The civilizing of Ea-Enkidu : an unusual tablet of the Babylonian Gilgameš epic

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THE CIVILIZING OF EA-ENKIDU: AN UNUSUAL TABLET OF THE BABYLONIAN GILGAMEŠ EPIC

BY

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Presented here is a large fragment of a cuneiform tablet that I was able to study at first hand in Princeton in March 2005, when I prepared the cuneiform copies that accompany this article. It is published here with the permission of the owner, who wishes to remain anonymous.

The fragment represents the upper left-hand portion of what was once a tablet of six columns, three on each side, and measures 170 × 125 mm. Its maximum thickness is 29 mm, reducing to 21 mm at the left edge. On one side most of the inscribed surface is extant (Figs. 1, 3); on the other very little inscription survives (Figs. 2, 4). At first sight the better-preserved side, which is noticeably convex, is the reverse and the other side, which seems flatter, is the obverse. However, this identification is not borne out by closer inspection. On the better-preserved side portions of two columns can be read. Some lines of the left-hand column continue across the vertical ruling in to the middle column, where the scribe has had to avoid the overrunning characters by indenting. Clearly the middle column was written after the left-hand column. The latter is therefore col. i, the former col. ii, and this must be the tablet’s obverse. The other side is by default the reverse. The patch of inscribed surface is clearly part of the middle column, which will then be col. v. Every tenth line of text is marked with the decimal sign. The use of such marks speaks for the serious intentions of the writer to produce a permanent copy fit for consultation, though the text is not free from error.

The text contained on the fragment is part of an Akkadian poetic narrative immediately recognizable as coinciding with versions of the Babylonian Epic of Gilgameš. Such an identification is compatible with the tablet’s layout in six columns. The six-column format was normal for library tablets of Gilgameš in the first millennium, when there are almost no exceptions, but was also utilized in the Old Babylonian period, at least by the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets (OB II, III). The episodes preserved on the fragment published here are, on col. i, the passage where the hero relates dreams to his mother, who explains them; on col. ii, the civilization of a male character by a woman, who takes him to a shepherds’ camp; and, on col. v, a description of the city as a place where the young women are supremely pretty. Most lines are

1. I have had the good fortune to read this tablet in seminars at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Both exercises led to gains in understanding, for which I should like to express my gratitude to Professor Jerrold S. Cooper, Dr Daniel Schwemer and others who contributed to the seminars.

2. The tablet has since been offered for sale by a Californian bookseller, Michael Sharpe Rare and Antiquarian Books, as item 53 in his catalogue no. 1, issued on 4 September 2007. It is there described as “Gilgamesh. Manuscript in cuneiform. Mesopotamia, c. 1400 B.C.” The sale was reported by another bookseller in a “blog” posted on 5 September 2007 at http://blog.myfinebooks.com/2007/09/heritage-bookss.html, with a photograph of the tablet’s obverse.

very close to one or other of the known versions of the text, especially the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II, ed. George 2003: 159–94) and Tablets I–II of the Standard Babylonian epic (SB I, II, ed. George 2003: 535–71). Script and language are post-classical Old Babylonian but certainly second millennium. The only reason for not immediately identifying the text as a witness to an intermediate version of the Babylonian Epic of Gilgameš is the proper nouns. Where we expect Gilgameš, we read 30 (ll. 5, 6, 16, 17, 18, 39, 83); where Enkidu is wanted, we find 40 (ll. 80, 88, v 3’, 7’); and the city where the former resides is not Uruk, but Ur (ll. 5, 12, 33, v 3’, 7’), except on one occasion when 40 is invited to Uruk, not Ur (l. 65). The prostitute’s name, Šamkatum in the Pennsylvania tablet and Šamlḥat in the Standard Babylonian version, is conditioned by her calling and not altered (90: ša-am-[...]).

The two spellings 30 and 40 elsewhere represent respectively Sîn, the moon god, on account of the thirty-day month, and Ea, the god of the subterranean waters, for reasons which are obscure. Might this fragment bear a text about Sîn and Ea that was a parody or adaptation of the Epic of Gilgameš? While light-hearted spoofs are extant in Assyrian and Babylonian literature, there are in the scribal repertoire that has come down to us no parodies of serious narrative poems that exactly parallel the wording of the original. And this is the striking point. The wording of the fragment is so close to extant versions of the Epic of Gilgameš that it seems incontrovertible that what we have here is a piece from an edition of the epic in which the names have been changed deliberately. The solitary inconsistency, Uruk for Ur in l. 65, is important in this regard, for it reveals that a text with the expected proper nouns underlies the text on the tablet. The questions then are: can we explain 30 and 40 as recherché spellings of Gilgameš and Enkidu, or are we intended to understand that this poem asserts the syncretisms Sîn = Gilgameš and Ea = Enkidu?

\[\text{Sin = Gilgameš, Enki = Enkidu, Ur = Uruk?}\]

Of course, Ea is Enki by another name, so that 40 = Ea might be interpreted as an abbreviation for the name Enkidu. Until recently the only name that appeared in abbreviated form in the Babylonian Gilgameš was Gilgameš’s, in the second millennium often written Ǧiš and once Ǧiš.BIL. That has changed. Enkidu is also abbreviated, to ʾen, in the larger of the Old Babylonian tablets now in Norway (OB Schøyen, ed. George 2003: 224–40). In the same tablet Ḫuwawa is Ḫu and Ḫu-wa. So there seems to have been a tradition of abbreviation of names of the poem’s dramatis personae. Abbreviations utilize the first sign after the divine determinative (Ǧiš, ʾen, Ḫu), and sometimes also the next (Ǧiš.BIL, Ḫu-wa). Nowhere is an abbreviation taken from the end of a name, so reading 30 in the present text as ʾeš is not a probable solution to the problem. And if 30 is not an abbreviation, then perhaps 40 is not either.

The substitution of numbers for certain cuneiform signs is a well-known habit of cuneiform scribes. Some such encryptions became established as conventional spellings. Others were handed down only in lists that today we call number syllabaries (Pearce 1996, 2005, von Weiher 1993: 130–1 no. 218) or confined to the periphery, as with the limited examples of number-writing at Susa (Labat 1965). Neither in the number syllabaries nor at Susa is there any suggestion that 30 and 40 could represent the signs giš and en, or any other signs that might identify these numbers as spellings of the names Gilgameš and Enkidu (the equivalence of en is

3. A recent suggestion is that Enki is 40 because the sun was in the Path of Ea at the winter solstice, when length of daylight in the ideal scheme of length of day and night, expressed as a sexagesimal fraction of the longest day, was 0,40 (Parpola 1993: 203). I am unconvinced by this, not just because, as Parpola admits, the observation only works for Anu (1) and Enlil (30) when their respective paths are exchanged, but also because the varying lengths of day and night were expressed in texts as weights of water and as units of time, but never as sexagesimal fractions of the longest day (Al-Rawi and George 1991–2, Hunger 1999, 2001).
given in one number syllabary as the sexagesimal fraction 13,31; Pearce 1996: 458 D ii 10). Indeed, the fact that Uruk is adjusted to Ur, and not to something more opaque, suggests that cryptic writing is not the issue here.

The substitution of Ur for Uruk is the least intractable of the three substitutions. It has long been known that in some historical traditions Gilgameš was considered to have been a king of Ur, not of Uruk. This is seen clearly in the Letter of Gilgameš, a fictional composition known from first-millennium copies. In it Gilgameš describes himself as šar Urim mār Kullab “king of Ur, native of Kullab”, where Kullab is part of Uruk (STT 40 // 42, 2). “This association [of Gilgameš] with Ur as well as Uruk must be a distant legacy of the efforts of Ur-Nammu and Šulgi of Ur to identify themselves in their considerable literary output as brothers of the great hero” (George 2003: 119). Ur and Uruk were already viewed as complements the one of the other in Early Dynastic times, when Lugalkiginnedudu described his dominion over both cities as the combination of nam.en (rulership in Uruk-Kullab) with nam.lugal (rulership in Ur). The political identity of Uruk later merged with Ur as a policy of the Ur III dynasty, so that a Šulgi hymn even offers them as variants, extolling Gilgameš as a conqueror “who brought kingship from Kiš to Uruk, var. Ur” (Šulgi O 61, George 2003: 111). Presumably the policy arose to assert the primacy of the new capital as a centre of political power. Thereafter the merger of the two cities entered the historiographic tradition. Thus “king of Ur, native of Kullab” is a combination of epithets that tallies with what later tradition implicitly believed about Ur-Nammu, for a Late Babylonian chronicle maintains that Utu-ḫengal of Uruk was Šulgi’s maternal grandfather, and thus Ur-Nammu was Utu-ḫengal’s son-in-law (SpTU I 2, 10). The same connections were evidently attributed by some to Gilgameš.

Just as we understand ūrim(ŠEŠ.UNUG) as Ur, replacing uruk(UNUG)i, so too we are encouraged to understand ũ30 and ũ40 in the normal way, as Šin and Ea, replacing Gilgameš and Enkidu. Let us then suppose that what the scribe had in mind in writing ũ30 and ũ40 that Gilgameš was somehow Šin and Enkidu somehow Ea. There must have been a deliberate purpose in these substitutions, as there was in a recension of Enûma eliš that circulated in seventh-century Assyria, with the name of Marduk replaced, for theological reasons, by Aššur (Lambert 1997). Šin and Gilgameš are more closely related than is at first apparent when one recalls that, in the Letter of Gilgameš, Gilgameš is “king of Ur”. This is also self-evidently a title of Šin, the patron deity of this city. But there should be a more cogent explanation for the substitution than that.

It has often been asserted that the first-millennium poem of Gilgameš, set out in twelve tablets, can be read as an astral myth, though few Assyriologists, if any, have been persuaded by the arguments presented so far. This new evidence suggests that at least one ancient scholar reinterpreted the poem on a cosmic scale, as a mythological narrative with divine protagonists. Far from being a solar figure, as some have wanted, Gilgameš took on, in this man’s view, the characteristics of the moon god, while Enkidu, perhaps only by virtue of his name, became Ea. Why was Ea thought suitable as the moon’s companion? In known mythology Ea has little connection with the moon, so that in search of an explanation one has to turn elsewhere.

In the speculative scholarship of Babylonian commentators, ideas are sometimes expressed that might be thought to assert a stronger association of Šin and Ea than that found in mythology. There was a notion that the waxing moon, when shaped like a kidney from the sixth to tenth days of the month, was Ea (Livingstone 1985: 47); but they equated the immediately preceding and succeeding phases with Anu and Enlil, so that the idea here seems to be not that Šin had a special relationship with Ea but that the moon in its different phases encompassed all cosmic forces. Scholarly speculation provides for another possible link between the two deities, and with Enkidu. A section of the Nippur Compendium that deals with the days of the month
equates night with Ea and Damkina, with a variant E-ude-Amanki “House, Marvel of Amanki” (George 1992 : 152–3). If Ea could be night itself, we may cite the tradition that Enkidu was responsible for regulating the watches of the night, presumably because he had been the shepherds’ nightwatchman (George 2003 : 143–4).

The moon and the night are obvious partners, but there are strong reservations. First, it is not clear how the moon and the night are suited to taking the parts of Gilgameš and Enkidu in the story told by the epic, and what understanding would be gained by such equations. Gilgameš lost Enkidu, but the moon does not lose the night. On the contrary, it is the night, ever-present and unchanging, that loses its companion, when the moon disappears from the night sky at the end of each lunar month. Second, these commentaries belong to the middle and late first millennium. It is not safe to assume that they contain information that can be used to elucidate material that, as we shall see, is in the order of one thousand years older.

Simple allegory and symbolism are other avenues for exploration. It can be commented that the poem of Gilgameš runs in a circle, just as the moon completes a cycle every lunar month. But Ea plays no part in the lunar cycle that can be correlated allegorically with the life and death of Enkidu. The moon is a potent symbol of kingship, displaying, as it does, the agû “crown”, and Gilgamesh was the greatest king of Babylonian legend. Ea is the source of all wisdom, but in this role is hardly matched with the wild Enkidu, even if he is accredited with native intuition as an interpreter of dreams. What we currently know of Sin and Ea does not open the text to an additional exegesis of the plot of the epic. For the moment the scribe’s purpose in replacing Gilgameš and Enkidu with these two deities is obscure.

Language and spelling

The language of the text is not classical Old Babylonian, for mimation is nowhere present in word-final position, not even on the name of the sky god, 𒀭𒈬𒉗 (9, 20, 28). There are a few points of elevated style but no more than one normally encounters in Gilgameš : one instance of the terminative ending : šadîška (4) ; a construct state in -u : milku simištî (72), unless an error for milku (ša) simištî ; an apocopated suffix in tatarrâš (25) for tatarrâšu ; and use of the short form of the preposition eli in eššu (22, 37) v. elišu (34). The assimilation /šl/ > /šš/ in eššu < elišu and atbaššu (15) < atbalšu is unremarkable in Middle Babylonian but not normal in Old Babylonian ; an early instance occurs in a tablet of bilingual proverbs from Nippur where akalšu “his bread” is written a-ka-šu (Lambert 1960 : 273 l. 2 = Alster 1997 : 14 SP 1.42 ; GAG § 34c Ergänzungen). More remarkable is the shift /ľl/ > /šš/ in ištabaš (75) for ittabaš ; the shift of liquid to fricative before a dental is hitherto attested only for /ľl/ > /šš/.

The spelling displays many Old Babylonian habits : /qu/ is always written qū (9, 23), and /qa/ is always qá (13, 17, 20, 26, 29, 58, 70) ; note also ḫū (22) and us/za (67, 73) ; vocalic onset in certain words is written plene : ū-ul (11, 13, 91), ū-um-mi-id (14), i-ip-pa-al (26). The plene spelling of a short final vowel as in um-mi-šu-ú (7) is not unusual in Old Babylonian writing. Other usage is not classical Old Babylonian, however. The sequence /NssV/ is spelled the same, whatever the derivation. Examples of /NssV/ < /NtšV are : -as-sa (71), -as-su (77) ; cf. occurrences of /NssV/ < /NstV/ : is-sa- (17, 26, 86). This conflicts with Old Babylonian practice. The bisyllable /aayi/ is written a-aa-i (8). Less diagnostic are /pj/ written pî (30), /su/ written su (81), and ligatures of i-na and a-na. However, a very distinctive feature is the use of the sign ku for the onset of gupru (78) ; this is not normal in Babylonia at any time, but occurs at Boğazköy (see the textual note). Some common nouns are written with logograms, but also two verbs : du = alâku (27) and igi = amâru (39b). To summarize, the spelling employed in this tablet is heavily influenced by Old Babylonian practice but the overall impression is of a tablet written after the
classical period, i.e. post-eighteenth century. Very few comparable literary tablets survive from the middle centuries of the second millennium, at least in the published record, and so the evidence of language and spelling cannot speak with exactitude; but on these grounds we might consider either a very late Old Babylonian date or an early Middle Babylonian date.

**Date and provenance**

Other evidence confirms the impression derived from the text’s language and spelling. The tablet was reported to be part of a group of unpublished tablets that included omen and liturgical compositions, some mentioning Pešgaldaramaš (pešgGal-da-ra-meš) and Ayadaragalamma (a-a-dàra-galam-ma), kings of the First Sealand Dynasty, and to share with them aspects of physical appearance and ductus. I was able to confirm this report from photographs of the tablets in question. In particular, the present piece closely resembles a tablet of lung omens dated to Pešgaldaramaš. Close resemblance is not an infallible criterion for attributing provenance, but it is enough to permit a provisional hypothesis that the tablet published here derives from the same source as the Sealand tablets. A date in the period of the kings mentioned would place the tablet in the early sixteenth century (middle chronology), shortly after the fall of Babylon and the end of the Old Babylonian dynasty. In current reckoning this is the beginning of the Middle Babylonian period. Consequently I give it the siglum MB Priv1 (Priv = private collection), after the style established in my critical edition (George 2003).

The realm of the First Sealand Dynasty is now known as the provenance of a large archive of administrative tablets, to be published by Stephanie Dalley (Dalley 2007) and also dating to Ayadaragalamma. Because the Sealand was not hitherto known as a source of literary tablets, such a provenance would explain why the ductus of the tablet published here is not a close match for any published Old or Middle Babylonian script. An origin in the southern periphery, far from Nippur and Babylon, might also account for other features of the tablet and its text. Two careless corruptions – ūštapaḫaru (21) for ūštamaḫḫaru, and ula”iṭū (22) for una”idā – and a false nominal case – genitive nuššišu (11) for accusative nuššašu – are perhaps indications of provincial origin. The presence of mā as a particle introducing speech in l. 18 contributes to the impression of a text corrupted by local influence.

More intriguing are features hitherto associated with places further afield. The unvoiced onset of kupru has already been mentioned as otherwise occurring in Anatolia. The ends of lines are not regularly aligned with the right margin; this is also a habit of the north-western periphery. The presence of these features raises the possibility that some well-known habits of mid-second-millennium Syrian and Anatolian scribes derived, ultimately, from the Sealand, where it now seems there was an active tradition of scholarship in the early sixteenth century, just the period when both Babylon and Nippur were abandoned. The existence of a tradition of scholarship in the Sealand also suggests that not all the southern intellectuals had fled north in the reign of Samsuiluna at the end of the eighteenth century; it can be envisaged that some sought refuge instead at the court of his enemies, the kings of the Sealand, and there passed down their scribal lore to succeeding generations. Further publication of Late Old Babylonian and Sealand-period literary texts will clarify matters.

The textual relationship between the present fragment and other versions of the poem will be examined in the commentary below, where consequent improvements in our understanding of those versions will also be set out. Before these comparisons, it is opportune to present the text itself. As in George 2003, cross-references at the right-hand margin identify parallel lines in other versions of the poem. The symbol // identifies shared lines, sometimes even verbatim correspondence, while lines in less close relationships are introduced by the abbreviation “cf.”
obv. col. i

1 [ . . . . . . . . . . . ]
2 [x x x l]-mu-ra l pa-ni1-[k[a] // SB I 224
3 [libbu(ša)? mu-du]-tuš i-šē-ib-ra cf. SB I 214, II 32 etc.
4 *[40 la-a]m ta-al-li-ka ša-di-iš-ša // SB I 243
5 [x x]x 30 i-na libbi(ša) um[i]-ša-ta // SB I 244
6 [it]-tuš ka-aš-ka-bu ša-ma-a-i // OB II 6 // SB I 247
7 [it]-beš i-ta-ma-[a] a-na um-mi-šu-ū // OB II 25, cf. SB I 245
8 [i]-bišu-ma ka-ši-im-ta mu-du-[ša] // SB I 248
9 [i]-bišu-ma nu-uš-ši-šu ú-ul el-e // OB II 9 // SB I 250
10 aš-šišu-ma ka-bi-ši-e-li-i-a // OB II 8 // SB I 249
11 as-ki-ipšu-ma nu-ušši-šu ú-ul el-e // OB II 7 // SB I 248
12 tūrim16 māt[u(kur)] pa-hi-ši e-li-i-a // OB II 10 // SB I 251
14 ú-um-mi-id bu-di i-mi-du ia-ti // OB II 17
15 aš-ša-aššu-ma at-ba-šu a-na ma-ah-ri-ki // OB II 14 // SB I 257
17 is-sa-aq-qā-ra a-na 30 // OB II 16, cf. SB I 259–60
18 lmai mi-in-de 30 ša ki ka-ta-ma // OB II 17
19 i-na še-ri i-ša-li-id-ma ša-ša-ša-br eš-ru // OB II 18–19
20 kī-ma kī-ši-ša a-na du-un-i-nu-na e-mu-qā-ša // SB I 270
21 aš-šum uš-ta-pa-ah-ša-šu ir-ti-ka // OB II 43 // SB I 290
22 ú-la-i-šu-ma i-pa-ah-šu-ru eš-šu // OB II 20
23 ú eš-lu-tu ú-na-ašša-šu ú-tu // OB II 21
24 ta-am-ma-ar-šu-ma llibba(ša)-ka i-ša-ak // OB II 20
26 *[30]1 l-ip-pa-alši is-sa-aq-qā-ra a-na um-mi-šu // OB II 24, cf. SB I 273a
27 [x x x l]-ši li-ša-amma li-ib-ši lillika(du)16 // OB II 29–30 // SB I 278
28 [l]-im-qi-ta-mum ka-ši-im-ša a-na um-mi-šu // OB II 35–6
29 [lu du-un-nu-na] e-mu-qā-ša // OB II 31
30 [x x x x x]-ki-ka-ma li-na-pi-iš llibbi(ša)16 // l. 6 // OB II 24, cf. SB I 273a
31 [i]-ti-la-am-ma 30 i-ta-mar šu-ut-ta // l. 7 // OB II 25, cf. SB I 274–5
32 [i]-beš i-ta-ma-a a-na um-mi-šu // OB II 27–8 // SB I 277
33 [x (x) x i-na su-qi ša úrim ri-bi-ti // OB II 30 // SB I 278
34 [h]-a-as-at na-dí-ma e-li-šu pa-ah-ru // OB II 33–4 // SB I 284
35 [el-qešu-ma ašša-ta-am-ša] a-na aḫ-ḫi-ia // OB II 31
36 [h]-a-as-at na-aššu-ba a-na um-mi-šu // OB II 35–6
37 [a-ra-am-ma kī-ma ašša] a-ti aḫ-ḫu-ub eš-šu // OB II 37, cf. SB I 286
38 [um-mi 30 mu-da-at i]-pa-ašša-ar // l. 1.6 // OB II 37, cf. SB I 286
39 [is-sa-aq-qā-ra a-na 30] // l. 1.7 // OB II 38, cf. SB I 287
40 [h]-a-as-at nu 40 (ša) tāmaru(i)ša amēlu(lu) // SB I 288
41 [ila-ka-ku-um-ma mu-še-zi i]-bš u-b // SB I 291
43 l . . . . . . . . . . . . x

remainder of col. i lost
Translation

1 [The harlot said to him, to Ea (Enkidu):]
2 “[Let the people(?) (. . .)] see your face,
3 [your heart(?), now wise,] is seeking a friend.
4 [O Ea (Enkidu), before] you came from your uplands,
5 [. . .] Sîn (Gilgameš) was having dreams in Ur.
6 Sîn (Gilgameš) [lay] down and had a dream,
7 [he] arose to talk to his mother:
8 ‘The stars of the sky grew distinct(?),
9 a lump of sky-rock fell down before me.
10 I picked it up but it was too heavy for me,
11 I gave it a shove but could not move it.
12 The land of Ur was gathered about me,
13 the young men all together could not raise it.
14 I braced my shoulder, they supported me,
15 I picked it up and took it away into your presence.’
16 Being wise the mother of Sîn (Gilgameš) explained,
17 saying to Sîn (Gilgameš),
18 so: ‘For sure, O Sîn (Gilgameš), there is one like yourself,
19 he was born in the wild and the wild reared (him).
20 His strength is as mighty as a lump of sky-rock,
21 because I shall gather in force (sic! for make equal) with you.
22 They shackled (sic! for admired) it, gathering around it,
23 and the young men kissing it:
24 You will see him and your heart will laugh,
25 you will hug him and bring him into my presence.’
26 [Sîn (Gilgameš)] answered her, saying to his mother:
27 ‘Let [a friend] come forth, so be it, let him come!
28 [Let him befall me(?)] like a lump of sky-rock,
29 [let] his strength [be mighty!]
30 [. . .] . . . and let him ease my heart!’
31 [Sîn (Gilgameš) lay down and] had a dream.
32 [He arose to talk to] his mother:
33 ‘[. . . in the street of] Ur-the-Capital,
34 [an axe was lying] and (people) were gathered around it.
35 [I took it up and put it] at my side.
36 [The axe was strange] in shape,
37 [I loved it like a] wife, caressing and embracing it.’
38 [Being wise, the mother of Sîn (Gilgameš)] explained,
39 [saying to Sîn (Gilgameš):]
40 ‘The axe, O Sîn (Gilgameš), that you saw is a man,
41 [there will come to you one who will save] (his) friend.
42 [You will see him and your heart] will laugh,
43 [you will hug him and bring] him into my presence.’”
two lines lost

55 x[ . . . .
56 b[a?] . . . . .
57 iš-tu x[ . . . . .]
59 am-mi-ni ki-m[a nammaššê tarappend šêra] // SB II 29, cf. OB II 54–5 // I 208
60 li-it-ba-aš l[u-ub-ša . . . . . ]
61 nê-en-zi-ih né-[be-ša . . . . . ] // SB II 28
cf. OB II 110–11
62 li-qê [kakka(tukul) ki-m a[u-ti . . . .]
63 mi-iš-šu lu-ra-ma-[t[ . . . . . ] // SB II 30

64 am-mi-ni at-ta ki-ma n[am- . . . . . ] // SB II 29
65 lu ta-mu-ur-ma unu%^[ . . . . . ]
66 šu-ub-ta ša ni-shi [ras.] m[u-ša-ab s-a-ni?] // OB II 58 // SB I 210
67 a-šar et-lu-tu uzr-tu-[h u nêbelî?] // SB I 227
cf. SB II 128, 232
68 ú-mi-ša ma-a-a-al m[u-ši . . . ] // SB II 62–3
69 at-ta a-na zi-bi ta-[ä . . . . . ]
70 ab-ka-ta i-na qa-aq[-qa-ri . . . . . ] // OB II 64–5
71 iš-me-ma a-ma-as-as-im-[a-ga-ar gabâša] // OB II 66
72 mi-il-ku sî-in-nî-iš-t[i imtaqut ana libbîšu] // OB II 67–8
73 iḥ-mu-u[a lu-ub-ša isṭ-te-n[am ultabbisu] // OB II 69–70, cf. SB II 34
75 iš-ta-ba-aš lu-ub-[ša . . . . . ]
76 ša-am-na ip-pa-ši-il[ . . . . . ]
77 ša-ab-ta-at qa-as-su ki-ma -(i)-l[i ireddêšu] // OB II 73–4 // SB II 36
78 a-na ku-up-ri ša re-e-i a-[šar tarbâšî] // OB II 75–6 // SB II 37
cf. OB II 110–11
79 i-mu-ru-šu-ma re-e-û ú x[ . . . . . ]
80 a-na 40 ki-ma i-li uš-[i-in-nu] // OB II 78–9?
81 ka-am-su re-e-û ma-[a-ar-šu]
82 ka-pa-ar ru ud-da-am-[a-šu ana šêriššu?] // OB II 80 // 183 // SB II 40
83 eṭ-lu-un-mi a-na 30 m[a-ši-il padatta] // OB II 81–2 // 184–5, cf. SB II 41
84 la-na né-e′ e-se-em-[l a pungul] // OB II 83–4 // 186–7 // SB II 42 bb
85 mi-in-de i-a-al-la-[ad] i-na[l šadî] // OB II 114
86 iš-sa-ak-pu re-ü[sipa]^[muši-šî] // OB II 118–19 // SB II 62
87 ši-it-tu iš-sa-a-[ba-aš su-su-nu-ti . . . . . ]
88 40 na-[šir-[šu-nu amêlu ēru] // OB II 115–16 // SB II 60?
89 i[t-ta-n[a . . . . . ]
90 it-ti ša-am-[ša-at ippu ulša?] // OB II 135–6?
91 ú-ul i-[ . . . . . ]
92 ut-ta-a[pi-ši . . . . . ] // OB II 115–16 // SB II 60?
93 mi-im-[ma[ . . . . . ]
94 [x x] x[ . . . . . ]

gap of more than two columns and a half, ca 130 ll.
57  From [. . . . . . .]
58  ‘You are handsome, [O Ea (Enkidu), you are just like a god,]
59  why like [the animals do you roam the wild?]  
60  Clothe yourself [with a garment . . .]
61  be girt with a waistband [. . . !]
62  Take up a weapon, [become(?)] like a warrior! 
63  Why do you inhabit [. . . . ?]
64  Why do you, like the [animals, roam the wild?]  
65  You should see Uruk, [. . . . . . ,]
66  the people’s home, seat [of Anu(?),]
67  where the young men are girt [with waistbands(?),]
68  daily the beds of night-[time . . . ]
69  To the festive food you will [. . . . . . ,]
70  you are (now) displaced from the territory [. . . ]’
71  He heard her words, consented [to what she said,]
72  a woman’s counsel [struck home in his heart,]
73  She took off (her) garment, [clothed him in] one part,  
74  and the other part she put [on herself.]
75  He put on the garment [. . . . . . ,]
76  he anointed himself with oil [. . . . . . ]
77  Grasping his hand, [she began leading him,] like a [god,]
78  to the shepherds’ camp, the site [of the sheep-pen.]
79  The shepherds saw him and [. . . . . . ,]
80  they threw [themselves prostrate] before Ea (Enkidu) as (before) a god.
81  The shepherds were bowed down in [his] presence,
82  the herdsboys humbling themselves [before him,]
83  “The fellow is [equal in build] to Sin (Gilgameš),
84  (though) squatter of stature, [he is sturdier of] bone.
85  For sure he is born in [the uplands.]”
86  The shepherds lay themselves down [at night,]
87  sleep overtook [them, . . . . . ,]
88  Ea (Enkidu) was [their] watchman, [a man wide awake,]
89  He kept [. . . . . . . ,]
90  with Šamiḫat [pleasuring himself,]
91  He did not [. . . . . . . ,]
92  he kept chasing(?) [. . . . . . . ,]
93  Anything [. . .

long lacuna
rev. col. v
1’ [ . . . ] x x [ . . . ]
2’ [ . . . ] x x x kal’-[a- . . . ]
3’ [ . . . ] t’40 úrim [ . . . ] // SB I 226?
4’ [ . . . ]-ga-ab? a-ši-im-x[ . . . ] // SB I 230
5’ [a-ša-ar?] ar-da-[t] šu-um-lu-[a- . . . ] // SB I 231
6’ [ku-u]z-[ba] [zu*-u-ú-na ma-[a ri-ša-a-ti] // SB I 232
7’ [x x x] x-ša? 40 úrim [ . . . ] cf. SB I 233?
8’ [30 lu]-k[a-a]-1-lim1-ka e-[ . . . ] // SB I 234
9’ [ . . . ] x x [ . . . ] x x tu [ . . . ] cf. SB I 236
10’ [ . . . ] x x x [ . . . ]

Significant variants in shared lines
4 šadîška for SB I 243 altu šadimma “from the uplands”
5 idagqala šunâti for SB I 244 inâšâla šunâtêka “was dreaming about you”
8 [ib’]-bi-šu-ma for SB I 247 ibšûnimma “appeared to me”
9 kišru for SB I 248 kîma kîšri “like lumps of rock”
10 kabir for OB II 8 ikabir “it grew heavy”, SB I 249 dân “it was too much”
11 askipšûma for OB II 9 unîssâma “I pushed at it”, SB I 250 ultablakkissâma “I kept trying to roll it”
11 el’e for OB II 9 el’tœ’i, SB I 250 el’e’a
12 paḫîr elîyâ for OB II 10 paḫîr elîšû “was gathered about it”. SB I 251 ìzzâz elî[šu] “was standing around [it]”
14 bidû for OB II 12 pûtû “my forehead”.
15 atbašša ana maḫûrika for OB II 14 atbahâššu ana šêrîki “I brought it away to you”, SB I 257 [a]tadîšû ana šâpîl[ki] “[I] set it down at [your] feet”
16 // 38 miûdû itpašûr for OB II 15 mâde’at kalâm “knowing everything”
18 mâ miñde for OB II 17 mâde
19 ki kâtâma for OB II 17 kîma kâti
19 urabbû šêrû for OB II 19 urabbûša šadû “the uplands reared him”
21 aḫšum usṭâpaḫhûru for OB II 43 aḫšum uṣṭamaḫḫûru “because I shall make (him) equal”, SB I 290 u anûku uṭuṭamaḫḫûru “and I shall make him equal”
23 u where OB II 21 omits
23 šûtu for OB II 21 šēpîšû “his feet”
24 // 41 libbaka īšâk for OB II 20 taḫaddu atta “you will rejoice”
25 // 42 ana maḫûrika for OB II 23 ana šêrîya “to me”
31 šutta for OB II 24 šuṭûm “another”
36 [h]ašîna for OB II 31 bânišû “its form”
37 aṭabbûb elûšû for OB II 34 aṭabbûb elûšû, SB I 284 elûšû aṭabbûb
39b baššînà 43 iši-šu for SB I 288 mâri baššînû ša tûmarû “My son, the axe that you saw”
58 damqatâ, with MB Boç, // SB, for OB II 53 anaṭâlka “I am looking at you”
59 kišma for OB // MB Boç, // SB itti “with”
61 nêziḥ for SB II 28 nanziḥ
63 miššû lâ ramânû for SB II 30 miṭluṭû mûmânû “taking his own counsel”
64 atta kišma for SB II 29 itti “with”
69 ana zîbî for OB II 62 ? (damaged, but different)
72 milku for OB II 67 milkûn ša
73 ilmûs lubša for OB II 69 ilmûs lubša “she stripped off her clothing”
74 u šànûl for OB II 71 libšan šânîm “the other garment”
74 il[šṭabaš] for OB II 72 ittalbaš
75 ʃṭabaš lubša for OB II 110 ilbaš libšam
76 ʃṭapašši for OB II 108 ʃṭapašši
83 eʃlu₃ni ana for OB [80] // 183 anâmî “to”
83 // OB II [80] // 183 maṣšîl padattûm, SB II 40 kî maṣšîl lâna “how similar in build”
84 nê’ for OB II [81] // 184 // MB Boç, šâpîl “shorter”
85 i‘allâdî for OB II [83] // 86 ša iwwalû “he that was born”, SB II 42 MS bb alîd
88 nâṣir[šanû] for OB II 118 maṣṣâṣranû “their watch”, SB II 62 nâṣissanû “their herdsman”
rev. S’ šûntû for SB I 230 šâmûm “comely”
NOTES

4. For the ablative function of “terminative” -iš see GAG § 67b.

5. The broken text in front of  추진, which ends in an upright wedge, is absent from the parallel, SB I 244 Gilgameš ina libbi Uruk inaštala šanātēka. One might read [šu-u] 추진, but the determinative DIS = m is not used elsewhere on this tablet.

8–9. On these lines and their parallels see the commentary below.

13. The sign  of  ṃ-ul was inserted in the line as an afterthought, and  tu squeezed as a consequence.

18. On the particle mà at the beginning of Akkadian clauses see Kienast 1961 and CAD M/1 1–4 s.v. mà. Simple spellings are confined to the third and early second millennia; thereafter the word is written maa. As (i) a particle of rhetoric mà expresses objection (OAkk, OA, OB, NB) or confirmation (OAkk, OB, Boğazköy, MA, NA), but it also serves as (ii) a particle introducing or continuing direct speech or quotation (MB, Boğazköy, Ras Shamra, MA, NA), particularly in the north. Objection is not appropriate in the present context, for Ninsun does not dispute the dream’s content, and confirmation seems redundant alongside minde, which has exactly that force (George 2003: 182 on OB II 17). Thus I take mà as (ii). It is without parallel elsewhere in the Gilgameš corpus and indicates the influence of vernacular usage on the text.

22. The verb ala’iššuma strikes a very false note; no doubt it is corrupt for una’iššuma “they admired him”.

24 // 41. The charming idiom of the heart laughing, said of one falling in love, also occurs in an unpublished Old Babylonian love poem (MS 2866: 2): li-bi i-ši-ik (ed. George forthcoming). In both texts the verb derives from the root  ṣi- (I am indebted to Jerrold S. Cooper for this insight), i.e.  ṣàḫu “to laugh” with substitution of plosive  /k/ for fricative  /š/, as in tanāḫu > tanāku, šāmuḫtu > šanaktu etc. (Knudsen 1969). It is noteworthy that west Semitic languages employ the plosives /k/ and /q/ as the third radical of cognates of  šāhū (see AAV s.v.). Further examples of libbu  šāhū in Akkadian occur conventionally spelled in MB letters (PBS I/2 36: 9–10): lib-bi ma-â-di-di-ša iš-ši-ša-an-[ni] “my heart rejoiced very much”; (BE XVII/1 89: 8–9): lib-bi a-na a-ma-ri-ka iš-ši-ša-an-ni “my heart rejoiced at (the idea of) seeing you”; and in Ashurnasirpal II’s great display inscription (I R 24 iii 26, ed. Grayson 1991: 214): a-na ši-tap-ru-šā šu-te-ni-šu i-ša-ša libba(ša)-šu “whose heart delighted in letting fly his darts(?).”

33. The word ribītu “main street” as an epithet of cities was briefly discussed in George 2003: 183 sub 28. That note overlooked the evidence from Mari that demonstrates ribītu in such a usage signifies a centre of political power (Durand 1991, Charpin 1991). The literal translations “Uruk-the-Town-Square” (George 1999) and “Uruk-Main-Street” (George 2003) are hereby retracted. On the etymology of ribītu see now Edzard 2000: 295.

40. The parallel line is longer (SB I 291): īlakakkumma ānu tappa māšēzi ibri, but there is not space on the present tablet to hold it all. An alternative restoration is to omit the verb; [da-an-nu tap-pu-â mušē-zi-[i]b ib-ri “[a mighty companion, the saviour] of (his) friend].”

63. The interrogative miššû is booked in the dictionaries as a lemma confined to Old Akkadian and Old Assyrian, except for entries in the Old Babylonian grammatical text at  ib i 3’ and 5’, where it is spelled mi-in-šam as well as mi-ši-šam. An overlooked instance is mi-in-ša in the OB dialogue CT 46 44 ii 7’, 11’, iii 6’. The word became minusu in Middle Babylonian, so miššû here is an example of the survival of old-fashioned language in a literary context. As such it might not have been freely intelligible, which would explain why it came later to be corrupted (if the line corresponds to SB II 30; see the commentary below). Note also mi-is-su in the Yale tablet of Gilgamesh (OB III 145).

69. In the contexts in which it appears the word zību signifies an offering of food made to a god. This is no doubt why the entry [zî]-[i]-[b]u = nap-[ta-nu] “meal” in the synonym list CT 18 21 Rm 354 obv. 2’ //
LTBA 2 14: 1’ is glossed “meal (for the god)” in CAD Z 106a. There is further lexical evidence from another synonym list, newly recovered:

- zi-i-bu MIN (mašatu) “offering flour”
- zi-i-bu mut-qā-u “sweet cake”
- zi-i-bu i-sin-nu “festival”
- zi-i-bu ni-gu-u “sacrifice”

// IM 132650 iv (courtesy Khalid Salim Isma’il)

In my view the explanations of zišu “food-offering” as naptanu “meal” and isinnu “festival” can be elucidated by comparative evidence. In Hebrew the cognate of zišu is zebah. This term refers to a sacrifice of meat in which the surplus was consumed in a communal feast by family, friends and neighbours, where the shared meal was a ceremonial rite that reaffirmed membership of the group. In Babylonia the popular consumption of sacrificial meat was a practice that found a literary expression in the Sumerian poem of Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven, which ends with the hero dividing the slaughtered bull’s carcase among the people of Uruk, the meat going to the poor (Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi 1993: 126 ll. 135–9). That passage is probably an aetiology of a particular festival in Uruk in which the townsfolk feasted on the meat of sacrificed bulls, distributed by the temple. There were surely other feasts when ordinary people themselves slaughtered animals as sacrifices and made a communal banquet of the surplus meat, as in ancient Israel. There is the story of the Poor Man of Nippur, in which Gimil-Ninurta bought a goat with the intention of sharing it with his neighbours, kith and kin, but decided not to because he could not afford the beer to make a proper feast of it. The specific mention of neighbours, kith and kin suggests that Gimil-Ninurta’s abandoned plans were motivated by the customs of popular religion, not just by sociability.

Commentary: the new text and the parallel material

The text begins with the prostitute talking to the wild man, Ea-Enkidu. She is persuading him to come with her back to the city of Ur, where people will see him and he may find companionship, and where Sin-Gilgameš has been having dreams about him (1–5). She goes on to relate the two dreams that Sin-Gilgameš had told his mother, the first about a hefty meteorite, the second about a strange axe, and the mother’s explanations that the dreams portended the coming of a companion and saviour (6–42). Following a lacuna at the bottom of col. i, the text continues with more of the prostitute’s advice. She asks Ea-Enkidu why, when he is so beautiful, he roams the steppe like a wild animal, and tells him to put on clothing and come to Uruk, where he will discover the joys of human society (58–70). He does as she advises, sharing her garment and rubbing sweet-smelling oil on himself (71–6). Then she takes him to the shepherds’ camp, where the herdsmen and shepherd boys abase themselves before him, recognizing him as a match for Sin-Gilgameš and of strange origin (77–85). That night Ea-Enkidu becomes their watchman.
The part of the Babylonian poem of Gilgameš covered by the new text is an old favourite. Thirty years ago Jerrold Cooper studied the dreams of Gilgameš in this part of the poem from the point of view of style and content, contrasting the Pennsylvania tablet with the first-millennium text (Cooper 1977). More recently Giorgio Buccellati has given us a structural study of the dream episode (Buccellati 2000). The dreams and their aftermath are now known in three different versions: (i) the Old Babylonian Pennsylvania tablet (OB II), (ii) the present tablet (MB Priv.), and (iii) the Standard Babylonian text (SB I–II). Another source for this part of the poem is a late Old Babylonian version known from (iv) a fragment of a tablet copied at Hattusa (MB Boğ, Fragment a), which (as restored) yields a text very similar to OB II. These four sources survive in varying degrees of completion. A comparison of the four sources is most easily made by presenting their contents in tabular form.

(a) Pennsylvania tablet (OB II)
1. Gilgameš tells his first dream to his mother Ninsun (OB II 1–14)
2. N. explains it (OB II 15–23)
3. G. has another dream and tells it to N. (OB II 24–36)
4. N. explains it (OB II 37–43, 39–42 lost)
5. Meanwhile Enkidu makes love with Šamkatum for seven days and nights (OB II 43–50)
6. Š. tells E. about Uruk and proposes to take him there (OB II 51–65)
7. E. agrees, so she covers his nakedness, leads him to the shepherds’ camp (OB II 66–76)
8. The shepherds admire E., give him food and drink (OB II 77–93)
9. Š. tells E. what to do with the food and drink (OB II 94–8)
10. E. eats, drinks, is groomed, clothed and becomes the shepherds’ watchman (OB II 99–119)
11. A stranger comes on the scene (OB II 120 f.)
12. E. and Š. observe the stranger while making love (OB II 135–9)

(b) The fragment from Boğazköy (MB Boğ, a)
1. The prostitute admires Enkidu’s beauty (1–4)
2. She clothes E. and leads him to the shepherds’ camp (5–8)
3. The shepherds admire E., give him food and drink (9–13)
4. The prostitute tells E. what to do with the food and drink (14–16)

(c) The present tablet (MB Priv.)
1. The prostitute alerts Ea-Enkidu to his need of human company ([11]–3)
2. She relates the dreams in which Sîn-Gilgameš has foreseen his coming (4–42)
3. [gap] see (d) 7–8
4. She asks why E.-E. lives with the animals, tells him to cover himself and go to Uruk (59–70)
5. E.-E. agrees and they share her clothing; he rubs on oil (71–6)
6. She leads E.-E. to the shepherds’ camp (77–8)
7. The shepherds admire him (79–85)
8. E.-E. becomes the shepherds’ watchman (86–9?)
9. E.-E. and the prostitute make love? (90 ff.)
10. [long gap]
11. Description of Ur-Uruk (v 1′–9′)
(d) Standard Babylonian poem (SB I–II)
1. Enkidu makes love with the prostitute ša-naqba inumuru for six days and seven nights (I 188–94)
2. E. is spurned by the animals and returns to Š. (I 195–204)
3. Š. asks why E. lives with the animals, proposes to take him to Uruk (I 205–12)
4. E. agrees and declares that he will challenge Gilgameš (I 213–23)
5. Š. describes Uruk and Gilgameš, advises submission to G. (I 224–42)
6. Š. relates the dreams in which G. has foreseen E.’s coming (I 243–99)
7. Š. and E. make love again (I 300–II 1)
8. [gap]
9. Š. again asks why E. lives with the animals (II 29)
10. E. ponders her question, agrees to take her advice (II 30–3)
11. E. and Š. share her clothing (II 34–5)
12. Š. leads E. to the shepherds’ camp (II 36–7)
13. The shepherds admire E., give him food and drink (II 38–48)
14. Š. tells E. what to do with the food and drink (II 49–51)
15. [gap]
16. E. becomes the shepherds’ watchman (II 60–2)
17. A stranger comes on the scene (II 63 ff.)

Leaving aside the issue of the peculiar proper nouns, there are many variants in the vocabulary and phrasing of the new text, when compared with the parallel versions; they have been collected above, after the transliteration. The synopses just given make it clear that the tablet published here is witness to a version of the poem of Gilgameš that displays considerable differences from the eighteenth-century Pennsylvania tablet, on the one hand, and the Standard Babylonian poem ša-naqba inumuru, a product of the late second millennium, on the other. These differences are examined in the following paragraphs.

In col. i, where the text runs parallel to col. i of the Old Babylonian Pennsylvania tablet, some lines of the Old Babylonian text are absent (OB II 11, 26, 32), while others appear transposed, not always to the benefit of the poem (MB Priv1, 23–4 // OB II 21, 20, MB Priv, 35–6 // OB II 35–6, 31). There are two completely new individual lines in this column: MB Priv1, 13: párittenu lili’u šuqāšu, which takes the place of OB II 11: etli’utum unāššaqū šēpišu, thus avoiding the repetition at MB Priv1, 23 // OB II 21; and MB Priv1, 22: una’iddāšu(!) ipalḫurītu eššu, which is a new variation on the theme of people marvelling at the strange sight of the meteorite that symbolizes Enkidu.

The new evidence presented by MB Priv1, 8–9 necessarily prompts a re-examination of the parallel lines of the Pennsylvania tablet. In my edition I read the damaged opening of OB II 6 as ip-ši żi?-ru-nim1-ma. Collating the tablet in 2005 in the light of the present line, I saw that the damage gives the impression of oblique wedges where they may be none and that the decipherments żi and ru are for this reason both far from secure. It now seems likely that the Pennsylvania tablet and the present tablet both have the same verb, OB II 6: ib-ši-šu-nim1-ma kakkabū šamā’i // MB Priv1, 8: [ib]-bi-šu-ma kakkabū šamāyi. This verb is difficult to parse, which is probably why the first-millennium text replaces it with ibšūнимma, literally “they came into being” (SB I 247). Since both second-millennium tablets write the syllable /pi/ with pi not pī, I can see no alternative root to /bū/. The verb bēšu “to grow apart, separate” is not hitherto attested in the IV-stem, but as an intransitive verb it would form an ingressive in this stem, i.e. nebsu “to become separate”. Such a meaning would suit the context: as night fell and the light
failed, more and more stars slowly became distinct against the darkening background of the
twilight sky.

Collation of the Pennsylvania tablet at OB II 7 did not alter my understanding of the
traces: x (x)-rum ša Anim imqutam ana šēriya. However, the presence of kiΩru on MB Priv 1, 9,
in addition to the first-millennium text (SB I 248), strengthens the case for reading k[i]-iΩ-t[rum in
OB II 7, against the tablet.

A new four-line passage, MB Priv 1, 27–30, is structurally the counterpart of SB I 295–7,
though it follows the explanation of the first dream, not the second. In both passages the
protagonist expresses to his mother his longing for the friend foretold him in the dreams, but in
different language. This reaction is not present in the Pennsylvania tablet. The new fragment
includes the previously unattested detail that the hero hopes the new arrival will linappiš libbi
“ease my heart”. This represents a tacit awareness by Gilgameš that his overbearing behaviour in
Uruk was borne of what, in another context, his mother Ninsun called libba lå šâli lu “a restless
spirit” (SB III 46).

Col. ii of the new tablet holds text that parallels first the fragmentary opening of SB II and
then the latter part of col. ii of the Pennsylvania tablet. Comparison between the versions is
hampered by the loss of the ends of lines on this column of MB Priv 1, and by our incomplete
knowledge of the three other texts, the Pennsylvania tablet (OB II), the tablet from Hattusa (MB
Bo[1]) and the first-millennium poem (SB II). Enough is preserved, nevertheless, to show that the
correspondence of lines is less close than it was in col. i. In the present version of the poem, the
episode in which the prostitute enjoins Enkidu to adopt human ways is far from a good match
with previously known text. It includes two lines new to knowledge, in which the prostitute tells
Ea-Enkidu first to cover himself (60: litbaš l[ubša ...]) and second to bear arms (62: liqe kakka
kîma m[uti ...]); both have counterparts in the narrative of the Pennsylvania tablet, where her
instructions are realized in very similar phrasing (OB II 110–13: ilbaš libšam kîma muti ibašši /
ilqe kakkašu låbi ugerre). In between MB Priv 1, 60 and 62 is a line that adds another detail, that
Ea-Enkidu should wear a belt around his waist (61: nenzi⁄ n[ba ...]); this shows that the
elusive opening word of SB II 28 is nanzi⁄.

Following these three lines are two that probably correspond to SB II 29–30, but
transposed. In the first-millennium text the prostitute concludes her speech by asking a second
why the wild man keeps the company of wild animals, and his reaction is to ponder her
words (SB II 30 mitluku ramânšu [...]). In the new tablet, as in the Pennsylvania tablet, he is
not allowed a reaction, and the prostitute’s speech continues. But before she asks why he behaves
like an animal there is a line of parallel meaning that, as it stands, has no counterpart elsewhere
(63 miššu lû ramâta ...). There is more than a passing phonetic similarity between the two
phrases miššu lû ramâta and mitluku ramânšu. The latter is a clumsy expression, and I suspect
it arose from a garbling of the former through corruption of a long sequence of signs: ni, iš→it,
šu→lu lu→ku ra ma ta→ni-šâ. Having turned a line of the prostitute’s speech into narrative,
the culprit then had no option but to transpose it with the following line. In this way the couplet
MB Priv 1, 63–4 became SB II 29–30.

The continuation of the prostitute’s speech contains her invitation to go to the city,
following broadly the example of the Pennsylvania tablet. But there is another new line (65 lû
tâm ur Uruk [...]), and one couplet (ll. 67–8) is more closely related to the Standard Babylonian
text than to the Old Babylonian. Lines 69–74 run parallel with the Pennsylvania tablet. The first
two of these prompt a re-examination of a damaged and perplexing passage of the Pennsylvania
tablet that in my edition I read, without much confidence, as follows:

\[ ù at-[a-\text{m}a] \] à[wi-li-im-ma?! \] 63 ta-aš-[ta-ka]-a[n?] ñ ra[1]-ma-an-ka \]
The present text confirms that the OB passage forms a couplet, though spread over four lines of tablet, and that it was correct to restore \textit{atta} in the first line of the couplet. However, the traces of what follows \textit{atta} in the OB line cannot be reconciled with MB Priv. 69 \textit{ana zîbî}, and here the Pennsylvania tablet retains its mystery, even after renewed collation. In the following line the new text shows that \textit{al-ka-ti-ma} was rightly understood as an archaic 2.m.sg. stative. The first sign of this word on the Pennsylvania tablet is as copied, i.e. either \textit{ab} or \textit{al}, but the word must now be read \textit{ab-ka-ti-ma} to match MB Priv. 70 \textit{abkåta}. The general import of the couplet is much as understood before. Enkidu’s habitat is no longer the wild. The city calls him, and there he must fit in with human society. The new text adds the detail that in the city he will share in the sacrificial meals (\textit{zîbu}), which were probably distributed by the temple on feastdays (see the textual note). Previously Enkidu was a vegetarian, like the gazelles with whom he grazed. In this invitation to eat meat the poet gives us another example of the way in which civilization will turn Enkidu into an oppressor of his former companions. At the same time he will become socialized by partaking of communal rites of feasting, for these were important events in confirming identity and kinship.

Like the Pennsylvania tablet, the new text follows the couplet discussed in the preceding paragraph with a narrative describing how Ea-Enkidu saw the sense of what the prostitute said and shared her garment (MB Priv. 71–4 // OB II 66–72). Lines 75–6 are a couplet reporting again that Ea-Enkidu clothed himself and that he splashed on scented oil. They represent an intrusion in comparison with the Pennsylvania tablet, where two comparable lines occur the other way around and at a point later in the narrative, after Enkidu has reached the shepherds’ camp. The departure for the shepherds’ camp is handled in the same way in both versions (MB Priv. 77–8 // OB II 73–6). Lines 79–82 are the counterparts of OB II 77 ff., but here a lacuna interrupts the text of the Pennsylvania tablet, so that comparison becomes impossible. To judge from l. 79, the new text diverges somewhat from the OB version. Three lines, not previously known, paint a vivid picture of the shepherds grovelling, man and boy, before their new guest (ll. 80–2).

In other versions the entry to the shepherds’ camp is greeted by a quatrain in which the shepherds, and later the townsfolk of Uruk, marvel at Enkidu’s size (MB Priv. 10–12, rather differently in SB II 40–3). Here this strophe is cut short, with no reference to his suckling by the animals (MB Priv. 83–5). In all three parallel versions the poem continues with the celebrated passage in which the shepherds give Enkidu bread and beer, and the prostitute shows him what to do with them (OB II 87–98 // MB Boğ, a 12–15 // SB II 44–51). A lacuna interrupts SB II and MB Boğ, at this point, but the Old Babylonian poem then has him getting drunk, being shaved, anointed with oil, dressed in proper clothes, and equipped with a weapon, so turning him into a human being (OB II 99–113). The narrative of the new text jumps straight to nightfall, when the newcomer takes over as the shepherds’ watchman (MB Priv. 86 // OB II 114). The text then continues with the passage in which Enkidu, dallying with the prostitute, spies the stranger who will tell him how Gilgameš behaves at weddings. This episode is poorly preserved in both the Pennsylvania tablet and SB II. It appears that the new text diverges again, with some points of contact with the Pennsylvania tablet (MB Priv. 88, 90 and 92) but several apparently new lines (ll. 87, 89, 91, 93). Unfortunately these are too damaged to restore.

The fragment of text on the reverse of the new tablet tells of the splendours of city life in Ur, where the girls are so pretty, etc. The passage has a parallel in the first-millennium text at the point where the prostitute first attempts to persuade Enkidu to leave the wild and go to Uruk, long before he enters the shepherds’ camp (SB I 226 ff.). It allows one correction to the reconstructed
text: in SB I 230 read not [har-ma]-a-ti “harlots” but [ar-da]-a-ti “young women”, with MB Priv, v 5’ aråtu. If I have correctly restored [luk]allimka “I will show you” in l. 8’ // SB I 234, this is also a passage of direct speech. The fragment is certainly many lines later than the episode at the camp, so must take its place later in the narrative. The obvious location for it is when Enkidu arrives at the city, accompanied by the prostitute. It would be natural for the poet then to have her repeat the description of the city already painted. The first-millennium text is poorly preserved and is marred by a long lacuna of nearly forty lines in SB II that falls between Enkidu spying the stranger and his confrontation of Gilgameš in Uruk. It is thus eminently possible, as well as fitting, that this lacuna contains a passage parallel to col. v of the present tablet.

From the point of view of the narrative, the most salient features of the new text are (a) the inclusion of the dream episode in a speech of the prostitute, and (b) the omission of the bread-and-beer episode. The former is not a feature of the Old Babylonian poem, where the dreams are reported as direct speech by the narrator. The technique of second-hand reporting is a sophistication also introduced into the poem by the inclusion of Ùta-napišti’s story of the deluge (SB XI 8–206). This kind of narrative complexity can be broadly said to distinguish later Gilgameš from earlier. The incorporation into Gilgameš of the Flood story seems definitely to have been a late development, for a version of the poem that had no room for it survived into the first millennium in an early Neo-Assyrian copy (Assyrian MS z, George 2003: 364–9). Formerly one was tempted to attribute both these major changes in the narrative to a single editor, for want of a better name, to Sîn-lēqi-unninni. The evidence of the present text, however, shows that the reporting of Gilgameš’s dreams by the prostitute could not have been an innovation of the Standard Babylonian text, but was a strategy already employed at a much earlier date.

The bread-and-ale episode is part of the story of the civilizing of Enkidu. In the new text he still learns how to wear clothing and use scented oil as perfume, but the comic passage in which he learns to eat bread and drink beer at the shepherds’ table is not present. Instead, Enkidu immediately becomes the camp watchman. The omission of part of this episode is another indication, if one were needed, that the evolution of the poem in the second millennium was not linear. While the version of the poem represented by the new tablet left out this key element of Enkidu’s transformation, other contemporaneous versions clearly did not, for the episode survives into the Standard Babylonian text. Versions of the poem differed in minor respects, such as vocabulary and phrasing, and in structural matters, such as the ordering of lines, but this comparison clearly reaffirms that there were also larger differences, and also demonstrates that not all versions held every episode.
Fig. 1. MB Priv, obverse
Fig. 2. MB Priv, reverse
Fig. 3. MB Priv, obverse
Fig. 4. MB Priv, reverse, detail showing inscribed surface

REFERENCES


**ABSTRACT**

This article presents a unique tablet of Gilgameš, not previously published, on which is preserved part of the episode of the taming of Enkidu. However, the proper nouns Gilgameš and Enkidu are replaced with gods’ names: 𒀀𒀁 (Sîn) and 𒀀𒈹 (Ea). No compelling explanation for this can be found. The tablet is probably of early Middle Babylonian date, from the Sealand. The article concludes with a comparison of its text with that of other versions of the poem. The chief difference is that this new account lacks the passage in which the wild man is offered bread and ale.

**RÉSUMÉ**

Cet article est consacré à une tablette de Gilgameš unique, jusqu’à présent inédite, sur laquelle elle est conservée une partie de l’épisode de la domestication d’Enkidu. Cependant, les noms propres de Gilgameš et Enkidu sont remplacés par des noms de dieux: 𒀀𒀁 (Sîn) et 𒀀𒈹 (Ea). Aucune explication de ce phénomène ne s’impose. La tablette date probablement du début de l’époque médio-babylonienne, étant originaire du Pays de la Mer. L’article s’achève avec une comparaison de ce texte avec celui des autres versions du poème. La principale différence réside dans l’absence de l’épisode dans lequel du pain et de la bière sont offerts à l’homme sauvage.

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