



# **THE EPIC OF GILGAMISH**

**R. CAMPBELL THOMPSON**

Global Grey ebooks

# THE EPIC OF GILGAMISH

A NEW TRANSLATION FROM A COLLATION OF THE  
CUNEIFORM TABLETS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM RENDERED  
LITERALLY INTO ENGLISH HEXAMETERS

BY  
R. CAMPBELL THOMPSON

1928

The Epic of Gilgamesh Translated By R. Campbell Thompson.

This edition was created and published by Global Grey

©GlobalGrey 2018



[globalgreyebooks.com](http://globalgreyebooks.com)

# CONTENTS

Preface

The First Tablet: Of The Tyranny Of Gilgamish, And The Creation Of Enkidu

The Second Tablet: Of The Meeting Of Gilgamish And Enkidu

The Third Tablet: The Expedition To The Forest Of Cedars Against Humbaba

The Fourth Tablet: The Arrival At The Gate Of The Forest

The Fifth Tablet: Of The Fight With Humbaba

The Sixth Tablet: Of The Goddess Ishtar, Who Fell In Love With The Hero After His Exploit Against Humbaba

The Seventh Tablet: The Death Of Enkidu

The Eighth Tablet: Of The Mourning Of Gilgamish, And What Came Of It

The Ninth Tablet: Gilgamish In Terror Of Death Seeks Eternal Life

The Tenth Tablet: How Gilgamish Reached Uta-Napishtim

The Eleventh Tablet: The Flood

The Twelfth Tablet: Gilgamish, In Despair, Enquires Of The Dead

## PREFACE

THE Epic of Gilgamish, written in cuneiform on Assyrian and Babylonian clay tablets, is one of the most interesting poems in the world. It is of great antiquity, and, inasmuch as a fragment of a Sumerian Deluge text is extant, it would appear to have had its origin with the Sumerians at a remote period, perhaps the fourth millennium, or even earlier. Three tablets of it exist written in Semitic (Akkadian), which cannot be much later than 2,000 B.C.: half a millennium later come the remains of editions from Boghaz Keui, the Hittite capital in the heart of Asia Minor, written not only in Akkadian, but also in Hittite and another dialect. After these comes the tablet found at Ashur, the old Assyrian capital, which is anterior in date to the great editions now preserved in the British Museum, which were made in the seventh century B.C., for the Royal Library at Nineveh, one Sin-liqi-unni(n)ni being one of the editors. Finally there are small neo-Babylonian fragments representing still later editions.

In the seventh century edition, which forms the main base of our knowledge of the poem, it was divided into twelve tablets, each containing about three hundred lines in metre. Its subject was the Legend of Gilgamish, a composite story made up probably of different myths which had grown up at various times round the hero's name. He was one of the earliest Kings of Erech in the South of Babylonia, and his name is found written on a tablet giving the rulers of Erech, following in order after that of Tammuz (the god of vegetation and one of the husbands of Ishtar) who in his turn follows Lugal-banda, the tutelary god of the House of Gilgamish. The mother of Gilgamish was Nin-sun. According to the Epic, long ago in the old days of Babylonia (perhaps 5,000 B.C.), when all the cities had their own kings, and each state rose and fell according to the ability of its ruler, Gilgamish is holding Erech in thrall, and the inhabitants appeal to the Gods to be relieved from his tyranny. To aid them the wild man Enkidu is created, and he, seduced by the wiles of one of the dancing girls of the Temple of Ishtar, is enticed into the great city, where at once (it would appear) by ancient right Gilgamish attempts to rob him of his love. A tremendous fight ensues, and mutual admiration of each other's prowess follows, to so great an

extent that the two heroes become firm friends, and determine to make an expedition together to the Forest of Cedars which is guarded by an Ogre, Humbaba, to carry off the cedar wood for the adornment of the city. They encounter Humbaba, and by the help of the Sun-god who sends the winds to their aid, capture him and cut off his head; and then, with this exploit, the goddess Ishtar, letting her eye rest on the handsome Gilgamesh, falls in love with him. But he rebuffs her proposal to wed him with contumely, and she, indignant at the insult, begs her father Anu to make a divine bull to destroy the two heroes. This bull, capable of killing three hundred men at one blast of his fiery breath, is overcome by Enkidu, who thus incurs the punishment of hybris at the hands of the gods, who decide that, although Gilgamesh may be spared, Enkidu must die. With the death of his friend, Gilgamesh in horror at the thought of similar extinction goes in search of eternal life, and after much adventuring, meets first with Siduri, a goddess who makes wine, whose philosophy of life, as she gives it him, however sensible, is evidently intended to smack of the hedonism of the bacchante. Then he meets with Ur-Shanabi (the boatman of Uta-Napishtim) who may perhaps have been introduced as a second philosopher to give his advice to the hero, which is now lost; conceivably he has been brought into the story because of the sails(?) which would have carried them over the waters of Death (by means of the winds, the Breath of Life?), if Gilgamesh had not previously destroyed them with his own hand. Finally comes the meeting with Uta-Napishtim (Noah) who tells Gilgamesh the story of the Flood, and how the gods gave him, the one man saved, the gift of eternal life. But who can do this for Gilgamesh, who is so human as to be overcome by sleep? No, all Uta-Napishtim can do is to tell him of a plant at the bottom of the sea which will make him young again, and to obtain this plant Gilgamesh, tying stones on his feet in the manner of Bahrein pearl-divers, dives into the water. Successful, he sets off home with his plant, but, while he is washing at a chance pool, a snake snatches it from him, and he is again frustrated of his quest, and nothing now is left him save to seek a way of summoning Enkidu back from Hades, which he tries to do by transgressing every tabu known to those who mourn for the dead. Ultimately, at the bidding of the God of the Underworld Enkidu comes forth and pictures the sad fate of the dead in the Underworld to his friend: and on this sombre note the tragedy ends.

Of the poetic beauty of the Epic there is no need to speak. Expressed in a language which has perhaps the simplicity, not devoid of cumbrousness, of Hebrew rather than the flexibility of Greek, it can nevertheless describe the whole range of human emotions in the aptest language, from the love of a mother for her son to the fear of death in the primitive mind of one who has just seen his friend die; or from the anger of a woman scorned to the humour of an editor laughing in his sleeve at the ignorance of a savage. Whether there is justification for taking the risk of turning it into ponderous English hexameter metre is an open question, but in so doing I have done my utmost to preserve an absolutely literal translation, duly enclosing in a round bracket, (), every amplification of the original phrasing which either sense or metre or particularly an appreciation of unproven Assyrian particles has demanded. Restorations, either probable from the context or certain from parallels, have been enclosed in square brackets [].

To George Smith, one of the greatest geniuses Assyriology has produced, science owes much for the first arrangement and translations of the text of this extraordinary poem: indeed, it was for this Epic that he sacrificed his life, for actually it was the discovery of the Deluge Tablet in the British Museum Collections which led the *Daily Telegraph* to subscribe so generously for the re-opening of the diggings in the hope of further finds at Kouyunjik (Nineveh), in conducting which he died all too early in 1876. Sir Henry Rawlinson and Professor Pinches played no small part in the reconstruction and publication of at least two of the tablets, and to their labours in this field must be added the ingenuity of Professor Sayce, and the solid acumen of Dr. L. W. King. In America to Professor Haupt is owed the first complete edition of the texts, very accurately copied, and later on the editions of two early Babylonian texts were edited by Langdon, Clay and Jastrow: among German publications must be mentioned the translations of Jensen and Ungnad, with the edition of an Old Babylonian tablet by Meissner. The Boghaz Keui texts have been edited by Weidner, Friedrich, and Ungnad. It would be superfluous to say how much I am indebted to the labours of all these scholars.

The present version is based on a fresh collation of the original tablets in the British Museum, the results of which I propose to publish shortly in a critical edition of both text and translation. It will be seen that I have departed from the accepted order of several of the fragments of which

the position in the Epic is problematical. An examination of numerous fragments of tablets of a religious nature has naturally led to the discovery of duplicates and joins, some of which will be apparent in the present text. For their great liberality in granting me facilities to copy and collate these valuable tablets I have to express my heartiest thanks to the Trustees of the British Museum, and the Director, Sir Frederick Kenyon. To my friends Dr. H. R. Hall, and Messrs. Sidney Smith and C. J. Gadd of the British Museum, I am greatly indebted for much help in forwarding the work: and to Sir John Miles, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, I owe many shrewd suggestions.

R. CAMPBELL THOMPSON.

NINEVEH,  
CHRISTMAS, 1927.

---



# THE FIRST TABLET: OF THE TYRANNY OF GILGAMISH, AND THE CREATION OF ENKIDU

## Column I.

(The Argument).

<sup>1</sup>He who (the heart of) all matters hath proven let him [teach] the nation,  
[He who all] knowledge possesseth, therein shall he [school] all the people,  
[He shall his wisdom impart (?)] and (so) shall they ]share it] together.  
[Gilgamish(?)] <sup>2</sup>—he was the [Master] of wisdom, with [knowledge of all things,

5.He 'twas discovered the secret concealed . . . . .

(Aye), handed down the tradition relating to (things) prediluvian,  
Went on a journey afar, (all) aweary and [worn with his toiling(?)],

10.[Graved] on a table of stone all the travail.

Of Erech, the high-wall'd,

He (it was) built up the ramparts; (and) he (it was) clamp'd the foundation,

Like unto brass, of [E]-Anna <sup>3</sup>, the sacred, the treasury hallow'd,  
[Strengthen'd] its base to grant wayleave to no [one] . . . . .

. . . . . the threshold which from [of old (?)] . . . . .

. . . . . [E]-Anna . . . . .

15. . . . . to grant wayleave [to no one (?)] . . . . .

(About thirty lines wanting. The description of Gilgamish runs on to the beginning of the next Column).

## Column II.

Two-thirds of him are divine, and [one-third of him human,] <sup>4</sup> . . .

---

<sup>1</sup> Assyrian Version

<sup>2</sup> Possibly to be restored at the end of the line. It is obvious that the hero's name must be introduced before *l. 5*.

<sup>3</sup> The great temple of Anu, the Sky-god, and Ishtar, the goddess of love, in Erech, where the worship of the latter was carried on by beviies of dancing-girls and hetaerae.

<sup>4</sup> Restored from the Ninth Tablet.

The form of his body . . . . .

He hath forced to take . . . . .

(Gap of about three lines).

(The Complaint of Erech(?) to the gods against the tyrant Gilgamish)

7. " . . . . . of Erech 'tis he who hath [taken],

. . . . . (while) tow'reth [his] crest like an aurochs,

10. Ne'er hath the shock of [his] weapons (its) [peer]; are driven [his] fellows

Into the toils <sup>5</sup>, while cow'd are the heroes of Erech un- . . . . .

Gilgamish leaveth no son to [his] father, [his] arrogance swelling  
(Each) day and [night]; [aye, he] is the shepherd of Erech, the high-wall'd],

15. He is [our(?)] shepherd . . . . [masterful, dominant, subtle] . . .

[Gilgamish] leaveth no [maid to her mother, nor] daughter to [hero],  
[(Nay), nor a spouse to a husband]"

(And so), to (th' appeal of) their wailing

[Gave ear th' Immortals]: the gods of high heaven address'd the god Anu], <sup>6</sup>

20. (Him who was) Seigneur of Erech: "'Tis thou a son hast begotten,  
(Aye, in sooth, all) tyrannous, [while tow'reth his crest like an aurochs],  
Ne'er hath [the shock of his weapons] (its) peer; are driven [his fellows]  
Into the toils, awhile cow'd are the heroes of Erech un- . . . .] <sup>7</sup>.

Gilgamish leaveth no son to his father, [his arrogance swelling]  
(Each) day and night; aye, he is the shepherd of Erech, [the high-wall'd],

25. He is their shepherd . . . masterful, dominant, subtle . . .

Gilgamish leaveth no maid to [her mother], nor daughter to hero,  
(Nay), nor a spouse to a [husband]."

(And so), to (th' appeal of) their wailing

30. [Anu] <sup>8</sup> gave ear, call'd the lady Aruru <sup>9</sup>: "'Twas thou, O Aruru,  
Madest [(primeval seed of) mankind(?)]: do now make its fellow,  
So that he [happen on Gilgamish], yea, on the day of his pleasure,  
So that they strive with each other, and he unto Erech give [surcease]."

<sup>5</sup> i.e., captured and killed. cf. the beginning of the Twelfth Tablet

<sup>6</sup> Uncertain restoration

<sup>7</sup> Uncertain restoration

<sup>8</sup> Uncertain restoration

<sup>9</sup> A goddess, form of Nin-makh, especially as protectress of children

(The Creation of Enkidu).

So when the goddess Aruru heard this, in her mind she imagined  
(Straightway, this) Concept of Anu, and, washing her hands, (then)  
Aruru

Finger'd some clay, on the desert she moulded <sup>10</sup> (it): [(thus) on the  
desert]

35. Enkidu made she, a warrior, (as he were) born (and) begotten,  
(Yea), of Ninurta <sup>11</sup> the double, [and put forth] the whole of his body  
Hair: in the way of a woman he snooded his locks (in a fillet);  
Sprouted luxuriant growth of his hair-like (the awns of) the barley,  
Nor knew he people nor land; he was clad in a garb like Sumuqan <sup>12</sup>.

40. E'en with gazelles did he pasture on herbage, along with the cattle  
Drank he his fill, with the beasts did his heart delight at the water.

(The Encounter of Enkidu with the Hunter).

(Then) did a hunter, a trapper, come face to face with this (fellow),  
Came on him [one], two, three days, at the place where (the beasts)  
drank (their) water <sup>13</sup>;

45. (Sooth), when the hunter espied him, his face o'ermantled with terror,  
He and his cattle went unto his steading, [dismay'd] (and) affrighted,  
Crying aloud, [distress'd in, his heart, and) his face overclouded,  
.... woe in his belly .....

50. (Aye, and) his face was the same as of one [who hath gone] a far  
[journey].

Column III.

Open'd [his mouth (then)] the hunter, and spake, addressing [his  
father]:

"Father, there is [a] great fellow come [forth from out of the mountains],  
(O, but) [his] strength is the greatest [(the length and breadth) of the  
country],

[Like to a double] of Anu's own self [his strength] is enormous,

5. Ever (?) [he rangeth at large] o'er the mountains, [(and) ever] with

<sup>10</sup> Or "cast."

<sup>11</sup> A god, son of Enlil, patron of war and hunting

<sup>12</sup> God of cattle and agriculture

<sup>13</sup> Literally "A certain hunter, a trapper, met him at the drinking-place, [one], two, three days at the  
drinking-place, ditto."

cattle

[Grazeth on herbage (and) ever he setteth] his foot to the water,  
 [So that I fear] to approach him. The pits which I [myself] hollow'd  
 10. [(With mine own hands) <sup>14</sup> hath he fill'd in (again)], (and) the traps of  
 my [setting]  
 [Torn up, (and) out of my clutches hath holpen escape] (all) the cattle,  
 Beasts of the desert: to work at my fieldcraft [he will not allow] me."

[Open'd his mouth (then) his father, and spake], addressing the hunter:  
 15. "Gilgamish [dwelleth] in Erech, [my son, whom no one] hath  
 vanquish'd,

<sup>15</sup> [(Nay, but) 'tis his strength is greatest (the length and breadth) of the  
 country]

[Like to a double of Anu's own self], his strength is [enormous],

<sup>16</sup> [Go, set] thy face [towards Erech: and when he hears of] a monster,

<sup>17</sup> [He will say 'Go, O hunter, a courtesan-girl, a hetaera]

20. Take [with thee] . . . . . like a strong one;

<sup>18</sup> [When he the cattle shall gather again] to the place of (their)  
 drinking,

[So shall she put off] her [mantle] (the charm of) her beauty [revealing];  
 [(Then) shall he spy her, and (sooth) will embrace her, (and thenceforth)  
 his cattle,

[Which in] his very own deserts [were rear'd], will (straightway) deny  
 him."

(How Gilgamish first heard of Enkidu).

25. Unto the rede of his father the hunter [hath hearken'd, (and  
 straightway)]

He will away [unto Gilgamish] <sup>19</sup>.

Taking the road towards Erech

Turn'd he [his steps, and to] Gilgamish [came, his speech thus  
 addressing]:

(Saying): "There is a great fellow [come forth from out of the

---

<sup>14</sup> Probably supply *anaku* at the end of the line "I myself."

<sup>15</sup> It is doubtful whether there is room for this line in the break.

<sup>16</sup> Fairly probable restoration

<sup>17</sup> Fairly probable restoration

<sup>18</sup> Fairly probable restoration

<sup>19</sup> Fairly probable restoration

mountains],

30. [(O, but) his strength] is the greatest, (the length and breadth) of the country,

Like to a double of Anu's own self [his strength] is enormous,

[Ever (?)] he rangeth at large o'er the mountains, (and) ever with cattle

[Grazeth on herbage, (and)] ever [he setteth] his foot to the water,

35. So that I fear to approach [him] . The pits which I [myself] hollow'd

(With mine own hands) hath he fill'd in (again, and) the traps of my

[setting]

Torn up, (and) out of my clutches hath holpen escape (all) the cattle,

Beasts [of the desert]: to work at my fieldcraft he will not allow me."

40. Gilgamesh unto him, unto the hunter made answer (in this wise):

"Go, (good) my hunter, take with thee a courtesan-girl, a hetaera,

When he the cattle shall [gather] again to the place of (their) drinking,

So shall she put off her mantle, (the charm of her) beauty [revealing],

45. (Then) shall he spy her, and (sooth) will embrace her, (and

thenceforth) his cattle

Which in his very own deserts were rear'd will (straightway) deny

him. <sup>20</sup>"

(The Seduction of Enkidu).

Forth went the hunter, took with him a courtesan-girl, a hetaera,

(So) did they start on their travels, went forth on their journey

(together),

(Aye), at the term of three days arrived at the pleasaunce appointed.

Sate they down in their ambush (?), the hunter and the hetaera,

50. One day, two days they sat by the place where (the beasts) drank

(their) water.

(Then) at last came the cattle to take their fill in their drinking.

Column IV.

Thither the animals came that their hearts might delight in the water,

(Aye), there was Enkidu also, he whom the mountains had gender'd,

E'en with gazelles did he pasture on herbage, along with the cattle

---

<sup>20</sup> This belief in this loss of innocence has been common in the East since the days of Adam and Eve. The proper person to peer into the ink-pool magic is a little boy; few others are successful.

5.Drank he his fill <sup>21</sup>, with the beasts did his heart delight at the water,  
 So beheld him the courtesan-girl, the lusty great fellow,  
 (O but) a monster (all) savage from out of the depths of the desert!  
 "'Tis he, O girl! O, discover thy beauty, thy comeliness shew (him),  
 10.So that thy loveliness he may possess—(O), in no wise be bashful,  
 Ravish the soul of him—(certes), as soon as his eye on thee falleth,  
 He, forsooth, will approach thee, and thou—O, loosen thy mantle,  
 So that he clasp thee, and (then) with the wiles of a woman shalt ply him;  
 (Wherefore) his animals, bred in his desert, will (straightway) deny him,  
 15.(Since) to his breast he hath held thee."

The girl, displaying her bosom,  
 Shew'd him her comeliness, (yea) so that he of her beauty possess'd him,  
 Bashful she was not, (but) ravish'd the soul of him, loosing her mantle,  
 So that he clasp'd her, (and then) with the wiles of a woman she plied  
 him,  
 20.Holding her unto his breast.

('Twas thus that) Enkidu dallied  
 Six days, (aye) seven nights, with the courtesan-girl in his mating.  
 (How Enkidu was inveigled into Erech to fight with Gilgamish).

Sated at length with her charms, he turn'd his face to his cattle,  
 O the gazelles, (how) they scamper'd away, as soon as they saw him!  
 25.Him, yea, Enkidu,—fled from his presence the beasts of the desert!  
 Enkidu losing his innocence <sup>22</sup>—so, when the cattle fled from him,  
 Failed his knees, and he <sup>23</sup> slack'd in his running, (not) as aforetime:  
 Natheless he (thus) hath attain'd his full growth and hath broaden'd (his)  
 wisdom.

30.Sat he again <sup>24</sup> at the feet of the woman, the woman his features <sup>25</sup>  
 Scanning, and, while she <sup>26</sup> was speaking, his ears heard (the words)  
 she <sup>27</sup> was saying:

"Comely thou art, e'en like to a god, O Enkidu, shalt be,  
 35.Why with the beasts (of the field) dost thou (ever) range over the

---

<sup>21</sup> Or "of the drinking-place."

<sup>22</sup> Lit. either "the innocence of his body," or, "the excellence of his bodily (strength)."

<sup>23</sup> Lit. "Enkidu."

<sup>24</sup> The word is curiously spelt, if this is right.

<sup>25</sup> Variant: "the woman, he her features watching."

<sup>26</sup> Lit. "[The woman] spake unto him, yea, unto Enkidu."

<sup>27</sup> Lit. "the woman"

desert?

Up! for I'll lead thee to Erech, the high-wall'd—(in sooth), to the Temple Sacred, the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar, where, highest in power, Gilgamish is, and prevaileth o'er men like an aurochs."

#### 40. Her counsel

E'en as she spake it found favour, (for) conscious he was of his longing Some companion to seek; so unto the courtesan spake he <sup>28</sup>:

"Up, then, O girl, to the Temple, the holy (and) sacred, invite me,  
45. Me, to the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar, where, highest in power, Gilgamish is, and prevaileth o'er men like an aurochs—for I, too,

#### Column V.

I, I will summon him, challenging boldly (and) crying through Erech, 'I too, am mighty!' Nay, I, forsooth [I], will (e'en) destiny alter— (Truly), 'tis he who is born in the desert whose vigour [is greatest!]

..... I will [please] thee,

5..... [whatever] there be, that would I know."

"Enkidu, come (then) to [Erech], the high-wall'd, [where] people [array] them

[Gorgeous] in festal attire, (and) each day the day is a revel,

10. [Eunuch]-priests [clashing] (their) cymbals, and [dancing]-girls . . . . .

. . . flown with their wantoning, gleeful, and keeping the nobles

Out of their beds <sup>29</sup>! (Nay), Enkidu, [joy] in thy life (to its fullest)

[Thou shalt] taste—(forsooth) will I shew thee a man who is happy,

15. Gilgamish! View him, O look on his face, (how) comely his manhood!

Dower'd with lustiness is he, the whole of his body with power

Brimming, [his] vigour is stronger than thine, (all) day and night

restless!

20. Enkidu, temper thine arrogance—Gilgamish, loveth him Shamash,

Anu, (and) Enlil <sup>30</sup>, and Ea <sup>31</sup> have dower'd his wisdom with largesse.

(How Gilgamish dreamt of Enkidu).

(Sooth), or ever from out of thy mountains thou camest, in Erech

25. Gilgamish thee had beheld in a dream; so, Gilgamish coming

<sup>28</sup> Lit. "Enkidu."

<sup>29</sup> The Text is mutilated and the translation of these two lines may not be exact

<sup>30</sup> The god Bel

<sup>31</sup> The god of the great waters

Spake to his mother, the dream to reveal.

'O my mother, a vision

Which I beheld in my night-time. (Behold), there were stars of the heavens,

When something like unto Anu's own self fell down on my shoulders,

30. (Ah, though) I heaved him, he was o'erstrong for me, (and though) his grapple

Loosed I, I was unable to shake him (from off me): (and now, all the meanwhile),

People from Erech were standing about [him <sup>32</sup>, the] artisans [pressing].

35. On [him behind], (while) throng'd him [the heroes]; my (very) companions

Kissing [his] feet; [I, I to my breast] like a woman did hold him,

(Then) [I] presented him low at [thy] feet, [that] as mine own equal.

[Thou] might'st account him.'

<sup>33</sup>[She] who knoweth all wisdom (thus) to her Seigneur she answer'd,

40. [She] who knoweth all wisdom, to Gilgamish (thus) did she answer:

'(Lo), by the stars of the heavens are represented thy [comrades],

[That which was like unto] Anu's [own self], which fell on thy shoulders,

[Which thou didst heave, but he was, o'erstrong for thee, [(aye), though] his grapple

Thou didst unloose], but to shake him from off thee thou wert [un] able,

45. [So didst present] him low at my feet, [that] as thine own equal

[I might] account him—[and thou to thy breast like a woman] didst hold him:

## Column VI.

[This is a stoutheart, a] friend, one ready to stand by [a comrade],

One whose strength [is the greatest, (the length and breadth) of the country],

[Like to a double of Anu's own self his] strength is enormous.

[(Now), since thou] to thy breast didst hold him [the way of a woman],

5. [This is a sign that] thou art the one he will [never] abandon:

[This] of thy dream is the [meaning].'

<sup>32</sup> Perhaps there is an additional line to be supplied in the small gap which exists here "[the people (all) thronging before him]."

<sup>33</sup> Or should the name of Nin-sun, the mother of Gilgamish, be supplied in the break?



[Again he spake] to his mother,  
 '[Mother], a second dream [did I] see: [Into Erech, the high-wall'd],  
 10. Hurltled an axe, and they gather'd about it: [the meanwhile, from  
 Erech]  
 [People] were standing about it, [the people] (all) thronging before it,  
 [Artisans pressing] behind it, [while] I at thy feet did present it,  
 15. [I], like a woman I held it to me [that] thou might'st account it,  
 As mine own equal.'  
 [She the [all]-wise, who knoweth all wisdom, (thus) answer'd her  
 offspring,  
 [She the all-wise] who knoweth all wisdom, to Gilgamish answer'd:  
 '(Lo, that) [Axe] thou didst see (is) a Man; like a woman didst hold him,  
 20. Unto thy breast, [that] as thine own equal I might account him,  
 [This] is a stoutheart, a friend, one ready to stand by a comrade,  
 One whose strength is the [greatest (the length and breadth) of the  
 country],  
 (Like to a double of] Anu's [own self], his strength is enormous.'  
 [Gilgamish open'd his mouth, and] addressing his mother, (thus spake  
 he):  
 '[Though] great [danger (?)] befall, [a friend (?)] shall I have . . . <sup>34</sup>'

(The Assyrian Edition of the seventh century has three more lines on the First Tablet, which correspond with Column II, l. 3 of the Second Tablet of the Old Babylonian Edition. This latter has already begun with the episode of the two dreams, approximately Column V, l. 24 of the Assyrian First Tablet, and the text is so similar in both that I have not repeated it here. The Old Babylonian Edition here takes up the story, repeating one or two details).

---

<sup>34</sup> Of one more line the traces are " . . . [let me] go (?), even me."

## THE SECOND TABLET: OF THE MEETING OF GILGAMISH AND ENKIDU

<sup>35</sup>Column II.

2. While Gilgamish (thus) is the vision revealing  
Enkidu sitteth before the hetaera, and she [displaying <sup>36</sup> her] bosom,  
5.Shewing [her beauty (?)], the place of his birth he <sup>37</sup> forgetteth.

(So) Enkidu dallied

(Thus) for six days, seven nights, with the courtesan-girl in his mating.  
10.Broke into [speech] then, the nymph, and (thus) unto Enkidu spake  
she:

"(Yea, as) I view thee, (e'en) like a god, O Enkidu, shalt be,  
Why with the beasts (of the field) dost thou (ever) range over the desert?  
15.Up, for I'll lead thee to [Erech] broad-marketed, (aye), to the Temple  
Sacred, the dwelling of Anu—O Enkidu, come, that I guide thee,  
Unto E-Anna, the dwelling of Anu, where [Gilgamish] (liveth),  
20.(He), the supreme of creation; and thou, aye, thou wilt [embrace him]  
Like [to a woman], (and e'en) [as] thyself thou shalt [love him].

O, rouse thee

Up from the ground—'tis a shepherd's bed <sup>38</sup> (only)."

Her utterance heard he,

25.Welcomed her rede: the advice of the woman struck home in his  
bosom.

She one garment took off wherewith she might clothe him: the other <sup>39</sup>  
30.She herself wore, (and so) taking her hand like a brother <sup>40</sup> she led  
him

(Thus) to the booths(?) of the shepherds, the place of the sheepfolds. The  
shepherds

35.Gather]d at sight of him <sup>41</sup>

(Gap of four or five lines.)

---

<sup>35</sup> Old Babylonian Version

<sup>36</sup> *Urtammu?*

<sup>37</sup> Lit. "Enkidu."

<sup>38</sup> Read *ma-a-[a]-lum?*

<sup>39</sup> Text adds "garment."

<sup>40</sup> BAR

<sup>41</sup> Read *i-na [be]-ri-shu [ip]-hu-ru ri-ia-u*

## Column III.

(How the Hetaera schooled Enkidu).

He (in the past) of the milk of the wild things to suck was accustom'd!

5. Bread which she set before him he broke, but he gazed and he stared:

Enkidu bread did not know how to eat, nor had he the knowledge

Mead how to quaff!

10. (Then) the woman made answer, to Enkidu speaking,

"Enkidu, taste of the bread, (for) of life 'tis; (forsooth), the essential,

Drink thou, (too), of the mead, 'tis the wonted use of the country."

15. Enkidu ate of the bread, (aye, ate) until he was gorged,

Drank of the mead seven bumpers; his spirits rose, (and), exultant,

20. Glad was his heart, and cheerful his face: [himself(?)] was he rubbing,

25. Oil on the hair of his body anointed: and (thus) became human.

Donn'd he a garment to be like a man <sup>42</sup>, (and) taking his weapon,

30. Hunted the lions, which harried the shepherds o' nights: and the jackals

Caught he. (So) he, having mastered the lions, the shepherds slept soundly <sup>43</sup>.

35. Enkidu—(he) was their warden—(becometh) a man of full vigour.

(Now) is one of the heroes speaking to [Gilgamish(?)] . . . .

(About thirteen lines are missing, a gap in which a sinister figure has evidently appeared, sent evidently by Gilgamish to learn the meaning of the arrival of the strangers in Erech. Enkidu sees him and speaks).

## Column IV.

10. (Then while) he pleased, he lifted his eyes, (and), observing the fellow,

Spake he unto the woman: "O doxy, bring me (this) fellow,

15. Why hath he come? I would know his intention."

The woman the fellow

Call'd that he come to him, that he might see him: "O, why art thou seeking,

Sir? (Pray), which is the way to thy rest-house?"

20. The man spake, addressing

<sup>42</sup> Or "bridegroom."

<sup>43</sup> Use of *rabutum* "greatness." It has no meaning if it is applied as an epithet to the shepherds

Enkidu: "You to the House of Community <sup>44</sup> [Gilgamish calleth],  
(This is) the custom of men, and a homage (too) to the great ones:

25.Come, then, and heap up the offerings such as are due to the city,  
Come, on behalf of the common weal bring in the food of the city.  
(Tis) for the king of broad-marketed Erech to look on thy greeting,  
30.Gilgamish, king of broad-marketed Erech to look on thy greeting;  
First doth he mate with the woman allotted by fate, and then after  
Speak by the counsel of god, and so from the shape of the omens <sup>45</sup>  
(Utter the rede of) his destiny."

(So) at the words of the fellow

Went they before him.

(Gap of about nine lines).

Column V.

(The Entry of Enkidu into Erech).

7.[Enkidu] going [in front], with the courtesan coming behind him,  
10.Enter'd broad-marketed Erech; the populace gather'd behind him,  
(Then), as he stopp'd in the street of broad-marketed Erech, the people  
15.Thronging, behind him exclaim'd "Of a truth, like to Gilgamish is he,  
Shorter in stature a trifle, [his] composition is stronger.

20.. . . . [(once)] like a [weakling] baby he *suck'd* the milk of the wild  
things!

Ever the bread-cakes in Erech give glorious (climax) to manhood!

25.He a (mere) savage becometh a hero of proper appearance,  
(Now) unto Gilgamish, god-like, his composition is equal."

(How Enkidu fought with Gilgamish for the Hetaera).

30.Strewn is the couch for the love-rites, <sup>46</sup> and Gilgamish (now) in the  
night-time

Cometh to sleep, to delight in the woman <sup>47</sup>: (but) [Enkidu], coming

35.(There) in the highway, doth block up the passage to Gilgamish,  
[threat'ning]

He with his strength . . . . .

<sup>44</sup> The common meeting place of the men of the town, as sometimes in Arab villages to this day

<sup>45</sup> I have used a euphemism here. From l. 1 to l. 29 the text is very difficult

<sup>46</sup> Lit. "for Ishhara," the goddess of love

<sup>47</sup> Lit. "her."

(Gap of seven or eight lines).

Column VI.

6. Gilgamish . . . behind him . . . . .

10. Burgeon'd [his rage], (and) he rush'd to [attack] him: they met in the highway.

Enkidu barr'd up the door with his foot, (and) to Gilgamish entry—

15. Would not concede: they grappled and snorted(?) like bulls, (and) the threshold

Shatter'd: the (very) wall quiver'd as Gilgamish <sup>48</sup>, Enkidu grappled,

20. Snorting(?) like bulls, (and) the threshold they shatter'd, the (very) wall quiver'd.

(The Birth of Friendship).

25. Gilgamish bent his leg to the ground: (so) his fury abated,

(Aye, and) his ardour <sup>49</sup> was quell'd: so soon as was quelled his ardour,

30. Enkidu (thus) unto Gilgamish spake: "(Of a truth), did thy mother

Bear thee as one, and one only: (that choicest) cow of the steer-folds,

35. Nin-sun <sup>50</sup> exalted thy head above heroes, and Enlil hath dower'd Thee with the kingship o'er men."

---



---

<sup>48</sup> Lit. "and."

<sup>49</sup> Or perhaps "rage, or valour," lit. "breast."

<sup>50</sup> The mother of Gilgamish

## THE THIRD TABLET: THE EXPEDITION TO THE FOREST OF CEDARS AGAINST HUMBABA

(About a column and a half of the beginning of the Old Babylonian version on the Yale tablet are so broken that almost all the text is lost. Gilgamesh and Enkidu have now become devoted friends, thus strangely stultifying the purpose for which Enkidu was created, and now is set afoot the great expedition against the famous Cedar Forest guarded by the Ogre Humbaba. The courtesan has now for a brief space left the scene, having deserted Enkidu, much to his sorrow. The mutilated Assyrian Version gives a hint that the mother of Gilgamesh is now describing the fight to one of her ladies(?) Rishat-Nin . . . and where her recital becomes connected the story runs thus).

Column II.

(The Tale of the Fight).

"He lifted up [his foot, to the door . . . . .

21.(?) They raged furiously . . . . .

Enkidu hath not [his equal] . . . unkempt is the hair . . .

(Aye) he was born in the desert, and [no] one [his presence can equal]."

(Enkidu's sorrow at the loss of his Love).

Enkidu (there) as he stood gave ear [to his utterance (?)], grieving  
26.Sitting [in sorrow]: his eyes fill'd [with tears], and his arms lost their power,

[Slack'd was his bodily vigour]. Each clasp'd [the hand of] the other.

37.[Holding] like [brothers] their grip . . . [(and) to Gilgamesh] Enkidu answer'd: <sup>51</sup>

40."Friend, 'tis my darling hath circled (her arms) round my neck (to

---

<sup>51</sup> Down to this point the: Assyrian Version has been used, restored in part from the Old Babylonian. The Old Babylonian Version runs (Column II. 26 "The eyes [of Enkidu fill'd] with tears, his heart was [heavy] and . . . he mourned, his heart [was heavy], and . . . he mourn 'd. [Gilgamesh] lifted up his face, [spake] to Enkidu: ' [Why] are thine eyes [full of tears] (and) thy [heart heavy]? [Why dost thou] mourn?' [Enkidu answer'd] and spake to Gilgamesh:" and then it continues as above in the text.

farewell me) <sup>52</sup>,  
 (Wherefore) my arms lose their power, my bodily vigour is slacken 'd."

(The Ambition of Gilgamish).

45. Gilgamish open'd his mouth, and to Enkidu spake he (in this wise):

Column III.

(Gap of about two lines)

"[I, O my friend, am determined to go to the Forest of Cedars],  
 5. [(Aye) and] Humbaba the Fierce [will] o'ercome and destroy [what is evil]

10. [(Then) will I cut down] the Cedar . . . . ." <sup>53</sup>

Enkidu open'd his mouth, and to Gilgamish spake he (in this wise),

15. "Know, then, my friend, what time I was roaming with kine in the mountains

I for a distance of two hours' march from the skirts of the Forest

Into its depths would go down. Humbaba—his roar was a whirlwind,

20. Flame (in) his jaws, and his very breath Death! O, why hast desired

This to accomplish? To meet(?) with Humbaba were conflict unequall'd."

25. Gilgamish open'd his mouth and to Enkidu spake he (in this wise):

"[Tis that I need] the rich yield of its mountains [I go to the Forest]" . . . .

(Seven mutilated lines continuing the speech of Gilgamish, and mentioning "the dwelling [of the gods?]" (of the beginning of the Fifth Tablet), and "the axe," for cutting down the Cedars).

36. Enkidu open'd his mouth [and] to Gilgamish spake he (in this wise):

40. "(But) when we go to the Forest [of Cedars] . . . its guard is a

[Fighter],

Strong, never [sleeping], O Gilgamish . . . . .

(Three mutilated lines, apparently explaining the powers which Shamash (?), the Sun-god, and Adad, the Storm-god, have bestow'd on Humbaba).

Column IV.

<sup>52</sup> A difficult phrase. It may be that this represents the words for saying farewell, without any further explanation, just as our "God be with you" has become, "Good-bye." The same convention is apparent in Ruth 1, 14, at the parting of the two daughters of Naomi: "And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her."

<sup>53</sup> Ends of three short lines here. . . . "the wood," " . . . , " "I will open it."

1. <sup>54</sup>So that he safeguard the Forest of Cedars a terror to mortals  
 Him hath Enlil appointed—Humbaba, his roar is a whirlwind,  
 Flame (in) his jaws, and his very breath Death! (Aye), if he in the Forest.  
 Hear (but) a tread(?) <sup>55</sup> on the road—'Who is this come down to his  
 Forest?'

So that he safeguard the Forest of Cedars, a terror to mortals,  
 Him hath Enlil appointed, and fell hap will seize him who cometh  
 Down to his Forest."

3. <sup>56</sup>Gilgamish open'd his mouth and to Enkidu spake he (in this wise):  
 5."Who, O my friend, is unconquer'd by [death]? A divinity, certes,  
 Liveth for aye in the daylight, but mortals—their days are (all) number'd,  
 All that they do is (but) wind—But to thee, now death thou art dreading,  
 10.Proffereth nothing of substance thy courage—I, I'll be thy va ward!  
 'Tis thine own mouth shall tell thou didst fear the onslaught (of battle),  
 (I, forsooth), if I should fall, my name will have stablish'd (for ever).  
 15.Gilgamish 'twas, who fought with Humbaba, the Fierce!

(In the future),

After my children are born to my house, and climb up thee, (saying):  
 'Tell to us all that thou knowest' . . . . .

(Four lines mutilated).

[(Yea), when thou] speakest [in this wise], thou grievest my heart (for)  
 the Cedar

25.[I am] determined [to fell], that I may gain [fame] everlasting.

(The Weapons are cast for the Expedition).

(Now), O my friend, [my charge] to the craftsmen I fain would deliver,  
 So that they cast in our presence [our weapons]."

[The charge] they deliver'd

30.Unto the craftsmen: the mould (?) did the workmen prepare, and the  
 axes

Monstrous they cast: (yea), the celts did they cast, each (weighing) three  
 talents;

Glaives, (too,) monstrous they cast, with hilts each (weighing) two

<sup>54</sup> From here to "down to his Forest" from the Assyrian Version, Second Tablet, Column v

<sup>55</sup> A word or two mutilated at this point.

<sup>56</sup> Old Babylonian Version



talents,

35. Blades, thirty manas to each, corresponding to fit them: [the inlay(?)],  
Gold thirty manas (each) sword: (so) were Gilgamish <sup>57</sup>, Enkidu laden  
Each with ten talents.

(Gilgamish takes counsel with the Elders).

(And now) [in] the Seven Bolt [Portal of Erech]  
Hearing [the bruit(?)] did the artisans gather, [assembled the  
people(?)] <sup>58</sup>,  
40. (There) in the streets of broad-marketed Erech, [in] Gilgamish'  
honour(?)] <sup>59</sup>,  
[So did the Elders of Erech] broad-marketed take seat before him.  
[Gilgamish] spake [thus: "O Elders of Erech] broad-marketed, [hear  
me!]  
45. [I go against Humbaba, the Fierce, who shall say, when he  
heareth] <sup>60</sup>,

Column V.

'(Ah), let me look on (this) Gilgamish, he of whom (people) are speaking,  
He with whose fame the countries are fill'd'—'Tis I will o'erwhelm him,  
5. (There) in the Forest of Cedars—I'll make the land hear (it)  
(How) like a giant the Scion of Erech is—(yea, for) the Cedars  
I am determined to fell, that I may gain fame everlasting."  
Gilgamish (thus) did the Elders of Erech broad-marketed answer:  
10. "Gilgamish, 'tis thou art young, that thy valour (o'ermuch) doth uplift  
thee,  
Nor dost thou know to the full what thou dost seek to accomplish.  
Unto our ears hath it come of Humbaba, his likeness is twofold. <sup>61</sup>  
15. Who (of free will) then would [seek to] oppose [in encounter] his  
weapons?  
Who for a distance of two hours' march from the skirts of the Forest  
Unto its depths would [go] down? Humbaba, his roar is a whirlwind,  
Flame (in) his jaws, and his very breath Death! (O), why hast desired.  
This to accomplish? To meet(?) with Humbaba were conflict unequall'd."

---

<sup>57</sup> Text has "and,"

<sup>58</sup> Conjecture

<sup>59</sup> Conjecture

<sup>60</sup> Conjecture

<sup>61</sup> A difficult phrase

20. Gilgamish unto the rede of his counsellors hearken'd and ponder'd,  
Cried to [his] friend: "Now, indeed, O [my] friend, [will I] thus [voice  
opinion].

I (forsooth) dread him, and (yet) to [(the depths of the) Forest] I'll take  
[me] . ."

(About seven lines mutilated or missing in which the Elders bless  
Gilgamish in farewell).

" . . . . . may thy god (so) [protect] thee,  
Bringing thee back [(safe and)] sound to the walls of [broad-marketed]  
Erech."

35. Gilgamish knelt [before Shamash] a word [in his presence] to utter:

"Here I present myself, Shamash, [to lift up] my hands (in entreaty),

O that hereafter my life may be spared, to the ramparts of [Erech]

40. Bring me again: spread thine aegis [upon me] ."

And Shamash made answer,

[Speaking] his oracle . . . . .

(About six lines mutilated or missing).

Column VI.

Tears adown Gilgamish' [cheeks were (now)] streaming: "A road I have  
never

Traversed [I go, on a passage(?)] I know not, (but if) I be spared

5. (So) in content [will I] come [and will pay thee(?)] due meed (?) of thy  
homage."

(Two mutilated lines with the words "on seats" and "his equipment.")

10. Monstrous [the axes they brought(?)], they deliver'd [the bow] and  
the quiver

[Into] (his) hand; (so) taking a celt, [he slung on (?)] his quiver,

15. [Grasping] another [celt(?) he fasten'd his glaive] to his baldrick.

[But, or ever the twain] had set forth on their journey, they offer'd

[Gifts] to the Sun-god, that home he might bring them to Erech (in  
safety).

(The Departure of the two Heroes).

20.(Now) do the [Elders] farewell him with blessings, to Gilgamish giving

Counsel [concerning] the road: "O Gilgamish, to thine own power Trust not (alone); (but at least) let thy [road] be traversed [before] thee, Guard thou thy person; let Enkidu go before thee (as vaward).

(Aye, for) 'twas he hath discover'd the [way], the road he hath travell'd.

25.(Sooth), of the Forest the passes are all under sway (?) [of] Humbaba, [(Yea), he who goeth] as vaward is (able) to safeguard a comrade,

O that the Sun-god [may grant] thee [success to attain] thine [ambition],

30.O that he grant that thine eyes see (consummate) the words of thy utterance

O that he level the path that is block'd, cleave a road for thy treading,

35.Cleave, too, the berg for thy foot! May the god Lugal-banda <sup>62</sup>

Bring in thy night-time a message to thee, with which shalt be gladden'd,

So that it help thine ambition <sup>63</sup>, (for), like a boy thine ambition

On the o'erthrow of Humbaba thou fixest, as thou hast settled.

40.Wash, (then), thy feet <sup>64</sup>: when thou haltest <sup>65</sup>, shalt hollow a pool, so that ever

Pure be the water within thy skin-bottle, (aye), cool be the water

Unto the Sun-god thou pourest, (and thus) shalt remind Lugal-banda."

45.Enkidu open'd his mouth, and spake unto Gilgamish, (saying):

"[Gilgamish], art (?) thou (in truth) full equal to making (this) foray?

Let [not] thy heart be afraid; trust me."

On (his) shoulder his mantle

50.[Drew] he, (and now) [on the road] to Humbaba they set forth (together).

(Five lines mutilated; the two heroes meet a man who sets them on their way).

56." . . . they went with me . . . [tell] you . . in joy of heart."

60.[So when he heard this his word, the man on his way did [direct him]:

"Gilgamish, go, . . . let thy brother (?) precede [thee] . . . [(and) in thine

---

<sup>62</sup> Lugal-banda appears to be the tutelary god of Gilgamish, and possibly his father: he and Tammuz are the two kings of Erech preceding Gilgamish in the Kings lists.

<sup>63</sup> Lit. "stand to thee in thine ambition."

<sup>64</sup> Doubtful: the meaning of this brief but difficult line is not obvious. *Mizi* might be from another verb "find," rather than "wash."

<sup>65</sup> Lit. "at thy halting."

ambition].

[O that the Sun-god (?) may shew [thee] success!"]

(The Old Babylonian Version breaks off after three more fragmentary lines. The following is the Assyrian Version of Column VI, l. 21, and onwards of the preceding text. It marks the beginning of the Third Tablet in the Assyrian Version, opening with the episode of the conclave of the Elders).

"Gilgamish, put not thy faith in the strength of thine own person (solely),  
Quench'd be thy wishes to trusting(? (o'er)much) in thy (shrewdness in)  
smiting.

(Sooth), he who goeth as vaward is able to safeguard a comrade,  
5.He who doth know how to guide hath guarded his friend; (so) before  
thee,

Do thou let Enkidu go, (for 'tis) he to the Forest of Cedars  
Knoweth the road: 'tis he lusteth for battle, and threateneth combat.  
Enkidu—he would watch over a friend, would safeguard a comrade,  
10.(Aye, such an one) would deliver his person from out of the pitfalls.  
We, O King, in our conclave have paid deep heed to thy welfare,  
Thou, O King, in return with an (equal) heed shalt requite us."

Gilgamish open'd his mouth, and spake unto Enkidu, saying:  
15."Unto the Palace of Splendour, O friend, come, let us betake us,  
Unto the presence of Nin-sun, the glorious Queen, (aye) to Nin-sun,  
Wisest of (all) clever women, all-knowing; a well-devised pathway  
She will prescribe for our feet."

20.Clasp'd they their hands, each to each, and went to the Palace of  
Splendour,

Gilgamish <sup>66</sup>, Enkidu. Unto the glorious Queen, (aye) to Nin-sun  
Gilgamish came, and he enter'd in unto [the presence of Nin-sun]:  
"Nin-sun, O fain would I tell thee [how] I a far journey [am going],  
25.(Unto) the home [of Humbaba to counter a] warfare I know not,  
[Follow a road] which I [know] not, [(aye) from the time of my starting],  
[Till my return, until I arrive at the Forest of Cedars,]  
[Till I o'erthrow Humbaba, the Fierce, and destroy from the country.]  
[All that the Sun-god abhorreth of evil]" . . . .

---

<sup>66</sup> Lit. "and."

(The rest of the speech of Gilgamish is lost until the end of the Column, where we find him still addressing his mother, and apparently asking that she shall garb herself in festal attire to beg a favour of the Sun-god).

" . . . garb thyself; . . . in thy presence.

(So) to her offspring, to Gilgamish [Nin-sun] gave ear . . . -ly,

Column II.

Enter'd [her chamber] . . . [and deck'd herself] with the flowers  
of *Tulal*(?),

[Put on] the festal garb of her body . . . . .

5.[Put on] the festal garb of her bosom . . . , her head [with a circlet]  
Crown'd, and . . . the ground *ipirani* <sup>67</sup>.

Climb'd [she the stairway], ascended the roof, and [the parapet(?)]  
mounted,

Offer'd her incense to Shamash, (her) sacrifice offer'd [to Shamash],  
(Then) towards Shamash her hands she uplifted (in orison saying):

10."Why didst thou give (this) restlessness of spirit

With which didst dower Gilgamish, [my] son?

That now thou touchest him, and (straight) he starteth

A journey far to where Humbaba (dwelleth),

To counter warfare which he knoweth not,

Follow a pathway which he knoweth not,

15.(Aye), from the very day on which he starteth,

Till he return, till to the Cedar Forest

He reach; till he o'erthrow the fierce Humbaba,

And from the land destroy all evil things

Which thou abhor'st; the day which [thou hast set]

20.As term, of (that) strong man (who) feareth thee,

May Aa <sup>68</sup>, (thy) bride, be [thy] remembrancer.

He the night-watches . . . . ."

(Columns III, IV, and V are much mutilated. There is the remnant of a passage in Assyrian, corresponding to the Third Tablet of the Old Babylonian Version, Column III, 15, which gives Enkidu's speech about "the mountains," "the cattle of the field," and how "he waited": then

---

<sup>67</sup> Uncertain

<sup>68</sup> The wife of the Sun-god

follows another fragment with a mention of the "corpse" [of Humbaba] and of the Anunnaki (the Spirits of Heaven), and a repetition of the line "that strong man (who) feareth [thee] ." Then a reference to "the journey" until [Gilgamish shall have overthrown the fierce Humbaba], be it after an interval of days, months, or years; and another fragment probably part of the previous text, where someone "heaps up incense"[to a god], and Enkidu again speaks with someone, but the mutilated text does not allow us much light on its connection, and although there is another fragment, the connection again is not obvious. The last column is a repetition of what the Elders said to Gilgamish):

"(Aye, such an one) [would deliver his person] from out of the pitfalls.  
 10.[We, O King], in our conclave [have paid deep heed to thy welfare],  
 (Now), O King, in thy turn with an (equal) heed] shalt requite us."  
 Enkidu [open'd] his mouth [and spake unto Gilgamish, saying]:  
 "Turn, O my friend . . . . a road not . . . ."

---

## THE FOURTH TABLET: THE ARRIVAL AT THE GATE OF THE FOREST

(Of Column I about ll. 1-36 are mutilated or missing, there being actually the beginnings of only sixteen lines. When the text becomes connected the heroes have reached the Gate of the Forest).

Column I.

(Enkidu addresses the Gate).

36. <sup>69</sup>Enkidu lifted [his eyes] . . . and spake with the Gate as [’t were human(?)]:

"O thou Gate of the Forest without understanding(? . . .  
Sentience which thou hast not, . . . .

40.I for (full) forty leagues have admired thy [wonderful] timber,  
(Aye), till I sighted the towering Cedar . . . .

(O but) thy wood hath no peer (in the country) . . .

Six *gar* thy height, and two *gar* thy breadth . . .

45.(Sooth, but) thy stanchion (?), thy socket (?), <sup>70</sup> thy pivot (?), thy lock  
(?), and thy shutter (?),

[(All of them) must have been fashion’d for thee] in the City of Nippur!

O, if I had but known, O Gate, that this was [thy grandeur],

This, too, the grace [of thy structure], then either an axe had I lifted

50.Or I had . . . or bound together . . . ."

(Of the next Column remains a fragment, and that only presumed to belong to one of the above fragments from its appearance, which speaks of terror, a dream, and sorrow: "let me pray the gods . . . . may thy? god be . . . the father of the gods." Again, of the third Column there is only a small portion left of the right half (this fragment, too, being also presumed to belong to the same tablet as that above-mentioned), speaking of Gilgamish, the Forest, and Enkidu. The fourth Column is entirely lost. Of Column V the latter part survives, in this case without

---

<sup>69</sup> Assyrian Version

<sup>70</sup> Text has "and".

any uncertainty. After a few broken lines it runs as follows, the first speaker being probably Enkidu, and the scene the Gate of the Forest):

6. "... [O, haste] thee, withstand him, he will not [pursue(?) thee],  
[We will] go on down into the wood not daunted, together (?)].  
... Thou shall put on seven garments ..  
... putting on, and six ... (?) ... "

10. He like a mighty wild bull ...

Flung he the Portal afar, and [his] mouth was fill'd (with his challenge),  
Cried to the Guard of the Forest: "Up (?) ... !  
['Tis I will challenge] Humbaba like to a ... "

(A small gap.)

Column VI.

(Enkidu is speaking)

"Trouble (?) [I foresee(?)] wherever I go ...

5. O my friend, I have [seen] <sup>71</sup> a dream which un- ... "

The day of the dream he had seen fulfilled ... <sup>72</sup>

(Enkidu is stricken with fear at thought of the combat).

Enkidu lay for a day, [yea, a second]—for Enkidu [lying]

10. (Prone) on his couch, was a third and a fourth day ... , a fifth, sixth and seventh,

Eighth, ninth, [and tenth]. While Enkidu [lay in his] sickness ... , th' eleventh,

(Aye, till) the twelfth ... on [his] couch was Enkidu [lying].

15. Call'd he to Gilgamesh, ...

"(O but), my comrade, ... hateth me .. because within Erech

I was afraid of the combat, and ... My friend, who in battle ... "

(A small gap in which Gilgamesh has answered. Enkidu replies):

26. [Enkidu open'd] his [mouth] and spake [unto Gilgamesh, saying]:  
("Nay, but), [my friend, let us no wise] go down [to the depths of the Forest],

<sup>71</sup> Or "the dream will be [fulfill'd]."

<sup>72</sup> One text adds a horizontal line here



(For) 'tis my hands [have grown weak], and [my arms] are stricken with palsy."

---

Gilgamish open'd his mouth and spake [unto Enkidu], saying:

30. "Shall we, O friend, [play] the coward? . . . . .

. . . . thou shalt surpass them all(?) . . . .

[Thou, O] my friend, art cunning in warfare, art [shrewd(?)] in the battle,  
(So) shalt thou touch the . . . and of [death] have no terror,

(Two difficult and mutilated lines).

[So that] the palsy (now striking) thine arms [may] depart, and the weakness

Pass [from thy hands]! [Be brave(?)] and resist! O my comrade, together  
We will go down—let the combat [in no wise diminish(?)] thy courage!

40. O forget death, and be fearful(?) of nothing(?) . . (for he who is)  
[valiant(?)],

Cautious (and) careful, by leading [the way] hath his own body guarded,  
(He 'tis) will safeguard a comrade."

A name by their [valour(?)] . .

They will establish. (And now) they together arrive at the barrier(?),  
[Still'd into silence(?)] their speech, and they themselves (suddenly)  
stopping.

---

## THE FIFTH TABLE: OF THE FIGHT WITH HUMBABA

Column I <sup>73</sup>.

(The Wonders of the Forest).

Stood they and stared at the Forest, they gazed at the height of the Cedars,

Scanning the avenue into the Forest: (and there) where Humbaba  
5. Stalk'd, was a path, (and) straight were his tracks, and good was the passage.

(Eke) they beheld the Mount of the Cedar, the home of th' Immortals,  
Shrine [of Irnini <sup>74</sup>, the Cedar uplifting its pride 'gainst the mountain,  
Fair was its shade, (all) full of delight, with bushes (there) spreading,  
Spread, too, the . . . the Cedar the incense <sup>75</sup> . . .

(After a few mutilated lines the Column breaks: the upper part of Column II contains about twenty lines badly mutilated; then the lower part is more complete, beginning with visions granted to the hero).

Column II.

(Gilgamesh relates his dreams).

32." [ <sup>76</sup>Then came another dream to me, comrade, and this second] vision

[Pleasant, indeed], which I saw, (for) we (?) [twain were standing together]

[High on (?) a] peak of the mountains, [and then did the mountain peak] topple,

35.[Leaving us twain (?) ] to be like . . . (?) which are born in the desert."

Enkidu spake to his comrade the dream (?) [to interpret], (thus saying):

"Comrade, (in sooth, this) vision [of thine unto us] good fortune (forbodeth),

---

<sup>73</sup> Assyrian Version

<sup>74</sup> A form of Ishtar

<sup>75</sup> Lit. *Ferule Persica*

<sup>76</sup> The restorations are obviously uncertain

(Aye), 'tis a dream of great gain [thou didst see], (for, bethink you), O comrade,

40.(Surely) the mountain which thou hast beholden [must needs be Humbaba(?)].

(Thus doth it mean) we shall capture Humbaba, (and) [throw down his] carcase,

[Leaving] his corpse in abasement—to-morrow 's (outcome) will I [shew thee]".

(Now) at the fortieth league did they break their fast [with a morsel],

45.(Now) at the sixtieth rested, and hollow'd a pit in the sunshine . . .

Gilgamish mounted above [it] . . . (and) pour'd out his meal [for the mountain]:

50."Mountain, a dream do thou grant . . . breathe on him . . ."

### Column III.

Granted [the mountain] a dream . . . it breathed on him . . .

Then a chill wind-blast [up]-sprang (and) [a gust] passing over . . .

5.[Made] him to cower, and . . . [thereat he sway'd] like the corn of the mountains . . .

Gilgamish, [squatting] bent-kneed, supported his haunches, (and straightway)

Sleep (such as) floweth on man descended upon him: [at] midnight

Ending his slumber (all sudden), he hied him to speak to his comrade:

10."Didst thou not call me, O friend? (O), why am I waken'd (from slumber)?

Didst thou not touch me—(for), why am I fearful(?), (or) hath not some spirit

Pass'd (me)? (Or,) why is my flesh (all) a-quiver?

(The dream of the volcano, which probably represents Humbaba).

### A third dream, O comrade,

I have beheld: but all awesome (this) dream which I have beholden:

15.(Loud) did the firmament roar, (and) earth (with the echo) resounded,

Sombre the day, with darkness uprising, (and) levin bolts flashing,

Kindled were flames, [and there, too, was Pestilence (?)] fill'd to

o'erflowing,

Gorgéd was Death! (Then) [faded] the glare, (then) faded the fires,  
20. Falling, [the brands] turn'd to ashes—[Come, let us go] down to the  
desert,

That we may counsel together."

Enkidu (now) to interpret his dream unto Gilgamish speaketh:

(Remainder of Column III broken away).

(A variant version is found on one of the Semitic tablets from Boghaz Keui <sup>77</sup>. Where the sense becomes connected it briefly describes how the heroes halt for the night and at midnight sleep departs from the hero who tells his dream to Enkidu, after asking much in the same way why he is frightened at waking from his dream. "Besides my first dream a second . . . In my dream, O friend, a mountain . . . he cast me down, seized my feet . . . The brilliance increased: a man . . ., most comely of all the land was his beauty . . . Beneath the mountain he drew me, and . . . water he gave me to drink, and my desire [was assuaged]; to earth he set [my] feet . . . Enkidu unto this god . . . unto Gilgamish spake: "My friend, we will go . . . whatever is hostile . . . Not the mountain . . . Come, lay aside fear . . ." The rest after about mutilated seven lines is lost).

(Column IV is all lost, and hardly anything of Column V remains.

Column VI once contained the story of the great fight, but except for a few broken lines at the end it is all lost. But we can fortunately replace it from the Hittite version from Boghaz Keui <sup>78</sup>)

Column VI.

(The Fight with Humbaba).

In the following manner . . . the Sun-god in heaven . . . the trees:

He saw [Gilgamish]: of the Sun-god in heaven in . . .

5. And [shew'd him] the dam on the ditches.

Gilgamish [spake] then [in orison] unto the Sun-god in heaven;

"Lo, on that day to the city . . . which is in the city:

10. I in sooth [pray] to the Sun-god in heaven: I on a road have now  
started,

<sup>77</sup> Published by Weidner, *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazkoi*, IV. 12, p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> Translation from J. Friedrich, *Alter Orient*, 25, 2. 31, and Ungnad, *Kulturfragen*, 4-5, 20. Two other small fragments (*Keils. Boghaz*, VI. 30 and 32) are to be assigned hereabouts.

....."

Unto th' entreaty of Gilgamish hearken'd the Sun-god in heaven,  
Wherefore against Humbaba he raised mighty winds: (yea), a great wind,  
Wind from the North, (aye), [a wind from the South], yea [a tempest]  
(and) storm wind,

15. Chill wind, (and) whirlwind, a wind of (all) evil: 'twas eight winds he  
raiséd,

Seizing [Humbaba] before and behind, so that nor to go forwards,  
Nor to go back was he able: and then Humbaba surrender'd.

20. Wherefore to Gilgamish spake (thus) Humbaba: "O Gilgamish, (pr'y  
thee),

Stay, (now, thy hand): be [thou] now my [master], and I'll be thy  
henchman:

[O disregard] (all) [the words which I spake [(so) boastfull against thee,

25. Weighty . . . I would lay me down . . . and the Palace.

Thereat to [Gilgamish] Enkidu [spake]: "[Of the rede which] Humbaba  
[Maketh to thee] thou darest in nowise offer acceptance.

(Aye, for) Humbaba [must] not [remain alive] . . . ."

(The Hittite Version here breaks off. The Assyrian Version ends with six  
badly mutilated lines of which the last tells the successful issue of the  
expedition).

. . . . [they cut off] the head of Humbaba.

---

## THE SIXTH TABLET: OF THE GODDESS ISHTAR, WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH THE HERO AFTER HIS EXPLOIT AGAINST HUMBABA

### Column I.

(Gilgamish is removing the stains of combat).

<sup>79</sup>(Now) is <sup>80</sup>he washing his stains, (and) is cleansing his garments in tatters,

Braiding (?) (the locks of) his hair (to descend loose) over his shoulders,

Laying aside his garments besmirchen, (and) donning his clean ones,

Putting on armlets (?), and girding his body about with a baldric,

5. Gilgamish bindeth his fillet, and girdeth himself with a baldric.

(Ishtar sees him and seeks to wed him).

(Now) Lady Ishtar espieth the beauty of Gilgamish: (saith she),

"Gilgamish, come, be a bridegroom, to me of the fruit (of thy body)

Grant me largesse: (for) my husband shalt be and I'll be thy consort.

10. O, but I'll furnish a chariot for thee, (all) azure and golden,

Golden its wheel, and its yoke precious stones <sup>81</sup>, each day to be harness'd

Unto great mules: (O), enter our house with the fragrance of cedar.

15. (So) when thou enterest into our house shall threshold and dais

Kiss thy feet, (and) beneath thee do homage kings, princes, and rulers,

Bringing thee yield of the mountains and plains as a tribute: thy she-goats

Bring forth in plenty, thy ewes shall bear twins, thy asses <sup>82</sup> attaining

---

<sup>79</sup> Assyrian Version

<sup>80</sup> The tense here is properly past, but the historic present will serve

<sup>81</sup> *Elmeshu*, an uncertain kind of gem

<sup>82</sup> Singular in the text. A fragment of a Semitic tablet from Boghaz Keui (*Keils. Boghazk*, IV. 12, p. 12) includes among her gifts "great horses" and "crystal for thy feet."

20.(Each) to the size of a mule, (and) thy steeds <sup>83</sup> in thy chariot winning Fame for their gallop: [thy mules <sup>84</sup>] in the yoke shall ne'er have a rival."

---

[Gilgamish] open'd his mouth in reply, Lady Ishtar [to answer]:

"Aye, but what must I give] thee, (if (?)) I should take thee in marriage?

25.[I must provide thee with oil] for (thy) body, and clothing: (aye, also)

[Give thee (thy)] bread and (thy) victual: (sooth), must be sustenance

[ample]

Meet for divinity—[I, (too), must give thee (thy) drink] fit for royalty.

30.. . . I shall be bound, . . . let us amass (?), . . . clothe with a garment.

[What, then, will be my advantage, supposing) I take thee in marriage?

[Thou'rt but a ruin which giveth no shelter (?) to man] from the weather,

Thou'rt but a back door [not] giving resistance to blast or to windstorm,

35.Thou'rt but a palace which dasheth the heroes [within it to pieces],

Thou'rt but a pitfall (which letteth) its covering [give way (all

treach'rous)],

Thou art but pitch which [defileth] the man who doth carry it with him,

Thou'rt but a bottle which [leaketh] on him who doth carry it with him,

Thou art but limestone which [letteth] stone ramparts [fall crumbling in ruin].

40.Thou'rt but chalcedony [failing to guard (?)] <sup>85</sup> in an enemy's country,

Thou'rt but a sandal which causeth its owner [to trip (by the wayside)].

Who was ever [thy] husband [thou faithfully lovedst] for all time?

Who hath been ever thy lord who hath gain'd [over thee the advantage?

Come, and I will unfold thee [the endless tale] of thy husbands.

---

45.(Sooth), thou shalt vouch (?) for the truth (?) of (this) list—Thy maidenhood's consort,

Tammuz, each year dost make him the cause of Wailing <sup>86</sup>, (then cometh

---

<sup>83</sup> Singular in the text. A fragment of a Semitic tablet from Boghaz Keui (*Keils. Boghazk*, IV. 12, p. 12) includes among her gifts "great horses" and "crystal for thy feet."

<sup>84</sup> Singular in the text. A fragment of a Semitic tablet from Boghaz Keui (*Keils. Boghazk*, IV. 12, p. 12) includes among her gifts "great horses" and "crystal for thy feet."

<sup>85</sup> a seal-cylinder or amulet of chalcedony

<sup>86</sup> The Annual festival of the Wailing for Tammuz. Tammuz, the husband of Ishtar, representing vegetation, dies each year in the Autumn, and his faithful spouse goes down to the Underworld to bring him back with the return of Spring.

Next) the bird Roller <sup>87</sup> gay-feather'd thou lovedst, and (yet) thou didst smite him

50. Breaking his wing: in the grove doth he stand, crying *kappi* 'my wing!'

Lovedst thou also a Lion, in (all) the full strength of (his) vigour,

(Yet) thou didst dig for him seven and seven (deep) pits (to entrap him).

Lovedst thou also a Stallion, magnificent he in the battle,

Thou wert the cause of a bridle, a spur, and a whip to him: (also)

55. Thou wert the cause of his fifty miles galloping; thou wert the cause, too,

(Eke), of exhaustion and sweating (?); (thereafter), 'twas thou who didst (also)

Unto his mother Silili give cause for (her deep) lamentation.

Lovedst thou also a Shepherd, a neatherd, for thee without ceasing

60. Each day to sacrifice yeanlings for thee would heap thee his charcoal,

(Yet) thou didst smite him, transforming him into a jackal: his herd boy

Yea, his own herd boy drove him away, and his dogs tore his buttocks.

Lovedst thou, too, Ishullanu, the gardener he of thy sire,

65. Bringing delights (?) to thee ceaseless, while daily he garnish'd thy platter;

'Twas for thee only to cast thine eyes on him, and with him be smitten <sup>88</sup>.

'O Ishullanu of mine, come, let me taste of thy vigour,

Put forth thy hand, too, . . . . . <sup>89</sup>

70. But he, Ishullanu,

Said to thee 'What dost thou ask me? Save only my mother hath baked (it),

Nought have I eaten—(and) what I should eat would be bread of transgression,

(Aye) and iniquity! (Further), the reeds are a cloak against winter. <sup>90</sup>

75. Thou this [his answer] didst hear, didst smite him and make him a spider(?) <sup>91</sup>,

<sup>87</sup> The Roller, a brightly coloured bird which lives in the palm groves of Southern Babylonia, uttering a hoarse cry which may be identified with *kappi*. During the breeding season it has a curious irregular flight which probably gave rise to the legend of the broken wing.

<sup>88</sup> The force of the tense of the last verb appears to demand this form of translation

<sup>89</sup> This, the invitation of Ishtar, (two words) is omitted

<sup>90</sup> The reply of Ishullanu is difficult. when the goddess falls in love with him, he refuses, saying in contempt that his mother's baking is enough for him, and, as for the cold, the reeds provide him with ample covering.

<sup>91</sup> *Dallalu*, an unknown word, perhaps *lit.* "the spinner," from a cognate Syriac root *dall*.



Making him lodge midway up a [dwelling(?)] <sup>92</sup>—not to move upwards  
Lest there be drainage <sup>93</sup>; nor down, lest a crushing [o'erwhelm him].

So, too, me in my turn thou wouldst love and (then) [reckon] me like  
them."

---

80.[Heard] this (then) Ishtar: she <sup>94</sup> burst into rage and [went up] to  
Heaven,

Hied her (thus) Ishtar to Anu, [her father], to Antu, her mother,

85.Came she [to tell (them)]: "O father, doth Gilgamish load me with  
insult,

Gilgamish tale of my sins, my sins and iniquities telleth."

---

Anu made answer, (thus) speaking, and said unto Ishtar the Lady:

"Nay, thou didst ask him [to grant thee largesse of the fruit of his body],

90.(Hence) he <sup>95</sup> the tale of thy sins, thy sins and iniquities telleth."

(The Creation of the Divine Bull which is to destroy the heroes).

Ishtar made answer (thus) speaking, and said unto [Anu, her father]:

"Father, O make (me) a Heavenly Bull, which shall Gilgamish

[vanquish],

95.Filling [its body] with flame . . . .

But if thou'lt [not] make [this Bull], then . . . .

I'll smite . . . ., I'll put . . . ., I'll . . . .

100.More than the . . . will be the . . . . . <sup>96</sup>

---

Anu [made answer, (thus) speaking, and said unto] Ishtar, the Lady:

"[If I the Heavenly Bull shall create, for which] thou dost ask me,

(Then) seven years of (leer) husks [must needs follow after his onslaught

---

<sup>92</sup> Only half the word left which might be restored "dwelling."

<sup>93</sup> From the roof

<sup>94</sup> Text "Ishtar."

<sup>95</sup> Text "Gilgamish."

<sup>96</sup> It is usual to restore this passage from the Legend of the descent of Ishtar to Hades where she, outside the door, threatens to break it down and release the ghosts, who shall then be more numerous than the living. The incident of the creation of the Bull is found on a Semitic fragment from Boghaz Keui (*Keils. Boghazk.* iv. 12, p. 12): the Bull is to be a young steer of six months, but there is little else that is new. This is the other part of the tablet quoted in the note to the Sixth Tablet, l. 20.

(?)].

105. Wilt thou [for man] gather [corn (?)], and increase [for the cattle(?)] the fodder (?)."

[Ishtar made answer, (thus) speaking [and said unto] Anu, her father:  
"[Corn for mankind] have I hoarded, have grown [for the cattle the fodder],

110. [If seven] years of (leer) husks [must needs follow after his onslaught (?)]

[I will for man] gather [corn and increase for the cattle] the fodder."

(Perhaps a small gap.)

(About seven lines are so badly mutilated that little can be gleaned from them except that the fight with the Heavenly Bull is about to take place in Erech. After these [a hundred men] descend [upon the Bull], but with his (fiery) breath[he annihilates them]. Then come two hundred with the same result, and then three hundred more, again to be overcome).

130. Enkidu girded (?) his middle; (and straightway) Enkidu, leaping,  
Seized on the Heavenly Bull by [his] horns, and (headlong) before him  
Cast down the Heavenly Bull his full length, . . . .  
(Aye), by the thick of his tail.

(Gap of thirteen mutilated lines.)

147. Chased him did Enkidu, . . . the Heavenly Bull . . .  
Seized him and by [the thick] of his tail . . . .

(Gap of about fourteen mutilated lines in which the Bull is slain.)

153. (So), what time they the Bull of the Heavens had kill'd, its heart they removed,  
Unto the Sun-god they offer'd in sacrifice; when the libation  
155. Unto the Sun they had voided, they sate them down, the two brothers.

---

(The Frenzy of Ishtar).

(Then) mounted Ishtar (the crest of) the ramparts of Erech, the high-wall'd,

(So) to the roof-top ascended, (and there) gave voice to her wailing;  
 160. "Woe unto Gilgamish—he who by killing the Bull of the Heavens,  
 Made me lament." When Enkidu heard this, the shrieking of Ishtar,  
 Wrenching the member from out of the Bull, he toss'd (it) before her;  
 165. "If I could only have reach'd thee, i'faith, I'd ha' served thee the same  
 way,  
 I'd ha' let dangle his guts on thy flanks (as a girdle about thee)."  
 Ishtar assembled the girl-devotees, the hetaerae and harlots,  
 Over the member (torn out) from the Bull she led the lamenting.

(The Triumph of Gilgamish).

170. Gilgamish call'd to the masters of craft, the artists, (yea), all of them,  
 That at the size of its horns (all) the guilds of the crafts speak their  
 praises  
 Each had of azure in weight thirty minas to be as their setting,  
 Two fingers their . . . . .  
 175. Both of them held six measures of oil; to his god Lugal-banda  
 He for (his) unguent devoting, brought in, and (thus) let them hang  
 (there),  
 (There) in the shrine of his forbears.

(And now) in the River Euphrates

Washing their hands, they start (on their progress) and come (to the  
 city);  
 (Now) are they striding the highway of Erech, the heroes of Erech  
 180. Thronging (about them) to see them. (Then) Gilgamish utter'd a  
 riddle  
 Unto the notables (?):

Who, pr'ythee, is most splendid of heroes,  
 Who, pr'ythee, is most famous of giants?  
 Gilgamish—he is most splendid of heroes,  
 185. [Enkidu—he is most] famous of giants.

(Three mutilated lines follow.)

---

190. So in his palace did Gilgamish hold high revel: (thereafter),  
 (While all) the heroes asleep, on their nightly couches were lying

Enkidu, too, was asleep, and a vision beheld, and (so) coming  
Enkidu (now) his dream to reveal: (thus) spake he unto his comrade.

---

## THE SEVENTH TABLE: THE DEATH OF ENKIDU

### Column I.

(Enkidu's dream).

"Why, O my friend, do the great gods (now) take counsel together?"

(The remainder of the Column is lost in the Assyrian, but it can be partially supplied from the Hittite Version: <sup>97</sup> " . . . Then came the day . . . [Enkidu] answered Gilgamesh: '[Gilgamesh, hear the] dream which I [saw] in the night: [Now Enlil], Ea, and the Sun-god of heaven . . . [the Sun-god (?)] Enlil spake in return: "[These who the heavenly] Bull have kill'd [and Humbaba have smitten]:. . . which help'd at the cedar . . . [Enlil hath said (?)] 'Enkidu shall die: [but Gilgamesh] shall not die.'" Then answer'd Enlil boldly '[O Sun-god], at thy behest did they slay the Heavenly Bull and Humbaba. But now shall Enkidu die.' But Enlil turn'd angrily to the Sun-god: 'What dost thou them as befitting . . . ? With his comrade thou settest out daily. "' But Enkidu laid himself down to rest before Gilgamesh, and by the dam . . . him the ditch: 'My brother, of (great) worth is my [dream]."' It breaks off after a few mutilated lines more).

(Column II entirely lost. From the Hittite it is clear that Enkidu has dreamt that the gods have taken counsel together, that Enkidu is to die, but Gilgamesh remain alive. It would appear from the succeeding material that Enkidu, stricken presumably by fever, attributes all his misfortunes to the hetaera whom he loads with curses. The first part of the next fragment begins "destroy his power, weaken his strength," probably referring to Enkidu. Then says Enkidu, after three broken lines: ". . . the hetaera . . . who has brought (?) a curse, 'O hetaera, I will decree (thy) [fate(?)] for thee—thy woes(?)] . . . shall never end for all eternity. [Come], I will curse thee with a bitter curse, . . . with desolation shall its curse come on thee: [may there never be] satisfaction of thy desire' —and then follow the broken ends of six lines and then—" [May . . .] fall on thy house, may the . . . of the street be thy dwelling, [may the shade of the wall be thy] abode, . . . for thy feet, [may scorching heat and

---

<sup>97</sup> Translation by Friedrich, and Ungnad

thirsty smite thy strength'" The rest of the curse is badly broken, but it is exceeding probable that the following are the fragments which should be assigned here).

(The End of Enkidu's curse on the Hetaera).

30."Of want . . . . since me it is that . . .hath . . . .  
And me the fever [hath laid] on my back."

---

(The Answer of Shamash).

Heard him the Sun-god, and open'd his mouth, and from out of the heavens

(Straightway) he call'd him: "O Enkidu, why dost thou curse the hetaera?

35.She 'twas who made thee eat bread, for divinity proper: (aye), wine (too),

She made thee drink, ('twas) for royalty proper: a generous mantle Put on thee, (aye), and for comrade did give to thee Gilgamish splendid.

40.Now on a couch of great size will he, (thy) friend (and) thy brother Gilgamish, grant thee to lie, on a handsome couch will he grant thee Rest, and to sit on a throne of great ease, a throne at (his) left hand, So that the princes of Hades <sup>98</sup> may kiss thy feet (in their homage);

He, too, will make (all) the people of Erech lament in thy (honour),

45.Making them mourn thee, (and) damsels (and) heroes constrain to thy service,

[While he himself for thy sake will cause his body to carry

Stains, [(and) will put on] the skin of a lion <sup>99</sup>, and range o'er the desert."

---

Enkidu [(then) giving ear] to the words of the valiant Shamash Speaking . . . . . his wrath was appeased.

(One or two lines missing).

Column IV.

---

<sup>98</sup> Or "of the earth."

<sup>99</sup> Or "dog." Both are possible

(Enkidu, relenting, regrets his curse, and blesses the Hetaera).

" . . . . . may . . . restore to thy place!

[(So, too), may monarchs and princes] and chiefs be with love [for thee] smitten;

[None smite (?)] his breech [in disgust (?); against thee; and for thee may the hero]

Comb out his locks; . . . who would embrace [thee],

5.Let him his girdle unloose . . . and thy [bed] be azure and golden;

May . . . entreat thee kindly (?), . . . are heap'd his *ishshikku*

May the gods make thee enter . . . . .

10.[Mayst thou] be left as the mother of seven brides . . ."

(Enkidu, sorrowful at his approaching end, sleeps alone and dreams).

[Enkidu] . . . woe in his belly . . . sleeping alone,

[Came] in the night [to discover] his heaviness unto his comrade:

"[Friend], (O) a dream I have seen in my night-time: the firmament [roaring],

15.Echo'd the earth, and I [by myself was standing(?) . . .

[When perceived I a man (?)], (all) dark was his face, [and] was liken 'd [Unto] . . .his face, . . . [and] his nails like claws of a lion. <sup>100</sup>

20.Me did he overcome . . . climbing up . . . press'd me down,

Upon me . . . my (?) body . . . . .

(Here follows a gap of perhaps three lines, until what is still presumably the dream is again taken up by the other half of the Column at l. 31 (?) with a description of the Underworld which is being shewn to Enkidu in premonition of his death).

33.. . . . like birds my hands: (and) he seized (?) me,

Me did he lead to the Dwelling of Darkness, the home of Irkalla, <sup>101</sup>

35.Unto the Dwelling from which he who entereth cometh forth never!

(Aye), by the road on the passage whereof there can be no returning,

Unto the Dwelling whose tenants are (ever) bereft of the daylight,

Where for their food is the dust, and the mud is their sustenance: bird-like

40.Wear they a garment of feathers: and, sitting (there) in the darkness,

<sup>100</sup> Is this the harbinger of death who is to carry Enkidu off?

<sup>101</sup> Presiding deity of the Underworld

Never the light will they see. On the Gate . . . . when I enter'd  
 On the house (?) . . . . was humbled the crown,  
 For . . . those who (wore) crowns, who of old ruled over the country,  
 . . . . of Anu and Enlil 'twas they set the bakemeats,  
 45.Set . . . ., cool was the water they served from the skins. When I  
 enter'd  
 Into (this) House of the Dust, were High Priest and acolyte sitting,  
 Seer and magician <sup>102</sup>, the priest who the Sea of the great gods  
 anointed <sup>103</sup>,  
 (Here) sat Etana <sup>104</sup>, Sumuqan; the Queen of the Underworld (also),  
 Ereshkigal <sup>105</sup>, in whose presence doth bow the Recorder of Hades,  
 [Belit]-seri, and readeth before her; [she lifted] her head (and) beheld  
 me,  
 . . . and took this . . . . .  
 (The text here breaks off).

---



---

<sup>102</sup> Text: "were sitting."

<sup>103</sup> Again "was sitting." The Sea is probably the great laver of the temple

<sup>104</sup> The hero of a legend, who was carried up to heaven on an eagle

<sup>105</sup> The Queen of Hades whose name has made its way into an ancient Greek charm



## THE EIGHTH TABLE: OF THE MOURNING OF GILGAMISH, AND WHAT CAME OF IT

<sup>106</sup>(The first Column is badly mutilated, and all we can glean from it is that "as soon as something of morning has dawned," Gilgamesh addressing Enkidu, compares him to a gazelle, and promises to glorify him. Then follows apparently a recital by Gilgamesh of their exploits together, "mountains [we ascended, we reach'd] the Forest of Cedars, [travelling] night and day . . . [with wild beasts (?)] drawing nigh after us." Enkidu is lying dying or dead, and Column II begins with Gilgamesh keening over his dead friend before the Elders of Erech):

"Unto me hearken, O Elders, to me, aye, me [shall ye listen],  
 'Tis that I weep for my [comrade] Enkidu, bitterly crying  
 Like to a wailing woman: my grip is [slack'd] on the curtleaxe  
 5. (Slung at) my thigh, (and) the brand at my belt from my sight [is removed].  
 (Aye, and) my festal attire [lends nought of its aid for] my pleasure,  
 Me, me hath [sorrow] assailed, and [cast] me [down in affliction].

---

Comrade (and) henchman, who chased the wild ass <sup>107</sup>, the pard of the desert,

Comrade (and) henchman, who chased the wild ass <sup>108</sup>, the pard of the desert,

10. Enkidu—we who all [haps] overcame, ascending [the mountains].  
 Captured the Heavenly Bull, and [destroy'd (him)]: we o'erthrew  
 Humbaba,

He who [abode] in the Forest [of Cedars —O, what is this slumber  
 Now hath o'ercome [thee], (for now) art thou dark, nor art able to hear  
 [me]?"

15. Natheless he raised not [his eyes, and] his heart, (when Gilgamesh)  
 felt (it),  
 Made no beat.

---

<sup>106</sup> Assyrian Version

<sup>107</sup> Text "of the mountains."

<sup>108</sup> Text "of the mountains."

Then he veil'd (his) friend like a bride ..  
 Lifted his voice like a lion . . . . .  
 [Roar'd] like a lioness robb'd of [her] whelps. In front of his [comrade]  
 20. Paced he backwards and forwards, tearing and casting his ringlets(?),  
 Plucking and casting away (all) the grace of his . . . .

---

Then when something of morning had dawn'd, did Gilgamish . . . .

(Column II here breaks off. Column III begins with Gilgamish still mourning, telling his dead friend all he will do for him in the words of Shamash in the preceding tablet, so that we may supply the last two (?) lines of Column II as follow):

Column II.

(The Lament of Gilgamish).

49-50."[O, on a couch of great size will I, thy friend and thy brother,

Column III.

[Gilgamish, grant thee to lie], on [a handsome] couch [will I grant thee Rest, and] to sit on [a throne of great size, a throne at (my) left hand], So that the princes of Hades [may kiss thy feet (in their homage)]; I, too, will make (all) [the people of Erech] lament in thy (honour), 5.[Making them mourn thee], (and) damsels(and)heroes[constrain to thy service], While I myself for thy sake [will cause my body to carry] [Stains], (and) will put on the skin of a [lion <sup>109</sup>, and range o'er the desert]."

---

Then when something of morning had dawn'd did [Gilgamish] . . . .  
 Loosing his girdle . . . . .

(Column IV has only five fragmentary lines at the end, mentioning "to my friend," "thy sword," "likeness," and "to the god Bibbu," i.e., a planet

---

<sup>109</sup> Or "dog."

or Mercury. Column V has only a bare dozen fragmentary lines at the end):

Column V.

43. " . . . Judge of the Anunnaki <sup>110</sup> . . . "

(Then), when Gilgamish heard this, he form'd of the slaying a concept <sup>111</sup>.

---

45. (Then), with the dawn of the morning did Gilgamish fashion a . . .  
 Brought out also a mighty platter of wood from the highlands <sup>112</sup>.  
 Fill'd he with honey a bowl of (bright) ruby <sup>113</sup>, a bowl (too) of azure,  
 Fill'd he with cream; (and) adorn'd he the . . ., and Shamash instructed ..  
 (One line lost at end of Column. Column VI is all lost).

---



---

<sup>110</sup> Spirits of the earth over whom Enlil was lord

<sup>111</sup> Or "of a river," but improbable. It may be that he is imagining a design for a sculpture of the slaying of the Bull. The remainder of the text perhaps describes the funerary rites.

<sup>112</sup> *Elammaqu*

<sup>113</sup> *Sandu-stone*

## THE NINTH TABLET: GILGAMISH IN TERROR OF DEATH SEEKS ETERNAL LIFE

Column I.

(Gilgamish determines to seek Eternal Life).

<sup>114</sup>Gilgamish bitterly wept for his comrade, (for) Enkidu, ranging  
Over the desert: "I, too—shall I not die like Enkidu also?  
5.Sorrow hath enter'd my heart; I fear death as I range o'er the desert,  
I will get hence on the road to the presence of Uta-Napishtim <sup>115</sup>, —  
Offspring of Ubara-Tutu is he—and with speed will I travel.  
(If) 'tis in darkness that I shall arrive at the Gates of the Mountains,  
10.Meeting with lions, then terror fall on me, I'll lift my head (skywards),  
Offer my prayer to the Moon-god, (or else) to . . the gods let my orison  
Come . . . 'O deliver me!'" . . . He slept . . . (and) a dream . . .  
[Saw he] . . . which were rejoicing in life,  
15.Poised he [his] axe . . . in his hand, (and) drew [his glaive from] his  
baldric,  
Lance-like leapt he amongst them . . . smiting, . . . (and) crushing.

(The rest of the Column is mutilated).

Column II. (The hero reaches the Mountains of Mashu).

Mashu the name of the hills; as he reach'd the Mountains of Mashu,  
Where ev'ry day they keep watch o'er [the Sun-god's] rising [and  
setting],  
5.Unto the Zenith of Heaven [uprear'd are] their summits, (and)  
downwards  
(Deep) unto Hell reach their breasts: (and there) at their portals stand  
sentry  
Scorpion-men, awful in <sup>116</sup> terror, their (very) glance Death: (and)  
tremendous,  
Shaking the hills, their magnificence; they are the Wardens of Shamash,

---

<sup>114</sup> Assyrian Version

<sup>115</sup> The Babylonian Noah, with whom so much of the remainder of this story is concerned

<sup>116</sup> Lit. "their terror, and."

10. Both at his <sup>117</sup> rising and setting. (No sooner) did Gilgamish see them" (Than) from alarm and dismay was his countenance stricken with pallor, Senseless, he grovell'd before them.

(Then) unto his wife spake the Scorpion:

"Lo, he that cometh to us—'tis the flesh of the gods is his body."

15. (Then) to the Scorpion-man answer]d his wife: "Two parts of him god-(like),

(Only) a third of him human."

(Eight broken lines remain, in which the Scorpion-man addresses presumably Gilgamish, asking him [why he has gone on a far journey, and telling him how hard the traverse is. Column III begins with the third line in which Gilgamish is evidently telling the Scorpion-man that he proposes to cask(?) Uta-Napishtim about death and life. But the Scorpion-man says that [the journey has never before been made, that none [has crossed] the mountains. The traverse is by the Road of the Sun by a journey of twenty-four hours, beginning with deep darkness. The last half of this Column and the first half of Column IV are lost, but it would appear that the Scorpion-man describes the journey hour by hour, and that Gilgamish accepts the trial of his strength "[even though it be] in pain . . ., [though my face be weather]d] with cold [and heat] (and) in grief [I go] . . ." Then the Scorpion-man, with a final word about the mountains of Mashu, farewells him, wishing him success.

"[(Then) when] Gilgamish [heard this], [he set off] at the word of the Scorpion-man, taking] the Road of the Sun . . ." The first two hours are in deep darkness, without light, which did not allow [him to see . . . behind him] . . ." Each succeeding period of two hours is the same until the eighth is reached and passed, and by the ninth he apparently comes to the first glimmer of light. Finally, with the twelfth double hour, he reaches the full blaze of the sun, and there he beholds the Tree of the Gods, the description of which is given in the only four complete lines, 48-51, of Column V. It is conceivable that this is the Vine, the Tree of Life, whence Siduri, the Maker of Wine, plucks the fruit for her trade).

Bearing its fruit (all) ruby, and hung about with (its) tendrils.

50. Fair for beholding, and azure the boskage it bore; (aye), 'twas bearing Fruits (all) desirable unto the eye.

---

<sup>117</sup> Lit. "of Shamash."

(Column VI in the Assyrian is nearly all lost, and it is uncertain what part the Tree plays: but at this point a third Old Babylonian tablet helps us out. At this point, according to this early version the Sun-god takes pity on the hero).

"[He of the wild things hath dresséd] their pelts and the flesh of them eateth.

Gilgamish, [never] a crossing [shall be (?) ] where none hath been ever, (No), [so long] as the gale driveth water."

5. Shamash was touch'd, that he summon'd him, (thus) unto Gilgamish speaking:

"Gilgamish, why dost thou run, (forasmuch as) the life which thou seekest

Thou shalt not find?" (Whereat) Gilgamish answer'd the warrior Shamash:

10. "Shall I, after I roam up and down o'er the waste as a wand'rer,  
Lay my head in the bowels of earth, and throughout the years slumber  
Ever and aye? Let mine eyes see the Sun and be sated with brightness,  
(Yea, for) the darkness is (banish'd) afar, if wide be the brightness.  
When will the man who is dead (ever) look on the light of the Sunshine?"

(With this ends all our connected text of Column VI, the Assyrian Version ending with about a dozen mutilated lines containing a mention of numerous minerals and stones, and evidently Gilgamish has now come to the girl Siduri the sabitu, which last word is generally taken to mean a provider of strong waters).

---

## THE TENTH TABLE: HOW GILGAMISH REACHED UTA-NAPIŠTIM

Column I.

(Gilgamish meets Siduri).

<sup>118</sup>Dwelt Siduri, the maker of wine . . . .

Wine(?) was her trade, her trade was . . . . .

Cover'd she was with a veil and . . . . .

5. Gilgamish wander'd [towards her] . . . . .

Pelts was he wearing . . . . .

Flesh of the gods in [his body] possessing, but woe in [his belly],

(Aye), and his countenance like to a (man) who hath gone a far journey.

10. Look'd in the distance the maker of wine, (and) a word in her bosom

Quoth she, in thought with herself: "This is one who would ravish (?) [a woman],

15. Whither doth he advance in . . . ?" As soon as the Wine-maker saw him,

Barr'd she [her postern], barr'd she her inner door, barr'd she [her chamber(?)].

Straightway did Gilgamish, too, in his turn catch the sound [of her shutting(?)],

Lifted his chin, and so did he let [his attention fall on her].

---

Unto her (therefore) did Gilgamish speak, to the Wine-maker saying]:

20. "Wine-maker, what didst thou see, that [thy postern (now)] thou hast barréd,

Barréd thine inner door, [-barréd thy chamber(?)]? O, I'll smite [thy] portal,

[Breaking the bolt] . . . . .

(About nine lines mutilated, after which it is possible to restore l. 32—  
Column II, 8).

---

<sup>118</sup> Assyrian Version. A fragment from Boghazkeui (Keils. *Boghazh.* VI. 33) in a dialect (Subara-Hurritic) mentions Siduri

[Unto him (answer 'd) the Wine-maker, speaking to Gilgamish, (saying):  
 "Why is thy vigour (so) wasted, (or why) is thy countenance <sup>119</sup> sunken,  
 (Why) hath thy spirit a sorrow (?), (or why) hath thy cheerfulness  
 surcease?

35.(O, but) there's woe in thy belly! Like one who hath gone a far journey  
 (So) is thy <sup>120</sup> face—(O,) with cold and with heat is thy countenance  
 weather'd,

. . . that thou shouldst range over the desert."

Gilgamish unto her (answer'd and) spake to the Wine-maker, saying:

40."Wine-maker, 'tis not my vigour is wasted, nor countenance sunken,  
 Nor hath my spirit a sorrow (?), (forsooth), nor my cheerfulness  
 surcease,

No, 'tis not woe in my belly: nor doth my visage resemble  
 One who hath gone a far journey—nor is my countenance weather'd  
 45.Either by cold or by heat . . . that (thus) I range over the desert.  
 Comrade (and) henchman, who chased the wild ass, the pard of the  
 desert,

Comrade (and) henchman, who chased the wild ass, the pard of the  
 desert,

Enkidu—we who all haps overcame, ascending the mountains,  
 50.Captured the Heavenly Bull, and destroy'd him]: we [o'erthrew  
 Humbaba,

He who abode in the Forest of Cedars; we slaughter'd the lions

## Column II.

There in the Gates (?) of the mountains (?); with me enduring all  
 hardships,

Enkidu, (he was) my comrade—the lions we slaughter'd (together),  
 (Aye), enduring all hardships—and him <sup>121</sup> his fate hath o'ertaken.

(So) did I mourn him six days, (yea), a <sup>122</sup> se'nnight, until unto burial  
 I could consign (?) him . . . . (then) did I fear . . . .

Death did I dread, that I range o'er the desert]: the hap of my comrade  
 [Lay on me heavy(?)—O 'tis a long road that I range o'er] the desert!

Enkidu, (yea), [of my comrade the hap lay heavy (?) upon me]—

---

<sup>119</sup> Probable restoration.

<sup>120</sup> Probable restoration.

<sup>121</sup> Probable restoration

<sup>122</sup> Probable restoration



10. ['Tis a long road] that I range o'er the desert—O, how to be silent],  
 (Aye, or) how to give voice? [(For) the comrade I ha' (so) lovéd]  
 Like to the dust [hath become]; O Enkidu, (he was) my comrade,  
 He whom I loved hath become alike the dust]—[I,] shall I not, also,  
 Lay me down [like him], throughout all eternity [never returning]?"

---

(Here may be interpolated, for convenience, the Old Babylonian Version of this episode in the Berlin tablet of 2000B.C. Column II, 1,-III, 14):

Column II.

"He who endured all hardships with me, whom I lovéd dearly,  
 Enkidu,—he who endured all hardships with me (is now perish'd),  
 Gone to the common lot of mankind! (And) I have bewail'd him  
 5. Day and night long: (and) unto the tomb I have not consign'd him.  
 (O but) my friend cometh not (?) to my call—six days, (yea), <sup>123</sup> a  
 se'nnight

10. He like a worm hath lain on his face—(and) I for this reason <sup>124</sup>  
 Find no life, (but must needs) roam the desert like to a hunter,  
 (Wherefore), O Wine-maker, now that (at last) I look on thy visage,  
 Death which I dread I will see not!"

(The Philosophy of the Wine-maker).

The Wine-maker Gilgamish answer'd:

Column III.

"Gilgamish, why runnest thou, (inasmuch as) the life which thou seekest,  
 Thou canst not find? (For) the gods, in their (first) creation of mortals,  
 5. Death allotted to man, (but) life they retain'd in their keeping.  
 Gilgamish, full be thy belly,  
 Each day and night be thou merry, (and) daily keep holiday revel,  
 10. Each day and night do thou dance and rejoice; (and) fresh be thy  
 raiment,  
 (Aye), let thy head be clean washen, (and) bathe thyself in the water,

---

<sup>123</sup> Lit. "and."

<sup>124</sup> Or "on account of him."

Cherish the little one holding thy hand; be thy spouse in thy bosom  
Happy—(for) this is the dower [of man] . . . . .

(Here the Old Babylonian Version breaks off and we must return to the Assyrian).

(Gilgamish, dissatisfied with a Wine-maker's philosophy, would seek further afield).

15. [Gilgamish] (thus) continued his speech to the Wine-maker, (saying),  
"[Pr'ythee, then], Wine-maker, which is the way unto Uta-Napishtim?  
[What (is)] its token, I pr'ythee, vouchsafe me, vouchsafe me its token.  
If it be possible (even) the Ocean (itself) will I traverse,  
(But) if it should be impossible, (then) will I range o'er the desert."

---

(The Wine-maker, in accordance with tradition, attempts to dissuade him).

20. (Thus) did the Wine-maker answer to him, unto Gilgamish (saying),  
"There hath been never a crossing, O Gilgamish: never aforetime  
Anyone, coming thus far, hath been able to traverse the Ocean:  
Warrior Shamash doth cross it <sup>125</sup>, 'tis true, but who besides Shamash  
Maketh the traverse? (Yea), rough is the ferry, (and) rougher its passage,  
25. (Aye), too, 'tis deep are the Waters of Death, which bar its  
approaches <sup>126</sup>.

Gilgamish, if perchance thou succeed in traversing the Ocean,  
What wilt thou do, when unto the Waters of Death thou arrivest?  
Gilgamish, there is Ur-Shanabi, boatman to Uta-Napishtim,  
He with whom sails (?) <sup>127</sup> are, the *urnu* of which in the forest he  
plucketh,

30. (Now) let him look on thy presence, (and) [if it be] possible with him  
Cross—(but) if it be not, (then) do thou retrace thy steps (homewards)."

Gilgamish, hearing this, [taketh] (his) axe in his [hand], awhile he  
draweth Glaive from his baldric (?).

---

<sup>125</sup> Lit. "the Ocean."

<sup>126</sup> Lit. "its face," or "its margin." The idea is perhaps that of the open sea after Gilgamish has left the more peaceable tidal waters where the Persian Gulf and the rivers meet in the salt lagoons.

<sup>127</sup> A word which is one of the greatest philological problems of the Epic. Possibly "paddles." I doubt whether it has any connection with "stones" as might be inferred from one rendering of the word.

(The remainder of this Column in the Assyrian Version is so much mutilated that little can be made out, but what is obviously essential is that Gilgamish meets Ur-Shanabi, but destroys the sails (?) of the boat for some reason. Before going on with the restoration of the Assyrian Version, we can interpolate Column IV from the Old Babylonian Version of the Berlin Tablet)

(Then) did Ur-Shanabi <sup>128</sup> speak to him (yea), unto Gilgamish, (saying):  
 "Tell to me what is thy name, (for) I am Ur-Shanabi, (henchman),  
 (Aye), of far Uta-Napishtim <sup>129</sup>." To him <sup>130</sup> did Gilgamish answer:  
 5."Gilgamish, (that) is my name, come hither from Erech(?), E-Anni (?),  
 (One) who hath traversed the Mountains, a wearisome journey of  
 Sunrise,  
 10.Now that I look on thy face, Ur-Shanabi—Uta-Napishtim  
 Let me see also—the Distant one!" Him did Ur-Shanabi [answer],  
 Gilgamish: . . . . ."

(In the Assyrian Version Ur-Shanabi presently addresses Gilgamish in exactly the same words as Siduri, the Wine-maker, with the same astonishment at his weather-beaten appearance):

### Column III.

(Thus) did Ur-Shanabi speak to him, (yea), unto Gilgamish, (saying)  
 "Why is thy vigour all wasted . . ."

(It continues thus, to be supplied for ll. 2-31 from Columns I, 33-II, 14 with due bracketing for the last words, and then the text goes on):

32.Gilgamish (thus) continued his speech to Ur-Shanabi, (saying)  
 "Pr'ythee, Ur-Shanabi, which is [the way unto Uta-Napishtim <sup>131</sup>?  
 What is its token, I pr'ythee, vouchsafe me, vouchsafe me nits token].  
 If it be possible (even) the Ocean (itself) will I traverse,  
 35.But if it should be impossible, [(then) will I range o'er the desert]."

---

<sup>128</sup> Sur-Sunabu in this Version

<sup>129</sup> Uta-naishtim

<sup>130</sup> Lit. "to him, to Sur-Sunabu."

<sup>131</sup> Sur-Sunabu in this Version

(Thus) did Ur-Shanabi speak to him, (yea), unto Gilgamish, (saying):  
 "Gilgamish, 'tis thine own hand hath hinder'd [thy crossing the Ocean],  
 Thou hast destroyéd the sails(?), (and) hast piercéd (?) the . . .  
 (Now) destroy'd are the sails(?), and the *urnu* not . . . . .

40. Gilgamish, take thee thy axe in [thy] hand; O, descend to the forest,  
 [Fashion thee] poles each of five gar in length; make (knops of) bitumen,  
 Sockets, (too), add (to them) <sup>132</sup>: bring [them me]." (Thereat), when  
 Gilgamish [heard this],

Took he the axe in his hand, (and) [the glaive] drew forth [from his  
 baldric],

45. Went <sup>133</sup> to the forest, and poles each of five gar in length [did he  
 fashion],

(Knops of) bitumen he made, and he added (their) sockets: and brought  
 them . . <sup>134</sup>,

Gilgamish (then), and Ur-Shanabi fared them forth [in their vessel],  
 Launch'd they the boat on the billow, and they themselves [in her  
 embarking].

After the course of a month and a half he saw on the third day

50. How that Ur-Shanabi (now) at the Waters of Death had arrivéd.

#### Column IV.

(Thus) did Ur-Shanabi [answer] him, [(yea), unto Gilgamish, (saying)]:  
 "Gilgamish, take the . . . . away . . . . .

Let not the Waters of Death touch thy hand . . . . .

Gilgamish, take thou a second, a third, and a fourth pole (for thrusting),

5. Gilgamish, take thou a fifth, (and) a sixth, and a seventh (for  
 thrusting),

Gilgamish, take thou an eighth, (and) a ninth, and a tenth pole (for  
 thrusting),

Gilgamish, take an eleventh, a twelfth pole!" He ceased <sup>135</sup> from (his)  
 poling,

(Aye) with twice-sixty (thrusts); (then) ungirded his loins . . . .

10. Gilgamish . . . . (?), and set up the mast in its socket.

<sup>132</sup> The modern punting-pole of S. Mesopotamia is a bamboo with a knob of bitumen at one end, and a metal ferule or ring at the other.

<sup>133</sup> Lit. "Went down into."

<sup>134</sup> Probably supply "to Ur-Shanabi."

<sup>135</sup> Or "he completed," or "used up his poles." The text has "Gilgamish."

(He reaches Uta-Napishtim).

Uta-Napishtim look'd into the distance and, inwardly musing,  
 15.Said to himself: "(Now), why are [the sails(?)] of the vessel destroyed,  
 Aye, and one who is not of my . . . (?) doth ride on the vessel?  
 (This) is no mortal who cometh: nor . . . .  
 I look, but (this) is no [mortal] . . . . .  
 20.I look, but . . . . . I look but . . . . .

(Remainder of Column lost, but about l. 42 it becomes apparent that  
 Uta-Napishtim is asking Gilgamesh in exactly the same words as Siduri,  
 the Wine-maker, and Ur-Shanabi "Why is thy vigour (all) wasted?" and  
 so on, down to Column V, l. 22 "[I], shall I not also lay me down like him,  
 throughout all eternity never returning?"):

23.Gilgamesh (thus) continued his speech unto Uta-Napishtim,  
 "Then [I bethought me], I'll get hence and see what far Uta-Napishtim

25.Saith (on the matter) . (And so), again (?) I came through all  
 countries,  
 Travell'd o'er difficult mountains, (aye), [and] all seas have I traversed,  
 Nor hath (ever) my face had its fill of gentle sleep (?): (but) with  
 hardship

Have I exhausted myself, (and) my flesh have I laden with sorrow.

30.Ere I had come to the [House(?)] of the Wine-Maker, spent were my  
 garments,

. . . Owl, bat, lion, pard, wild cat, deer, ibex, and . . . . .

[Flesh] of them (all) have I eaten, (and eke) their pelts have I dress'd (?)  
 [me]."

(The remainder of the Column is mutilated: there is some mention of "let  
 them bolt her gate . . .; with pitch and bitumen . . . ." in l. 33, and then  
 nothing which gives connected sense until Column VI, ll. 26-39):

Column VI.

26."Shall we for ever build house(s), for ever set signet (to contract),  
 Brothers continue to share, or among [foes (?)] always be hatred?  
 (Or) will for ever the stream (that hath risen) in spate bring a torrent,  
*Kulilu*-bird [to] *Kirippu*-bird . . . . . ?

Face which doth look on the sunlight . . . presently (?) shall not be <sup>136</sup> . . .  
 Sleeping and dead [are]r alike, from Death they mark no distinction  
 Servant and master, when once thy have reach'd [their full span  
 allotted],  
 Then do the Anunnaki, great gods, . . . . .  
 Mammetum, Maker of Destiny with them, doth destiny settle,  
 Death, (aye), and Life they determine; of Death is the day not revealéd."

---



---

<sup>136</sup> Difficult line

## THE ELEVENTH TABLE: THE FLOOD

### Column I.

(The Cause of the Flood).

<sup>137</sup>Gilgamish unto him spake, to Uta-Napishtim the Distant:

"Uta-Napishtim, upon thee I gaze, (yet) in no wise thy presence  
Strange is, (for) thou art like me, and in no wise different art thou;  
5.Thou art like me; (yea) a stomach for fighting doth make thee  
consummate,

[Aye, and to rest (?) ] on thy back thou dost lie. [O tell me (?) ], how  
couldst thou

Stand in th' Assemblage of Gods to petition for life (everlasting)?"

Uta-Napishtim (addressing him thus) unto Gilgamish answer'd:

"Gilgamish, I unto thee will discover the (whole) hidden story,  
10.Aye, and the rede of the Gods will I tell thee.

The City Shurippak <sup>138</sup>—

(O 'tis) a city thou knowest!—is set [on the marge] of Euphrates,  
Old is this city, with gods in its midst. (Now), the great gods a deluge  
Purposed to bring: . . . . . there was Anu, their sire; their adviser  
Warrior Enlil; Ninurta <sup>139</sup>, their herald; their leader(?) Ennugi;

Nin-igi-azag—'tis Ea—, (albeit) conspirator with them,

20.Unto a reed-hut their counsel betray'd he: "O Reed-hut, O Reed-hut!  
Wall, wall! Hearken, O Reed-hut, consider, O Wall! O thou Mortal,

Thou of Shurippak, thou scion of Ubara-Tutu, a dwelling

25.Pull down, (and) fashion a vessel (therewith); abandon possessions,  
Life do thou seek, (and) thy hoard disregard, and save life; every creature  
Make to embark in the vessel. The vessel, which thou art to fashion,

30.Apt be its measure; its beam and its length be in due correspondence,  
(Then) [on] the deep do thou launch it." And I—sooth, I apprehending,

(This wise) to Ea, my lord, did I speak: '[See], Lord, what thou sayest

35.Thus, do I honour, I'll do—(but) to city, to people, and elders  
Am I, forsooth, to explain?' (Then) Ea made answer in speaking,

---

<sup>137</sup> Assyrian Version

<sup>138</sup> The modern Fara

<sup>139</sup> Son of Enlil, and the god of war and hunting

Saying to me—me, his henchman!—"Thou mortal, shalt speak to them this wise:

"'Tis me alone (?) whom Enlil so hateth that I in your city

40.No (more) may dwell, nor turn my face unto the land which is Enlil's.

[I will go] down to the Deep, (there) dwelling with Ea, my [liege] lord,  
(Wherefore) [on] you will he shower down plenty, yea, fowl [in great number(?)],

45.Booty of fish . . . [and big] the harvest.

. . . . . causing a plentiful rainfall (?) to come down upon you." <sup>140</sup>

[(Then) when something] of morning had dawn'd . . .

(Five lines mutilated).

55.Pitch did the children <sup>141</sup> provide, (while) the strong brought [all] that was needful.

(Then) on the fifth day (after) I laid out the <sup>142</sup> shape (of my vessel),  
Ten *gar* each was the height of her sides, in accord with her planning(?),  
Ten *gar* to match was the size of her deck (?), and the shape of the forepart (?)

60.Did I lay down, (and) the same did I fashion; (aye), six times cross-pinn'd her,

Sevenfold did I divide her . . . , divided her inwards

Ninefold: hammer'd the caulking within her, (and) found me a quant-pole,

65.(All) that was needful I added; the hull with six <sup>143</sup> *shar* of bitumen  
Smear'd I, (and) three *shar* of pitch [did I smear] on the inside; some people,

Bearing a vessel of grease, three *shar* of it brought (me); (and) one *shar*  
(Out of this) grease did I leave, which the tackling (?) consumed; (and) the boatman

70.Two *shar* of grease stow'd away; (yea), beeves for the . . . I slaughter'd,

Each day lambs did I slay: mead, beer, oil, wine, too, the workmen

<sup>140</sup> Two difficult lines

<sup>141</sup> Singular

<sup>142</sup> Lit. "her."

<sup>143</sup> Var. "three."



[Drank] as though they were water <sup>144</sup>, and made a great feast like the New Year,

(Five mutilated lines "I added salve for the hand(s)," "the vessel was finish'd . . . Shamash the great." "was difficult," " . . ? I caused to bring above and below," "two-thirds of it"):

---

80.[All I possess'd I] laded aboard her; the silver I laded  
 All I possess'd; gold, all I possess'd I laded aboard her,  
 All I possess'd of the seed of all living [I laded aboard] her.  
 Into the ship I embark'd all my kindred and family (with me),  
 85.Cattle (and) beasts of the field (and) all handicraftsmen embarking.  
 (Then) decreed Shamash the hour: " . . . . (?)  
 Shall in the night let a plentiful rainfall(?) pour down . . . . <sup>145</sup>  
 (Then) do thou enter the vessel, and (straightway) shut down thy  
 hatchway."  
 90. <sup>146</sup>Came (then) that hour (appointed), . . . . . (?)  
 Did in the night let a plentiful rainfall(?) pour down . . . . (?)  
 View'd I the aspect of day: to look on the day bore a horror,  
 (Wherefore) I enter'd the vessel, and (straightway) shut down my  
 hatchway,  
 (So, too) to shut down the vessel to Puzur-Amurri (?), the boatman,  
 95.Did I deliver the poop (of the ship), besides its equipment.

---

(Then), when something of dawn had appear'd, from out the horizon  
 Rose a cloud darkling; (lo), Adad (the storm-god) was rumbling within it,  
 100.Nabu and Sharru were leading the vanguard, and coming as heralds  
 Over the hills and the levels: (then) Irragal wrench'd out the bollards;  
 Havoc Ninurta let loose as he came, th' Anunnaki their torches  
 105.Brandish'd, and shrivell'd the land with their flames; desolation  
 from Adad  
 Stretch'd to (high) Heaven, (and) all that was bright was turn'd into  
 darkness.

---

<sup>144</sup> Lit. "water of the river."

<sup>145</sup> Lit. "water of the river."

<sup>146</sup> Two difficult lines.

(Four lines mutilated "the land like . . .," "for one day the storm . . .," "fiercely blew . . . " "like a battle . . .").

Nor could a brother distinguish his brother; from heaven were mortals  
Not to be spied. O, were stricken with terror the gods at the Deluge,  
Fleeing, they rose to the Heaven of Anu, and crouch'd in the outskirts,  
115. Cow 'ring like curs were the gods (while) like to a woman in travail  
Ishtar did cry, she shrieking aloud, (e'en) the sweet-spoken Lady  
(She of the gods): 'May that day turn to dust, because I spake evil  
120. (There) in th' Assemblage of Gods! O, how could I utter (such) evil  
(There) in the Assemblage of Gods, (so) to blot out my people, ordaining  
Havoc! Sooth, then, am I to give birth, unto (these) mine own people  
Only to glut (with their bodies) the Sea as though they were fish-spawn?'  
125. Gods—Anunnaki—wept with her, the gods were sitting (all)  
humbled,  
(Aye), in (their) weeping, (and) closed were their lips amid(?) the  
Assemblage.

Six days, a <sup>147</sup> se'nnight the hurricane, deluge, (and) tempest continued  
Sweeping the land: when the seventh day came, were quelléd the  
warfare,

130. Tempest (and) deluge which like to an army embattail'd were  
fighting.

Lull'd was the sea, (all) spent was the gale, assuaged was the deluge,  
(So) did I look on the day; (lo), sound was (all) still'd; and all human  
Back to (its) clay was return'd, and fen was level with roof-tree.

135. (Then) I open'd a hatchway, and down on my cheek stream'd the  
sunlight,

Bowing myself, I sat weeping, my tears o'er my cheek(s) overflowing,  
Into the distance I gazed, to the furthest bounds of the Ocean,

140. Land was uprear'd at twelve (points), and the Ark on the Mountain  
of Nisir

Grounded; the Mountain of Nisir held fast, nor gave lease to  
her <sup>148</sup> shifting.

One day, (nay,) two, did Nisir hold fast, nor give lease to her shifting.

Three days, (nay), four, did Nisir hold fast, nor give lease to her shifting,

Five days, (nay,) six, did Nisir hold fast, nor give lease to her shifting.

---

<sup>147</sup> Lit. "and."

<sup>148</sup> Text has "the vessel."

145.(Then), when the seventh day dawn'd, I put forth a dove, and  
released (her),  
(But) to and fro went the dove, and return'd (for) a resting-place was not.  
150 (Then) I a swallow put forth and released; to and fro went the  
swallow,  
She (too) return'd, (for) a resting-place was not; I put forth a raven,  
Her, (too,) releasing; the raven went, too, and th' abating of waters  
Saw; and she ate as she waded (and) splash'd, (unto me) not returning.  
155.Unto the four winds (of heaven) I freed (all the beasts), and an  
off'ring  
Sacrificed, and a libation I pour'd on the peak of the mountain,  
Twice seven flagons devoting, (and) sweet cane, (and) cedar, and myrtle,  
160.Heap'd up beneath them; the gods smelt the savour, the gods the  
sweet savour  
Smelt; (aye,) the gods did assemble like flies o'er him making the  
off'ring.  
Then, on arriving, the Queen (of the gods) the magnificent jewels  
Lifted on high, which Anu had made in accord with her wishes;  
'O ye Gods! I will (rather) forget (this) my necklet of sapphires,  
165.Than not maintain these days in remembrance, nor ever forget them.  
(So), though (the rest of) the gods may present themselves at the off'ring,  
Enlil (alone of the gods) may (himself) not come to the off'ring,  
Because he, unreasoning, brought on a deluge, and therefore my people  
Unto destruction consign'd.'

170.Then Enlil, on his arrival,  
Spied out the vessel, and (straightway) did Enlil burst into anger,  
Swollen with wrath 'gainst the gods, the Igigi <sup>149</sup>: 'Hath any of mortals  
'Scaped? Sooth, never a man could have lived through (the welter of)  
ruin.'  
(Then) did Ninurta make answer and speak unto warrior Enlil,  
175.Saying: 'O, who can there be to devise such a plan, except Ea?  
Surely, 'tis Ea is privy to ev'ry design.' Whereat Ea  
Answer'd and spake unto Enlil, the warrior, saying: 'O chieftain  
Thou of the gods, thou warrior! How, forsooth, how (all) uncounsell'd  
150.Couldst thou a deluge bring on? (Aye,) visit his sin on the sinner  
Visit his guilt on the guilty, (but) O, have mercy, that (thereby)

---

<sup>149</sup> Gods of heaven

He shall not be cut off; be clement, that he may not [perish].

O, instead of thy making a flood, let a lion come, man to diminish;

O, instead of thy making a flood, let a jackal come, man to diminish;

O, instead of thy making a flood, let a famine occur, that the country

185. May be [devour'd(?)]; instead of thy making a flood, let the Plague-god

Come and the people [o'erwhelm];

Sooth, indeed 'twas not I of the Great Gods the secret revealéd,  
(But) to th' Abounding in Wisdom <sup>150</sup> vouchsafed I a dream, and (in this wise)

He of the gods heard the secret. Deliberate, now, on his counsel'.

190. (Then) to the Ark came up Enlil; my hand did he grasp, and uplifted Me, even me, and my wife, too, he raised, and, bent-kneed beside me, Made her to kneel; our foreheads he touch'd as he stood there between us,

Blessing us; 'Uta-Napishtim hath hitherto only been mortal,

Now, indeed, Uta-Napishtim and (also) his wife shall be equal

195. Like to us gods; in the distance afar at the mouth of the rivers

Uta-Napishtim shall dwell'. (So) they took me and (there) in the distance

Caused me to dwell at the mouth of the rivers.

But thee, as for thee, pray,

Who will assemble the gods for thy (need), that the life which thou seekest

Thou mayst discover? Come, fall not asleep for six days, aye, a se'nnight!"

(But Gilgamish is too mortal to resist even sleep).

200. (Then), while he sat on his haunches a sleep like a breeze breathed upon him.

Spake to her, Uta-Napishtim, yea, unto his wife: "O, behold him,

E'en the strong fellow who asketh for life, (how) hath breathéd upon him

205. Sleep like a breeze!" (Then) his wife unto Uta-Napishtim the Distant

Answer 'd: "O, touch him, and let the man wake, that the road he hath traversed

He may betake himself homeward in peace, that he by the portal

Whence he fared forth may return to his land." Spake Uta-Napishtim,

---

<sup>150</sup> *Atra-hasis*, another name for Uta-Napishtim

210.(Yea), to his wife: "(How) the troubles of mortals do trouble thee also!

Bake then his flour (and) put at his head, but the time he is sleeping  
On the house-wall do thou mark it. <sup>151</sup>" (So straightway) she (did so), his flour

Baked she (and) set at his head, but the time he was sleeping she noted

215.On the house-wall. (So), *first* was collected his flour,

(then) *secondly* sifted,

*Thirdly*, 'twas moisten'd, and *fourthly* she kneaded his dough, and so *fifthly*

Leaven she added, and sixthly 'twas baked; (then) *seventh*—he touch'd him,

All on a sudden, and (so from his slumber) awoke the (great) fellow!

Gilgamish unto him spake, (yea) to Uta-Napishtim the Distant:

220."(Tell me), I pr'ythee (?), was 't thou, who when sleep was shower'd upon me

All on a sudden didst touch me, and (straightway) rouse me (from slumber)?"

Uta-Napishtim to Gilgamish [spake, (yea), unto him spake he]:

"Gilgamish, told was the tale of thy meal . . . and (then) did I wake thee:

225.[ '*One*'—was collected] thy flour: [(then) '*two*']—it was sifted;

(and) '*thirdly*'—

Moisten'd: (and) '*fourthly*'—she kneaded thy dough [(and) '*fifthly*'] the leaven

Added: (and) '*sixthly*'—'twas baked: [(and) '*seventh*'] —'twas I on a sudden

Touch'd thee and thou didst awake." To Uta-Napishtim, the Distant, <sup>152</sup>

230.Gilgamish answer'd: "O, [how] shall I act, (or) where shall I hie me,

Uta-Napishtim? A Robber <sup>153</sup> (from me) hath ravish'd my [courage,]

Death [in] my bed-chamber broodeth, and Death is wherever I [listen] ."

<sup>151</sup> A difficult passage, capable of other interpretations. But if this is the correct one, Uta-Napishtim is mocking the "strong man" who seeks eternal life, with the tally of the number of hours (or days?) he sleeps, unable even to stay awake.

<sup>152</sup> As before "Unto him, unto Uta-Napishtim."

<sup>153</sup> So as it stands, but it is not intelligible.

[Spake] to [him, (yea),] to the boatman Ur-Shanabi Uta-Napishtim:

235. "'Tis thou, Ur-Shanabi . . . the crossing, will hate thee,  
(Sooth), to all those who come to its marge, doth its marge set a limit:

(This) man for whom thou wert guide—are stains to cover his body,  
Or shall a skin hide the grace of his limbs? Ur-Shanabi, take him,  
240. Lead him to where he may bathe, that he wash off his stains in the  
water

(White) as the snow: let him cast off his pelt(s) that the sea may remove  
(them);

Fair let his body appear: of his head be the fillet renewéd,

Let him, as clothes for his nakedness, garb himself in a mantle,

245. Such that, or ever he come to his city, and finish his journey,  
No (sign of) age shall the mantle betray, but preserve (all) its freshness."  
Wherefore Ur-Shanabi took him, and where he might bathe did he lead  
him,

Washing his stains in the [water] like snow, his pelt(s), [too], discarding,

250. So that the sea might bear them away; (and) his body appeared

Fair; [of] his head he [the fillet] renewed, and himself in a mantle

Garb'd, as the clothes for his nakedness, [such that or ever his city

Reach he], or ever he finish his journey, [the mantle betray not

255. Age, but] preserve [(all) its freshness].

(So) into their vessel embarkéd

Gilgamish, (aye), and Ur-Shanabi, launching (their) craft [on the billow],  
They themselves riding aboard (her).

(The magic gift of restored youth).

To Uta-Napishtim, the Distant <sup>154</sup>,

Spake (then) his wife: "Came Gilgamish (hither) aweary with rowing,

260. What wilt thou give wherewith he return to his land?" and the  
meanwhile

Gilgamish, lifting his pole, was pushing the boat at the seashore.

(Then answer'd) Uta-Napishtim to him, (yea), [to] Gilgamish [spake he]:

"Gilgamish, (hither) didst come (all) aweary with rowing; (O, tell me),

265. What shall I give thee (as gift) wherewith to return to thy country?

Gilgamish, I will reveal thee a hidden matter . . . I'll tell thee:

There is a plant like a thorn with its root (?) [deep down in the ocean],

<sup>154</sup> Lit. "to him, (yea), to Uta-Napishtim."

Like unto those of the briar (in sooth) its prickles will scratch [thee],  
 270.(Yet) if thy hand reach this plant, [thou'lt surely find life  
 (everlasting)] ."

(Then), when Gilgamish heard this, he loosen'd) <sup>155</sup> [his girdle about  
 him],

Bound heavy stones [on his feet], which dragg'd him down to the sea-  
 deeps,

[Found he the plant]; as he seized on the plant, (lo), [its prickles did  
 scratch him].

275.Cut he the heavy stones [from his feet] that again it restore him  
 Unto its shore.

Gilgamish spake to him, (yea), to the boatman Ur-Shanabi (this wise):  
 "(Nay, but) this plant is a plant of great wonder(?), Ur-Shanabi," said he,  
 "Whereby a man may attain his desire—I'll take it to Erech,  
 280.(Erech), the high-wall'd, and give it to eat [unto . . . ].  
 'Greybeard-who-turneth-to-man-in-his-prime' is its name and I'll eat it  
 I myself, that again I may come to my youthful condition."

(The Quest ends in Tragedy).

Broke they their fast at the fortieth hour: at the sixtieth rested.

285.Gilgamish spied out a pool of cool water, (and) therein descending  
 Bathed in the water. (But here was) a serpent who snuff'd the plant's  
 fragrance,

Darted he up [from the water (?)], and snatch'd the plant, uttering  
 malison

290.As he drew back. Then Gilgamish sate him, (and) burst into  
 weeping.

Over his cheeks flow'd his tears: to the boatman Ur -Shanabi [spake  
 he(?)]

"(Pr'ythee), [for] whom have toiled mine arms, O Ur-Shanabi, (tell me),  
 295.(Pr'ythee), for whom hath my heart's blood been spent? (yea), not  
 for mine own self,

Have I the guerdon achieved; (no), 'tis for an earth-lion (only)

Have I the guerdon secured—(and) now at the fortieth hour

<sup>155</sup> The word is not spelt quite correctly, if this is right.

(Such an) one reiveth (it)—O, when I open'd the sluice and . . .ed the attachment, <sup>156</sup>

(Aye), I noted the sign (?) which to me was vouchsafed as a warning,  
300. Would I had turn'd and abandon'd the boat at the marge (of the ocean)!"

Broke they their fast at the fortieth hour: at the sixtieth rested,  
(So in the end) to the middle of Erech, the high-wall'd, arrivéd.

---

(The Pride of the Architect).

Gilgamish spake to him, (yea), to the boatman Ur-Shanabi (this wise):

"Do thou, Ur-Shanabi, go up and walk on the ramparts of Erech,  
Look on its base, and take heed of its bricks, if its bricks be not kiln-  
burnt,

305. (Aye), and its ground-work be not bitumen, e'en seven courses,  
One *shar* the city, (and) one *shar* the gardens, and one *shar* the (2)  
. . . . the Temple of Ishtar, amass'd I three *shar* and . . . (?) of Erech <sup>157</sup>.

---



---

<sup>156</sup> Lit. "furniture." The incident is lost in one of the previous gaps. Is it referable to the "dam" in the Fifth Tablet, Column VI?

<sup>157</sup> Unfortunately there are two difficult words in these two lines.



## THE TWELFTH TABLE: GILGAMISH, IN DESPAIR, ENQUIRES OF THE DEAD

### Column I.

(How the dead haunt the living).

<sup>158</sup>(Then), what time that the seine had pass'd through the Architect 's dwelling,

(Aye, and) the net [had taken its toll] . . . . [said he]:

"Lord, what [is't I may do] . . . . .

(Now, what time that) the seine hath [pass'd through the Architect's <sup>159</sup> dwelling],

5.(Aye and) the net [hath taken its toll] . . . . ."

Gilgamish [unto him spake] . . . . .

"If unto . . . . .

(About two lines wanting, in which Gilgamish presumably asks how the dead may be made to haunt the mourner).

"Gilgamish, . . . . ."

(The Mourner's Duty).

"If to the . . . [thou drawest], unto the temple <sup>160</sup> . . . . .

15.Raiment clean [shalt not don], (but) like to a townsman shalt . . . .

Nor with sweet oil from the cruse be anointed, (lest) at its fragrance

Round thee they gather: nor mayst thou set bow to the earth, (lest) around thee

20.Circle those shot by the bow; nor a stick in thy hand mayst thou carry, (Lest) (stricken) ghosts should gibber against thee: nor shoe to thy

---

<sup>158</sup> Assyrian Version. Apparently the previous tablet has ended with the short description of Erech and its architecture by Gilgamish, as a cue for the opening lines of the Twelfth Tablet. The "Architect" must be Gilgamish: and the description of seine and net passing through his house, parallel to the phrase in the First Tablet, Column II, must be a euphemism for the death of Enkidu. Gilgamish, having failed to learn the secret of eternal life is now reduced to calling up his dead friend to know the worst which he may expect. He asks what must the mourner do to avoid being haunted by the ghost: and then proceeds to do exactly the contrary in order that. Enkidu may return to haunt him.

<sup>159</sup> Or, if it is the Architect speaking, "my dwelling."

<sup>160</sup> These lines are capable of two restorations: either "If thou [drawest] . . . unto . . ., then the ghosts will accompany thee to thy Temple," or "If thou [drawest] . . . unto . . ., or go to the Temple." Some slight restoration can be made from I. 31.

footsole

Put on, nor make on the ground a (loud) echo: thy wife, whom thou lovest,

25. Kiss (her) thou mayst not, thy wife whom thou hatest—thou mayst not chastise (her),

(Aye, and) thy child whom thou lovest not kiss, nor thy child whom thou hatest

Mayst not chastise, (for) the mourning of earth doth hold thee enthralled.

"She who dead lieth,

She who dead lieth,

Mother of Ninazu,

She who dead lieth,

30. No more with mantle are

Veil'd her fair shoulders,

No more her bosom

Drawn <sup>161</sup>, like the lard cruse!"

(Gilgamesh by contravening these customs attempts to raise Enkidu).

(So) did he draw [the . . . to . . . , and came to the temples,

[Put on clean raiment] . . . (and) like to a townsman . . .

35. (Aye), with [sweet] oil from the cruse [was] anointed: (then) at [its] fragrance

Round him they gather 'd: <sup>162</sup> the bow did he set (?) [to the earth], and around him

Circled the spirits, (yea,) those who were [shot] by the bow at him gibber'd,

[Carried] a stick in his hand [and the (stricken) ghosts at him gibber'd(?)].

40. [Put on] a shoe to [his foot-sole, and made on the ground a (loud)] echo.

[Kiss'd he] his wife [whom he lovéd, chastiséd his] wife whom he hated,

45. [Kiss'd he his child] whom he lovéd, chastiséd [his] child whom he hated.

<sup>161</sup> *Shaddata, shadadu* being used in medicine for sucking or drawing vapour through a tube. This short poem may be the regular lament of the professional mourner.

<sup>162</sup> There is a little confusion in the next three or four lines, in comparison with the previous parallel text, and it may be that we should boldly emend or correct them accordingly.

(Aye, in good sooth, 'twas) the mourning of earth which did hold him enthralled:

"She who (dead) lieth,  
 [She who] (dead) lieth,  
 Mother of Ninazu,  
 She who (dead) lieth,  
 No (more) with mantle are  
 Veil'd [her] fair shoulders,  
 No (more) her bosom  
 Drawn, like the lard cruse."

50.Cried(?) [he] (for) Enkidu out of the earth to ascend: "[Not] (the Plague-god),  
 Namtar, hath [seized] him, nor fever, (but only) the earth: <sup>163</sup> nor the Croucher,  
 [Nergal], the ruthless, hath seized him, (but only) the earth: neither fell he  
 There where was [battle] of mortals; 'twas only the earth [which hath seized him.] "

(So) <sup>164</sup> . . . for his servitor Enkidu sorrow'd the offspring of Nin-sun,

55.(Aye), as he went all alone unto [Ekur], the temple of Enlil:  
 "[Enlil], (my) Father, ('tis now) that the seine hath stricken me also,  
 Down to the earth—the net to the earth hath stricken me also.  
 Enkidu 'tis—whom [I pray thee] to raise [from the earth]—not (the Plague-god),

60.Namtar, hath seized him, nor fever, [but only the earth]: nor the Croucher,  
 Nergal, the ruthless, hath seized him, but only the earth]: [neither fell he]

There where was battle of mortals: ['twas only the earth which hath seized him]."

(But) no answer did Enlil, the father vouchsafe.

[To the Moon-god he hied him (?):

"Moon-god, (my) Father, ('tis now) that the seine [hath stricken me also,  
 Down to the earth]—the net [to the earth hath stricken me also].

65.Enkidu 'tis—whom [I pray thee] to raise [from the earths—not (the

<sup>163</sup> *Lit.* "'twas the earth [seized h]im," or "'twas the earth [ditto]."

<sup>164</sup> It is uncertain what is to be restored for the two mutilated words at the beginning.

Plague-god),

Namtar, hath seized him, [nor] fever, [but only the earth: nor] the  
Croucher,

Nergal, [the ruthless, hath seized him, but only the earth]: [neither fell  
he]

There where [was battle of mortals: 'twas only the earth which hath  
seized him."

70. [(But) no answer the Moon-god vouchsafed:

(Then) to Ea he hied him:]

["Ea, (my) Father, 'tis now that the seine hath stricken me also,]

[Down to the earth—the net to the earth hath stricken me also.]

[Enkidu 'tis,—whom I pray thee to raise from the earth—not (the Plague-  
god),]

75. Nam[tar, hath seized him, nor fever, but only the earth: nor] the  
Croucher,

Nergal, the ruthless, [hath seized him, but only the earth: neither fell he]

There where was battle of mortals: ['twas only the earth which hath  
seized him]."

Ea, the father, [gave ear (and) to Nergal], the warrior-hero,

[Spake he]: "O Nergal, O warrior-hero, [give ear to my speaking(?)]!

80. [Ope now,] a hole [in the earth], that the spirit of [Enkidu, (rising)],

[May from the earth issue forth, and so have speech] with [his] brother."

Nergal, the warrior-hero, [gave ear to the speaking of Ea],

85. Oped, then, a hole in the earth, and the spirit of Enkidu issued

Forth from the earth like a wind. They embraced and . . . . .

Communed together, mourning.

"Tell, O my friend, O tell, O my friend, (O) tell (me, I pr'y thee),

What thou hast seen of the laws of the Underworld?" "(Nay, then,) O  
comrade;

90. I will not tell thee, (yea,) I will not tell thee—(for), were I to tell thee,

What I have seen of the laws of the Underworld,—sit thee down

weeping!"

"(Then) let me sit me down weeping."

(The wretched lot of all who must die).

"(So be it): [the friend(?)] thou didst fondle

(Thereby) rejoicing thee—[into his body(?), as though 'twere a] mantle

95. Old, hath the worm made its entry: (in sooth, then) [the bride(?)]  
thou didst fondle,

(Thereby) rejoicing thee—fill'd with the dust [is her body] . . . .

. . . . he hath spoken and [into the"] ground (?) is he sunken,

. . . he hath spoken and [into the ground (?) is he sunken."

"[He who fell in . . . .]

100. [Didst thou see him?]. " (Aye), I saw . . . . "

(About seventeen lines missing).

118. "As a pillar beautiful

[Props?] an inner por[tico (?) ] . . .

(About twenty-five lines missing).

145. "He who falleth from a pole

Didst thou see him? " (Aye), I saw]:

Straightway for . . . .

By removal of a plug . . . . . "

"He whom death . . . . . "

"Didst thou see him?" "[ (Aye) I saw]:

He's at rest upon a couch,

Limpid water doth he drink."

"(Then, the hero) slain in fight,

Didst thou see him?" " (Aye) I saw:

150. Father, mother <sup>165</sup> raise his head,

O'er him wife <sup>166</sup> [in bitter woe]."

"He whose corpse in desert lieth,

Hast thou seen him?" " (Aye), I saw;

Not in earth doth rest his spirit."

"He whose ghost hath none to tend,

Didst thou see him?" " (Aye), I saw,

Lees of cup, and broken bread

Thrown into the street he eateth."

<sup>165</sup> Lit. "his father and his mother."

<sup>166</sup> Lit. "and o'er him his wife ...."