up], the Netherworld seized him!
68 Namtar did not seize him, Asakku did not seize him, the Netherworld seized him!
69 The pitiless sheriff of Nergal [did not seize] him, the Netherworld seized him!

³ MS q omits the entire line.
⁴ So MS G; MS q probably: 'were trembling'.

He did not fall where men do battle, the Netherworld seized him!

[He went off (alone)] to [Enkidu, the house of Ea]

'O [Father Ea, today the ball fell into the Netherworld,]

my mallet [fell into the Netherworld,]

Enkidu, [who went down to bring them up, the Netherworld seized him!]

Namtar did not [seize him, Assakku did not seize him, the Netherworld seized him!]

The pitiless sheriff of Nergal [did not seize him, the Netherworld seized him!]

[He did not fall] where men do battle, [the Netherworld seized him!]

Father Ea [helped him] in [this matter,]

[he spoke] to Young Hero Šamaš,

'O Young Hero Šamaš, [...] son of Ningal,

perhaps [you can open] a chink [in the Netherworld,]

[you can bring] the shade of Enkidu [up from the Netherworld like a phantom!]

To the word [of Ea . . . . ]

The Young Hero Šamaš, [...] son of Ningal,

opened a chink in the Netherworld,

he brought the shade of Enkidu up from the Netherworld like a phantom.

They hugged each other, kissing one another,

sharing thoughts and exchanging questions:

'Tell me, my friend! Tell me, my friend!'

'Tell me the rules of the Netherworld that you saw!'

'I cannot tell you, my friend, I cannot tell you!'

If I am going to tell you the rules of the Netherworld that I saw,

sit you down (and) weep!'

'[So] let me sit down and weep!'

'My friend, the penis that you touched so your heart rejoiced,

grubs devour' [it . . . like an] old garment.

'My friend, the crotch that you touched so your heart rejoiced,

it is filled with dust [like a crack in the ground.]

[Woell! said the lord,] and threw himself prostrate [in the] dust.

[Woell! said Gilgamesh,] and threw himself prostrate [in the dust.]

'Did you see the man with one son?' 'I saw him.'

[As a peg is] fixed [in his wall] and he weeps over [it bitterly.]

'Did you see the man with two sons?' 'I saw (him).'

[He sits on two bricks] eating a bread-loaf.

'Did you see the man with three sons?' 'I saw (him).

He drinks water [from a waterskin slung on the saddle.]

Lit. 'order, instruction'.

Lit. 'a grub devours'.

77 q: ra-bi-su 79 q: a-bi 80 q: gar-na-ši 83 q: šu-tuk-ku 84 G: a-maṭt
97 U: iš-šu-a 99 U: e-pa-ra 100-1 U: in four lines 103 U: in two lines
108 ‘Did you see the man with four sons?’ ‘I saw (him).’
109 [Like the owner of a donkey]—team his heart rejoices.’
110 ‘Did you see [the man with five sons?]’ ‘I saw (him).’
111 [Like a] fine [scribe] his hand is deft;
112 he enters the palace [with ease.]
113 ‘Did you see [the man with six sons?]’ ‘I saw (him).’
114 ‘Like a ploughman his heart rejoices.’
115 [‘Did you see the man with seven sons?’ ‘I saw (him).)]
116 [Among the junior deities he sits on a throne and listens to the proceedings.]
117 [‘Did you see the palace enuch?’ ‘I saw (him).’]
118 Like a fine standard he is propped in the corner,
119 like . . . . . .

Lacuna

132 [‘Did you see] the one [who . . . ?’ ‘I saw (him).’]
133 To [ . . . . . ]
134 [‘Did you see] the one [who . . . ?’ ‘I saw (him).’]
135 To [ . . . . . ]

Lacuna

144 ‘Did you see the one who was struck by a mooring-pole?’ ‘I saw (him).’
145 ‘Alas for his mother [and father!] When pegs are pulled out [he wanders about.’
146 ‘Did you see the one who [died] a natural death?’ ‘I saw (him).’
147 He lies drinking clear water on the bed of the [gods].’
148 ‘Did you see the one who was killed in battle?’ ‘I saw (him).’
149 His father and mother honour his memory and his wife [weeps] over [(him)].’
150 ‘Did you see the one whose corpse was left lying in the open countryside?’ ‘I saw (him).’
151 His ghost does not lie at rest in the Netherworld.’
152 ‘Did you see the one whose ghost has no provider of funeral offerings?’ ‘I saw (him).’
153 He eats the scrapings from the pot [and] crusts of bread that are thrown away in the street.’

Lit. ‘his arm is open’.  
Lit. ‘the death of his god’.  
So MS G; MS N: ‘the very [gods]’.  
Lit. ‘hold up his head’.  
So MS G; MS N: ‘providers’.
COLOPHONS OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

MS A₁ Table VI Plate 80

tablet 6.kám ša naq-bi e-mu-ru [ēš.gār 4iš-gim-maš]
libir-ra.bi.gim ab.sar-ma ba.an.[ē]

[tablet 6.kám ša naq-bi e-mu-ru [ēš.gār 4iš-gim-maš]
libir-ra.bi.gim ab.sar-ma ba.an.[ē]

Table VI, 'He who saw the Deeps', series of Gilgamesh. Written and checked according to its original.
Palace of Aššurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria.

MS B₁ Table I Plate 40

[dub 1.kam ša naq-ba i-mu-ru il-i di ma-a-ti
[irk a.an šar-di-a šar šar an šar[a 4nina-nil tak-lu
[nir.gal.xu nu te šar dingir[a] an šar[a

[Tablet I, 'He who saw the Deep, the] foundation of the country'. [Palace of Aššurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, who] trusts [in Aššur and Ninil. [May he who trusts in you not come to shame], O Aššur, [king of the gods!]

MS C Table XI Plate 122

dub 11.kam ša naq-bi i-m[u-ru ēš.gār] 4iš-gim-maš
libir-ra.bi.gim [a]b.sar-amus ba.a.[ē]
kur a.an šar-di-[a] šar šar kur an šar[a]

Table XI, 'He who saw the Deeps', series of Gilgamesh. Written and checked according to its original.
Palace of Aššurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria.

MS D Table IX Plate 107

[dub 9.kam ša naq-ba e-mu-ru ēš.gār 4iš-gim-maš]
kur a.an šar-di-a

1. The property label, which is Aššurbanipal colophon a = Hunger, *Klopfkod* no. 317, was incised on the tablet after the clay had hardened.
2. The last two lines of the colophon represent an abbreviated form of Ash colophon c (Hunger, *Klopfkod* no. 319), parallel with colophons t-w (nos. 332–5).
3. The property label, which is Aššurbanipal colophon a = Hunger, *Klopfkod* no. 317 with minor orthographic variants, was incised on the tablet after the clay had hardened.

EDITION OF THE TEXT: COLOPHONS

šaš̌aru ša šarru an šar 4

Tablet [IX], 'He who saw the Deep', series of Gilgamesh.
Palace of Aššurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria.

MS P₁ Table I Plate 41

[dub 1.kam ša naq-ba i-mu-ru ēš.gār 4iš-gim-maš]
[kima labūtu 4aššur bi[a-ri]

[Tablet I, 'He who saw the [Deep]', series [of Gilgamesh]. Written and [checked according to its original.]

MS G₁ Table XII Plate 145

[dub 12.kam ša naq-ba i-mu-ru
libir-ra.bi.gim ab.sar ma ba.a[ē]

Tablet XII, 'He who saw the Deeps'. Written and checked according to its original.

MS H Table V Plate 73

[dub 5.kam me ēš.gār 4iš-gim-maš]

[Tablet V], series [of Gilgamesh.]

MS K₁ Table X Plate 113

[dub 10.kam me ša naq-ba i-mu-ru ēš.gār 4iš-gim-maš]
kur a.an šar-di-a šar šar kur an šar[a]

Tablet X, 'He who saw the Deep', series of Gilgamesh.
Palace of Aššurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria.

MS N Table XII Plate 107

Hunger, *Klopfkod* no. 294 (705 BC)

[dub 12.kam ēš.gār 4iš-gim-maš zagg.ti.la.bi[ē šal.til]
libir-ra.bi.gim ab.sar-amos ba.[an.ē]

[dub 12.kam ēš.gār 4iš-gim-maš zagg.ti.la.bi[ē šal.til]
libir-ra.bi.gim ab.sar-amos ba.[an.ē]

* The property label, which is Aššurbanipal colophon a = Hunger, *Klopfkod* no. 317, with minor orthographic variants, was incised on the tablet after the clay had hardened.
Tablet XII, series of Gilgamesh, [completed to its end. Written and [checked] according to its original. Tablet of Nabû-zuquq-kēnu, son of Marduk-šumu-iddina, the [scribe], descendant of Gabbī-ilānī-ērēs, the chief of the [scribes]. Kalah, 27th Du’uzu, [eponymy of Nashir]-Bel, the governor of Sinabu, [year 17, Sargon (II)], king of Assyria, [and year 5], king of Babylon.

MS O1

Tablet VI

Plate 85


Tablet VI, ‘He who saw the Deeps’, series [of Gilgamesh.]

MS Q1

Tablet VI

Plate 88


Tablet VI, series of Gilgamesh. Written and checked (according to its original).

MS R

Tablet VIII

Plate 101

[du]b 8.ka[m] ša naq-ši i-mu-ru ē[l]aši-ru

[Table VII, ‘He who saw the Deep.’]

[Written and] checked [according to its original. Palace of Aššur, king of the world, king of Assyria.

MS V3

Tablet VIII

Plate 103

i[na ūṣaddir ...]
a-ina [ta-ma-ra-ši ...]

6 Then follows, in 9 lines, Aššurbanipal colophon d = Hunger, Kolephone no. 319.
7 This and the following line were incised on the tablet after the clay had hardened. The property label is Aššurbanipal colophon a = Hunger, Kolephone no. 317.
8 Probably Aššurbanipal colophon d = Hunger, Kolephone no. 319, though other restorations are possible.

6 Note the minor variant nūm-ma instead of sum-ma.
7 This sign appears to be a partly erased TUK, presumably an erroneous anticipation of the following line.
8 Assuming a variant šaršu for šaršu; by analogy with the adjective šaršu; šaršu.
[[(vacat?)] gim sumun-ta ba-ri [(vacat?)]]]

[Its line-count: 2]48(?). '(Enkidu was sitting) before [her, as they . . .]' Tablet I, 'He who saw the Deep', series of Gilgamesh. [...] Checked according to its original. [...]]

MS w Table IV Plate 71

A trace on col. vi may be of a colophon: see p. 600.

MS dd Table IV Plate 76


The structure of this colophon is apparently confused: the numeral 48 in its first line represents an evidential immu- or catch-line. It must belong to a line count, though one plainly much at odds with that of the text reconstructed here. In the second line, the traces of the first extant sign are as copied and do not allow Hunger's reading m[t]i₅. I assume that the sign before im.dub represents the end of a plural verb with which the catch-line ended.

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41 See also J. Oelshnger, ZA 56 (1964), pp. 262-4, who reconstructed the date as between 171 and 199, i.e. 141-113 BC. He suggested that the month may also be read *gazin* (pp. 274 f.), and that the scribe of this tablet may be the Bili-ahhē-usur, son of Inti-Marduk-balātu, known from an administrative document dated to 185 (T. G. Pinches, BOR 4 (1889-90), p. 132; E. Unger, Babylon, pp. 319-23, no. 57). The same man is now known from other tablets from Parthian Babylon; he was one of a group of astrologers in the pay of the temple E-sagili who were active in the year 185-209 (see further R. J. van der Spek, BiOR 42 (1985), 548-56; F. Rechberg, *E Oelsner*, p. 371). Since he wrote this tablet for his father, Inti-Marduk-balātu, it presumably dates to the time of his scribal apprenticeship. This would have been before he and his brother succeeded their father as astrologers of E-sagili, a promotion that happened in the year 185.

42 According to R.A. Parker and W.H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronicle* 628 B.C.-A.D. 75, p. 21, the limits for the co-regency of Seleucus I and Antiochus I in the available dated documents are 292-281 BC.