This study edits BM 48053, a newly identified Late Babylonian manuscript of the epic poem *Lugal-e* in the British Museum collection. This tablet, which is likely to come from Borsippa, contributes towards the reconstruction of Tablet IV of the epic in its late bilingual form. It is also of interest for its colophon, which specifies the swift return of the tablet following a same day loan, using the phrase *ina mišil tumšu* “in half a day” or perhaps “at midday”.

The tablet edited here preserves the opening and closing lines of Tablet IV of *Lugal-e* on the obverse and reverse respectively. The obverse features the address of Šarur, Ninurta’s divine weapon, to Ninurta. The reverse recounts the Asag’s attack. This manuscript contributes towards the reconstruction of the text, particularly lines 144–147 and 175–179. In the case of at least three lines (147, 176 and 179), an improved reconstruction leads to important changes in sense. The manuscript is also of interest for subtle variations it introduces between the late manuscripts; examples include the variation in Sumerian grammatical forms in line 138, or the use of an alternative Akkadian verbal form in line 177. The tablet is also of interest for its fully preserved colophon, which includes the direction for the tablet to be returned to its owner within half a day, or possibly “at midday”. BM 48053 belongs to the 1881-11-03 collection of the British Museum. This consignment includes tablets excavated by Rassam at Babylon, Borsippa and Dilbat. The script is Late Babylonian. The colophon indicates that it was copied from a Borsippa master copy.

Based on similar occurrences of this formula, our tablet is likely to come from Borsippa. This is suggested by the reference to Nabû in the colophon, together with the precise form and writing of the colophon on the reverse (Fig. 2), which is comparable to similar examples from Borsippa (see below). The tablet has been glued together from numerous fragments. In addition, it is accompanied by a group of small fragments, which are at present not physically attached. I have situated five of these small fragments in my copy of the obverse, where they are marked by dotted lines (Fig. 1). The remaining small fragments are copied for completeness (Fig. 3), but I have been unable to confirm these fragments as belonging to BM 48053. Most likely, the present state of the tablet and associated fragments is due to damage resulting from baking. The process of baking may have resulted in the fracturing of the tablet, followed by a museum conservator’s partial reconstruction.

sources for lines parallel to those preserved in BM 48053. In the following edition, line numberings follow the edition of van Dijk (1983), as do text sigla. Newly attested lines or partial lines are underlined. Exclamation marks refer to readings known from this manuscript which result in revised readings, in partially damaged parallel manuscripts. The translation is based solely on the late bilingual version.

**BM 48053**

Upper Edge

136. ˹ina tam-ḫu-us  kاك-[ki] ṭ-sin-li ni  et-šu-tu˺

Obverse

136. ˹[š]tukul sàg-sà]g-ge ˹ez-e ni nam-guruš-[a]˺

From the clash of weapons, the festival of young men,

Fig. 1  BM 48053: obverse (including 5 loose fragments) and upper edge
A NEW MANUSCRIPT OF *LUGAL-E*, TABLET IV

Fig. 2  BM 48053: reverse

Fig. 3  BM 48053: unplaced fragments
137. ešemen(KI.'E.NE.DI') r^3inana-ta á-zu' [ba]-r^3a'-mu-un-[gi]
    ina me-hul-ti d^4iš-tar id-k[a] la ta-né-^e ^3am'-ma

from the play of Ištar, do not turn back (lit: turn back your arm)!

138. 'en^1-e mē mah-e-ne ĝen-na ĝiri na-ab-ul, ĝiri-z[u kil]-a si-b[i]-ib
    be-lu a-na 'ta-Ḫa-a-[z]i' s[i]-i-ri a-li[k] la tuš-te-[e]'pi-[i]r šēpka' ina'
    erti[k]-(K)-tim) ki-[in]

O lord, go to the supreme battle (Sum: battles), (but) do not hurry!
Place your foot firmly on the ground!

139. [d^dr]nin-urma ā-sāg^4-e 'kur^3-ra ĝiri mu-e-[š]-ib-gub
    [d^dr]MIN a'-sak-ku ina šadīl(K[UR]-i) a-[qa-a-k]a

Ninurta, the Asakku awaits you in the mountain!

140. [ur-sa^g] 'men^1-[na] [ga]-bi sig^-ga^1-[n]a
    qar-ra-du 'šā' [ma a^1]-gi^3-i ra-[bi]-iš^3 [ba-nu]-^e

Hero, who with a tiara is very handsome,

141. [dumu d^e]n-li[1-lā h]i-'li-bi' nu-[til-la
    mār('DUMU') r^d'en-nil šā' ku-z[u-ub]-šā la [qatū]

son of Enlil, whose sexual allure is without end,

142. [en zi] 'en^1-[ra nun-a] 'ū^3-[u]-ud-da
    be-lu 'kun-nu'-ši šā 'ana' be-lu r[u-b]-a^1-tum^3 [uldušu]

steadfast ruler, whom the queen (Ninlil) has borne for the lord (Enlil),

143. [ur-sa] d^suen('d^+EN.Z[U])-'na-gim^1 [s]i m[u]-mū
    qar-ra-[d]u 'šā ki^1-ma rd[sin qarni banū]

hero, who grows horns like Sīn,

144. [lugal] 'kalam^1-[m]a-[r[a] 'u^1-[la u] 'sū-da'
    'šar-ri ma-a-ti^1 ba-la[t ūm] ṭa]-qu-tu^3

who is life of long days for the king of the land,

145. [usu ma]h an-na-ra an b[ad-b]a'd-da
    e-mu-qan si'-ra-a-ti šā dy^3[a-nim] pe-tu-ū' šamē(AN-e)

who, (being) the supreme strength of Anu, opens the sky,
the flood which makes the banks gather together,

Ninurta, lord who is imbued with [angry] fearsomeness, towards whom the mountains do not rush,

He (Asakku) roared like a great snake in the land;

he dried out the mountains, and dragged away the tamarisks;

the body of the earth became split, and he created severe wounds (to appear on the earth’s surface);

he set fire to the reed-beds, and bathed the sky in blood;

he fomented rebellion in the environs, and flattened that land.
i-ne-ēš u₄-da a₅-sā₁-ša₂-ga u₄-ū₃-gi₄₅
i-na-an-na u₄₅-mu e-qel id-ra-ni ṣal-mu

Now, on this day, (that land was) a field of black potash (Sum: scum).

me₅-dē úr₄-ra an-na sig-hé-me-da-gim sa₅-sē ur₃ hé-na-nam-me
m[a-l]-mi i₇-sid šamēth(AN-e) ki-na na-ba-si ša-rip šē i₃ lu-ū₅ ki-a₅-am

Forever, the horizon was as red as dyed wool. It was truly so!

Catchline:
182. an-nē ib dú[b-ba]-šē ša-šu-bi ši-ib-[fri₃]

As Anu became furious and trembled, he wrung his hands over his heart,

Colophon:
46.AP₉ 'MU₉ŠID.BI DUB.4.KAM.MA 'lugal-e₄ u₄ me-lám-bi 'nir-gāl₉ 'úl₈ qatṭi[(AL₉.TIL) GABA.RI BAR.SIPA ki₉] | kim(a)GIM) labirt(SUMUN)-šē šatir(SAR)-ma bar-it(IGI.TAH) pa-līb nabū(d+AK) i₃-na Sar-tum lā inaṣšilt(es)-šē-Sū ina me₃-reš₃-tū la ū-sā-ka-āš | šā-[l₇]-na₄-aš₃-šā-šu ina mī-šēl ūm(t₄.MEŠ)-šu a-na be-li-šē lē-te₄-er-šē

46 is its line-count, Tablet IV of Lugale-u-melambi-nīr-gal. (The series) is not finished. Master copy from Borsippa, written and checked according to its original. He who fears Nabû must not dishonestly take it, or deliberately allow it to go missing. He who takes it away must return it to its owner in half a day/at midday.

Notes

136. The Akkadian version of the incipit is written on the upper edge of the obverse, ahead of its usual place following the Sumerian version. There are several other examples of this practice in first millennium bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian tablets (see Gabbay 2014: 235, with n. 54). As has been suggested by Cavigneaux and Ismail (1998: 6), this practice is likely to have functioned as a means of quick reference within tablet collections or “libraries”.

137. Lines 137–38 are good examples of highly divergent understandings between the Old Babylonian and late Babylonian versions. In the Old Babylonian version the incipit of Ninurta’s divine weapon, the Šarur, clearly directs Ninurta not to go to battle; line 137 reads: esemēn ₂i₃₇-ni₅₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇₇ percent, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://doi.org/10.1017/irq.2017.5

138. I interpret the Sumerian postposition -e as a vocative. Cf. the opening line of Tablet I in the late version: Lugal-e₄ u₄ me-lám-bi ‘nir-gāl₉ ‘úl₈ qatṭi[(AL₉.TIL) GABA.RI BAR.SIPA ki₉] | kim(a)GIM) labirt(SUMUN)-šē šatir(SAR)-ma bar-it(IGI.TAH) pa-līb nabū(d+AK) i₃-na Sar-tum lā inaṣšilt(es)-šē-Sū ina me₃-reš₃-tū la ū-sā-ka-āš | šā-[l₇]-na₄-aš₃-šā-šu ina mī-šēl ūm(t₄.MEŠ)-šu a-na be-li-šē lē-te₄-er-šē

139. On the use of vocative -e see Woods (2000: 322–23), with earlier literature. Although it appears to be attested infrequently in early Sumerian literature, vocative -e may be considered characteristic of late Sumerian; it is, for example, a feature of the post-Old Babylonian (Enesal) Sumerian Eršašuqa prayers (Maul 1988: 6). The Sumerian of this line shows substantial differences with manuscript t₂ (BM 38388), such as the introduction of the -en/ plural suffix. Use of this suffix is irregular here, according to Old Babylonian conventions, as it is normally attached exclusively to personal nouns. In addition, the Akkadian version of this line does not reflect an understanding of “battle” as a plural. The -en/- plural suffix is used with non-personal nouns in the bilingual Šamaš-šuma-uktin inscription VR 62, 2 (Jacobsen 1991: 284).

140. For the image of mountains rushing (ḫišṭu) towards Ninurta, see the bilingual version of line 125 in Angîm (Cooper 1978: 76–77). By the introduction of negation, the meaning of this line is transformed. In the Old Babylonian version Ninurta’s
fearsomeness is the reason why he rushes to the mountain. In the first millennium version, Ninurta’s fearsomeness is the reason why the mountains do not rush towards him. 

The newly attested bilingual equation between the saršaru snake and its Sumerian equivalent conforms to the lexical evidence (CAD S: 115).

The clear SU sign in inš-tar confirms as correct the emendation in manuscript u: inš-tar (text: KU)-árum proposed in Geller (1985: 217–18). In manuscript i₂ I see ub-bil (collated), confirming our tablet. 

The first GIG sign may possibly be read as sim-. Cavigneaux (1987: 45) discusses this reading, the primary evidence for which is the Old Babylonian writing sim-ma. However, I know of no first millennium examples of such a writing. The Akkadian of this line probably omitted the sign -mi in sim<-mi>. The parallel Late Babylonian duplicate manuscript u is written syllabically (sim-ma). But the possibility of a construct state (sim ār-rum) cannot be excluded. The use of the N stem of letû “to split”, which differs from the G stem of the only other manuscript (i₂) for this line, clarifies that the body of the earth became split as a direct result of being dried out, not as a separate action of the Asakku. 

In manuscript i₂ my collation confirms our tablet. In manuscript i₁ I see: ša-ge-túm ʲ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣}


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IV

مخططة جديدة من لugal-ye-lūğah

بَلْقَمْ: سام ميريلمان

يرحى هذا البحث المستند 548053 من BM وهو مخططة من العهد البابلي الحديث بين مجموعة في حوزة المتحف البريطاني. هذا اللوح الذي من المعتاد أن يكون قد جاء من مدينة ورسيا يساعد في إعادة تركيب اللوح الذي يتضمن المخططة بشكلها المتاخر المزودة اللغات. اللوح المهمة الأخرى هي خانقة المخططة التي تتضمن تحديدا نوعا لم يحدد سورة المخططة في تلك مطالعات اللبابية المتاخرة الأخرى. بالإضافة إلى ذلك تحدد هذه الخانقة أن بعد اللوح يجري في نفس اليوم الذي يستعار فيه مستعملين لذلك "خلال نصف يوم" أو "يمكن أن يصوتون في منتصف النهار" (na mišš šumiššu) مع أنه تمتلكة للدلالة على اليوم الذي يتضمن بشكل لوح ورسيا يساعد في إعادة تركيب اللوح الذي يتضمن المخططة بشكلها المتاخر المزودة اللغات.