The Epic of Gilgamesh

ANONYMOUS (SÎN-LĒQI-UNNINNI)

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Ša naṣba imuru

Translated from the Akkadian with AI (Claude) and edited



FORAGE
forage.com

The Epic of Gilgamesh · Anonymous (Sîn-lēqi-unninni)

Translated from the Akkadian with AI (Claude) and edited. Reading edition, Forage, October 2026. forage.com/gilgamesh/epic

Akkadian text: R. Campbell Thompson (1876–1941), *The Epic of Gilgamish: Text, Transliteration, and Notes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), transliteration only (pp. 11–70), transcribed from the page scans at the Internet Archive (archive.org/details/epicgilgamishoooorcam) and proofread twice against them; public domain. Thompson's brackets mark restorations and breaks; superscript signs are determinatives; footnotes and variant readings are omitted. English: translated from the Akkadian with AI (Claude), then edited for accuracy and consistency. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. The small numbers set in the text are Thompson's tablet, column and line numbers (e.g. I.ii.7); "OB" marks the Old Babylonian tablets and "Bo" the Boghazköy version he uses to fill gaps.

The original text is in the public domain. This translation is free to share and adapt under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA 4.0): creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0

Set in Source Serif 4.

CONTENTS

Introduction ix

Tablet I 1
- Column I 1
- Column II 2
- Column III 3
- Column IV 4
- Column V 6
- Column VI 7

Tablet II 9
- Column I 9
- Column II, fragment K. 8574 9
- Column II, fragment Rm. 289 9
- Column II, fragment Rm. 289 10
- Column IV 10
- Column IV, fragment Rm. 289 10
- Column IV, fragment K. 7224 11
- Column IV, fragment K. 9759 11
- Old Babylonian Version, Column I 12
- Old Babylonian Version, Column II 12
- Old Babylonian Version, Column III 13
- Old Babylonian Version, Column IV 14
- Old Babylonian Version, Column V 14
- Old Babylonian Version, Column VI 15

Tablet III 17
- Old Babylonian Version, Column I 17
- Old Babylonian Version, Column II 17
- Old Babylonian Version, Column III 18
- Old Babylonian Version, Column IV 18
- Old Babylonian Version, Column V 19

Old Babylonian Version, Column VI 20
Column I 21
Column II 22
Column II, fragment K. 4474 23
Column II, fragment No. 34191 (Sp. 297) 23
Column III, fragment S. 2097 23
Column IV, fragment K. 3423 + Rm. 579 23
Column IV, fragment K. 9885 24
Column VI, fragment Ki. 1904–10–9, 19 24

Tablet IV 25
Column I, fragment S. 2132 25
Column I, fragment K. 3588 25
Column I, fragment Rm. ii. 399 26
Column V, fragment K. 8591 and K. 13525 26
Column VI, fragment K. 3588 and S. 2132 26

Tablet V 29
Column I, fragment K. 3252+8561 29
Column II, fragment K. 3252 29
Column II, fragment K. 8586 30
Column III, fragment S. 1040 30
Column V, fragment K. 3252 31
Column VI, fragment K. 3252 31

Tablet VI 33
Ishtar's proposal 33
Gilgamesh refuses 34
The Bull of Heaven 35
Triumph in Uruk 36
fragment K. 14945 37
Boghazköy Version (Tablets V–VI), Obverse 37
Boghazköy Version (Tablets V–VI), Reverse 38

Tablet VII 41
The gods' decision 41
Column III 41

Column IV 42
Column a, fragment 79–7–8, 320 43
Column b 43
Column I, fragment K. 10536 44
Column II 44

Tablet VIII 45
Column I, fragment K. 8587 and K. 8565 45
Column II 45
Column III 46
Column IV 46
Reverse 47
Column V 47

Tablet IX 49
Column I 49
Column II 49
Column III 50
Column IV 51
Column V 51
Column VI 52

Tablet X 53
Old Babylonian Version, Column I 53
Old Babylonian Version, Column II 53
Old Babylonian Version, Column III 54
Old Babylonian Version, Column VI 54
Column I, fragment K. 8589 55
Column II 56
Column III, fragment K. 8579 57
Column IV, fragment K. 3382 58
Column V 58
Column VI, fragment K. 8589 59

Tablet XI 61
Utnapishtim's secret 61
Building the boat 62

The Flood 63
The birds 64
Enlil's anger 65
The test of sleep 66
Washed and clothed 67
The plant of youth 68
Return to Uruk 69

Tablet XII 71
The pukku and mikku 71
Enkidu seized 72
Gilgamesh appeals to the gods 72
The law of the netherworld 73

INTRODUCTION

Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, is two-thirds god and one-third man, and he is a tyrant. The gods answer his people's complaints by making him an equal: Enkidu, a wild man who runs with the animals until the courtesan Shamhat brings him into human company. The two fight, become inseparable friends, and set out to kill Humbaba, guardian of the Cedar Forest. When Gilgamesh spurns the goddess Ishtar, the gods decree that Enkidu must die. Terrified of death, Gilgamesh crosses the world to find Utnapishtim, the one man granted eternal life, who tells him the story of the Flood.

Stories of Gilgamesh, a king who may have ruled Uruk around 2700 BC, were told in Sumerian by about 2000 BC and woven into an Akkadian epic in the Old Babylonian period. The "Standard" version in twelve tablets, opening "He who saw the Deep," is credited by ancient tradition to the scholar Sîn-lēqi-unninni, perhaps in the late second millennium BC. Most of the text known in 1930 came from tablets in the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (seventh century BC), excavated in the mid-nineteenth century; George Smith recognized the Flood story among them in 1872. Tablet XII, a separate tale of Enkidu in the underworld, was added to the end.

Every manuscript is broken, so the text has gaps; "[...]" marks them in the English, and square brackets mark words the editor restored. The original column is R. Campbell Thompson's 1930 transliteration of the cuneiform into Latin letters. Where the Assyrian tablets fail, he filled in from older Old Babylonian tablets and from a version found at Boghazköy in Anatolia, and the headings say so. Much has been recovered since 1930, so this is the epic as it stood then.

Tablet I

Gilgamesh and Enkidu
The tyrant of Uruk; the gods create Enkidu; the courtesan Shamhat; Gilgamesh's dreams.

COLUMN I

The poet introduces Gilgamesh, who saw the Deep, and invites the reader to view the walls of Uruk.

I.i.1 [... He who] saw the Deep, [let me make] known to the land; [who] knew [all things], every[thing, let me tell] of h[im]. [...] alike [they stand] (?). [...] the wisdom of all things [Gilgamesh] (?) [knew]. He saw the [secret], and what was hidden [...] I.i.6 He brought back word from before the Flood. He traveled a distant road, and was weary and [...]. [He engraved] on a stone tablet all his toil. He had the wall of Uruk the Sheepfold built, and of holy Eanna, the pure storehouse.[1] I.i.11 Look at its wall, which is like a strand of [wool] (?); gaze at its parapet, which no one can equal. Take hold of the threshold stone, which is from of old. Draw near to Eanna, the dwelling of Ishtar, which no later king, no man at all, can equal. I.i.16 Go up onto the wall of Uruk and walk about; inspect the foundation platform, survey the brickwork. Is not its brickwork of baked brick? Did not the Seven [Sages] lay its foundations?[2]

1 Eanna was the great temple of Anu and Ishtar in Uruk.
2 The Seven Sages were legendary wise men believed to have brought the arts of civilization to the first cities.

COLUMN II

Gilgamesh oppresses Uruk, and the gods have Aruru create Enkidu, who lives among the wild animals.

I.ii.1 Two-thirds of him is god, [one-third of him is human]. The form of his body [...] [was made] perfect [...]

I.ii.7 [...] of Uruk he has [raised] [...], [a fierce son] (?), his [head] held high like a wild bull. He has no [rival], and [his] weapons are raised. At the pukku [his] companions are roused. The young men of Uruk grow fearful in [their chambers] (?). Gilgamesh does not leave the son to [his] father.[3] I.ii.13 [Day] and [night] he is fierce in [his] arrogance (?). [Gilgamesh] (?), is he the [shepherd] of Uruk the [Sheepfold]? Is he [our] (?) shepherd [...], [strong, splendid, wise] [...]? [Gilgamesh] does not leave [the girl to her mother] (?), the daughter of the war[rior, the bride of the young man]. Their complaint [the gods heard]. I.ii.19 The gods of heaven, the lord of Uruk [...]: "You have brought into being a fierce son, [... his head held high like a wild bull]. He has no rival, and [his weapons are raised]. At the pukku [his companions] are roused. Gilgamesh does not leave the son to his father; day and night [he is fierce in his arrogance] (?). Is he the shepherd of Uruk [the Sheepfold]?[4] I.ii.25 Is he their shepherd and [...], strong, splendid, wise [...]? Gilgamesh does not leave the girl to [her mother] (?), the daughter of the warrior, the bride of the young [man]." Their complaint the god [...] heard. They called Aruru, the great one: "You, Aruru, created [man];[5] I.ii.31 now create his likeness; let him be a match for the storm of his heart, [Gilgamesh] (?). Let them rival each other, and let Uruk have [peace]." When Aruru heard this, she formed in her heart an image of Anu. [A]ruru washed her hands, pinched off clay, and threw it into the open country. [In the open country] (?) she created Enkidu, the warrior, off-

3 The pukku was probably a ball, hoop, or drum used in a game or contest; its exact nature is uncertain.

4 The "lord of Uruk" here is probably Anu, the sky god, whose temple stood in Uruk.

5 Aruru is a mother goddess, credited with the creation of humankind.

spring of silence, a force of Ninurta. His whole body [is] shaggy with hair; his locks are made like a woman's.[6] I.ii.37 The growth of his hair springs up like Nisaba. He knows neither people nor land; he is clothed in a garment like Sumuqan. With the gazelles he eats grass; with the beasts he jostles at the watering place; with the wild creatures his heart delights in the water. A hunter, a trapping man,[7] I.ii.43 met him face to face at the edge of the watering place. [One] day, a second, and a third, at the edge of the watering place he met him face to face. The hunter saw him, and his face froze. [He] and his beasts went into his house. [He was] afraid; he froze and was still. His heart [raged], his face was darkened. I.ii.49 Grief [entered] (?) his belly; his face was like [that of one who has traveled a road] far away.

COLUMN III

A hunter sees Enkidu at the watering place; his father and Gilgamesh tell him to bring Shamhat.

I.iii.1 The hunter opened [his mouth] and spoke, saying [to his father]: "My father, [there is a certain] young man who has co[me from the mountains]; [in the land] his strength is mighty; [like a lump of] Anu [his strength] is mighty. [He roams] over the mountains con[stantly] (?); [constantly] with the beasts [he jostles at the watering place];[8] I.iii.7 [constantly] his feet [are set] (?) at the edge of the watering place. [I am afraid, and] I do not go near [him]. [He has filled in the] pits that [I] (?) dug; [he has torn out] my traps that I [spread]; [he has let slip from my hands] the beasts, the wild creatures of the open [country]; [he does not let] me do the work of the open [country]."

I.iii.13 [His father opened his mouth and spoke], saying to the hunter: "[My son, in] Uruk [there dwells] Gilgamesh; [there is no one stronger] (?) than he; [in the land his strength is mighty; like a lump of Anu] his strength is mighty. [Go, set] (?) your face

6 Ninurta is a warrior god, son of Enlil.
7 Nisaba is the goddess of grain; Sumuqan is the god of cattle and wild animals.
8 A "lump of Anu," the sky god, is probably a meteorite, a rock fallen from heaven.

[toward Uruk], [and when ...] (?) the strength of a man, I.iii.19 [he will say: 'Go, hunter,] lead [the courtesan Shamhat with you]. [...] like a strong one. [When he] waters (?) [the beasts at] the watering place, [let her strip off her] clothing and [reveal her] charms. [He will see] her and draw near [to] her. His beasts [that grew up in] his open country will turn away from him.'" I.iii.25 To the counsel of his father he [set his mind] (?). The hunter went [to Gilgamesh]; he took the road, and toward Uruk he [set his face]. [...] Gilga[mesh] [...]: "There is a certain young man who [has come from the mountains]; in the land [his strength] is mighty; I.iii.31 like a lump of Anu [his strength] is mighty. He roams over the mountains [constantly] (?); constantly with the beasts [he jostles at the watering place]; constantly his feet [are set] (?) at the edge of the watering place. I am afraid, and I do not go near [him]. He has filled in the pits that [I] dug; I.iii.37 he has torn out my traps [that I spread]; he has let slip from my hands the beasts, the wild creatures [of the open country]; he does not let me do the work of the open country." Gilgamesh spoke to him, saying [to] the hunter: "Go, hunter, lead the courtesan Shamhat with you. When he waters the beasts at the watering place, I.iii.43 let her strip off her clothing and reveal her charms. He will see her and draw near to her. His beasts that grew up in his open country will turn away from him." The hunter went, leading the courtesan Shamhat with him. They took the road, they set out on the way. On the third day they reached the appointed place. I.iii.49 The hunter and the courtesan settled into their places. One day, a second day, they sat at the edge of the watering place. The beasts came; they drank at the watering place.

COLUMN IV

Shamhat lies with Enkidu; the animals run from him, and she invites him to Uruk.

I.iv.1 The wild creatures came; their heart delighted in the water. And he, Enkidu, whose birthplace is the mountains, with the gazelles he eats grass; with the beasts he drinks at the watering

place; with the wild creatures his heart delights in the water. Shamhat saw him, the primal man, I.iv.7 the murderous young man from the depths of the open country. "This is he, Shamhat! Bare your bosom, open your lap, and let him take your charms. Do not hold back; take in his breath. He will see you and draw near to you. Spread out your clothing, so that he may lie upon you. I.iv.13 Do for him, the primal man, the work of a woman. His beasts that grew up in his open country will turn away from him. His passion will cling to your body." Shamhat loosened her garments, opened her lap, and he took her charms. She did not hold back; she took in his breath. She spread out her clothing, and he lay upon her. I.iv.19 She did for him, the primal man, the work of a woman; his passion clung to her body. For six days and seven nights Enkidu was aroused and coupled with Shamhat. When he was sated with her delights, he set his face toward his beasts. The gazelles saw Enkidu and ran away; I.iv.25 the beasts of the open country shied away from his body. Enkidu was taken aback; his body was spent. His knees stood still, while his beasts went off. Enkidu was weakened; his running was [not] as before. But he had grown, [and was broadened] in understanding. He turned back [...] and [sat down] at the feet of the courtesan. I.iv.31 He gazed at the face of the courtesan, and as the courtesan spoke, his ears listened. [The courtesan] spoke to him, saying to Enkidu: "You are [beautiful], Enkidu; you have become like a god. [Why] do you roam the open country with the wild creatures? Come, let me lead (?) you [into] Uruk the Sheepfold, I.iv.37 to the pure house, the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar, where Gilgamesh is perfect in strength, and like a wild bull lords it over the people." She spoke to him, and her words found favor; aware of his own heart, he was seeking a friend. Enkidu spoke to her, saying to the courtesan: I.iv.43 "Come, Shamhat, take me along to the pure and holy house, the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar, where Gilgamesh is perfect in strength, and like a wild bull lords it over the people. I will call out to him, and boldly [I will speak]:

COLUMN V

Enkidu boasts that he will challenge Gilgamesh; Shamhat tells of Gilgamesh's dream of a fallen star.

I.v.1 [Let me shout] in Uruk, 'I am the mighty one! [I] am the one who changes destinies! [He who] was born [in] the open country [is] mighty in his strength.'" "[...] [...] [one who will match] (?) you. [...] [who] is there, I indeed know. Go, Enkidu, [into Uruk] the Sheepfold, I.v.7 where [the people] are [resplendent] in festive garments; [day by day] a festival is held; where [...] (?) the [cult performers] and the drum [...], and the [courtesans] (?) [...] are fair of form, [adorned] with charms, [...] full of joy; from the bed of [night] they [draw out] (?) the great ones.[9] I.v.13 Enki[du, you who rejoice] (?) in life, let me show you Gilgamesh, the man of joy. Look at him, gaze at his face: he is fair in young manhood, he has vigor; his whole body is adorned with [charm]; he has strength mightier than yours. I.v.19 He does not rest, by day or by night. Enkidu, set aside your arrogance. Shamash loves Gilgamesh, and Anu, Enlil, and Ea have broadened his wisdom. Before you came from the mountains, Gilgamesh in Uruk was seeing dreams of you." I.v.25 Gilgamesh arose and interpreted the dream, saying to his mother: "Mother, I saw a dream during my night. The stars of heaven appeared, and like a lump of Anu something kept falling upon me. I lifted it, but it was too strong for me. I strained at it, but I could not move it. I.v.31 The land of Uruk stood around [it], [the land was gathered] over [it], [the people pressed] upon [it], [the young men] crowded over it, [...] my [companions] kissed its feet. [I, like] a wife, embraced it, I.v.37 [and I] laid it at [your] feet, [because (?) you] made it equal with me." [The mother of Gilgamesh (?), the wise, the] knowing one, who knows everything, said to her lord. [Ninsun (?), the wise,] the knowing one, who knows everything, said to Gilgamesh: "[Your companions (?)] are the stars of heaven. [Like a lump of] Anu, which fell upon you, I.v.43 [you lifted it, but it was too] strong

9 The assinnu were cult performers in the service of Ishtar.

for you. [You strained at it, but] you could not move it. [You laid] it at my feet, [because I made] it equal with you. [Like a wife] you [embraced] it.

COLUMN VI

Ninsun interprets the dreams: a strong companion is coming who will never abandon Gilgamesh.

I.vi.1 [He is a strong] companion, one who saves [a friend]. [His] strength [is greatest in the land]. [Like a lump of Anu] his [strength] is mighty. [Because (?) you, like a wife,] embraced him, [...] [he will not] abandon you. [This is the interpretation of] your dream." I.vi.7 [Gilgamesh spoke a second time] to his mother: "[Mother, I have] seen a second dream. [In Uruk the Sheepfold] an axe lay, and they gathered around it. [The land of Uruk] stood around it, [the land was gathered] over it, [the people pressed] upon it. I.vi.13 [I] laid it at your feet, [and] like a wife I embraced it, [because (?)] you made it equal with me." [The mother of Gilgamesh (?), the] wise, the knowing one, who knows everything, said to her son. [Ninsun (?), the] wise, the knowing one, who knows everything, said to Gilgamesh: "[The axe] that you saw is a man. I.vi.19 [You] will embrace him like a wife, [because (?)] I made him equal with you. [He is] a strong companion, one who saves a friend. His strength [is greatest in the land]. [Like a lump of] Anu his strength is mighty." [Gilgamesh opened his mouth and] spoke, saying to his mother: I.vi.25 "[...] great, may it fall, [...] I would gain [a friend (?)], [...] your [...] I." [Gilgamesh interpreted] his dreams. [Shamhat] spoke to Enkidu. [They sat down,] the two of them.

Tablet II

The friendship
Enkidu comes to Uruk and wrestles Gilgamesh; they plan to go against Humbaba.

COLUMN I

A few broken lines about Enkidu and Shamhat.

II.i.1 [Enkidu was sitting] before her.

II.i.38 [...] his. [...] is [good]. [...] great. [...]. [...]. II.i.43 [...] [Enki]du. [...]. [...]. [...]. [...].

COLUMN II, FRAGMENT K. 8574

Broken lines mention wolves, shepherds, and Uruk the Sheepfold.

II.ii.1 [...] his heart [...]. [...] the wolves [...]. [...] the shepherds [...]. [Enki]du, another shepherd, [...]. II.ii.5 [...] to the house [...]. [...] Uruk the Sheepfold to [...]. [...].

COLUMN II, FRAGMENT RM. 289

Enkidu blocks Gilgamesh at the door of the wedding house, and the two wrestle in the street.

II.ii.35 [...] in the street of [Uruk the Sheepfold]. [...] he made a show of strength [...]. He blocked the way through [Uruk the Sheepfold]. The land of Uruk stood around [him], the land was gathered [over him], the people pressed [upon him], II.ii.41 the young men crowded [over him]. Like a little child he [sucked (?) milk (?)]. Straightaway a handsome young man [...]. For Ishhara the bed of [night was laid]. For Gilgamesh, like a god, was set [for

him] [...] a calf (?). Enkidu blocked the door of the wedding house with [his] feet.[1] II.ii.47 He would not let Gilgamesh enter. They seized each other at the door of the wedding house. They grappled in the street, in the square of the land. [...] they shook (?) the wall, [...] (?).

COLUMN II, FRAGMENT RM. 289

Gilgamesh's mother speaks to Rishat-Ninlil about her son.

II.ii.43 [His strength is] greatest [in the land]. [Like a] lump of Anu [his strength is mighty]. [...] she [...]. The mother of Gilgamesh [opened her mouth and spoke], II.ii.47 saying to [Rishat-Ninlil (?)]: "Rishat-Nin[lil], [...] my son [...] bitterly [...]."

COLUMN IV

Enkidu weeps and grows weak, and the two clasp hands like brothers.

II.iv.2 Seized, mighty [...]. He raised up at his gate (?) [...]. Bitterly they stood [...]. Enkidu has no [rival (?)]. Loosened hair [...]. II.iv.7 He was born in the wilderness, and no one [can rival him]. Enkidu stood and heard [his words]. He was troubled and sat down [weeping (?)]. His eyes filled [with tears]. His arms went limp, and [his] strength [weakened]. II.iv.12 They clasped [their hands] together. [They joined (?)] their hands like [brothers]. [...] without [...]. [Enki]du spoke a word [to Gilgamesh]: "[My friend], [...] [...]."

COLUMN IV, FRAGMENT RM. 289

Humbaba, whom Enlil set to guard the Cedar Forest, is described as a terror to people.

II.iv.1 To keep the Cedar [Forest] safe, Enlil appointed him as a terror to people. Humbaba: his roar is a flood, his mouth is Gibil, his breath is death. He hears the tread (?) of a young man (?) on

1 Ishhara was a goddess of love and marriage. The bed prepared for her is evidently the wedding bed.

the road [...] of the forest. Who is there who would go down into his forest? To keep the cedar safe, Enlil appointed him as a terror to people, and whoever goes down into his forest is seized by weakness.[2]

II.iv.7 Gilgamesh [said] to him, [to] Enkidu: "[My friend], [...] you say [...] heart [...] [...]."

COLUMN IV, FRAGMENT K. 7224

Gilgamesh and Enkidu speak of going against Humbaba.

II.iv.1 They have given birth [...]. Gilgamesh opened [his mouth and spoke, saying to Enkidu]: "My friend, not [...]. They have not borne sons [in my house (?)] [...]." Enkidu opened his mouth and [spoke, saying to Gilgamesh]: II.iv.6 "My friend, the one to whom we are going (?) [...], Humbaba, whom we [...]." Gilgamesh opened his mouth [and spoke, saying to Enkidu]: "[My] friend, let us [...]."

COLUMN IV, FRAGMENT K. 9759

A fragment describes Humbaba's fury, which shakes heaven and earth.

II.iv.1 [...] abundance [...]. [...] exalted [...]. [...] proud [...]. [Who stirs up (?)] the sea (?), who makes [the earth (?)] tremble, [...] who sets up battle, [...] of the flood, who stirs up the circle of the world. II.iv.7 [...] whose fury is a flood. [At the opening of] his mouth the heavens quake, [the mountains (?)] shake, the hills tremble, [...] the slopes stand, [...] heaven, earth [...] the circle [of the world]. [His mouth is] Gibil, [his] breath [is death].

2 Gibil is the god of fire. To say Humbaba's mouth is Gibil means that it is fire itself.

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN I

In the older version, Gilgamesh tells his mother two dreams, and she interprets them.

II.OB.i.1 Gilgamesh arose and interpreted the dream, saying to his mother: "Mother, in the depth of my night I was feeling proud and walking about among the young men. The stars of heaven appeared. II.OB.i.7 A [lump] of Anu fell upon me. I lifted it, but it was too heavy for me. I pushed at it, but I could not move it. The land of Uruk was gathered around it, and the young men kissed its feet. I braced my forehead, II.OB.i.13 and they supported me. I lifted it and brought it to you." The mother of Gilgamesh, who knows everything, said to Gilgamesh: "Surely, Gilgamesh, one like you was born in the wilderness, II.OB.i.19 and the hills raised him. You will see him, and [...] you will rejoice. The young men will kiss his feet. You will take him, [you will find] him, and you will lead him to me." He lay down and saw another. II.OB.i.25 He told the [dream] to his mother: "[Mother], I have seen another [dream]. At my father-in-law's, in the street [of Uruk] of the broad squares, an axe lay, and they were gathered around it. II.OB.i.31 It was an axe, and its appearance was strange. I saw it and I rejoiced. I loved it, and like a wife I caressed it. I took it and set it at my side." II.OB.i.37 The mother of Gilgamesh, who knows [every]thing, [said to Gilgamesh:] ["Gilgamesh, the one you saw is a man.] [You caress him]

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN II

Shamhat clothes Enkidu and leads him to the shepherds' camp.

II.OB.ii.1 because he will riv[al] you." Gilgamesh interprets the dream. Enki[du was sit]ting before the courtesan. They [made] love (?); her [skirt (?), her sex (?) she opened (?)]. [...] he forgot the place where he was born. For six days and seven nights II.OB.ii.7 En[kidu] was aroused and lay with Sha[mhat]. The c[ourtesan opened her mouth] and spoke, [saying] to Enkidu: "I look at you, Enkidu: you are like a god. Why with the wild beasts II.OB.ii.13 do

you roam the steppe? Come! Let me lead you into the midst of [Uruk] of the broad squares, to the [pure] house, the dwelling of Anu. Enkidu, rise, let me lead you to E[an]na, the dwelling of Anu, II.OB.ii.19 where [Gilgamesh is perfect] in vigor; and yo[u], li[ke] [...] (?), will [love him like] yourself. Come! Rise from the ground, the bed (?) of the shepherd." He heard her word and accepted her speech. II.OB.ii.25 The coun[sel] of the woman fell into his heart. She stripped off her garment; with one she clothed him, and the second [garment] she put on herself. II.OB.ii.31 She took hold of his hand; like a brother she led him to the hut of the shepherd, the place of the fold. A[round] him the shepherds [gath]ered.

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN III

Enkidu learns to eat bread and drink beer, and guards the shepherds' flocks.

II.OB.iii.1 The milk of the wild beasts he used to suck. They set bread before him; he hesitated, and he looked, and he stared. Enkidu did not know II.OB.iii.7 how to eat bread; how to drink beer he had not been taught. The courtesan opened her mouth and spoke, saying to Enkidu: "Eat the bread, Enkidu, II.OB.iii.13 what befits life; drink the beer, the custom of the land." Enkidu ate bread until he was full; he drank beer, seven jugs. II.OB.iii.19 His spirit loosened, he sang; his heart rejoiced, and his face [be]came bright. He rubbed [...] (?) his hairy body; with oil he anointed himself, and II.OB.iii.25 he became a man. He put on a garment; he was like a warrior. He took his weapon; he attacked lions, so that the shepherds could lie down at night. II.OB.iii.31 He struck wolves, he drove off lions. The great herd[smen] la[y down]; Enkidu was their watchman, a strong man, a young man without equal. II.OB.iii.37 He spoke to [Gilgamesh].

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN IV

A traveler tells Enkidu of the king's right to the bride, and Enkidu's face grows pale.

II.OB.iv.9 He was making merry. He lifted his eyes and saw a man. He said to the courtesan: "Shamhat, bring the man over. Why has he come? II.OB.iv.15 I would know his name." The courtesan called to the man; she went up to him and saw him: "Young man, where are you hurry[ing]? What is this weari[some] journey of yours?" The young man opened his mouth and II.OB.iv.21 spoke, saying to En[kidu]: "To the house of marriage [...] (?) [... Gilgamesh]. It is the custom of the people, the selection of brides. For the city the incense offerings are heaped up; the food of the city, the delicacies of the sisters. II.OB.iv.27 For the king of Uruk of the broad squares the veil of the act is opened for the bridegroom; for Gilgamesh, king of Uruk of the broad squares, the veil of the act is opened for the bridegroom. He lies with the destined wife, II.OB.iv.33 he first, the husband after. By the counsel of the god it was spoken; at the cutting of his umbilical cord it was his destiny." At the word of the young man[3] II.OB.iv.39 his face grew pale.

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN V

Enkidu enters Uruk and blocks Gilgamesh's way to the bride.

II.OB.v.7 [Enkidu] was walking [in front], and Shamhat [be]hind him. He entered into Uruk of the broad squares; the troops gathered around him. He stood in the street of Uruk of the broad squares. II.OB.v.13 The people gathered and talked about him: "He is like Gilgamesh in form; in stature he is shorter, in b[one (?)] [...] he is [mas]sive. [...] he tends. II.OB.v.19 [...] [a child (?)] [...] he became; he used to suck the milk of the wild beasts." Constantly in [the midst of] Uruk there were weapons; the young men made

3 The young man describes the king's claimed right to lie with a bride before her husband, the custom that provokes Enkidu.

merry; a champion was set up II.OB.v.25 for the young man whose features were fine; for Gilgamesh, like a god, a rival was set up. For Ishhara the bed was laid, and Gilgamesh ro[se (?)] [...] II.OB.v.31 In the night he la[y] down (?), and he approached. [Enkidu] went into the street; he blocked the [p]ath of Gilgamesh. [...] in his strength.

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN VI

Gilgamesh and Enkidu wrestle; Gilgamesh's anger subsides, and Enkidu praises him.

II.OB.vi.5 Proud (?) [...]. Gilgamesh [...]. Against [him] [...]. [His anger (?)] swelled. He rose and [stood (?)] before him. II.OB.vi.11 They met in the square of the land. Enkidu blocked the gate with his foot; he did not let Gilgamesh enter. They seized each other, and like bulls they grappled. II.OB.vi.17 They shattered the doorpost; the wall shook. Gilgamesh and Enkidu seized each other, and like bulls they grappled. They shattered the doorpost; II.OB.vi.23 the wall shook. Gilgamesh knelt, his foot on the ground. His anger abated and his breast grew calm. After his breast had grown calm, II.OB.vi.29 Enkidu spoke to him, saying to Gilgamesh: "As one unique your mother bore you, the wild cow of the fold, Ninsun. II.OB.vi.35 Exalted above men is your head; kingship over the people Enlil has destined for you."

II.OB.vi.38 (Second tablet. "Surpassing above [...]." Four sixties.)[4]

4 A scribal colophon: the tablet's number, the opening words of the series, and its length, four sixties (240 lines).

Tablet III

Setting out
The elders' counsel; Ninsun's prayer to Shamash; Enkidu is adopted as her son.

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN I

Broken lines in which someone asks why Gilgamesh wants to go to the forest.

III.OB.i.11 [...] [...] precious (?). [Why] do you desire to do [this]? [We heard, and] [...] greatly. [...] [...] [you] desire. III.OB.i.17 [...] [to the forest]. A task (?) [...] in [...] (?). [...] he. They made [...] (?). [...] they conferred. [...]

III.OB.i.40 [...] [...] and [...] [The cedar (?)] they extolled [...]. They gave [ans]wer. [...] the courtesan (?). [They] made for [...].

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN II

Enkidu weeps and tells Gilgamesh that his strength has failed.

III.OB.ii.12 [...] a rival [...] Set for him, and [...] not [...] (?) [...] The mother of [Gilgamesh (?)] [...] III.OB.ii.17 Before [...] of Sham[hat] [...] No[w] (?) [...] [...] [Bitterly (?)] [...]

III.OB.ii.26 [Enkidu's eyes filled with] tears, his [heart was] sad, [and] [...] he kept sigh[ing]. [Enkidu's eyes] filled with tears, [his] heart [was sad], and III.OB.ii.31 [...] he kept sigh[ing]. [Gilgamesh] turned his face; [he said] to Enkidu: "[Why] are your eyes [filled with] tears, III.OB.ii.36 [is] your [heart sad], [...] [do you keep] sighing?" [Enkidu opened his mouth and spoke], saying to Gilgamesh: "Cries of woe, my friend, III.OB.ii.41 have pulled at my

sinews; my arms have gone slack, my strength has weakened." Gilgamesh opened his mouth and spoke, saying to Enkidu:

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN III

Gilgamesh resolves to kill Humbaba, and Enkidu warns him about the forest's guardian.

III.OB.iii.5 "[...] Humbaba the fierce [...] [I will] kill [him, and] [every evil thing [...] I will] destroy. [I will cut down] the cedar [...] (?) the forest [...] III.OB.iii.11 [...] let me open (?) it." Enkidu opened his mouth and spoke, saying to Gilgamesh: "Know, my friend, in the mountains, when I roamed with the herd: for one league on every side the forest extends.[1] III.OB.iii.17 [I] went down into its midst. [Humbaba]—his roar is a flood, his mouth is Gibil, his breath is death. Why do you desire to do this? III.OB.iii.23 A battle not to be withstood is the [onslaught (?)] of Humbaba." Gilgamesh opened his mouth and spoke, saying to Enkidu: "[I desire (?)] to climb its mountains, [I will go to the] forest. III.OB.iii.29 [...] [...] to [...] the dwelling of [...] the hatchet [...] you [...] III.OB.iii.35 I [...]." Enkidu opened his mouth [and spoke], saying to [Gilgamesh]: "How [shall] we go to the [Cedar] Forest? Its guardian, Gilgamesh, is a [warrior], III.OB.iii.41 mighty, never [sleeping]. Humbaba [...] Shamash (?) [...] Adad [...] he [...]

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN IV

Gilgamesh says only the gods live forever and seeks lasting fame; weapons are cast for the journey.

III.OB.iv.1 To keep safe [the Cedar Forest], [Enlil has destined him] as a terror to (?) [the people]." Gilgamesh opened his mouth [and spoke], saying to [Enkidu]: "Who, my friend, can go up beyond [death]? Only the gods [dwell] forever with Shamash. III.OB.iv.7 As for mankind, their days are numbered; whatever they keep doing is but wind. You, even here, are afraid of death; your

1 The "league" (Akkadian *bēru*) is the distance walked in a double-hour, roughly ten kilometers.

heroic might has no strength. Let me go before you, and let your mouth call out to me, 'Advance, do not fear!' III.OB.iv.13 If I fall, let me establish my name: 'Gilgamesh fell with Humbaba the fierce.' Since he was born and grew up in my house, he attacked you, and say (?): you know everything. [...] (?) [...] III.OB.iv.19 [...] [...] open [...] like [...] (?) [...] (?). [Thus you have cried] out to me; you have saddened my heart. [Let me set my hand to it], and [...] (?) the cedar. III.OB.iv.25 [A name that] endures I will establish for myself. [Let us go (?)], my friend, to the forge and give the order: [let them cast weapons] in our presence." [They went (?)] to the forge and gave the order. The craftsmen sat and conferred. They cast great axes. III.OB.iv.31 They cast hatchets of three talents; they cast great daggers, their blades of two talents, their edges thirty minas on their sides, [...] the daggers thirty minas of gold. Gilgamesh and Enkidu were loaded with ten talents.[2] III.OB.iv.37 [At the] gate of [Ur]uk with its seven bolts [...] heard (?), and the troops assembled. [...] (?) in the street of Uruk of the broad squares [...] Gilgamesh. [The elders of Uruk] of the broad squares [...] sat down before him. III.OB.iv.43 [Gilgamesh spoke thus]: "[Hear, elders of Uruk] of the broad squares!

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN V

The elders of Uruk warn Gilgamesh, and he prays to Shamash for a safe return.

III.OB.v.1 Gilgamesh—let me see him of whom they speak, whose name fills the lands. Let me conquer him in the Cedar Forest; let me make the land hear how mighty the offspring of Uruk is. Let me set my hand to it and cut down the cedar. III.OB.v.7 A name that endures I will establish for myself." The elders of Uruk of the broad squares gave answer to Gilgamesh: "You are young, Gilgamesh; your heart carries you away. Whatever you keep doing, you do not understand. We have heard that Humbaba—his features are strange. III.OB.v.13 Who [can] face his weapons? For one [league] on every side the forest extends. Who [would] go down

2 A talent was a weight of sixty minas, roughly thirty kilograms.

into its midst? Humbaba—his roar is a flood, his mouth is Gibil, his breath is death. Why do you desire to do this? III.OB.v.19 A battle not to be withstood is the onslaught (?) of Humbaba." Gilgamesh heard the words of his counselors. He looked around and laughed to his [friend]: "Now, my [friend], [I will speak] thus: I fear him, and [...] [Let me go] [...]

III.OB.v.30 [...] may [...] you. May your god [protect] you; may he bring you along the road [in] safety to the quay of Uruk [of the broad squares]." Gilgamesh knelt [before Shamash]. III.OB.v.36 The word that he speaks [...]: "I go, Shamash, [I raise] my hands. Henceforth may I keep my [life] safe; bring me back to the quay of [Uruk]; set protection [over me]." Shamash called out, and [...] III.OB.v.42 His oracle [...] [...] [...] [...] when (?) [...]

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN VI

The elders bless the journey and tell Gilgamesh to let Enkidu lead the way.

III.OB.vi.1 [Down the face] of (?) Gilgamesh tears [are flow]ing: "[...] a road that I have never [trav]eled [...] (?) I do not know. [...] may I be safe, I myself [...] [may I come] in gladness of heart [...] your praise III.OB.vi.7 [...] you [...] on (?) thrones. [...]." [They cast] great [daggers (?)], [bow] and quiver they placed [in] the hand. He [took] the axe, III.OB.vi.13 [...] his quiver [...] the second; [he set his] dag[ger] in his belt. [Before (?)] they set out on the journey, [...] (?) were praying to (?) Shamash (?). [...] (?) he returned into Uruk. III.OB.vi.19 [The elders] bless him; [about] the road they counsel Gilgamesh: "[Do not] trust, Gilgamesh, in your strength; let your [road] be watched, and guard yourself. Let Enkidu go before you; he has seen [the way], he has traveled the road. III.OB.vi.25 [...] the passes of the forest, [of] Humbaba, all of their [...] (?). [He who goes] in front keeps his companion safe; [his road] watched, [he guards himself]. May Shamash [let you attain] your victory; what your mouth has [sp]oken, may he show your eyes. III.OB.vi.31 May they open the barred path for you; may the road be cleared for your tread; may the mountains be cleared for your feet. May

your night bring a word that you will rejoice in, and may Lugalbanda stand by you in your victory.[3] III.OB.vi.37 Like a youth, attain your victory. In the river of Humbaba, whom you are striving after, wash your feet. At your night's rest dig a well; let there always be pure water in your waterskin. [Co]ol water you shall pour out to Shamash, III.OB.vi.43 [and ever (?)] remember Lugalbanda." [Enkidu] opened his mouth and spoke, saying to Gilgamesh: "[Gilgamesh], [...] you have insisted: undertake the journey. [Let] your heart [not] fear; look to me. [He has set] his dwelling at my side, [the road] which Humbaba travels. III.OB.vi.49 [...] speak and [...] them.

III.OB.vi.53 [...] [is continually] filled. [...] who went with me. [...] [I will tell] you. [...] in joy of heart." [When he heard (?)] this speech of his, he [directed] the young man to the road. III.OB.vi.59 "Go, Gilgamesh, may [...]. Let your brother (?) go [before you (?)]; let him show [you] [...]. Shamash (?) may (?) [...]. Knowing [...]. The leagues [...]."

COLUMN I

The elders entrust the king to Enkidu, and the friends go to Ninsun.

III.i.1 [The elders opened their mouths and spoke, saying to Gilgamesh:] "Do not trust, Gilgamesh, in all [your] strength. Let your [eyes] be satisfied, the blow of your hand (?). He who goes in front saves the companion; he who knows the path has guarded his friend. Let Enkidu go before you. III.i.7 He knows the roads to the Cedar Forest; he has seen battle and is experienced in fighting. Let Enkidu protect the friend, keep the companion safe; let him bring his body back to the wives. In our assembly we entrust the king to you; on your return you shall entrust the king back to us." III.i.13 Gilgamesh opened his mouth and spoke, saying to Enkidu: "Come, my friend, let us go to the Egalmah, before Ninsun, the great queen. Ninsun, the wise, the knowing one, who knows everything, will set the path of counsel for our

3 Lugalbanda, a deified early king of Uruk, is Gilgamesh's father in the tradition.

feet."[4] III.i.19 They took each other by the hand, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and went to the Egalmah, before Ninsun, the great queen. Gilgamesh arose and entered into [the house (?) of the] queen: "Ninsun, I have spoken [...], a distant road to where [Humbaba is]. III.i.25 [A battle] that I do not know [I will face], [a path] that I do not [know I will travel], [until the day that I go and return,] [until I reach the Cedar Forest,] [until I slay Humbaba the fierce] [and destroy from the land all the evil that Shamash hates.] III.i.29 [...] his. [...] clothed. [...] before you." [Ninsun [...] the words] of Gilgamesh, her son, [...] she listened to.

COLUMN II

Ninsun prays to Shamash to protect her son on the road to Humbaba.

III.ii.1 [Ninsun] entered [her chamber]. [...] the tullal-plant. [She put on] [...], the ornament of her body; [she put on] [...], the ornament of her breast. [...] (?) and she donned her crown. [...] the ground, the dust.[5] III.ii.7 She [sprinkled] [...], she went up to the roof. She went up [to] [...] Shamash and set out incense; she set out the [offering before] Shamash and lifted up her arms: "Why have you given my [son] Gilgamesh a restless heart and laid it upon him? Now you have touched him, and he goes a distant road to where Humbaba is. III.ii.13 A battle that he does not know he will face, a path that he does not know he will travel, until the day that he goes and returns, until he reaches the Cedar Forest, until he slays Humbaba the fierce and destroys from the land all the evil that you hate. III.ii.19 On the day that you [have fixed] the term [...], may Aya the bride, who fears you, remind you of him; [him] to the watches of the night [...]. [...] evening [...].[6]

4 The Egalmah ("Great Palace") was the temple of Ninsun, Gilgamesh's divine mother, in Uruk.
5 The tullal was a plant used for ritual washing.
6 Aya was the goddess of the dawn and the wife of Shamash.

COLUMN II, FRAGMENT K. 4474

Broken lines mention the mountains and the beasts of the steppe.

III.ii.26 [...]. [...]. To [...]. The mountains [...]. III.ii.30 The beasts of the steppe [...]. He waits for [...]. [...]. [...].

COLUMN II, FRAGMENT NO. 34191 (SP. 297)

Broken lines mention Shamash, the gate of Marduk, and the cedar gate.

III.ii.1 At the word of Shamash you heard (?) [...]. In the gate of Marduk [...]. At the breast of the waters [...]. He has faced the rear [...]. III.ii.5 In the cedar gate [...]. Gilgamesh [...] and Enkidu [...].

COLUMN III, FRAGMENT S. 2097

Broken lines of Ninsun's prayer mention the dead and the Anunnaki.

III.iii.1 The dead man [...]. To [...]. To the rising of [the sun] [...]. The Anunnaki [...]. Him [...]. Him [...]. III.iii.7 The path [...]. Touch and [...]. Because he knows [...]. The road [...]. And [...]. Until [Gilgamesh goes and returns to the Cedar Forest], III.iii.13 be it [a day] [...], be it [a month] [...], be it [a year] [...], in [...]."

COLUMN IV, FRAGMENT K. 3423 + RM. 579

Ninsun adopts Enkidu and places a token on his neck.

III.iv.13 [Shamash, in] the heavens, to the wind [...]. [...] Gilgamesh made [...]. She heaped up the incense and [kept praising] [...]. She called Enkidu and gave instructions: "Mighty Enkidu, you are not the offspring of my womb; now your offspring III.iv.19 with the oblates of Gilgamesh, the high priestesses, the holy women [and the] devotees." She put a token on the neck (?) [of] Enkidu. "The high priestesses took [...], and the daughters of the gods brought

up (?) [...]. I [...] Enkidu [...] have taken as [...].[7] III.iv.25 Enkidu to [...] [Gil]gamesh [...]. [...] laughter (?) [...], and [...] until, until he [goes and returns, until he reaches] the [Cedar Forest], be it a month [...], be it a year [...]."

COLUMN IV, FRAGMENT K. 9885

Broken lines place Gilgamesh in the Egalmah and Enkidu in a temple.

III.iv.8 [...]. [Gil]gamesh [...]. His [mace] (?) four (?) [...]. In the cedar gate [...]. [En]kidu in the house of [Shamash (?)] [...]. III.iv.13 [And (?)] Gilgamesh in the Egal[mah] [...]. He [offered] (?) an offering [...]. [...] the sons of the king (?) [...]. [...] and [...] his (?) [...].

III.iv.49 [until he reaches the] Cedar [Forest], [until he] slays [Humbaba the fierce].

COLUMN VI, FRAGMENT KI. 1904-10-9, 19

The elders entrust the king to Enkidu, who urges Gilgamesh to turn back.

III.vi.8 [Let Enkidu protect] the friend, [keep the companion safe]; [let him bring his body back] to the wives. In our assembly [we entrust the king to you]; on your return you shall [entrust the king back to us]." Enkidu [opened] his mouth [and spoke], III.vi.13 saying [to Gilgamesh]: "My friend, turn [back] [...]. A road not [...]. Let us [...]."

7 Oblates, high priestesses and holy women were classes of people dedicated to temple service.

Tablet IV

The road to the forest
The journey to the Cedar Forest and Gilgamesh's dreams on the way.

COLUMN I, FRAGMENT S. 2132

Broken lines from the journey toward the forest.

IV.i.b Because (?) [...]. Now [...]. I [...]. Be it [...]. Be it [...]. IV.i.g Your name [...]. He has torn out [...]. He [heard] his words [...]. Gilgamesh [his words] [...]. Gilgamesh [opened his] mouth [and spoke] [...].

COLUMN I, FRAGMENT K. 3588

Enkidu speaks to the great door made from the forest's wood.

IV.i.27 Enkidu [opened his mouth and spoke], saying [to Gilgamesh]: "Come, my [friend] [...], by the [command (?) of Shamash (?)] [...], the door of [the forest] [...], because [...]."

IV.i.36 Enkidu [...] raised [his eyes] and [spoke] with the door as with [a human being]: "Door of the forest, that does not [understand (?)], possessed of a sense that is not there [...]! For twenty leagues I chose your wood, [fine (?)], IV.i.41 until I saw the lofty cedar [...]. Your wood has no rival [in the land (?)]. Six GAR is your height, two GAR your breadth [...]. Your post, your pivot and your crossbar [...]. I made you, I carried you; in Nippur [...].[1] IV.i.46 Had I known, door, that this [was your majesty (?)] and this

1 A GAR (nindanu) was a unit of length of about six meters; Nippur was the holy city of Enlil.

the beauty [of your workmanship (?)], I would have lifted the axe, I would have [...], I would have bound a raft [...]."

COLUMN I, FRAGMENT RM. II. 399

Broken lines mention terror, a dream, and prayers to the gods.

IV.i.1 [...] great [...]. [...] he relates [...]. [...]. [...] and terror [...]. [...] like [...]. [...] the dream I [told (?)] [...]. IV.i.7 [...] left [...]. [...] grief [...]. [...] let me pray to the gods [...]. [...] your god, let me [...]. [...] the father of the gods [...]. [...] your [...].

COLUMN V, FRAGMENT K. 8591 AND K. 13525

At the forest the friends urge each other on, and Humbaba raises a cry.

IV.v.1 [...] not [...]. [What] you said [in the midst] of Uruk [...]. [...] and stand [...]. [...] [Gil]gamesh, offspring of the heart of Uruk [...]. [...] [heard] the utterance of the mouth [...]. IV.v.6 "[Hurry], stand against him, let him not [pursue you (?)]. [Let us go] down into the forest and let us not [be afraid (?)]. [And (?)] he wears seven cloaks [...]. [...] he wears, and six he has taken off [...]. Like a fierce wild bull he has turned hostile (?) [...]." IV.v.11 He raised a cry at the top of [his] voice; the guardian of the forests shouts [...]. Humbaba, like [...].

COLUMN VI, FRAGMENT K. 3588 AND S. 2132

Enkidu lies sick for days; the friends encourage each other and reach the forest.

IV.vi.3 [...] your weapon, let me [show (?)]. [Consider (?)] [...], whatever I go [...]. "My friend, I [have seen] a dream [...]." The day on which he saw the dream is ended [...]. Enkidu lay one day, [a second day], that Enkidu [lay (?)] on his bed. IV.vi.9 A third day and a fourth day [that Enkidu lay on his bed]; a fifth, a sixth and a seventh, an eighth, a ninth [and a tenth]. Enkidu's sickness [...]. An eleventh and a twelfth day [...]. Enkidu [lay] on [his bed]. He called Gilgamesh [...]. IV.vi.15 "He has cursed me, my [friend], [...].

As one who in the midst of [Uruk] [...]. I feared the battle [...]. My friend, he who in [battle] [...]. I [...]

IV.vi.22 [...] and [...]." [Enkidu] opened [his] mouth and [spoke, saying to Gilgamesh]: "[My friend, let us not] go down [into the heart of the forest]. My hands [are weary] and [my arm] grows stiff."

IV.vi.26 [Gilgamesh] opened his mouth and spoke, saying [to Enkidu]: "[...] My friend, like weaklings [are we (?)]? [You (?)] have passed all (?) of them [...]. [That which (?) they] fear [...] before us [...] we [...]. [My friend (?)], you who know combat, [you are versed (?)] in battle. [...] you have touched, and you need not fear [death]. IV.vi.32 [With a] shout, raise up with me and [repeat] [...]. [...] the kettledrum, let it be [...]. Let the stiffness of your arm leave, and let the weakness [of your hands] depart. [...] and (?) stand (?), my friend; together let us [go down]. [...] your heart [...] combat; forget death and do not [...]. [The mighty (?)] carry off; a man who is careful, IV.vi.38 [he who] goes [in front], guards his body and keeps his companion safe." [By] their good deeds they have established a name. [At the] boundary (?) the two of them arrived. Their words [ceased]; they stood still.

Tablet V

Humbaba
The Cedar Forest and the battle with its guardian.

COLUMN I, FRAGMENT K. 3252+8561

The friends stand at the edge of the Cedar Forest and gaze at the cedars.

V.i.1 They stood still and gazed at the forest. They kept looking at the height of the cedars, they kept looking at the entrance of the forest. Where Humbaba used to walk a track was laid down; the ways were straight and the path was good. They saw the cedar mountain, dwelling of the gods, sanctuary of Irnini.[1] V.i.7 On the face of the mountain the cedar lifts up its abundance. Its shade is [good], full of delight. [Tangled] is the thornbush, tangled the [...]. [...] the cedar and the ballukku-tree [...]. [...] one league [...]. [...] a second time, to two-thirds [...]. V.i.13 [...] knot, [not] [...]. [...] let it be like [...]. [...] let [...]. [...]

COLUMN II, FRAGMENT K. 3252

Broken lines about swords and Humbaba.

V.ii.1 [From] afar the swords [...], [which] from the sheaths (?) [...]. [...] [...] the sword [...]. [...] V.ii.6 He [slipped in] [...]. [Humbaba] [...]. He did not [come] [...]. He did not [come] [...].

V.ii.17 Enlil [...]. Enkidu [opened] his mouth [and spoke, saying to Gilgamesh]: "[...] Humbaba [...]. [...] one by one [...]. [...] Slip-

1 Irnini is a name of the goddess Ishtar.

pery [...]. V.ii.23 [Let] me destroy you [...]. [...] let it be [tripled (?)] [...]. [...] strong; two [...]. [...] your [...]. [...] you [took] (?) [...]."

COLUMN II, FRAGMENT K. 8586

On the way Gilgamesh tells his dreams, and Enkidu interprets them as good omens.

V.ii.32 "[The second dream] that I [saw] [...]: [On] the peak of the mountain [we were (?)]. [The mountain] fell [...]. [We] were like reed flies [...]. [One who] was born in [the steppe] [...]." Enkidu spoke to his friend, [interpreting the dream]: V.ii.38 "[My friend], [your dream] is good; the [dream] is precious [...]. [My friend], the mountain that you [saw] [...]. [We shall] seize Humbaba, [we shall cast down his corpse], [and] his body on the plain [...]. At dawn [...]."

V.ii.44 [At] twenty leagues they [broke bread]; [at] thirty leagues they stopped [for the night]. [Before] Shamash they dug a well [...]. Gilgamesh climbed up on [it]. V.ii.48 He poured out his flour offering [into the well]: "Mountain, bring a dream [...]." He made for him [...].

COLUMN III, FRAGMENT S. 1040

Gilgamesh wakes from a third dream of thunder, fire, and death.

V.iii.1 [The mountain] brought a [dream] [...]. [He made] for him [...]. A chill [passed by]; it [goes] [...]. [He made] him lie down and [...]. [...] and like mountain barley [...]. [Gilgamesh] propped his chin on [his] knees. V.iii.7 [Sleep], which pours over people, fell upon him. [In] the middle watch he ended his sleep. [He rose] and spoke to his friend: "[My friend], did you not call me? Why am I awake? [Did you not] touch me? Why am I startled? [Did] not a god pass by? Why is my flesh numb? V.iii.13 [My friend], I have seen a third dream, and the dream that I saw was wholly bewildering. The heavens cried out, the earth roared. [The day] grew still, darkness came forth. Lightning [flashed], fire was kindled. [...] blazed up, death rained down. V.iii.19 The glare [went out], the fire went out. [...] which kept falling turned to ash. [Let

us go down], and in the steppe we can take counsel." [Now] Enkidu made him accept his dream, saying to [Gilgamesh]:

COLUMN V, FRAGMENT K. 3252

Broken lines in which Enkidu speaks to Gilgamesh.

V.v.44 [...] [...] [...] Over [...] Gilgamesh, [Enkidu] [...]. V.v.48 [Enkidu] opened his mouth and [spoke, saying to Gilgamesh]: "[My friend], I say to you [...]. I will go down [to] [...]."

COLUMN VI, FRAGMENT K. 3252

The friends cut off the head of Humbaba.

V.vi.42 [...] [...] [...] a second time, until [...]. [...] they threw down [...]. [...] two; Enkidu killed (?). [...] they [cut off] the head of Humbaba.

V.vi.2 Of his mouth [...]. The young man whom you saw [...]. At that time [...]. He seizes the lord (?) [...]. He lifts (?) [...]. I [...].

Tablet VI

Ishtar and the Bull of Heaven
Gilgamesh spurns the goddess, and the friends kill the Bull;
with the Boghazköy version of Tablets V–VI.

ISHTAR'S PROPOSAL

Gilgamesh cleans himself after the forest, and Ishtar asks him to be her husband.

VI.1 He washed his matted hair, he cleaned his gear. He [shook out] his locks over his back. He threw off his dirty clothes and put on his clean ones. He wrapped himself in fringed garments and was girded with a sash. Gilgamesh put on his crown. The princess Ishtar raised her eyes to the beauty of Gilgamesh. VI.7 "Come, Gilgamesh, be my bridegroom! Grant me your fruit as a gift. You be my husband and I will be your wife. Let me harness for you a chariot of lapis lazuli and gold, whose wheels are gold and whose horns are amber. You shall have storm demons harnessed for you as great mules. VI.13 Enter our house amid the fragrance of cedar. When you enter our house, let threshold and dais kiss your feet. Let kings, lords and princes bow down beneath you. Let [...] of mountain and land bring you tribute. Let your goats bear triplets, your ewes twins. VI.19 Let your colts under load outpace the mules. Let the horses at the chariot be glorious at the gallop. Let [your mules (?)] under the yoke have no rival."

GILGAMESH REFUSES

Gilgamesh insults Ishtar and lists what became of her earlier lovers.

VI.22 [Gilgamesh] opened his mouth and spoke, [saying] to the princess [Ishtar]: "[What shall I give (?)] to you if I [marry] you? [I would give] oil for the body and [garments]; [I would give] food and sustenance; [...] bread fit for divinity; VI.28 [...] fit for kingship. [...] [...] be heaped up. [...] [is clothed] with a garment. [...] I marry you. [...] in (?) bringing in. VI.34 A back door [that does not] keep out wind and draft; a palace that [crushes] [...] the warriors; an elephant [...] its covering; bitumen that [...] [the man] who carries it; a waterskin that [...] [the man] who carries it; limestone that [...] the stone wall; VI.40 jasper [...] [in] the land of the enemy; a shoe that [pinches] its owner! Which lover [did you love] forever? Which of your allallu-birds [went up above you]? Come, let me [...] your lovers.[1]

VI.45 [...] [...] his arm. For Tammuz, the lover of your [youth], you decreed weeping year after year. You loved the speckled allallu-bird; you struck him and broke his wing. He stands in the forests crying, 'My wing!'[2] VI.51 You loved the lion, perfect in strength; you dug for him seven and seven pits. You loved the horse, glorious in battle; you decreed for him the whip, the spur and the lash. You decreed for him to gallop seven leagues; you decreed for him to drink muddied water; VI.57 for his mother Silili you decreed weeping. [You loved] the shepherd, the herdsman, [who] constantly heaped up ash-cakes for you, [and every day] [slaughtered] young goats for you. [You struck] him and turned him into a wolf. His own shepherd boys drive him off,[3] VI.63 and his dogs bite his haunches. You loved Ishullanu, your father's gardener, who constantly brought you baskets of dates and every day made your table shine. You raised your eyes to him

1 The allallu is a bird, often identified as the roller; Ishtar's love for one is told next.
2 Tammuz, Ishtar's young husband, was mourned with ritual weeping each year.
3 Silili is a goddess, the divine mother of horses.

and went to him: 'My Ishullanu, let us taste your vigor, VI.69 and put out your hand and touch our vulva.' Ishullanu said to you: 'What do you want of me? Has my mother not baked, and have I not eaten, that I should eat food of insults and curses? Against the cold, [is] the rush a covering?' VI.75 You heard this [that he said]; you struck him and [turned him] into a mole. You made him dwell in the midst of [toil (?)]. He cannot go up the *miḫḫu*, he cannot go down the *dak[û]* [...]. And as for me, you would love me and [make me] like them."[4]

THE BULL OF HEAVEN

Ishtar asks Anu for the Bull of Heaven, and Enkidu and Gilgamesh kill it.

VI.80 When Ishtar [heard] this, Ishtar was furious and [went up] to heaven. Ishtar went before Anu [her father]; before Antum her mother she [came and] [...] [...]. "My father, Gilgamesh has insulted me. Gilgamesh has recounted my foul deeds,[5] VI.86 my foul deeds and my curses." Anu opened his mouth and spoke, saying to the princess Ishtar: "Was it not you yourself who called forth [your allure] [...]? And Gilgamesh recounted your foul deeds, your foul deeds and [your curses]."

VI.92 Ishtar opened her mouth and spoke, saying to [Anu, her father]: "My father, create the Bull of Heaven, and [let it overcome Gilgamesh]. Gil[gamesh] [...] [you will] fill [his body (?)] [...]. If [you do not ...] me, un[til (?)] [...] VI.97 I will str[ike] [...], I will se[t] [...], [...], upon [...]."

VI.101 A[nu opened his mouth and spoke], saying [to the prin]cess Ish[tar]: "[If I make the Bull that] you ask of [me], [there will be] seven years of ch[aff]. [Have you gathered grain (?) for the people]? [For the cattle] [...] made the grass grow?"[6]

VI.107 [Ishtar opened her mouth] and spoke, [saying to A]nu her father: "[Grain for the people (?)] I have heaped up; [grass for the

4 The creature Ishtar turns him into is uncertain; "mole" is one common reading.
5 Antum is the consort of Anu, the sky god.
6 "Years of chaff" are years of empty harvests: the Bull's descent will bring famine.

cattle (?)] I have brought into being. VI.111 [If there are seven] years of chaff, [I have gathered grain for the people], [I have made] grass [grow for the cattle]. [...] him."

VI.116 [...] of the Bull [...]. [The word (?)] Anu [...]. [...] and t[o] [...]. [...] and he led down [...]. [...] of Uruk [...]. VI.121 [...] [...]. It went down [...]. At its snorting [...] two hundred young men [...].

VI.125 [...] young men [...]. At the second snort[ing] [...] into it. Two hundred young men [...], three hundred young men [...]. [...] into it. At the third snorting [...] upon Enkidu. VI.130 Enkidu was thrown down to his waist. Enkidu leapt up and [seized] the Bull of Heaven by [its] horns. The Bull of Heaven spat [its] slaver into his face; with the thick of its tail [...] him [...].

VI.134 Enkidu opened his mouth and [spoke], saying [to Gilgamesh]: "My friend, we have gloried [...]. How shall we answer [...]? My friend, I have seen [...]. And my strength [...] VI.140 Let me tear out [...]. I [...]. Let me st[and] [...]. Let me fill [...]. In [...]. And [between] its neck [and] its horns [...]. VI.146 [...] your [...] [...]." Enkidu circled [...] the Bull of Heaven; he [seized (?)] it by [the thick of] its tail. [...]. And Gilgamesh, like a [man (?)] [...], valiant and [...]. VI.152 Between the neck, the horns and [...] [...] it [...]. After they had slain the Bull, they tore out [its] heart and set it before Shamash. They drew back and prostrated themselves before Shamash. Then the two brothers sat down together.

TRIUMPH IN URUK

Enkidu throws the Bull's haunch at Ishtar; Uruk celebrates, and Enkidu has a dream.

VI.157 Ishtar went up onto the wall of Uruk the Sheepfold. She leapt up, gave a cry, and hurled a curse: "Woe to Gilgamesh, who has defamed me and slain the Bull of Heaven!" Enkidu heard this speech of Ishtar; he tore off the right haunch of the Bull of Heaven and flung it in her face: "And you—could I only catch you, like it VI.163 I would treat you! I would hang its entrails at your side." Ishtar assembled the temple women, the *šamḫatu*-courtesans and the *ḫarimtu*-courtesans; over the right

haunch of the Bull of Heaven she set up a lament. Gilgamesh summoned the craftsmen, the smiths,[7] VI.169 all of them. The craftsmen's sons admired the thickness of its horns: thirty minas of lapis lazuli was their mass, two fingers was their rim. Six gur of oil, the capacity of the two, he gave for the anointing of his god Lugalbanda. VI.175 He brought them in and hung them up in the bedchamber of his lordship. They washed their hands in the Euphrates, took hold of each other and came, riding through the street of Uruk. The people of Uruk gathered, gazing [at them]. Gilgamesh, to the serving women [of Uruk (?)], VI.181 [spoke] a word: "Who is the finest among the young men? Who is the most splendid among the males? Gilgamesh is the finest among the young men, [Enkidu is the most splen]did among the males! [...] (?) [...] our anger. VI.187 [...] [...] [...] the street; he has no *mulu[tta]* (?). [...] go[ing out (?)] [...] the hand of [...] his [...] (?)."

VI.189 Gilgamesh held a celebration in his palace. The young men lay down, asleep on the couches of the night. Enkidu lay down and saw a dream. Enkidu got up and interpreted the dream; he said to his friend:

FRAGMENT K. 14945

Broken lines mention Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven.

VI.1 [...] (?). [...] (?) to Gilga[mesh]. [...] your (?). [...] (?) [...]. VI.5 [...] of the Bull of Heaven [...]. [...] two minas of *tērītu* [...]. [...] the might of the Bull of [Heaven] [...]. [...].

BOGHAZKÖY VERSION (TABLETS V–VI), OBVERSE

In the Boghazköy version, Gilgamesh tells Enkidu a dream of a mountain and a radiant young man.

V–VI.Bo.obv.1 [...] (?) my [friend] [...]. [...] [...] (?) [...]. Over your dream I rejoiced [...]. His face [...].[8]

7 Two different Akkadian words for "courtesan" stand side by side here.

8 The Boghazköy tablets, found at the Hittite capital in Anatolia, preserve a western version of the epic.

V–VI.Bo.obv.5 They took hold of each other and came, *nupat[ti]* [...]. A stretch of the night, *raḫit*, they [...]. In the middle of the night, sleep [...] with him. He told the dream to Enkidu: "[My friend], V–VI.Bo.obv.9 how is it you did not wake me? Why [...]? Enkidu, my friend, I have seen a dream. Did you wake me? Why [...]?

V–VI.Bo.obv.12 Besides my one dream, a second [...]. In my dream, my friend, a mountain [...]. It threw me down; it seized my feet [...]. The radiance grew intense; a certain young [man] [...]. V–VI.Bo.obv.16 In the land he was the fairest, and his beauty [...]. From beneath the mountain he drew me out and [...]. He gave me water to drink, and my heart grew ca[lm]. He set [my] feet (?) on the ground."

V–VI.Bo.obv.20 Enkidu [spoke and said] to this god, to Gilgamesh: "My friend, we [will go] [...]. Something is changed, the god [...]. The mountain is not chan[ged] at all [...]. Come! As for the fear [...]. It will be seen [...].

V–VI.Bo.obv.26 And the young man who [...], of your eyes [...], of the body [...], with you [...]. Quick[ly] [...]. I rejoiced [...]."

BOGHAZKÖY VERSION (TABLETS V–VI), REVERSE

In the Boghazköy version, Ishtar asks her father Anu for the Bull of Heaven.

V–VI.Bo.rev.2 [...] tore out (?), the god [...] set up (?). It comes to you; you [...]. He raged at Enkidu, the god [...]. Let it be firm (?) without battle [...]. A gift of [...]. V–VI.Bo.rev.7 The chief of the words that [...] us [...]. Great donkeys I will [...]. *Dušû*-stone in your abundance [...]. Let them kiss [...].[9]

V–VI.Bo.rev.11 Ishtar heard what Gilgamesh [had said]. *Šidat šiggata* throbbed [...]. She turned to the offering bowl, *saḫi* [...]. She went up to heaven and said: "My father [Anu], V–VI.Bo.rev.15 he has wronged me, the bull of the sixth month [...]. He has slighted me; now give [...]. The nose-rope of the Bull, Gilgamesh [...]. *Takmam*, let (?) [...]."

V–VI.Bo.rev.19 And he, Anu, [...] her banquet [...]: "Ishtar, what has the young man done to you [...]? Why have you come up? The young man [...]. The [n]ose-rope of the Bull—the Bull [...]. V–VI.Bo.rev.23 In (?) heaven before [...]. [...] his [...] he consumed [...]. [...] of famine [...]. [...] lip [...]."

9 *Dušû* is a precious stone; these lines seem to list gifts offered to Gilgamesh.

Tablet VII

The death of Enkidu
The gods' decree; Enkidu curses and blesses Shamhat and dreams of the underworld.

THE GODS' DECISION

Enkidu asks why the great gods have been taking counsel.

VII.1 My friend, why have the great gods been taking counsel?

COLUMN III

Dying, Enkidu curses Shamhat; Shamash rebukes him, and his heart grows calm.

VII.iii.1 [...] his [...], destroy, diminish his strength. [...] his [...] before you. [...] may it go out in front. [...] the [hun]ter pondered (?) in his heart. [...] Shamh[at] [...] which brought a curse. "[Co]me, Shamhat, I will decree [a fa]te for (?) [you], VII.iii.7 [...] (?) that shall not end, for ever and ever. [Let] me curse you with a great curse; [...] quickly may its curses pour down upon you. [...] [may] (?) they cast down the fullness of your allure. [...] [you] love the off[spring] (?) of your *taḫûtu*. [...] [...] of the young women. VII.iii.13 [...] [...] may it soil. [...] [may] it besmear. [...]. [...] of the potter. [...] she. [...] he will cast in your house. VII.iii.19 [...] the road, may it be your dwelling; [...] [may it be] your standing place; [...] [o]f your feet. [May the drunk and the thirsty strike] your cheek. [...] your [...], may he cry out. [...] he gave. VII.iii.25 [...]. [...]. [...]. [...] of blue-purple wool [...]. [...] clothed (?), we remove [...] of your lap, *šaḫrim* [...]. VII.iii.31 Because of me [...] [she has cursed] me, and on me [she has laid] sick[ness], upon my body."

VII.iii.33 Shamash heard [and op]ened his mouth; from afar [...] [from] heaven he called out to him: "Why, Enkidu, do you curse the courtes[an] Shamhat, who fed you bread fit for divinity, gave you beer to drink fit for kingship, clothed you in a great garment, VII.iii.39 and made you have fair Gilgamesh as your companion? [N]ow Gilgamesh, your friend, your brother, [will] lay you on a great bed; [on] a bed of loving care he will lay you; he will [s]eat you on a seat of rest, a seat at the left; [the ru]lers of the earth will kiss your feet. VII.iii.45 He will [make] the people of Uruk weep for you, he will make them mourn for you; [the flourishing] people he will fill with woe for you; [and he] himself, after you, will let [his] body bear matted hair, [he will put] on the skin of a dog and roam the wil[derness]."

VII.iii.49 Enkidu [heard] the word of the war[rior] Shamash; [...] his angry heart grew calm; [...] (?) [...] grew ca[lm].

COLUMN IV

Enkidu blesses Shamhat, then dreams of being taken down to the house of dust.

VII.iv.1 "[...] your [...], may it return, [...] your [...]. [May kings, prin]ces and nobles love [you]. [May no one (?)] strike his thigh; [over you may the young man (?)] shake his locks; [...] [he who has] lowered his belt, may he loosen it for you. VII.iv.6 [...] your [...], lapis lazuli and gold. [...] [may they re]pay [your kindness (?)] to you. [...] his [b]razier (?), his storehouses heaped up. [...] the gods, may he bring you in. [...] [may] the mother of seven, the wife, [be] forsaken." VII.iv.11 [...] [Enki]du, his insides were sick; [...] and (?) he lay down alone. [He went] [...] in the night, from his heart, to his friend: "[My friend,] [...] I saw a dream in my night: the heavens [cried out], the earth answered; VII.iv.16 [...] I was standing [alone] (?); [...] his face was dark; [...]-like was his face; [...] his [...], his nails were the talons of an eagle; [...] he overpowered me. VII.iv.21 [...] he leapt; [...] he submerged me; [...] upon m[e]; [...] [my] (?) body; [...].

VII.iv.30 [...]. [...] he transformed my bo[d]y (?); [...] my arms like a bird's. He seized (?) me, he led me down to the House of Darkness, the dwelling of Irkalla, to the house whose entrant does not come out, to the road whose going has no return,[1] VII.iv.36 to the house whose dwellers are deprived of light, where dust is their sustenance and clay their food. They are clothed like birds in a garment of wings, and they see no light, they dwell in darkness. Over the do[or and the bolt dust is spread]. In the h[ouse of du]st that I entered, VII.iv.41 I lo[oked] [...], and crowns were heaped up; I [saw] (?) [...] those of the crowns who from days of old had ruled the land, [...] (?) Anu and Enlil, they set out roast meat; [...] baked (?) goods they set out, they poured cool water from waterskins. In the house of dust that I entered there dwelt the high priest and the acolyte; VII.iv.47 [th]ere dwelt the purification priest and the ecstatic; [there] dwelt the anointed priests of the great gods; [th]ere dwelt Etana, there dwelt Sumuqan; [there dwelt] the queen of the netherworld, Ereshkigal. [Belit]-seri, scribe of the netherworld, knelt before her; [...] and she kept reading aloud before her.[2] VII.iv.53 She [raised] her head, she saw me; [...] and she took this [...]."

COLUMN A, FRAGMENT 79-7-8, 320

Broken lines mention Ereshkigal and the Flood.

VII.a.1 [...] him. [...] brought. [...] [may] he acquire. [...] exalted. [...]. VII.a.6 [...]. [...] me. [...] [Eresh]kigal. [...] the flood. [...].

COLUMN B

A few broken lines.

VII.b.1 [...]. The g[od] [...]. [...]. [...]. In [...]. Of one [...]. VII.b.7 To [...]. Slee[p] [...]. [...]. [...]. [...].

1 Irkalla is a name for the netherworld and for its ruler.
2 Etana is a legendary early king; Belit-seri, "Lady of the Steppe," is the scribe of the netherworld.

COLUMN I, FRAGMENT K. 10536

Broken lines from Enkidu's last days.

VII.i.1 [...] bow down your face; [...] the equal; [...] [for e]ver and ever; [...] your thirst; [...] smitten; [...].

COLUMN II

A single broken line.

VII.ii.1 The young woman [...]

Tablet VIII

Mourning
Gilgamesh laments Enkidu and honors him in death.

COLUMN I, FRAGMENT K. 8587 AND K. 8565

At dawn Gilgamesh mourns Enkidu and recalls their journeys together.

VIII.i.1 When the first [light of dawn appeared], Gilga[mesh said (?) to] his [fr]iend: "En[kidu], [...] [like (?)] a gazelle, and [...] your [...], you, [...] who [ra]ised you, and [...] the pastures,

VIII.i.7 The moun[tains we climbed (?), we went down (?) into] the Cedar Forest; all [...] [we wen]t (?) night and day; [...] broad, of Uruk the Sheepfold; [...] they draw near after us; [...] the [lo]fty ones of the mountain, of the hills. VIII.i.12 [...] *aniella*. [...] the meadow, like your mother. [...] the cedar oil. [...] in our fury. [...] [...] the panther. VIII.i.17 [...] [the wild creat]ures of the steppe; [...] on its bank; [...]; [...]; [...] [Uruk the Sheep]fold."

COLUMN II

Gilgamesh laments before the elders and finds that Enkidu's heart has stopped.

VIII.ii.1 "Hear me, O elders, [...] [hear (?)] me! I weep for Enkidu, my [friend]; like a wailing woman I [w]ail bitterly. The axe at my side, [bor]ne by my arm, VIII.ii.5 the sword of my belt, [...] in front of me, my festive garment, [...] [for] my delight: [...] (?) rose up and [...] me.

VIII.ii.8 [My friend, the mu]le, chaser of the wild ass of the mountain, leopard of the wilderness! En[kidu, my fr]iend, the

mule, chaser of the wild ass of the mountain, leopard of the wilderness! We who [achieved] everything and climbed [the mountain], seized the Bull and [killed it], overthrew Humbaba who [dwelt] in the [Cedar] Forest—[1] VIII.ii.13 Now, what is this sleep that has seized [you]? You have grown dark and do not hear [me]." But he did not lift [his eyes]. He touched his heart, but it did not bea[t]. He covered his friend like a bride [...]. VIII.ii.18 Like an eagle he circled [...]; like a lioness [b]ereft of [her] whel[ps] [...] he kept turning to face [his friend (?)]; he plucked out and threw away [...]; he tore off and cast away the finery of [his] b[ody].

VIII.ii.23 When the first [light of] dawn appeared, Gil[gamesh] [...]

VIII.ii.49 "[I, your friend, your brother, will lay you on a great bed;]

COLUMN III

Gilgamesh vows to make Uruk mourn and to roam the wilderness in skins.

VIII.iii.1 on a b[ed of loving care I will lay you]; I will seat you [on a seat of rest, a seat at the left]; the rulers of the ear[th will kiss your feet]; I will make the people [of Uruk] weep for you, [I will make them mourn for you]; VIII.iii.5 the flourishing people [I will fill with woe for you]; and I, after you, [will let my body bear matted hair], I will put on the skin of a l[ion and roam the wilderness]."

VIII.iii.8 When the first light of da[wn appeared, Gilgamesh] [...]; he loo[sed] his bonds [...]; [...] *sandu* [...]; [...] his [...] and [...].

COLUMN IV

Gilgamesh gathers treasures of gold for his dead friend.

VIII.iv.46 [...]. To my friend [...]. Your dagger [...]. Half of [...]. To Bibbi [...].[2]

1 The Bull is the Bull of Heaven, which Gilgamesh and Enkidu killed in Tablet VI.
2 Bibbi appears to be a minor deity; the passage seems to list gifts offered on Enkidu's behalf.

VIII.iv.1 [...] he saw the jewelry. [...] of alabaster. [...] clothing. [...] for his friend. [...] for his friend. VIII.iv.6 [...] minas of gold for his friend. [...] minas of gold for his friend. [...] minas of gold for his friend. [...] minas of gold for his friend. [...] they are carved (?), set with thirty minas of gold. VIII.iv.11 [...] [of them] for his friend. [...] of them for his friend. [...] their [th]ickness. [...] [of them] for his friend. [...] great. VIII.iv.16 [...] for his friend. [...] of his waist. [...] for his friend. [...] for his friend. [...] for his friend.

REVERSE

Gilgamesh displays offerings for Enkidu to Shamash.

VIII.rev.36 [...]. [...]. [...] his [...]. [...] (?) he fell [sick]. [...] his form (?). VIII.rev.41 [...] the Euphrates. [...] [of the earth] he displayed to Shamash. [...] of the wide [earth]. [...] [so that he may rejoice], may he go at his side. [...] of alabaster. VIII.rev.46 [...] a strainer for the companions of the wide earth he displayed to Shamash. [...] of the Deep, a strainer for the companions of the wide earth. [...] so that he may rejoice, may he go at his side. [...] whose top is lapis lazuli. [...] inlaid with carnelian.

COLUMN V

At dawn Gilgamesh sets out a table with honey and butter before Shamash.

VIII.v.40 [...] of [...]. [...] their [...], and their name [...]. [...] [j]udge of the Anunna[ki] [...]. [Gilga]mesh, on [hearing] this, fashioned the word of the river [...].

VIII.v.45 When the first light of dawn appeared, Gilgamesh fashion[ed] [...]. He brought out a gr[eat] table of *elammaku*-wood. He filled a carnelian bowl with honey; he filled a lapis lazuli bowl with butter. [...] he adorned and displayed to Shamash. [...].[3]

3 *Elammaku* is a precious wood used for fine furniture.

Tablet IX

The road of the sun
Afraid of death, Gilgamesh wanders to Mount Mashu and the scorpion-people.

COLUMN I

Afraid of death, Gilgamesh sets out to find Utnapishtim and fights lions in the passes.

IX.i.1 Gilgamesh wept bitterly for Enkidu his friend, and roamed the wilderness. "When I die, shall I not be like Enkidu? Grief has entered my heart. I am afraid of death, and I roam the wilderness. Toward Utnapishtim, son of Ubara-Tutu,[1] IX.i.7 I have taken the road, and I travel quickly. At night I reached the mountain passes. I saw lions and I was afraid. I lifted my head and prayed to Sin; to [...] (?) of the gods my prayers went: '[...] keep me safe!'"[2] IX.i.13 [...] he lay down, and [awoke (?)] from a dream. [...] they rejoiced in life. [He raised his axe] to his side; he drew [the sword] from his belt. Like an arrow [...] he fell [among] them. He struck [...] (?) and smashed it. IX.i.19 And [...] he [...] (?) her, and [...]. He threw [...]. He drew [...]. The name of the fir[st] [...]. The name of the second [...]. He raised [...]. IX.i.25 To [...]. [...]. [...]. [...].

COLUMN II

At Mount Mashu the scorpion-man and his wife question Gilgamesh.

IX.ii.1 The name of the mountain [is] Mashu. When he [reached] Mount Mashu, which every day guards the ri[sing of the sun and

1 Ubara-Tutu was the father of Utnapishtim and king of Shurippak.

the setting of the sun]—above, their peaks [reach] the vault of heaven; below, their breasts reach Arallu—scorpion-men guard its gate,[3] IX.ii.7 whose terror is awesome and whose glance is death, whose fearsome radiance overwhelms the mountains; at the rising of the sun and the setting of the sun they guard the sun. Gilgamesh saw them, and fear and terror darkened his face. He collected his wits and drew near before them. IX.ii.13 The scorpion-man called to his wife: "He who has come to us—his body is the flesh of the gods." The scorpion-man's wife answered him: "Two-thirds of him is god, and one-third of him is human." [The scorpion-]man, the male, called out; [...] of the gods, he spoke a word: IX.ii.19 "[...] a distant road. [...] into my presence. [...] whose crossing is difficult. [...] your [...], let me learn. [...] your [...] is set. [...] [let me] learn."

COLUMN III

Gilgamesh asks about Utnapishtim, and the scorpion-man warns of the dark road.

IX.iii.3 "[...] Utnapishtim my father [...], who stood in the assembly [of the gods and sought life]. About death and life [I would ask him (?)]." The scorpion-man opened his mouth [and spoke], saying to [Gilgamesh]: "There has not been, Gilgamesh, [a road (?) at any time]. IX.iii.9 No one [has traveled the path (?)] of the mountain. For twelve leagues [its] interior (?) [...]. Dense is the darkness, and [there is] no [light]. To the rising of the sun [...]. To the setting of the sun [...]. To the setting of the [sun] [...]. IX.iii.15 They brought out [...]. [...]. I [threw (?)] [...]. You shall [enter] [...]. [Good]. [...]."

2 Sin is the moon god.
3 Arallu is a name for the netherworld.

COLUMN IV

The scorpion-man lets Gilgamesh pass, and he enters the road of the sun.

IX.iv.33 "In the gr[ief of my heart (?)] [...], in cold and [heat my face is burned (?)], in weariness [...]. Now you [...]." The scorpion-man [opened his mouth and spoke] to Gilgamesh, the k[ing (?)] [...]: IX.iv.39 "Go, Gilga[mesh] [...]. The mountains of Mashu [...]. The mountains, the [ranges] [...]. Safely may [he travel (?)] [...]. The gate of the mountain [...] (?)." Gilga[mesh, on hearing this], IX.iv.45 to the words [of the scorpion-man paid heed (?)]. The road of Shamash [...]. One league [...]. Dense is the dark[ness, and there is no light]. It does not allow [him] [...]. Two leagues [...].[4]

COLUMN V

Gilgamesh travels twelve leagues in darkness and comes out into a garden of jewels.

IX.v.23 Four leagues [...]. Dense is [the darkness, and there is no light]. It does not [allow him] [...]. Five leagues [...]. Dense is the dar[kness, and there is no light]. It does [not] allow him [...]. IX.v.29 [Six leagues] [...]. Dense is the darkness, [and there is no light]. It does not allow [him] [...]. When he reached seven leagues [...]. Dense is the darkness, and [there is] no [light]. It does not allow him [...] (?) behind [him]. IX.v.35 Eight leagues [...] (?) [...], he cr[ies out (?)]. Dense is the dar[kness, and there is no] light. It does not [allow him] [...] (?) behind him. Nine leagues [...] the north wind. [...] his face. [...] [there is] light. IX.v.41 [...] (?) behind him. [When he reached ten leagues], [...] drew near. [...] of a league. [When he reached eleven leagues, he came out] before the sun. [When he reached twelve leagues,] brightness was there. IX.v.47 [To (?)] [...] (?) the trees of [...], on seeing them, he went straight on. The carne-

4 The road of Shamash is the path the sun was thought to travel through the mountain by night.

lian bears its fruit; the vine is laden, lovely to look upon. The lapis lazuli bears foliage; it bears fruit and is delightful to see.[5]

COLUMN VI

Gilgamesh walks among trees of precious stones by the sea.

IX.vi.24 [...]. [...] cedar [...]. [...] its [...], UD.A[Š (?)] stone [...]. Its branch of the sea [...] *sasu*-stone. Like thorns and [brambles] [...] AN.GUG.ME stone. IX.vi.29 Carob [...] (?) [...] *adrummu*-stone. *Šubû*-stone, *ša[danu]*-stone [...]. [...] and luxuriance [...] (?) and [...] (?) [...]. Like [...] MUḪ.AŠ.GE.GE stone. Which [...] of the sea. IX.vi.34 [...] (?) [...] (?) [...]. Gilgamesh [...] as he walked about. He raised [...] it.

5 In this garden of the gods the trees bear precious stones as fruit.

Tablet X

The waters of death
The ale-wife Siduri, the boatman Urshanabi, and Utnapishtim.

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN I

In the older version, Shamash tells Gilgamesh he will not find the life he seeks.

X.OB.i.1 [...] wild bulls [...]. [He makes good] their hides; he eats the meat. [There is no] harvest, Gilgamesh, such as never was, [n]ever. The wind drives the waters. Shamash was troubled and went to him. X.OB.i.6 He said to Gilgamesh: "Gilgamesh, where are you wandering? The life that you seek you will not find." Gilgamesh said to him, to the hero Shamash: "After I have roamed (?) over the wilderness like a wanderer, X.OB.i.11 shall I lay my head (?) in the heart of the earth and sleep through all the years? Let my eyes look upon the sun, that I may be sated with light. The darkness is far off; how much light is there? When may the dead see the radiance of the sun?"

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN II

Gilgamesh tells the ale-wife how he mourned Enkidu.

X.OB.ii.1 "The one who went with me through all hard[ships], Enkidu, whom I loved so dearly [...], the one who went with me through all hardships, has gone to the fate of mankind. Day and night I wept over him. X.OB.ii.6 I would not give him up for burial—my friend, would he not (?) rise up at my cry?—for seven days and seven nights, until a worm fell from his nose. Since he went,

I have not found life. X.OB.ii.11 I roam like a hunter in the midst of the wilderness. Now, ale-wife, I have seen your face; the death that I constantly fear, may I not see it!" The ale-wife said to him, to Gilgamesh:[1]

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN III

The ale-wife tells Gilgamesh to enjoy life, since the gods kept life for themselves.

X.OB.iii.1 "Gilgamesh, where are you wandering? The life that you seek you will not find. When the gods created mankind, they appointed death for mankind; life they kept in their own hands. X.OB.iii.6 You, Gilgamesh, let your belly be full; day and night be merry. Every day make rejoicing; day and night dance and play. Let your garments be clean. X.OB.iii.11 Let your head be washed, bathe in water. Look at the little one who holds your hand; let a wife delight (?) in your lap. This is the work [of mankind] [...]."

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION, COLUMN VI

Gilgamesh meets the boatman Sursunabu and asks to see Utnapishtim.

X.OB.vi.1 He smashed them in his rage. He came back and stood over him. Sursunabu looked into his eyes. Sursunabu said to him, to Gilgamesh: "What is your name? Tell me.[2] X.OB.vi.6 I am Sursunabu, of Utnapishtim the Faraway." Gilgamesh said to him, to Sursunabu: "Gilgamesh is my name. I am the one who came from Uruk (?), Eanna (?), by the circuit (?) of the mountains, X.OB.vi.11 the distant road, the rising (?) of the sun. Now, Sursunabu, I have seen your face. Show (?) me Utnapishtim the Faraway." Sursunabu [said] to him, to Gilgamesh:

1 The ale-wife is Siduri, a tavern-keeper who lives by the sea at the edge of the world.

2 Sursunabu is the Old Babylonian name of the boatman called Urshanabi in the later version.

COLUMN I, FRAGMENT K. 8589

The ale-wife Siduri bars her door, and Gilgamesh tells her of Enkidu's death.

X.i.1 The ale-wife Siduri [who dwells on the shore of the sea], she dwells and [...]. They made for her a vessel (?), they made for her [...]. She is covered with a veil and [...]. Gilgamesh came roaming and [...]. He is clothed in a skin, [...]. X.i.7 He has the flesh of the gods in [his body]. There is grief in [his heart]. His face [is like that] of one who has traveled a distant road. The ale-wife was looking into the distance. She talked to her heart, [spoke] a word; she [took counsel] with herself: X.i.13 "Perhaps this is [a seducer (?) of women (?)]. Where is he heading in [...]?" The ale-wife saw him and barred [her door]; she barred her gate, she barred [the bolt]. And he, Gilgamesh, lent his ear to [her voice (?)]. He lifted his chin and set [his ears on her].

X.i.19 Gilgamesh [said] to her, [to the ale-wife]: "Ale-wife, what did you see, [that you barred your door], barred your gate, [barred the] bolt? I will strike your door, I will smash [your gate]. [...] my [...]. [...] the wilderness."

X.i.32 [The ale-wife said to him, to Gilgamesh:] ["Why are your cheeks wasted, your face sunken,] [your heart wretched, your features worn?] [There is grief in your heart,] [your face is like that of one who has traveled a distant road.] X.i.37 [In (?) [...] frost and heat your face is burned,] [and (?), having taken (?) the form of the wind, you roam the wilderness?"] [Gilgamesh said to her, to the ale-wife:] ["Ale-wife, my cheeks are not wasted, my face is not sunken,] [my heart is not wretched, my features are not worn.] X.i.42 [There is no grief in my heart,] [my face is not like that of one who has traveled a distant road.] [In (?) [...] frost and heat my face is not burned,] [and (?) I have not taken (?) the form of the wind as I roam the wilderness.] [My friend, the mule, chaser of the wild ass of the mountain, leopard of the wilderness,] X.i.47 [Enkidu, my friend, the mule,] chaser of the wild ass of the mountain, leopard of the wilderness, [we who overcame

everything and climbed the mountain,] [who seized and killed the Bull of Heaven,] [who overthrew Humbaba, who dwelt in the Cedar Forest,] [who killed lions in the passes (?) of the mountains—]

COLUMN II

Gilgamesh asks Siduri the way, and she sends him to the boatman Urshanabi.

X.ii.1 [my friend, whom I love dearly, who went with me through all hardships,] [Enkidu, whom I love dearly, who went through all hardships,] [the fate of mankind (?) overtook him.] [Six days and seven nights I wept over him;] [I did not give him up for burial] X.ii.6 [until [...] his [...].] [I grew afraid and [...]] [...]. [I feared death, and I roam the wilderness]; the word of my friend [lies (?) upon me]. [By a distant road I roam the] wilderness; the word of Enkidu, [my friend, lies (?) upon me]. [By a distant way] I roam [the wilderness]. X.ii.11 [How] can I keep silent, how can I be still? [My friend, whom I love, has turned] to clay; Enkidu, my friend, whom I love, has turned [to clay]. [Shall I not, like] him, lie down, and [not] rise, forever and ever?"

X.ii.15 [Gilgamesh] said to her, to the ale-wife: "[...] Ale-wife, what is the road to Utnapishtim? [What is] its sign? Give it to me; give me its sign. If it is possible, let me cross the sea; if it is not possible, let me roam the wilderness."

X.ii.20 The ale-wife said to him, to Gilgamesh: "There has never been a crossing, Gilgamesh, and no one who has come here since days of old has crossed the sea. The one who crosses the sea is valiant Shamash; apart from Shamash, who crosses? The crossing is difficult, its way very hard, and in between are the waters of death, which bar its approach. X.ii.26 Even if, Gilgamesh, you cross the sea, when you reach the waters of death, what will you do? Gilgamesh, there is Urshanabi, the boatman of Utnapishtim. The Stone Ones (?) are with him; in the forest he is plucking the urnu. Let him see your face. [If it is] possible, cross with

him; if it is not possible, turn back."[3] X.ii.32 When Gilgamesh heard this, [he raised] the axe to his side, [drew the dagger from his belt]; he crept forward and went down to [...]. [...] he fell among them. [...] belt (?) [...]. [...]. X.ii.38 [...] him. [...] Gilgamesh. [...] his breast. [...] and the boat. [...] [the waters] of death. [...] the wide sea. X.ii.44 [...] held back. [...] to the river. [...] the boat. [...] on the bank. [...] the boatman. [...]. X.ii.50 [...] your [...] you.

COLUMN III, FRAGMENT K. 8579

Urshanabi has Gilgamesh cut poles, and they set out across the sea.

X.iii.1 Urshanabi said to him, to Gilgamesh: "Why are your cheeks wasted, [your face] sunken?"

X.iii.32 Gilgamesh said to him, to [Urshanabi]: "Now, Urshanabi, what is [the road to Utnapishtim]? What is its sign? Give it to me; give [me its sign]. If it is possible, let me cross the sea; if it is not possible, [let me roam the wilderness]."

X.iii.36 Urshanabi said to him, to [Gilgamesh]: "Your hands, Gilgamesh, have held back [...]. You have smashed the Stone Ones (?), you have plucked [the urnu]. The Stone Ones (?) are smashed, and the urnu (?) is not [...]. Gilgamesh, raise the axe to your side; X.iii.41 go down to the forest, and poles of five rods each [...]; trim them and set on knobs; bring [them to me]." When Gilgamesh [heard] this, he raised the axe to his side, drew [the dagger from his belt]; he went down to the forest, and poles of five rods each [...].[4] X.iii.46 He trimmed them and set on knobs, and brought them [to him]. Gilgamesh and Urshanabi embarked on [the boat]. They launched the boat on the waves, and they [on it] [...]. On the third day he looked out over a journey of a month and fifteen days. Urshanabi reached the waters [of death].

3 The "Stone Ones" (Thompson reads *šuttak*) are mysterious helpers or tackle of the boatman; the *urnu* is an unidentified plant or tree.

4 Five rods make each pole about thirty meters long.

COLUMN IV, FRAGMENT K. 3382

Gilgamesh poles across the waters of death while Utnapishtim watches.

X.iv.1 Urshanabi [said] to him, [to Gilgamesh]: "Stand back, Gilgamesh, [...]. Let your hand not touch the waters of death [...]. A second, a third, and a fourth, Gilgamesh, take a pole; a fifth, a sixth, and a seventh, Gilgamesh, take a pole; an eighth, a ninth, and a tenth, Gilgamesh, take a pole; X.iv.7 an eleventh, a twelfth, Gilgamesh, take a pole." At two sixties Gilgamesh had used up the poles. And he loosened his waistband for [...]. Gilgamesh stripped off [...]. With his arms he raised up a mast, and Utnapishtim was looking into the distance. X.iv.13 He talked to his heart, [spoke] a word; he [took counsel] with himself: "Why have [the Stone Ones (?)] of the boat been smashed, and one who is not its master riding [on it]? The one who is coming is not a man of mine, and on the right [...]. I look, but I do not (?) [...]. X.iv.19 I look, but I do not [...]. I look, and [...]. [...]."

COLUMN V

Gilgamesh tells Utnapishtim of his journey and his grief.

X.v.23 Gilgamesh said to him, to Utnapishtim: "Now let me go and see Utnapishtim the Faraway, of whom they speak. I turned and went through all the lands; I crossed over difficult mountains; I crossed all the seas. X.v.28 My face has not had its fill of sweet sleep. I have worn myself out with sleeplessness; I have filled my sinews with grief. [To the house (?)] of the ale-wife I had not yet come when my clothing was worn out. [Of] bear, hyena, lion, panther, tiger, deer, and ibex, the beasts and creatures of the wilderness, [their flesh] I ate, their skins I [...]. X.v.33 [...] let them bar her gate; with bitumen and pitch [...]. [...] revelry [...]. [...]."

X.v.36 [Utnapishtim] said to him, to [Gilgamesh]: "You (?), Gilgamesh, grief [...]. [...] gods and mankind [...]. [...] your father and your mother made (?) [...]. [...] Gilgamesh to the fool [...]. X.v.41 (Who (?)) [...]. (Who, like (?)) [...] to the fool, dregs [...]. (When (?))

[...] its cakes, which like [...]. [...] like [...]. [...]. X.v.46 [...]. Not [...]. Like [...]. Because [...]. [...].

COLUMN VI, FRAGMENT K. 8589

Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh that nothing lasts and that the gods fix death.

X.vi.24 Not [...]. Fierce [...] (?). Do we build a house forever? Do we set our seal forever? Do brothers divide shares forever? Does hatred last forever in [the enemy]? Does the river rise forever and bring high water? X.vi.30 The dragonfly floats [...]; its face gazes on the face of Shamash. Then all at once there is no [...]. The sleeper and the dead, how alike [they are]! Of death they have not drawn its image. The man, the prince, once they have drawn near [to his fate], X.vi.36 the Anunnaki, the great gods, assembled (?); Mammetum, maker of fate, decreed the fates with them. They established death and life; of death they did not reveal its days."[5]

5 Mammetum is a mother goddess who decrees the destinies of human beings together with the Anunnaki.

Tablet XI

The Flood
Utnapishtim's story of the Flood; the test of sleep; the lost plant; return to Uruk.

UTNAPISHTIM'S SECRET

Gilgamesh asks how Utnapishtim gained life, and Ea warns him of the coming Flood.

XI.1 Gilgamesh said to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway: "I look at you, Utnapishtim. Your features are not different; you are just like me. And you yourself are not different; you are just like me. XI.5 My heart was fully set on doing battle with you, [...] yet you lie [on] your side, on your back. [Tell me (?)] how you stood in the assembly of the gods and obtained life."

XI.8 Utnapishtim said to him, to Gilgamesh: "Let me reveal to you, Gilgamesh, a hidden matter, and let me tell you a secret of the gods. Shurippak, a city that you know, [which] lies [on the bank of] the Euphrates—that city was old, and the gods were within it. XI.14 [To] bring about the Flood the great gods set their hearts. [...] their father Anu; their counselor, the warrior Enlil; their throne-bearer, Ninurta; their canal-inspector, Ennugi. Ninigiku-Ea was under oath with them.[1] XI.20 He repeated their words to the reed wall: 'Reed wall, reed wall! Wall, wall! Reed wall, listen! Wall, pay attention! Man of Shurippak, son of Ubara-Tutu, tear down the house and build a boat; abandon wealth and seek life. XI.26 Spurn possessions and keep life alive. Bring the

1 Ninigiku ("Lord of the bright eye") is a title of Ea, god of wisdom and of the fresh waters.

seed of all living things up into the boat. The boat that you are to build—let her dimensions be measured out; [let] her width and her length be equal. [Like (?)] the Deep, roof her over.' XI.32 I understood, and I said to Ea, my lord: '[...] my lord, what you have commanded thus I have heeded; I will do it. [But I]—how shall I answer the city, the people, and the elders?' Ea opened his mouth and spoke, saying to his servant, to me: XI.38 'And (?) you shall speak thus to them: "[I know (?)] that Enlil hates me, and I may not dwell in your [city], nor set my face on Enlil's ground. [I will go down] to the Deep and dwell with Ea, my lord. [Upon] you he will rain down abundance: XI.44 [...] of birds (?), a hidden store of fish, [...] wealth and harvest, [...] cakes, [...] he will rain down upon you a shower of wheat."'

BUILDING THE BOAT

Utnapishtim builds the boat and loads it with his family and every living thing.

XI.48 [When the first] light of dawn appea[red], the land gathered [about me]. [...] [...] [...] the young men [...] houses (?) [...] brickwork (?). XI.54 The children [carried] pitch; the strong man [...] brought what was needed. On the fifth day I laid out her shape. Within her hull her walls were ten rods high; ten rods each, the rim of her top measured the same. I laid out the form of her exterior; I drew her plan. XI.60 I gave her six decks; I divided [...] into seven; her interior I divided into nine. I drove water-plugs into her middle. I saw to the punting poles and laid in supplies. Three shar of pitch I poured into the furnace.[2] XI.66 Three shar of bitumen [...] into it. Three shar of oil the basket-carrying workmen brought in. Apart from the shar of oil that the offering consumed, two shar of oil [that] the boatman stowed away. For [...] I slaughtered oxen; I killed sheep every day. XI.72 Beer, [ale], oil, and wine the workmen [drank] like river water. They held a feast like the day of the New Year festival. I [opened (?)] [...] ointment and put my hand to it. [...] the boat was finished. [...] was very

2 A shar is the number 3,600, used here as a measure of volume.

difficult, and[3] XI.78 they kept moving the beams of the mooring-posts above and below. [...] two-thirds of it.

XI.80 [Whatever I had] I loaded on her. Whatever I had of silver I loaded on her; whatever I [had] of gold I loaded on her; whatever I had of the seed of all living things [I loaded on] her. I brought up into (?) [...] the boat all my family and kin. The cattle of the field, the beasts of the field, the craftsmen, all of them I brought up. XI.86 Shamash had set me a fixed time: 'In the morning, cakes; in the evening he will rain down a shower of wheat. Enter the boat and close your door.' That time arrived: in the morning, cakes; in the evening it rained a shower of wheat. I looked at the appearance of the weather. XI.92 The weather was fearful to look at. I entered the boat and closed my door. For the sealing of the boat, to Puzur-Amurri the boatman I gave the palace with its goods.

THE FLOOD

The storm rages for six days and seven nights, and all mankind turns to clay.

XI.96 When the first light of dawn appeared, a black cloud rose up from the horizon. Adad thundered within it. Nabu and Sharru went in front; the throne-bearers went over mountain and land. Erragal tore out the mooring-posts.[4] XI.102 Ninurta went and made the weirs overflow. The Anunnaki raised torches; with their brilliance they set the land ablaze. Adad's deathly stillness swept through the heavens; [whatever] was bright was turned to darkness. [...] the land like [...] he shattered [...]. XI.108 For one day the [storm] [...]; swiftly it blew, and [...]; like a battle over [...] it swept [...]. Brother could not see brother; people could not be made out from heaven. The gods were frightened by the Flood, and XI.114 they drew back and went up to the heaven of Anu. The gods cowered like dogs; they lay curled up outside. Ishtar cried out

3 The akitu was the great Babylonian New Year festival.

4 Nabu is the scribe of the gods and Sharru ("King") a divine title; Erragal is a name of Nergal, god of the netherworld.

like a woman in labor; the Lady [of the gods], sweet of voice, lamented: 'The days of old have truly turned to clay, because I spoke evil in the assembly of the gods. XI.120 How could I speak evil in the assembly of the gods and command battle for the destruction of my people? It is I myself who give birth to my people, and like the spawn of fish they fill the sea!' The gods, those of the Anunnaki, wept with her; the gods sat humbled, in weeping. XI.126 Their lips were parched [...] gatherings. For six days and [seven] nights the wind went on, the Flood; the storm flattened the land. When the seventh day arrived, the storm, the Flood, slackened in its onslaught, which it had fought like a woman in labor. The sea grew calm, the tempest fell still, the Flood ceased. XI.132 I looked at the weather, and silence had set in, and all mankind had turned to clay. The meadow was as level as a roof. I opened a window, and daylight fell upon my cheek. I bowed down, sat, and wept; down my cheek my tears ran.

THE BIRDS

The boat rests on Mount Nisir; Utnapishtim sends out birds and offers a sacrifice.

XI.138 I looked to the quarters of the world, the shores of the sea. At twelve points a stretch of land rose up. At Mount Nisir the boat came to rest. Mount Nisir held the boat fast and did not let it move. One day, a second day, Mount Nisir held the boat fast and did not let it move. A third day, a fourth day, Mount Nisir held the boat fast and did not let it move. XI.144 A fifth, a sixth, Mount Nisir held the boat fast and did not let it move. When the seventh day arrived,

XI.146 I brought out a dove and set it free. The dove went off and came back; no resting place appeared to it, so it turned round. I brought out a swallow and set it free. The swallow went off and came back; no resting place appeared to it, so it turned round. XI.152 I brought out a raven and set it free. The raven went off and saw the waters receding; it ate, it scratched about, it flew here and there, and did not turn round. I sent them out to the four

winds and offered a sacrifice. I set out an incense offering on the summit of the mountain. Seven and seven cult vessels I set in place. XI.158 Beneath them I heaped up reed, cedar, and myrtle. The gods smelled the savor; the gods smelled the sweet savor; the gods gathered like flies over the sacrificer. Then, when Mah arrived, she lifted up the great flies that Anu had made according to her wish:[5] XI.164 'You gods here—as surely as I shall not forget the jewel of my neck, I will remember these days and never forget them. Let the gods come to the incense offering, but let Enlil not come to the incense offering, because he did not take counsel and brought about the Flood, and consigned my people to destruction.'

ENLIL'S ANGER

Enlil rages that a man survived; Ea rebukes him, and Enlil makes Utnapishtim immortal.

XI.170 Then, when Enlil arrived, he saw the boat, and Enlil grew angry; he was filled with rage at the gods, the Igigi: 'Has some living being escaped? No man was to survive the destruction!' Ninurta opened his mouth and spoke, saying to the warrior Enlil: 'Who but Ea could devise such a thing? XI.176 For Ea knows every undertaking.' Ea opened his mouth and spoke, saying to the warrior Enlil: 'You, sage of the gods, warrior—how, how could you, without taking counsel, bring about the Flood? On the sinner lay his sin; on the wrongdoer lay his wrong. Be lenient, that he not be cut off; pull tight, that he not [...]. XI.182 Instead of your bringing about the Flood, let a lion rise up and diminish the people. Instead of your bringing about the Flood, let a wolf rise up and [diminish] the people. Instead of your bringing about the Flood, let a famine come and the land [...]. Instead of your bringing about the Flood, let Erra rise up and [...] the people. It was not I who revealed the secret of the great gods; I let Atrahasis see a dream, and so he heard the secret of the

5 Mah is the mother goddess, the Lady of the gods; the "flies" are fly-shaped jewels of her necklace.

gods.[6] XI.188 Now then, take counsel concerning him.' Enlil went up into the boat. He took me by the hand and brought me up. He brought up my wife and made her kneel at my side. He touched our foreheads and, standing between us, blessed us: 'Formerly Utnapishtim was a human being;

THE TEST OF SLEEP

Utnapishtim challenges Gilgamesh to stay awake, and he sleeps for seven days.

XI.194 now Utnapishtim and his wife shall be like us gods. Let Utnapishtim dwell far away, at the mouth of the rivers.' They took me and made me dwell far away, at the mouth of the rivers. But now, as for you, who will gather the gods for you, so that you may find the life you seek? Come, do not lie down to sleep for six days and seven nights." XI.200 As he sits there on his haunches, sleep breathes over him like a mist. Utnapishtim said to her, to his wife: "Look at the strong man who wanted life! Sleep breathes over him like a mist." His wife said to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway: XI.206 "Touch him, and let the man wake up. By the road on which he came, let him return in peace; by the gate through which he went out, let him return to his land." Utnapishtim said to her, to his wife: "Mankind is deceitful; he will deceive you. Come, bake his loaves and keep setting them at his head, XI.212 and mark on the wall the days that he sleeps." She baked his loaves and kept setting them at his head, and the days that he slept she marked on the wall. His first loaf was dried out; the second had gone bad; the third was soggy; the fourth—its crust had turned white; the fifth had gone moldy; the sixth was freshly baked; XI.218 The seventh—at that very moment he touched him, and the man awoke.

XI.219 Gilgamesh said to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway: "Scarcely (?) had sleep poured over me when you quickly touched me and roused me." Utnapishtim [said to him], to Gilgamesh: "[...] [Gilga]mesh, count your loaves. XI.224 [...] let me

6 Erra is a god of plague; Atrahasis ("Exceedingly Wise") is a name of Utnapishtim.

make it known to you: [the first], your loaf, [is dried out]; [the second has gone] bad; the third is soggy; the fourth—its crust has turned white; [the fifth] has gone moldy; the sixth is freshly baked; [the seventh]—at that very moment you awoke." XI.229 [Gil]gamesh said to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway: "[...] shall I do, Utnapishtim? Where shall I go? The Snatcher has seized my [inner parts]; [in] my bedchamber death dwells, and wherever [I may] set [my ears], there too is death."

WASHED AND CLOTHED

Urshanabi washes Gilgamesh and dresses him for the journey home.

XI.234 Utnapishtim [said to him], to Urshanabi the boatman: "Urshanabi, yo[u] [...] your [...]; may the crossing hate you! You who used to wa[lk] along its shore, be barred from its shore! The man whom you led here—matted hair covers his body, skins have marred the beauty of his flesh. Take him, Urshanabi, bring him to the washing place, and XI.240 let him wash his matted hair in water until it is clean; let him cast off his skins, and let the sea carry them away; let his body be rinsed fair; let the headband of his head be renewed; let him be clothed in a robe, the garment of his dignity. Until he goes to his city, until he completes his journey, XI.246 let the robe show no age but ever stay new." Urshanabi took him and brought him to the washing place; he washed his matted hair in w[ater] until it was clean; he cast off [his] skins, [and] the sea carried them away; his body was rinsed fair; [the headband of] his head was rene[wed]; XI.252 he was clothed in a robe, the garment of his dignity. Until he [goes to his city], until he completes his journey, [let the robe show no age but ever] stay new. Gilgamesh and Urshanabi boarded the boat; [they launched] the boat [onto the waves], and they rode in it.

THE PLANT OF YOUTH

Utnapishtim reveals a plant under the sea; a snake steals it, and Gilgamesh weeps.

XI.258 His wife said to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway: "Gilgamesh has come here, he has grown weary, he has toiled. What will you give him, so that he may return to his land?" And he, Gilgamesh, lifted the pole and brought the boat close [to] the shore. XI.263 Utnapishtim [spoke] to him, [to] Gilgamesh: "Gilgamesh, you have come here, you have grown weary, you have toiled. What shall I give you, so that you may return to your land? Let me reveal, Gilgamesh, a hidden matter, and not (?) [...] [let me] tell you. XI.268 This plant—its [root] (?) is like a thornbush; its thorn, like a bramble's, will pri[ck your hands (?)]. If your hands reach that plant, [you will find life]." Gilgamesh, when he heard this, opened the [channel (?)]; he tied heavy stones [to his feet]. XI.273 They dragged him down into the De[ep, and he saw the plant]. He took the plant, and it pr[icked his hands (?)]. He cut away the heavy stones [from his feet], and the second (?) cast him up onto its shore.

XI.277 Gilgamesh said to him, to Urshanabi the boatman: "Urshanabi, this plant is a plant of renown (?), by which a man attains his life's breath. I will bring it into Uruk the Sheepfold; I will make [...] eat, and the plant shall be cut. Its name is 'The Old Man Becomes a Young Man.' XI.282 I myself will eat it, and I will return to what I was in my youth." At twenty leagues they broke bread; at thirty leagues they stopped for the night. Gilgamesh saw a pool whose water was cool; he went down into it and bathed in the water. XI.287 A snake smelled the fragrance of the plant; it came up [out of the water (?)] and carried off the plant; as it turned back, it shed its skin. [On] that day Gilgamesh sat down and wept; his tears ran down his cheeks. XI.292 [...] of Urshanabi the boatman: "[For] whom, Urshanabi, have my arms toiled? For whom has my heart's blood been spent? I have not gained any good for myself; I have done good for the lion of the

ground.[7] XI.297 Now the tide is carrying it twenty leagues away. When I opened the channel, [...] the gear. What have I found that was set as a sign for me? Let me turn back—and I have left the boat on the shore." At twenty [leagues] they broke bread; at thirty leagues they stopped for the night; and they arrived in Uruk the Sheepfold.

RETURN TO URUK

Gilgamesh shows Urshanabi the walls of Uruk.

XI.302 Gilgamesh said to him, to Urshanabi the boatman: "Go up, Urshanabi, onto the wall of Uruk and walk about; inspect the foundation platform, survey the brickwork. Is not its brickwork of baked brick? Did not the Seven Sages lay its foundations? One shar is city, one shar is orchards, one shar is clay pits, the open land of the temple of Ishtar; three shar and the open land—so Uruk is laid out."[8]

7 "Lion of the ground" is an epithet for the snake.
8 A shar is a large Mesopotamian unit of area.

Tablet XII

Enkidu in the underworld
Enkidu goes down to the world of the dead, and his spirit returns to tell what he saw.

THE PUKKU AND MIKKU

Gilgamesh's pukku and mikku fall into the netherworld, and he warns Enkidu how to behave there.

XII.1 "Today, the pu[kku—would that I had left it in the carpenter's house (?)]! The mikku [...]!" "My lord, wha[t shall I do (?)] [...]?" "Today, the pu[kku—would that I had left it in the carpenter's house (?)]!"[1] XII.5 The mik[ku] [...]. Gil[gamesh opened his mouth to him] [...]: "If [to] [...], t[o (?)] [...]."

XII.10 Wh[at (?)] [...]? Gilgamesh [...]: "If to [...], to the temple yo[u] [...] [do not draw near]; [do not put on] a clean garment—like a stranger you [...] ou[t (?)] [...]; XII.16 do not anoint yourself with fine oil from the jar—at its scent they will gather around you. Do not throw the throwstick to the ground—those struck by the throwstick will surround you. Do not lift a staff in your hands—the ghosts will tremble at you. XII.22 Do not put sandals on your feet; do not make a noise in the netherworld. Do not kiss your wife whom you love; do not strike your wife whom you hate. Do not kiss your son whom you love; do not strike your son whom you hate. XII.28 The outcry of the netherworld will seize you. She who lies, she who lies, the mother of Ninazu, she who lies—her pure shoulders are not covered with a garment, her

1 The pukku and mikku are wooden objects, perhaps a ball and mallet or a drum and drumstick, that have fallen into the netherworld.

breast like a bowl [is not drawn up]." [To the temple] [...] [he] drew near; [he put on a clean garment].[2]

ENKIDU SEIZED

Enkidu goes down, ignores every warning, and the netherworld seizes him.

XII.34 Like a st[ranger] [...] him. [He anoint]ed himself with [fine] oil from the jar; at its sc[ent they gath]ered around him. He [threw] the throwstick t[o the ground] [...]; the ghosts [...] [sur]rounded him; those [struck] by the throwstick trembled. XII.39 He [lifted] a staff in [his] hand; he [put] sandals on [his feet]; he [made] a noise [in the netherworld]; [he kissed his] wife [whom he loved]; [he struck his] wife whom he [hated]; [he kissed his] son whom he [loved]; XII.45 [he struck his] son whom he hated. The out[cr]y of the netherworld seized him. She who lies, [she who] lies, the mother of Ninazu, she who l[ies]—her [pure] shoulders are not covered with a garment, her breast like a flask is not drawn up. Th[en (?)] Enkidu, to come up from the netherworld—

GILGAMESH APPEALS TO THE GODS

Gilgamesh begs Enlil, Sin and Ea, and Ea has Nergal release Enkidu's spirit.

XII.51 Nam[tar did not seize] him, Asakku did not seize him; the netherworld [seized] him. The lur[ker of Nergal] who does not spare did not seize him; the netherworld [seized] him. In the place of [the warriors' battle] he did not fall; the netherworld [seized] him. Th[en (?)] [the lo]rd (?), the son of Ninsun, wept for his servant Enkidu. To [Ekur], the temple of Enlil, he went by himself: "Father [Enlil], today my pukku fell into the netherworld,[3] XII.57 my mikku fell into the netherworld. Enkidu, who, to

2 The mother of Ninazu is Ereshkigal, queen of the netherworld.

3 Namtar is the netherworld's messenger of death and Asakku a demon of disease; the "lurker" is a demon in the service of Nergal.

bring up [from the netherworld] [...]—Namtar did not seize him, Asakku did not [seize him; the netherworld seized him]. The lurker of Nergal who does not spare did not se[ize him; the netherworld seized him]. In the place of the warriors' battle he di[d not fall; the netherworld seized him]." Father Enlil did not answ[er] a word; [he went to Sin by himself]. XII.63 "Father Sin, today my pukku [fell into the netherworld], my mikku [fell into the netherworld]. Enkidu, who, to bring up f[rom the netherworld] [...]—Namtar did not seize him, As[akku did not seize him; the netherworld seized him]. The lurker of Nergal who [does not spare did not seize him; the netherworld seized him]. In the place of [the warriors' battle he did not fall; the netherworld seized him]." XII.69 [Father Sin did not answer a word; he went to Ea by himself.] ["Father Ea, today my pukku fell into the netherworld,] [my mikku fell into the netherworld.] [Enkidu, who, to bring up from the netherworld] [...]—Na[mtar did not seize him, Asakku did not seize him; the netherworld seized him]. The lurker of Nergal who does not spa[re did not seize him; the netherworld seized him]. XII.75 In the place of the warriors' ba[ttle he did not fall; the netherworld seized him]." Father Ea [...] [heard], and to the hero [...] the yo[ung man Nergal he spoke]: "Hero, young man N[ergal, hear me (?)]! Now [open] a hole [in the earth], so that the spirit o[f Enkidu may come out from the netherworld] XII.81 [and let him speak] to [his] brother [...]." The hero, the young man Nergal, [...]. Now he opened a hole in the earth, and the spirit of Enkidu came out of the netherworld like a breath of wind. They embraced and did not let go (?); they conferred together and wearied themselves.

THE LAW OF THE NETHERWORLD

Enkidu's spirit tells Gilgamesh what he saw among the dead.

XII.87 "Tell me, my friend, tell me, my friend, tell me the law of the netherworld that you have seen!" "I will not tell you, my friend, I will not tell you. If I told you the law of the netherworld that I have seen—[yo]u, sit down and weep!" "[I (?)] will sit down and

weep." XII.93 "[My friend (?)] [...] whom you touched so that your heart rejoiced—[his body (?), like a gar]ment grown old, vermin devour. [The bride (?)] [...] [whom] you touched so that your heart rejoiced—[her body (?)] [...] is full of dust." [...] he said, and [...] he threw himself down [on the gro]und (?). [...] he said, and [...] he threw himself down [on the gro]und (?). XII.99 "[The one who] [...] [fell—did you see him]?" "I saw him: [...] [is co]vered; [...]."

XII.118 Like a fine emblem, the cor[ner] [...]; like [...].

XII.145 "The one who [...] on the mooring pole—did you see him?" "[I saw him]: now to [...] [...] at the pulling out of the pe[g]." "The one of a death by sur- [...]—did you see him?" "[I saw him]: he lies on a couch of night and drinks pure water." "The one who was killed in battle—did you see him?" "I saw him: XII.150 his father and his mother hold up his head, and his wife over him [...]." "The one whose corpse lies in the open country—did you see him?" "I saw him: his ghost does not rest in the nether-world." "The one whose ghost has no one to care for it—did you see him?" "I saw him: he eats the scrapings of the pot and the crusts of bread that are thrown into the street."[4]

4 In Mesopotamian belief the dead depended on offerings of food and drink from their living relatives.