

The Gilgameš epic at Ugarit

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[Fourteen years ago came the announcement that several twelfth-century pieces of the Babylonian poem of Gilgameš had been excavated at Ugarit, now Ras Shamra on the Mediterranean coast. This article is written in response to their *editio princeps* as texts nos. 42–5 in M. Daniel Arnaud's brand-new collection of Babylonian library tablets from Ugarit (Arnaud 2007). It takes a second look at the Ugarit fragments, and considers especially their relationship to the other Gilgameš material.]

The history of the Babylonian Gilgameš epic falls into two halves that roughly correspond to the second and first millennia BC respectively.¹ In the first millennium we find multiple witnesses to its text that come exclusively from Babylonia and Assyria. They allow the reconstruction of a poem in which the sequence of lines, passages and episodes is more or less fixed and the text more or less stable, and present essentially the same, standardized version of the poem. With the exception of a few Assyrian tablets that are relics of an older version (or versions), all first-millennium tablets can be fitted into this Standard Babylonian poem, known in antiquity as *ša naqba īmuru* “He who saw the Deep”. The second millennium presents a very different picture. For one thing, pieces come from Syria, Palestine and Anatolia as well as Babylonia and Assyria. These fragments show that many different versions of the poem were extant at one time or another during the Old and Middle Babylonian periods. In addition, Hittite and Hurrian paraphrases existed alongside the Akkadian texts. This variety is today only represented by fragments, so that none of these versions can be reconstructed even in skeletal form, except for the Hittite paraphrase. More second-millennium pieces of the epic are always to be welcomed, not only for their own sake and because they add to our knowledge of the epic's evolution, but also for comparative purposes, because they can help extend our knowledge of the Standard Babylonian poem where it is still fragmentary, and even allow us to fill gaps in its text.

Ever since Gilgameš turned up in archives found at Boğazköy (Hattusa, the Hittite capital in Anatolia), it has always been likely that he would eventually surface at Ugarit. This probability was reinforced by finds of Gilgameš tablets first in a disturbed context at Megiddo and then in a twelfth-century scriptorium at Emar on the great bend of the Euphrates. These finds demonstrate that copying the poem of Gilgameš was a part of the curriculum of scribal learning in the West throughout the Late Bronze Age. It was thus no great surprise when the excavation of private dwelling houses at Ras Shamra in 1994

1. For the history of the Gilgameš poems see George 2003: 3–70.

yielded four pieces of Gilgameš, apparently in a scriptorium library of the “house of Urtenu”.² On decipherment these turned out to be a complete tablet inscribed with lines from the beginning of the epic, and three fragments, probably all from the same tablet, that provide text from Gilgameš’s encounter with the ogre Humbaba in the Cedar Forest. Following the practice adopted in my editions of the Babylonian Gilgameš (George 2003), I give these two tablets the sigla MB Ug₁ and MB Ug₂ (fragments a, b and c).

The names of four characters of the epic occur in the Ugarit fragments: Gilgameš, Enkidu, Humbaba and Ūta-napišti. Gilgameš is always spelled ^dbīl.ga.mes here, which Arnaud found peculiar and alien to the western tradition (2007: 14). Surprisingly so, because this standard Sumerian spelling occurs in a copy of the Weidner god list from Ugarit and in a text found at Boğazköy, and most pertinently is the spelling used in the twelfth-century fragments of Gilgameš from nearby Emar, first edited by Arnaud (now George 2003: 326–38). Full details are given in my discussion of Gilgameš’s name and its spelling (George 2003: 76 sub 3a).

Enkidu’s name is spelled ^den-ki-dū. This is the spelling used by the Standard Babylonian version, but it also graces copies of the Poem of Early Rulers from Ugarit and Emar and the older copies of Gilgameš from Boğazköy (George 2003: 138). The writing of the name of Humbaba shows inflection: nom. ^dhu-ba-bu (MB Ug₂ b 18’, c 4’, 11’, 22’), gen. ^dhu-ba-bi (a 2, c 19’). These are forms not previously encountered in the west, but an intermediate Assyrian edition also inflected the name, with the added feature of vowel harmony: acc. ^mhu-ba-ba, gen. ^mhu-be-be (Ass. MS y; see George 2003: 145).

Ūta-napišti occurs only once in the Ugarit fragments, written ^u-tu-ur-na-pu-uš-ti (MB Ug₁ 7). Arnaud remarks rightly that *napušti* is Assyrian dialect (2007: 132); one may add that the version of the name in MB Ug₁ is something of a halfway point between Middle Assyrian ^mUD-na-pu-u[š-te?] and the Old Babylonian variant ^u-ta-ra-pa-āš-tim (for references see George 2003: 152). This new version of the flood hero’s name is fully appropriate to his condition: (w)uttur-napušti “well augmented as to life”. It represents an attempt to make good sense of the conventional spelling UD-napišti. This conventional form of the name has now been found at Hattusa, written ^mUD-na-pí-iš-t[a(-)] in a fragment of the Hittite Gilgameš (Soysal 2004).

1. RS 94.2006 = MB Ug₁. A variant version of ša naqba īmuru

This complete tablet of thirty-eight lines was published by Arnaud as no. 42 in his volume, under the title “prologue de l’épopée de Gilgameš” (2007: 130–4 and pls. 19–20). Arnaud identified it as “une copie de l’œuvre même de l’auteur urukéen” (scil. Sîn-lēqi-uninni), in contrast to the other three fragments found in the same season, which he considered representatives of an older version (2007: 14, 36, 42). He noted the presence in the text of Middle Babylonian forms, “nombreuses” Assyrianisms and spellings in -šū as well as -šu, the last of which marked the text as “un peu tardivement dans le temps”. He observed that the script is elegant and certainly Syrian, the tablet no doubt written at Ugarit.

The writer of the tablet was no expert. He is clearly guilty of terrible lapses in l. 11, which is marred by the omission of two signs and by an erasure, and another obvious omission occurs in l. 31. Without collation of the original tablet it is unclear how many of the other spelling errors should be attributed to the scribe and how many to the maker of the modern facsimile. But I would agree with Arnaud (2007: 14, 130), that the tablet is a pedagogical exercise. This explains not only the poor quality of the writing, but also the fact that the tablet breaks off with only one-third of the reverse inscribed. The exercise had come to an end; or the student had exhausted his capability.

2. A preliminary report stated that the Gilgameš material stemmed from two separate buildings, the “house of Urtenu” and the “house of Rap’anu” (Malbran-Labat 1995: 108). Arnaud does not give a list of findspots in his book but informs us in the introduction that “tous quatre ont été trouvés dans la ‘maison d’Urtenu’” (Arnaud 2007: 36).

Some irregularities may not be the fault of this particular scribe, for they are probably corruptions that had already entered the tradition: *rūqti* (l. 7) for *rūqi*, *gar-nu-šu-ma* (11) for *šakin*, *kallat šeḫret* (12) for *batūlta* (via the logogram *guruš.tur*), *umma* (25) for *šumma* and the unwanted intrusion of the name *Gilgāmeš* in l. 20. The grammar is generally sound Middle Babylonian, but on five occasions case-endings cause trouble: absent from acc. *kallat šeḫret* (11), unwanted on construct *šīti* (8) for *šīt*, wrong vowels on *tāmata rapašta* (8) for gen. *tāmati rapašti*, on *šanu'udi* (16 // 18) for nom. *šanu'udu*, and on *purīdūšu* (36) for dual nom. *purīdāšu*. These errors are symptomatic of textual transmission in a place where case-endings were not part of the native language.

Like other copies of Babylonian poetry from the west, the present tablet is not always particular about setting down lines of poetry each on one line of tablet. There are false line-breaks in ll. 20–1 and 34–5. The spelling is unremarkable, but note the use of the value *rīt* (RAD) in l. 35, which is typical of Ugarit and Boğazköy. Distinctively Middle Babylonian forms are *ildi* (1 // 3) for OB *išdi*, *ilteneṃmi* (14) for OB *ištenemme*, *ultādir* (30) for OB *uštādir*, and *inambuṭā* (32) for older *inabbuṭā*. The only Assyrianisms in my view are *tišassi* (24) for Bab. *šitassi*, and the name of the Flood hero, Uttur-napušti (7).

A reading of this tablet in the light of the most recent evidence produces a decipherment significantly different from Arnaud's *editio princeps* in ll. 16 // 18, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36 and 37, and a different understanding of the development of the narrative. What emerges is a Middle Babylonian piece in some ways a match for the standardized Babylonian text handed down in the first millennium, but one that deviates from that text in many ways. This it does not only in variant readings and minor corruptions of individual words but particularly in the order of lines and whole passages. Before discussing the implications of such a tablet for the evolution of the poem, and commenting on the new knowledge it brings to a study of the text, it seems useful first to present a completely new edition.

Transliteration

1	[š]a na-aq-ba i-mu-ru il-di ma-t[i]	// SB I 1
2	[a]l-ka-ka-ti i-du-u ka-la-ma ḥa-[as-su]	// SB I 2
3	^d bīl.ga.mes ša na-aq-ba i-mu-ru ^r il-di māti(kur) ^r	// SB I 3
4	[a]l-ka-ka-ti i-du-u ka-la-ma ḥa-as-s[u!]	// SB I 4
5	^r i ^r -ḥi-iṭ-ma mit-ḥa-riš pa-rak-ki! {x}	// SB I 5
6	nap-ḥar né-mé-qí ša ka-la-ma i-de	// SB I 6
7	a-lik ḥarrān(kaskal) ú-tu-ur-na-pu-uš-ti ^r ru-uq-ti ^r	cf. SB I 42
8	e-bi-ir a-ab-ba ta-ma-ta rapaš(dagal)-ta a-di ši-ti ^d šamši(utu) ^{ši}	// SB I 40
9	ub-la ṭe-ma ša la-am a-bu-[b]i	// SB I 8
10	ḥar-ra-na ru-uq-ta illik(gin)-ma a-ni-iḥ ù šup-šu-uq	// SB I 9
11	gar-nu-šu-ma na-ru-⟨ú⟩ ka-lu ma-⟨na⟩-aḥ-⟨ras⟩-ti	// SB I 10
12	ul ú-maš-šar ^d bīl.ga.mes kal-lat še-eḥ- ^r ret ^r / a-na mu-ti- ^r ša ^r	// SB I 76
13	šu-ú ri-im-ši!-na ši-na ar-ḥa- ^r tum ^r	// SB I 73
14	ta-zi-im-ta-ši-na il-te-né-mi ^d iš ₈ - ^r tár! ^r	// SB I 78
15	rig-mu mar-šu ik-ta-na-ša-da ana šamê(an) ^e anim(an) ^{nim}	
16	šu-tur a-na šarri(lugal) ša-nu- ^r ú-di bēl(en) ga!- ^r at! -ti ^r	// SB I 29

- 17 *qar-ra-du lil-lid ú-ru-uk ri-mu x (x) x* // SB I 30
 18 ^dbil.ga.mes ša-nu-ú-di bēl(en) ga-ʿat!-ʿ-*ti*
 19 *qar-ra-du lil-lid ú-ru-uk ri-mu mut-tak!-pu*
-
- 20 *e-li ^dbil.ga.mes muḥḥi(ugu) du-ri ša ʿuruk(unug) ^{ki} ²¹i-tal-lak* // SB I 18
 21 *te-me-na ḥi-iṭ libitta(sig₄) šu-up-pi* // SB I 19
 22 *pi-te-ma tu-up-ni-in-na ša ^{giš}erēni(eren)* // SB I 24
 23 *pu-uṭ-te-er ḥar-gal-li-šú ša siparri(zabar)* // SB I 25
 24 *i-šam-ma ṭup-pi ^{na4}uqnî(za.gìn.na) ti-ša-ʿasʿ-si* // SB I 27
 25 *um-ma libitta(sig₄)-ša la a-gur-rat* // SB I 20
 26 *uš-ši-šú la id-du-ú 7 mu-un-tal-ku* // SB I 21
 27 *šár^{ár} ālu(uru) šár^{ár} ^{giš}kirātu(kiri₆) ^{meš} šár^{ár} es-sú-u pi-tir ʿbīt(é) iš₈-tárʿ* // SB I 22
- edge
 28 *ša-la-áš! ša-ri ù pi-tir ú-ru-uk x x x* // SB I 23
 29 *ik-tap-píl ^dbil.ga.mes 50 ru-ʿi! / {ru-ʿi!}*
u₄-mi-šam i-gam-mar eṭlūti!(guruš!)
- rev.
 30 *ul-ta-dir eṭlūti(guruš!) ^{meš} ša uruk(unug!) ^{ki} ina ku-x x* // SB I 67 // 84
-
- 31 *ap-pat pe-er-ti-šu <i>-ḥa-an-nu-ba kīma(gim) ^dniss[aba]* // SB I 60 // 107
 32 *i-nam!-bu-ṭa ši-na-šú ki-ma ni-pí-iḥ! ^dšá!-am!-š[i]*
 33 *ša!-kin pe-re-ta ki-i! uq-na-ti* cf. SB I 106
 34 *11 i-na am-ma-ti la-an-šú* // SB I 52
4 i-na am-ma-tim ³⁵ bi-rít tu-le-šú // SB I 53=55
 36 *ni!-kás šēpā(gìr) ^{min}-šu ù qa-na pu-ri-du-šu* // SB I 56
 37 *ni!-kás ašarēdū(iḡi.du) ^{meš} ša le-ti-šu* // SB I 58
 38 *a-na ša ra a šu-up pa-ni-šu*

Variants in relation to the SB text (excluding minor differences in spelling)

- 1 // 3 *ildi* for SB I 1 // 3 *išdi*
 10 *ḥarrāna* for SB I 9 *urḥa*
 10 *illikma* for SB I 9 *illikamma*, var. *illakamma*
 10 *šupšuq* for SB I 9 *šupšuḥ*
 11 *gar-nu-šu-ma na-ru* for SB I 10 *šakin ina narē*
 12 *kallat šeḥret* for SB I 76 *^fbatūlta(guruš.tur)*
 14 *iltenemmi* for SB I 78 *i[štenem]mâ*
 16 *ana šarri* for SB I 29 *eli šarrī*
 17 // 19 *qarrādu* for SB I 30 *qardu*

- 20 *eli Gilgāmeš muḥḥi* for SB I 18 *elīma ina! muḥḥi*
 21 *ḥīt* for SB I 19 *ḥītma*
 22 *tupninna* for SB I 24 *tupšenna*
 24 *tišassi* for SB I 27 *šitassi*
 25 *umma* for SB I 20 *šumma*
 26 *uššīšu* for SB I 21 *u uššīšu*
 30 *ultādir* for SB I 67 *ūtaddarū* // 84 *uštādir*
 31 *appāt* for SB I 60 *itqi* // 107 *itiq*
 31 *⟨i⟩ḥannubā* for SB I 60 // 107 *uḥtannaba*
 36 *qana purīdūšu* for SB I 56 *mišil nindan purīssu*
 37 *igi.du^{meš}* for SB I 58 *ašarittu*

Translation

- 1 He who saw the Deep, the foundation of the country,
- 2 who knew the proper ways, was wise in everything!
- 3 Gilgameš, who saw the Deep, the foundation of the country,
- 4 who knew the proper ways, was wise in everything!
- 5 He explored everywhere the seats of power,
- 6 he knew the totality of wisdom about all things.
- 7 He who travelled the distant road to Uttur-napišti,
- 8 who crossed the ocean, the wide sea, as far as the sunrise:
- 9 he brought back tidings from the antediluvian age.
- 10 He went a distant journey and so was weary and in pain;
- 11 steles were set up for him (to relate) all (his) labours.
- 12 Gilgameš lets no young bride go free to her husband,
- 13 he is their (fem.) wild bull, they (fem.) are his cows.
- 14 Ištar keeps hearing their complaint,
- 15 the terrible din reaching (even) the heaven of Anu.
- 16 Surpassing all (other) kings(!), renowned for bodily stature,
- 17 hero born in Uruk, butting(?) wild bull!
- 18 Gilgameš, renowned for bodily stature,
- 19 hero born in Uruk, butting wild bull!
- 20 Go up, O Gilgameš, on to the wall of Uruk, ²¹ walk around,
 survey the foundation platform, inspect the brickwork!
- 22 Open the box of cedar wood,
- 23 release its clasps of bronze!
- 24 Pick up the tablet of lapis lazuli and read out,

- 25 thus: “Is not its brickwork kiln-fired brick,
 26 did the seven sages not lay its foundations?
 27 One *šār* is city, one *šār* date-grove, one *šār* is clay pit, half a *šār* the temple of Ištar:
 28 three *šār* and a half (is) Uruk, (its) measurement(?)”
 29 Gilgameš grappled in turn with fifty companions,
 daily holding sway over the young men(!),
 30 he kept wrongfully(!) putting the young men of Uruk in fear.
 31 The strands of his hair were growing thickly as Nissaba’s,
 32 his teeth gleaming like the rising sun,
 33 he had hair (that was dark) like lapis-coloured wool.
 34 Eleven cubits was his height,
 35 four cubits the width of his chest (lit. between his breasts).
 36 A triple cubit was his foot and a reed-length his legs,
 37 a triple cubit the whiskers(?) of his cheeks.
 38 To . . . of his face.

Notes

1 // 3. Arnaud: *ḥa-as-^rsi^r-[su]*.

5. The spacing of the signs on the line, with a long gap between *rak* and *ki*, makes it unlikely that the wedges copied in the damage at the right edge are intended to be read (*pace* Arnaud: *pa-rak-ke-^re^r*).

7. In the SB poem (I 42 and *passim*), it is the flood hero that is “far away” not the journey. Because this is also the case in an Old Babylonian fragment (OB VA+BM iv 6: *ú-ta-na-iš-tim ru-ú-qí-im*), the present text’s transfer of adjective from person to thing can be viewed as a corruption, probably the result of contamination from l. 10.

8. *tāmata* for *tāmti*, with the insertion of a superfluous anaptyctic vowel, is a mark of SB style also displayed in the counterpart of this line (SB I 40); for other examples in SB Gilgameš see George 2003: 432. The phrase *tāmata rapašta* displays a false accusative ending, no doubt under the influence of the indeclinable proper noun to which it is in apposition, *ayabba* (genitive). Arnaud noted the form *ši-ti* as grammatically incorrect. An alternative, but less probable solution, would be to explain it as a survival of the archaic genitive construct in *-i*, for which examples in SB poetry remain to be collected; a sole example in SB Gilgameš could occur at VI 46: *ana Du’ūzi ḥa-mi/me-ri šuḥrētīki* (MSS from Kuyunjik and Aššur).

10. The phrase *ḥarrāna rūqta alāku* is the counterpart of *urḥa rūqta alāku*, a stock expression in the SB poem (see George 2003: 779 on I 9). I read *šup-šu-uq* as from *√pšq*, with Arnaud. An alternative strategy, for those who might seek to make the word conform with the first-millennium text (SB I 9 *šup-šu-uh*), would be to read *šup-šu-uk* and invoke the phenomenon of phonemic shift *ḥ : k*, i.e. *šupšuh : šupšuk* (for examples see Knudsen 1969). The shifts from fricative to plosive and vice versa cannot be discounted as factors behind the existence of the two variants but they are rare as a written phenomenon. The implications of this version of the line are explored in the commentary below.

11. The clause *gar-nu-šu-ma na-ru*, presumably to be normalized as *šaknūšumma narû* (pl.), leaves *kalu mānaḥti* syntactically marooned and can accordingly be considered a corruption. SB I 10 has *šakin ina narê*.

12. Arnaud read the word after *kallat* as *še-eh-ra* (masc.) but the damaged sign at the line's end is just as easily *ret* as *ra*, and reading *še-eh-ret* (fem.) makes for fewer grammatical problems. The phrase *kal-lat šeḫret* is a bungled attempt to make sense of ^f*guruš.tur* = *batūltu* (which is what the SB text has), by splitting the compound logogram: *guruš*(KAL) has been expanded to *kallat*, and *tur* has been misunderstood as *tur* = *šeḫru* and spelled out syllabically. Whoever introduced this change was accustomed to gender but not to case endings, and clearly not a native user of Babylonian.

13. This line restores at least the latter part of SB I 73 (read now [x x x] ^rx x-*ma?* ^ši-na ar-[*ha-tú*]). It is clearly also related to SB I 89, which begins *šū rē'ûšināma* but is not yet fully recovered.

14. Arnaud: ^dinanna^r. Because *iltēnemmi Ištar* is certainly singular, its counterpart in the first-millennium text (SB I 78 *i[š-te-nem]-ma-a* ^d1[5]) may also be read as singular ventive (for *šemû* with the ventive in Gilgameš see Hirsch 2002: 235–6), instead of 3rd fem. pl. (George 2003: 786–7).

16. Arnaud read the last word *ta-dir₂^r-ti^r*. Because the copy does not support him unambiguously, I feel justified in reading the traces to match SB I 29 *gatti*. That apart, this line exhibits three minor differences from the first-millennium text: (a) *ana* is written for *eli*, (b) *lugal* is not accompanied by the plural determinative, and (c) the adjective *šanu'udi* is genitive not nominative. The exchange of preposition is not of consequence, but the other differences are related. It seems that an OB spelling *šar-ri* has been misunderstood as singular, and *šanu'udi*, which should qualify the nominative phrase *bēl gatti*, has been attached to genitive *šarri* instead. The resulting line can be translated but is unconvincing: “surpassing in regard to a renowned king, (he is) endowed with bodily stature”. The false agreement is repeated in l. 18, in the absence of *šarri*, where the line cannot be translated as it stands. For this reason the Ugarit tablet's version of the line is seen to be corrupt.

17. Arnaud reads the last word *kād-ru*, but the copy does not show that clearly. According to the SB text, *muttakpu* is expected, as in l. 19.

18. Arnaud's transliteration ^dGIŠ.BIL-*ga-mèš kà-šid* and textual note on “le second GA MIŠ” presuppose dittography of the last two signs of the hero's name. His copy shows no such error.

22. The common word *tupninnu* appears where SB has the rarer and more specific term *tupšennu* “tablet box”.

24. The form *tišassi* shows a metathesis not apparent in the SB text, which has the regular *šitassi*. Metathesis in imperatives of verbs I-š is a feature of early Assyrian dialect, rather than Babylonian.

25. The SB line begins *šumma*, but is otherwise identical. The effect of the Ugarit tablet's *umma* is to convert the quatrain that describes Uruk and its wall into direct speech, i.e. the text read from the lapis-lazuli tablet.

27. Arnaud: “šár ub uru šár ub kiri₆.meš šár ub *is-su-ú pi-li* [sic! copy shows *tir*] *iš^d-dī*”.

28. Arnaud: “ša la *pa-ša-ri* *ù pi-li* [sic! copy shows *tir*] *ú-ru-uk li-ih^{1?}-^r šiš^r*”. The last word should be *tamšīhu*, with the SB text, but the broken traces of the facsimile are difficult to reconcile with such a reading.

29. Arnaud: *iq-tab-bi₅* ^dGIŠ.BIL-*ga-mèš* 50 *ru-di / ru-di ú-mi-šam i-gam-mar ú-sa*. This line of tablet and its overrun are probably to be taken as two lines of poetry. They find no parallel in the SB text. The phrase *ūmišam ugammar* is surely to be understood in the light of the Hittite version of the story, in which the young Gilgameš “every day overpowered the [young] men of Uruk” (Beckman 2001: 158). The signs that Arnaud reads *ru-di* and *ú-sà* are thus most probably (a) *ru^rī* with dittography at the line break, and (b) a clumsy *guruš* or a corruption of it, even in the absence of the plural determinative *meš*.

That being so, I discard Arnaud's *iq-tab-bi₅*, because it seems improbable that Gilgameš begins speaking at this juncture (and also because the poem employs *iqabbi* not *iqtabbi*). A reading *iktappil* (I/3 of serial action) is more suitable to the context of physical contests. Finite forms of the verb *kitpulu* have hitherto occurred in omen protases describing snakes, lizards and birds wrapped one around another. A connection with wrestling is indicated by the pairing of the adjective *kitpulu* and the participle *lāsimu*

“runner” in an omen apodosis from *Multābiltu* X (CT 20 49: 18, ed. Koch 2005: 166): *ana kit-pu-li e-mu-qí ana la-si-me bir-ki ana muš-tam-ši-i ta-nit-tum šaknat(gar)*^{at} “strength of arm will be given to the grappler, fleetness of foot to the runner, fame to him that exerts himself”). The same pairing may occur in a line of the fable of the fox, as known from manuscript from Aššur (Lambert 1960: 194 rev. 5); CAD K 467 read *[ki]t(?) - pu-lu*, but the copy suggests either *[ku] - ʿup - pu-lu* (so Lambert) or *[k]át - pu-lu*, where *kát* might have a value *kit*_x. That *kitpulu* is an athlete known for physical power explains the equation *kít - pu-lu* = *dan-nu* “strong” in the synonym list *LTBA* 2 no. 1 v 17.

30. Arnaud: *ul-ta-si* *ela.meš ša-ad Hur-rum dūr kala*^ʿ. It is much easier to identify this as a known line. The last word should be *kukitti*, on which see George 2003: 786 sub 67 // 84.

31. The phrase *appāt pērti* is the counterpart of SB I’s *itqi pērti*; cf. *ap-pat ziq-ni-šú* “the strands of his beard” in the physiognomic omen tablet *Alamdimmū* VII (Böck 2000: 108 l. 10).

32. Arnaud: *i-sé bu-da pe-na-šú ki-ma ni-bi-ḥe diri.ga-šú*^ʿ. The emendations of the text, as read in my edition, look drastic but are defended as not just meaningful but mutually supportive: *kīma nipiḥ šamši* is a fitting simile for *inambuṭā šinnāšu*, for *nabāṭu* commonly describes the great celestial bodies shining in the night sky. Just so do Gilgameš’s teeth gleam pearly white amid his dense black beard.

33. Arnaud: *ap-pa-ri pi-ri-dá ʿki-i uq-na-ti*. As read here this line is reminiscent of the description of Enkidu in SB I 106: *uppuš pēretu kīma sinništi*, and has the same extended form of *pērtu* (see above on *tāmatu*, l. 8). That line is there paired with SB I 60 // 107: *itqi pērti uḫtannaba kīma Nissaba*, which matches l. 32 of the Ugarit tablet and so suggests that the present line is the counterpart of SB I 107. But it is also close to SB I 59: *ṭarrā lētāšu kīma ša [uqnâti]*, where the last word is now restored from a fragment from Aššur so far available only in Stefan Maul’s translation of the epic (Maul 2005: 59): “Bartbewachsen seine Wangen, wie Lapislazuli *schimmernd sein Bart*” (the italics denote modern text composed to fill a lacuna).

36. In this and the following line Arnaud read the opening word *er-bé* “four”, and supposed that Gilgameš was equipped with four legs and four eyes. A more sober strategy is to match it with the metrological unit employed at this juncture by the first-millennium text, *nikkas*. The unit *qana* “reed” is a synonym of SB I’s *mišil nindan* “half a rod”: both comprise six cubits. The word spelled *pu-ri-du-šu* (so the copy; Arnaud: *pu-ri-id-šu*) is hardly plural, which should be *purīdātūšu*, and a plural is in any case inappropriate to the description of a biped. It must be an error for the dual *purīdāšu*; the first-millennium text has the singular, *purīssu*.

37. The word written *igi.du*^{meš} is clearly the counterpart of SB I 58 *ašaritti*. Now that the line is fully recovered and found to describe something related to Gilgameš’s cheeks, it is tempting to suppose that *ašarittu* and *igi.du*^{meš} are terms for “whiskers”, especially since Gilgameš’s beard is the topic of the next line in the first-millennium text (SB I 59: *ṭarrā lētāšu kīma ša [uqnâti]*).

38. Arnaud: *a-na ša-ra-a šu-up-pa-ni-šu* “jusqu’à 36 000 moutons-*suppu*”. This line is clearly corrupt but there is no counterpart in the first-millennium text to lead us out of the mire. Given the probable appearance of facial hair in l. 37, an emendation to *ša-ra-a-tu! ša! pa-ni-šu* “the hairs of his face” would provide a fine formal parallel to *ašaritti ša lētīšu*, but still the line remains unresolved, for the signs *a-na* do not yield any obviously suitable predicate.

Commentary

Before assessing the contents of the Ugarit tablet as a witness to the Babylonian epic of Gilgameš, it is necessary to recapitulate briefly the substance of the corresponding part of the first-millennium text. There Gilgameš is introduced in the prologue as a man who gained wisdom through the hardships he endured on a long journey and who left a record of his suffering in the form of a stone tablet embedded in the wall he built around his city, Uruk (SB I 1–28). This prologue is a skilful piece of poetry that can be set out as seven quatrains, the number seven being special in Babylonian culture. The passage is generally thought

to have been the work of a Middle Babylonian redactor, who may as well be identified as Sîn-lēqi-unninni, after the Babylonians' own tradition. The mood of the poem then changes from downbeat and passive to upbeat and active, for there follows a paean to Gilgameš that summarizes his heroic feats in nine couplets (SB I 29–46). This paean begins with a phrase that is known to have been the incipit of an Old Babylonian version of the poem, *šūtur eli šarrī*, and so it is probable that the paean embedded in the Standard Babylonian epic is all of Old Babylonian origin. In its late form, then, the poem had two prologues, which placed the poem's protagonist in very different lights: suffering wise man and vigorous heroic king. The topic then turns to Gilgameš's birth, overseen by the gods, his semi-divine status, giant body, thick hair and beard, and remarkable beauty, all dealt with in what can now be reconstructed as another passage of seven couplets (SB I 47–62 in the current numeration). Finally the narrative begins: Gilgameš bullies the young men of Uruk and harasses the young women, so that the women complain and the gods hear (SB I 63–78). The Standard Babylonian poem is characterized by a coherence of structure, topic and plot, and nowhere more so than at its beginning.

Let us now compare the version of the poem set down on the Ugarit tablet. The text opens with six lines extolling Gilgameš as one versed in all wisdom and explaining how he acquired it (MB Ug₁ 1–6). These lines correspond exactly to the first-millennium text (SB I 1–6). The text goes on to summarize his quest, as does the first-millennium text. However, in place of the rather general line SB I 7: *niširta imurma katimta iptē* "He saw the secret and uncovered the hidden", the Ugarit tablet introduces two lines that describe the quest in geographical terms (MB Ug₁ 7–8). These have their counterparts in the first-millennium text, the one more exactly than the other, but there they occur much later, embedded in the paean that has been identified as the prologue of an Old Babylonian version of the poem (SB I 42, 40). The next three lines of the new tablet revert to the sequence of lines from the text's opening, hailing the hero as one who brought back antediluvian knowledge from a journey that exhausted him, and who left behind a stone tablet describing his experiences (MB Ug₁ 9–11 // SB I 8–10). Then follow two couplets which narrate how the hero harassed the young wives of Uruk and their complaint reached the gods in heaven; three of these lines occur later in the first-millennium text, though in a different order (MB Ug₁ 12–14 // SB I 76, 73, 78); one is unparalleled (MB Ug₁ 15). At this point the Ugarit tablet places the opening of the Old Babylonian paean, extolling Gilgameš as a glorious king and hero, as if this were the women's complaint. It is a double couplet, where the first-millennium text has one couplet only (MB Ug₁ 16–19 // SB I 29–30).

Next comes the passage in which the poet invites someone to explore the walls of Uruk, gaze down on Uruk, and find a lapis-lazuli tablet (MB Ug₁ 20–28). In the first-millennium text this passage is addressed to the reader, and the tablet which he finds reveals the story of Gilgameš's arduous quest (SB I 15–28). The Ugarit tablet holds a shorter version of this passage, addresses the invitation explicitly to Gilgameš, and transposes some lines, so that it appears that Gilgameš, having found the lapis-lazuli tablet as instructed, will read from it the description of Uruk. The topic of the new text then reverts to Gilgameš's tyranny, this time his mistreatment of the young men, in a triplet (MB Ug₁ 29–30) where two lines are new and one has parallels in a later passage of the first-millennium text (MB Ug₁ 30 // SB I 67 // 84). The remaining lines describe the hero's hair, teeth, giant physique and facial hair (MB Ug₁ 31–38). This passage corresponds more or less to its counterpart in the first-millennium text, though there the dimensions of Gilgameš's physique are dealt with first and his hirsute beauty second (SB I 52–62); two lines of the Ugarit tablet, however, have no parallel in the first-millennium text, one of them a poetic gem (MB Ug₁ 32), the other corrupt (MB Ug₁ 38).

It is easy to see that the text on the Ugarit tablet lacks the thematic and narrative coherence of the text that circulated in Babylonia and Assyria during the first millennium. The poor quality of the Ugarit text becomes even more clear when one considers what it omits. The most prominent missing passages are: (a) the couplet that commemorates Gilgameš as the builder of Uruk's wall, and the succeeding text, which

acts as a bridge between the opening lines and the invitation to go up on to the walls (SB I 11–17); (b) most of the paean (SB I 31–39, 41, 43–6); (c) the important lines describing Gilgameš's birth and, especially, his semi-divine status (SB I 47–51); and the measurement of his stride (SB I 57).

In this analysis of the contents of the Ugarit tablet, it is difficult to agree with Arnaud's judgement that the new text represents "le texte canonique" of the Babylonian poem *ša naqba īmuru* (2007: 8). It is better characterized as an inferior relation. In its omission of some lines present in the first-millennium text of *ša naqba īmuru* and interpolation of others not known to the first-millennium poem, it is similar to the Middle Babylonian Gilgameš tablets from Ur and Emar. No doubt its text derived from a southern Mesopotamian source, but during the process of transmission to Syria the poem has picked up traces of Assyrian influence (24 *tīšassi*). Most noticeably the text been garbled to the point of incoherence. In this last respect it is similar to the thirteenth-century tablet from Boğazköy (MB Boğ₂), which is clearly also witness to a very corrupt text. As with that tablet, the corruption of the text is a symptom of the poem's transmission among scribes who did not fully understand the poem's language. But that cannot be the whole story. The transposition of lines and longer passages that so damages the text's coherence is not likely to be the result of copying errors. It speaks instead for a transmission of the poem in the human memory, whether by a singer or by a scholar. The faults lie less in the replication of individual lines than in the ordering of them. Perhaps then the most feasible explanation of this text's failings is that it represents the outcome of an attempt to set down in writing a half-remembered poem. The poor quality of this corrupted text was then compounded by the spelling mistakes of the novice who copied out the surviving extract.

While the text is certainly partly corrupt, there are significant additions to knowledge, many of which permit improvements to be made to the first-millennium text of SB Tablet I, as established in 2003 (George 2003: 535–57). These are explored in the next paragraphs.

The opening quatrain of MB Ug₁ confirms the recent discovery that the SB poem opened with a repeated couplet forming a strophe of classic type. The word *alkakāti* "ways" is revealed as the missing object of *īdū* (SB I 2 // 4) and the text of the opening lines is thus at long last fully recovered. The plural *alkakātu* signifies the correct ways of doing things. This reminds us that the knowledge and wisdom for which Gilgameš was remembered were not theoretical but applied: thus arose a tradition that the hero had himself re-established the proper order destroyed by the Deluge (SB I 43–44, Death of Bilgames M 58–61 // 149–52).

SB I 5 is now restored entirely, courtesy of MB Ug₁ 5: [*i-ḫi-l*]*t-ma mit-ḫa-riš pa-ra[k-ki]* "he explored everywhere the seats of power". The word *parakku* is, strictly speaking, the dais on which was located the throne of a god or king. The line thus hails Gilgameš as one who visited on his travels the centres of mortal power, divine power or both. The epic tradition has little to say that tallies with such a notion: Gilgameš's travels take him to the Cedar Forest and across the seas to the land of Ūta-napišti, but neither is truly a place where political or cosmic power was wielded. In the omen tradition, however, Gilgameš is remembered as a king who conquered the entire world, and one fragmentary apodosis uses the term *parakku* in this connection: *amūt Gilgāmeš [ša . . .]-i šarrāni āšibūt parakkī qāssu ikšudu [. . .]* "it is an omen of Gilgameš, [who] conquered [all] the kings who sit on thrones . . ." (composite version of text edited in George 2003: 114 l. 8). The line MB Ug₁ 5 // SB I 5 presumably alludes to this tradition, and gives it considerable prominence in the epic.

SB I 9's counterpart in the present text is MB Ug₁ 10, which differs from it in two important respects: (a) it reads *illikma* "he went" where SB I 9 has forms that exhibit a ventive ending, *illikamma* "he came" // *illakamma* "coming", and (b) it has *šupšuq* "distressed" for SB *šupšuḫ* "at ease". Both variants show an internal logic. The language of MB Ug₁ 10 focuses on the hero's departure on his quest and the exertion and physical discomfort consequent upon that quest. The SB version of the line calls attention with its ventive to the hero's return from his quest (Hirsch 1997), and then with *šupšuḫ* to the resigned state of

mind that was the consequence of his homecoming. The line is crucial to the poem's interpretation, for the presence of *šupšuḥ*, in particular, can be taken to mean that, at the last, wisdom born of failure reconciled Gilgameš to his mortal destiny and brought him inner peace (Moran 1991: 16, George 2003: 446, and see also the many translations of SB I 8–9 in Hirsch 1997: 173–4). By contrast the Ugarit tablet's *šupšuq* drives home the point that Gilgameš's quest brought him nothing he wanted but pain and danger in plenty. There are thus two mutually opposed positions: (a) a hopeless quest may end in failure but also brings a peace borne of self-knowledge (SB I), and (b) a hopeless quest is nothing more than hardship and suffering endured in vain (MB Ug₁). Since *šupšuḥ* derives from a single Late Babylonian manuscript, a source of only slightly more authority than the Ugarit tablet, one is entitled to prefer *šupšuq* if so minded.

MB Ug₁ 15 has no counterpart in the extant first-millennium text. Nevertheless, it is a convincing partner to l. 14 (// SB I 78), with which it forms a couplet. The couplet is finely balanced in structure, which is expressed through form, parallelism and opposition, and yet it also effects a crescendo, with a line of three simple feet (in the terminology of Buccellati 1990) followed by a line that sandwiches another simple foot between two complex feet:

<i>tazzimtašna</i> <i>iltenémmi</i> <i>Íštar</i>	noise ₁ (obj.) ← I/3 verb ₁ ← goddess (subj.)
<i>rígmu mársu</i> <i>iktanáššada</i> <i>aš-šamé Áni</i>	noise ₂ (subj.) → I/3 verb ₂ → god (ind. obj.)

This is Babylonian poetry of the highest order, and thus we are entitled to suppose that the second line was not an innovation of a peripheral editor but original to a south Mesopotamian version of Gilgameš. The first-millennium text is badly damaged at this point (SB I 78–80) but clearly differs in what follows the listening goddess (or goddesses). One wonders how the latter half of such a dynamic and beautifully wrought unit of poetry fell by the wayside.

MB Ug₁ 16–19 contain a quatrain that is essentially the couplet SB I 29–30 in repeated form, with two minor variants and a grammatical aberration. SB I 29 has long been identified as the incipit of an Old Babylonian version of the poem, *šūtur eli šarrī* (George 2003: 160). The quatrain suggests that one or more older versions of the poem began with the same classic four-line strophe, later to be emulated in the opening of *ša naqba īmuru*.

MB Ug₁ 29–30 yield a passage that describes how Gilgameš discomfited the young men of Uruk in contests of physical strength. As set out here, the passage consists of three lines of poetry. Two of them are new to knowledge, and offer a much better Babylonian parallel to the corresponding passage of the Hittite Gilgameš. MB Ug₁ 32 is another line without counterpart in the poem hitherto extant; as read here it gives a description of the hero's flashing white smile to match his lustrous black hair.

The fragmentary passage in which the Standard Babylonian poem gives the dimensions of Gilgameš's giant body (SB I 52–58) is now completed from the two couplets of MB Ug₁ 34–37. The text established in 2003 had already been improved by another manuscript from Aššur, especially in confirming that SB I 53–4 and 55–6 do indeed overlap as suspected (see Maul 2005: 47–48, 156). The passage can now be reconstructed in five lines, as follows (where the erroneous line-numeration is retained):

gh	52	[x x x x l]a-na ʿ11 ina ʿ ammati(1.kùš) [la-an-šú]
Pgh	53	[4 ina ammati] bi-rit [tu-le-e-šú]
Pgd ₁	56	nikkas(níg.ka9) šēp(gír)-šú mišil(maš) nindan pu-ri-su
Pd ₁	57	ʿ6 ʿ ammat(kùš) bi-rit {ras.} p[u-ri-di-šú]
Pd ₁	58	[x am]mat(kùš) a-šá-rit-ti š[á le]-te-šú

SB Gilgameš I 52–58; cf. George 2003: 540

- 52 [A giant(?)] in stature, eleven cubits [was his height,]
 53 [four cubits was] the width of [his chest,]
 56 a triple cubit his foot, half a rod his leg,
 57 six cubits was the length of his stride,
 58 [x] cubits the whiskers(?) of his cheeks.

The description tallies more closely with the Hittite Gilgameš than previously realized.

In addition to those points observed in the preceding paragraphs, the recovery of the tablet from Ugarit permits other, minor improvements to the text of SB Tablet I as it is known from first-millennium manuscripts. SB I 6 ends *i-[de]* (MB Ug₁ 6) not *i-[hu-uz]*, SB I 24 starts *pite* (MB Ug₁ 22) not *amur*, SB I 25 [*pu-ut-te*]r is confirmed as correct (MB Ug₁ 23), SB I 26 no doubt starts [*i-ša*]m-ma with MB Ug₁ 24, SB I 76 does indeed end *ana mutiša* (MB Ug₁ 12).

2. RS 94.2082 (+) 2083 (+) 2191 = MB Ug₂. Gilgameš in the Cedar Forest

It seems most probable that these three fragments come from the same tablet. They were excavated together, share a ductus and come from the episode in which Gilgameš and Enkidu arrive at the Cedar Forest, enter it, are confronted by its guardian, Humbaba, and kill him.

(a) MB Ug₂ Fragment (a). Gilgameš sleeps

The fragment RS 94.2191 is edited as no. 43 of Arnaud's book under the title "Le terreur de Gilgameš devant Hubabu" (2007: 134–5). It contains a fragment of the conversation that takes place between Gilgameš and Enkidu before they reach the Cedar Forest. It is thus a counterpart of the latter part of SB Tablet IV, as the text is reconstructed in my edition (George 2003: 598–601). This part of the SB text is still very poorly understood. The new source provides welcome new details. In the Ugarit fragment the two heroes can already hear the loud cries of Humbaba (l. 2': gù^{rig-ma}), a detail already known from SB IV 202–5 (cf. OB Schøyen₂ 57). Either Gilgameš or Enkidu suffers from a temporary physical incapacity (l. 3': *mungu*); in what survives of SB IV it seems to be Enkidu that suffers from *mangu* (SB IV 231, 242). In the Sumerian poem of Bilgames and Huwawa both heroes are struck unconscious by Huwawa's aura, but it is Enkidu who wakes first (BH A 67–85). Enkidu's speech to Gilgameš (MB Ug₂ a 6' ff.) clarifies matters, for he talks of *mungu ša zumrika* (l. 7': *mu-un-gu ša su!meš^{zu-ri}-ka*) "the paralysis of your body" and clearly Gilgameš is the afflicted party, as in the Sumerian poem. Mention in the continuation of Enkidu's speech of nightfall (l. 9': *ša]knat ekletu*) and sunbeams (l. 10': *šariūr x[...]*) confirms the fragment's affinity with the Sumerian composition, where Enkidu warns his unconscious master in lyrical language that night is come:

^dbil.ga.mes en.tur kul.aba^{ki}.ke₄ en.šè ì.nú.dè
 kur ba.sùh.sùh gissu ba.an.lá
 an.usan še.er.še.er.bi im.ma.DU
^dutu úr ama.ni.šè ^dnin.gal.ra sag.íl.la mu.un.gen

Bilgames and Huwawa A 76–9, after Edzard 1991: 192–3

O Bilgames, young lord of Kullab, how long will you lie?

The mountain is dark, the shadows cast over it,
all the sunbeams of eventide are gone(?),
with head held high the Sun God has gone to the bosom of Ningal, his mother.

It seems from MB Ug₂ Fragment (a) that the Babylonian epic poem contained, at least in the version it represents, an episode in which Gilgameš lies unconscious and Enkidu frets over him as daylight fails. This passage clearly shares this element of its narrative with the Sumerian poem, and is further evidence for the presence of common material in the Babylonian and Sumerian compositions.

Without collation of the original I cannot improve on Arnaud's transliteration, except to note that in l. 10' his copy reads *ki-i* against the transliteration's *ki*.

(b) = MB Ug₃ Fragment (b). Enkidu's encouragement

RS 94.2082 is the lower right-hand part, obverse, of what is probably the same tablet as the preceding piece. It is no. 44 in Arnaud's book, where it is described as "Gilgameš est engagé à attaquer Hubabu" (2007: 134–5). The context of MB Ug₂ b is the very fragmentary passage in which the heroes have penetrated the Cedar Forest and Enkidu encourages Gilgameš to continue by quoting to him a series of proverbs preaching that two will succeed where one might fail. The passage occurs in the Babylonian epic at SB V 71–7, where Enkidu speaks to Gilgameš, and in the Sumerian Bilgames and Huwawa A 106–10, where Gilgameš speaks to Enkidu. The context is already clear in the first preserved line of MB b, which I prefer to read (l. 1'): *iš-te]-en' ù ši-na ši-na-'ma?*. This can be compared with SB V 72 [x] *iš-tén iš-tén-ma š[i?-.]*. Perhaps the two fragments of lines can be put together: [ša] *ištēn ištēnma u šina šināma* "He who is one is just one; but two are two". In l. 6' I find a certain point of contact with the SB text, reading [. . . 2] *mu-ra-nu-ša* "her [two] cubs" in comparison with SB V 77: *lābi dannu 2 mi-ra-[nu-šu . . .]*. It then becomes apparent that the preceding line contains in the phrase (5') TIR×TIR^{ās-lu} *ša-ku-ul-tum* "rushes, a banquet" a corruption of SB V 76 *ašlu šušlušu* "a three-ply cord" that cannot easily be broken; the corruption is distinguished by a word in Assyrian dialect (Bab. *šūkultu*), which gives us a clue as to where it arose. Continuing backwards, I suggest that the beginning of l. 3' (Arnaud: [x] *da-ra-ta mi-ši-ta ša iḥ-tu-pu*) is to be read as 'lu'-ba!-ra-ta-mi ši-ta ša-aḥ-tu-t[a "a pair of garments taken off" (note false agreement); cf. SB V 73: [2] *lubārātumma* [. . .]. The episode is also known from the piece MB Emar₁ (George 2003: 328–31). This is also a pitiful fragment but we read rev. iii 7' ...] *šitta(2)^{ta} ša-aḥ-na*, which may be a corrupt version of the same line.

After *mu-ra-nu-ša* in l. 6' there is a blank space in the line, which signifies the boundary between two lines of poetry, as in other peripheral copies of Gilgameš (MB Megiddo, Assyrian MS e). What follows, *e-nin-na-a a-na ep-ri-ia* (or *ib-ri-ia?*) does not match SB V 78. Instead it introduces a passage that is close to SB V 102 ff. This difficult passage of direct speech, preserved only on a LB manuscript from Uruk (MS dd), occurs in the parleying between Gilgameš and Humbaba that precedes their combat. Enkidu urges Gilgameš to strike fast and hard:

- 102 *eninnāma ibrī ištāt [(x)]-pi?-[x]*
103 *ina rāṭu nappāḥi e-ra-⟨a⟩ šá-ba-šá-'a'*
104 *tuwru ana bēn napāḥu napiḥtu ana bēn x-'lu-ú'*
105 *šapār abūbu ištuhḥu lapātu*
106 *[ē] tassuh šēpika ē tatūr ana arkīka*
107 *[x x x x x] x x x miḥiška dunnin*

SB Gilgameš V 102–7, ed. George 2003: 606

The antepenultimate sign of l. 104 was identified as either *šá* or *me* (George 2003: 825). Compare MB Ug₂ b 6'–11' set out in lines of poetry:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------|
| a | ⁶ <i>e-nin-na a-na ib-ri-ia</i> ⁷ [. . . | cf. SB V 102 |
| b | <i>na-pi-iḫ]-ta bi-ir ša-lu-ú ša-ri-iḫ!-ta bi-ir la-x-bu</i> | cf. SB V 104 |
| c | ⁸ [<i>ša-pa-ar a-bu-b</i>] <i>i i-na iš-tu-ḫi la-pa-tum</i> | // SB V 105 |
| d | <i>i-na ra-ṭi dan-ni</i> ⁹ [. . . | // SB V 103 |
| e | . . . <i>a]-ia im-ḫaš-ka nam-ša-ar i-di-ka</i> | |
| f | <i>e ta-su-uḫ</i> ¹⁰ [<i>šēpīka e ta-t</i>] <i>u!-ur a-na ar-ki-ka</i> | // SB V 106 |
| g | ^d <i>en-ki-dù ki-i-ma la-bi</i> ¹¹ [<i>miḫiška dunnin?</i>] | // SB V 107 |

There are evident corruptions here: the superfluous *ana* in l. a, *danni* for *nappāḫi* in l. d, the unwanted *Enkidu* in l. g (Gilgameš and Enkidu never address each other by name and, in any case, Enkidu is speaking). Line e may be corrupt, for *namšar idīka* does not make a good subject of *ay imḫaška*, but its presence speaks for a line that somehow dropped out of the poem. Line b clears up some of the uncertainty in SB V 104 (i.e. *šalû* not *mēlû*) and offers the variant *šariḫta* (l. b) for *tumru* “coals”; *šariḫtu* is evidently a feminine adjective in use as an abstract noun, meaning “fiery heat”. In the light of the probable relationship between l. g and SB V 107, it is tempting now to read the latter as [*eninna kīma u*]r.‘maḫ’ *miḫiš-ka dunnin* “[now] make your blow as strong [as a] lion’s”, where *eninna* provides potential for corruption into *Enkidu*.

After a lacuna the SB text resumes with the combat between Gilgameš and Ḫumbaba. The remainder of MB Ug₂ Fragment (b) will then be the counterpart of that lacuna. I can do no more with ll. 11' ff. than its first editor could, except to note that (a) l. 12 may instead be read *ri]g-ma* (<*ša*) *ḫa-aš-ši-na-ti-šu-nu il-te-ni-ma-a* “he keeps hearing the noise of their axes”, a reference to Ḫumbaba, and (b) l. 19: *lā l[e-’-ú a-wi-lu u at-ta* and l. 20 [...] *i-du-ú* are reminiscent of SB V 86–87: *limtalkū lillu Gilgāmeš nu’u amēlu / minā tallika adi maḫrīya / alka Enkidu mār nūni ša lā idū abāšu*. In the SB poem these three lines occur before Enkidu’s urging of Gilgameš to combat, but that is no matter, for it is clear that different versions of the poem placed passages in a different order and that the Ugarit version suffers badly from displaced lines and general garbling.

(c) MB Ug₂ Fragment (c). Ḫumbaba pleads for his life

RS 94.2083 is a large fragment from the reverse, published by Arnaud as no. 45 under the title “Hubabu cherche à apitoyer” (2007: 136–8). The text becomes properly intelligible at l. 8', which I read (with the copy) [*Enkidu* (. . .) *izzakkar*] *a-na* ^b*il.ga.mes ib-ri e te!-eš-mi ša* [^d*ḫu-ba-bi qabāšu*] “[Enkidu declared] to Gilgameš, ‘O friend, do not listen to what [Ḫumbaba says]’.” This is the counterpart of the fuller text in SB V 156–157: *Enkidu pāšu ipušamma iqabbi / izzakkara ana Gilgāmeš / ibrī ē tašme ša Ḫumbāba qabāšu*. Having thus anchored the passage, in the immediately preceding line we must read (l. 7'): *giš.meš x x ša nu ši-ma-at é.gal-lī-ka* “trees . . . , worthy of your palace”, where *ši-ma-at* is corrupt for *simat*. This is the counterpart of SB V 155: *iššī baltī ekal[līka . . .]* “[tall, full-grown] trees that will be the pride of [your] palace”, which Ḫumbaba offers in return for his life (the SB line is now restored by an unpublished fragment from Aššur that informs Stefan Maul’s translation into German, Maul 2005: 86). The preceding six lines of MB Ug₂ c, in which Ḫumbaba should begin his plea for mercy, seem to have little in common with the SB text, which is itself not complete. Only two phrases can be clearly fixed in relation to the known text: l. 4': ^d*ḫu-ba-bu nap!-šat!-sú! še-e* [...], which matches SB V 144: *Ḫumbāba napšatuš iše* “Ḫumbaba was pleading for his life”; and l. 5': [...] *ú-ru-uk qar-ra-du* ^b*il.ga.mes* [...], which

is the counterpart of SB V 148: *per'umma ša libbi Uruk šarru Gilgāmeš* “O offshoot sprung from Uruk’s midst, O king Gilgameš”. Beyond that, *im-ḥa-aš* (l. 1') probably matches SB V 132: *imḥaš qaqqaramma*, while l. 3' perhaps reads *a!-šam-šu!-tum im-ḥ[ul-lu]*, two of the thirteen storm winds listed in SB V 138–140.

MB Ug₂ c 8' is repeated almost verbatim as ll. 18b'–19': *^den-ki-dù an-nu-ú i-na š[a-mi-šu iz-zak-kar a-na ^db]il.ga.mes ib-ri e te-eš-mi ša ^dḥu-ba-bi qa!-b[a-šu* “When Enkidu heard this [he declared to] Gilgameš, ‘O friend, do not listen to what Humbaba says!’” (note the false case ending on *annû*). On both occasions Enkidu goes on with much the same text:

- 9' . . .]x ú-ra?-ma ul al-da-ni ku-ru-ub i-na [. . .
 20' . . . -r]a-ma-ma! ul al-da-na i-ru-ub i-na ḥal-bi-ma x[. . .
 10' . . .]-šar na-aḥ-la-pa-ti ša nam-ri-ri iš-ta-ti ḥa-li-i[p . . .
 21' . . . s]é?-bé? na-aḥ-la-pa-ti ša nam-ri-ri [. . .

In the SB text Enkidu’s speech at V 158 ff. is lost, save the single word *unninnīšu* “his supplications”. However, the counterpart of the Ugarit tablet at this point is found earlier in the poem, at SB IV 196–198, where Šamaš warns the heroes to attack Humbaba while he is comparatively defenceless:

- 196 [urr]iḥ izizzaššu lā irr[ub ana qištišu]
 197 [lā ur]rad ana ḥalbimma lā [. . .]
 198 [lā i]ḥḥallip sebe naḥlapātīš[u ša namriri]
 199 [ištē]t ḥalipma 6 šaḥiṭ

SB Gilgameš IV 196–199, ed. George 2003: 598

- 196 ‘Hurry, stand against him! He must not [enter his forest,]
 197 [he must not] go down into the grove, he must not [. . . ,]
 198 he [must not] wrap himself in his seven cloaks [of radiance!]
 199 [One] he was wrapped in, six he had divested.

It can be seen at once that the Ugarit tablet places in Enkidu’s mouth a corrupt version of these lines of Šamaš’s warning – so corrupt that they are almost incomprehensible. The warning is still appropriate, so it may be that lines parallel to SB IV 196–199 are to be restored in the lacuna that begins at SB V 160. Enkidu would then remind Gilgameš of what Šamaš said by repeating his words.

In both cases Enkidu’s warning is followed by Humbaba’s reaction. These lines can be set out as poetry thus:

- ^dḥu-ba-bu an-nu-ú i-na ša-mi-šu*
i-ši re-ši-šu a!-na pa-[ni ^dšamši i-ba-a]k!-ki
a-na (var. i-na) pa-an ša!-ru-ri ša ^dšamši(utu)^{ši} il-la-ka di-ma-t[u!-šu]

MB Ug₂ c 11'–12' // 22'–3' composite transliteration

When Humbaba heard this,
he lifted his head weeping before [Šamaš,]
[his] tears flowing in broad daylight.

Note the Assyrianizing infinitive phrase, *ina šamêšu*, and again the false case-ending *annû* for *annâ*. The latter two lines of this strophe are a standard couplet in the Babylonian repertoire, for other examples of which see George 2003: 839. The knowledge that the Ugarit version twice includes this strophe in the episode of Humbaba's pleading allows the restoration of some very fragmentary lines of the SB text:

iš-me-e-ma ^d*hum-ba-ba* [ša *Enkidu qabâšu*?]
^r*iš-ši-ma re-ši-šú* ^d*hum*-b[a-ba ana pān *Šamši ibakkī*]
[ana pān *šarūrī ša Šamši illakā dīmāšu*]

SB V 190–192 // 230–232 composite transliteration, cf. George 2003: 610

Humbaba heard [what Enkidu said,]
Humbaba lifted his head [weeping before Šamaš,]
[his tears flowing in broad daylight.]

Lacunae interrupt the SB text at both these points. Lines 13'–18a' of the Ugarit fragment are comparatively free of garbling and allow us to learn the gist of the first of Humbaba's two laments to the Sun God. Set out as poetry this passage reads as four couplets:

- a ^{13'} [^d*en-k*]i-dù it-ti bu-li-šú! ša-li-il-ma ul al-sa-a e-[li-šu]
b ^{14'} [*si-ra-ra*]^{hur.sag} ù la-ba-⟨na⟩-nu^{hur.sag} ba-nu-ú^{giš} erēni(eren) la iḥ-[ḥa-ab-lu?]
c ^{15'} [at-ta lu ša]rrī (lugal) dayyānī (di.kud)ⁿⁱ ^dšamšu(utu)^{šu}
d *ummī* (ama)^{mi!} ša ul-da-ni ul i-de-ši
e ^{16'} [a-bi ša KI]MIN?
f *šadû*(hur.sag) ul-da-ni-ma ù at-ta tu-ra-ba-an-ni
g ^{17'} [it-ti-ka ša]-ki-in ^den-⟨ki⟩-dù! {iš-ku-un} ru-mu!-ú pa-ṭa-ru
h [qí-bi a-na ^{18'}^dbīl.ga.mes n]a-pu-ul-ti li-ṭe-er

MB Ug₂ c 13'–18a'

When Enkidu lay asleep with his animals I did not call out to [him,]
mounts [Sirara] and Lebanon, creators of cedar, had never been [spoilt(?).]
[You,] O Šamaš, [be] my lord and judge!
I knew no mother that bore me,
[I knew no father that reared me,]
[it was the] mountain that bore me and you that reared me!
O Enkidu, (my) release rests [with you,] (and also my) freedom:
[speak to Gilgameš,] so he spares my life!

Note Middle Assyrian *napultī* in the last line. The first of these couplets is a lyrical evocation of a bygone time when the world was unsullied. It does not fit the present passage well, and may be an intrusion. Its recall of Enkidu's youth is reminiscent of a line much earlier in the heroes' encounter with Humbaba, i.e. SB V 89: *ina šeḫērika adaggalkāma ul aqerrubukka* "When you were young I would watch you but I would not go near you". The second and third couplets are directly comparable with lines from the Sumerian Bilgames and Huwawa, in the parallel passage where Huwawa throws himself on Gilgameš's mercy:

^dbil.ga.mes šu ba.àm.mu.u₈

^dutu.ra inim ga.mu.na.ab.dug₄

^dutu ama.tu.da.mu nu.zu a.a bùlug.gá.mu nu.zu

kur.ra (= *kur.e) mu.un.tu.ud.dè.en za.e mu.e.bùlug.e

Bilgames and Huwawa A 153–6, cf. Edzard 1991: 219–21

O Bilgames, set me free!

To the Sun God let me say a word!

O Utu, I knew no mother that bore me, I knew no father that reared me,
the mountain bore me, you reared me!

Here is a further, previously unsuspected, point of contact between the Babylonian poem and the Sumerian material.

The last of the four couplets of the Ugarit fragment just quoted, in which Humbaba turns to Enkidu, is a good match for the very end of Humbaba's pleas, where it sits rather incongruously after a succession of insults (SB V 179–180 // 238–239): *eninnāma Enkidu ittika šakin rumm[ū'a] u [paṭārī] / qibīma ana Gilgameš napištī līter*. Line 17' = g of the Ugarit fragment permits the completion of ll. 180 // 239 with *paṭārī*. It is followed by Enkidu's reaction in ll. 18b'–21', and Humbaba's response in ll. 22'–23', both of which have already been dealt with above. Traces survive on two more lines of the fragment (24'–25') and kù.babbar "silver" is mentioned, but I am unable to find any parallel for this.

3. Conclusion

As already noted, Arnaud considered the tablet no. 42 (here MB Ug₁) and the fragments nos. 43–5 (here MB Ug₂) to belong to two different stages in the evolution of the epic. In particular he supposes that MB Ug₂ represents an older version of the poem, predating Sîn-lēqi-unninni, that might have been taken from Babylonia to Assyria by Tukulī-Ninurta I and thence imported to Ugarit (2007: 36). I do not think the evidence we have stands up to this. Both texts show clear connections with the canonical Gilgameš poem of the first millennium, but both also exhibit clear differences. The fragmentary state of MB Ug₂ and the poor condition of its first-millennium counterpart, SB IV–V, make it difficult to determine exactly how they differed in the way that was possible in the comparison of MB Ug₁ and SB I 1–60.

It can be argued that the evidence speaks for a situation opposed to Arnaud's view. Both MB Ug₁ and MB Ug₂ have passages that match the first-millennium text and passages that do not, both have lines that are out of sequence, both exhibit Assyrian influence, both suffer from corruption and grammatical mistakes; they also share date and provenance. As witnesses to the poem of Gilgameš they have much in common. For the moment I see good reason to identify them both as corrupt representatives of a single,

Middle Babylonian version of the poem that reached the Mediterranean via Assyria. It is not implausible to suppose that other scribal centres of twelfth-century Syria knew the same text. Perhaps the Gilgameš tablets from Emar are witnesses to the same version of the poem.

4. Addendum

Text No. 65 in Arnaud's book, edited on pp. 201-2 as "La construction du temple de Ba'al", is instead a first-person account of the release of birds by a Babylonian Flood hero, and as such may be either a piece of the Epic of Gilgamesh or a fragment belonging with RS 22.421 (Ugaritica V 167, Lambert and Millard 131-3); for sharing with me this important discovery I thank Antoine Cavigneaux, who is preparing a new edition of No. 65.

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