

12 ✓

WAS THERE AN INTEGRATED GILGAMESH EPIC IN THE OLD BABYLONIAN PERIOD?

Jeffrey H. Tigay
University of Pennsylvania

Although it is generally agreed that the "canonical" version of the Gilgamesh Epic (henceforth GE) was composed in the last half or quarter of the second millennium, probably in the Kassite period,¹ it is widely assumed that the integrated Akkadian epic, with its plot and unifying themes, is a product of the Old Babylonian period. In the past two decades a number of scholars have noted that this assumption has never been substantiated.² They ask, in effect: is there any evidence against an assumption that the Akkadian Gilgamesh texts of the Old Babylonian period are simply independent, disconnected episodes, like the Sumerian Gilgamesh compositions? The purpose of this paper is to adduce evidence in support of the view that the integrated epic existed in the Old Babylonian period.

I

Since the adventures of Gilgamesh first became known to modern scholars in the form of GE, it is not surprising that the subsequently discovered Sumerian forerunners of the epic were also first taken to be parts of a single integrated epic.³ This view was rejected by Kramer in 1944.⁴ Kramer argued, on the basis of the varying lengths of the six Sumerian tales then known and their character as "individual, disconnected tales,"⁵ that the Sumerian tales comprised independent narratives which had not been united into a single epic, and that the composition of the epic, with an unfolding plot linking the episodes, was a Babylonian contribution. Some years later further evidence for this position was adduced by L. Matouš.⁶ He noted that GEN and the Sumerian account of the flood began with mythological introductions, a feature which typically appears at

1. W. von Soden, MDOG 85 (1953) 23; ZA 40 (1931) 187; 41 (1933) 129f.; W. G. Lambert, JCS 11 (1957) 1-14; F. Böhl, *Het Gilgamesj-Epos*² (1952) p. 16; RLA 3/5 (1968) 364; cf. W. W. Hallo, IEJ 12 (1962) 15f. B. Landsberger dates the Gilgamesh Epic about 1250 B.C. (Garelli, *Gilg.* p. 34), and L. Matouš dates it about 1100 (Garelli, *Gilg.* p. 93f.).

This article is dedicated to the memory of J. J. Finkelstein, in appreciation for the privilege of being among his students.

I am indebted to my colleagues, Barry L. Eichler, Erle Leichty, and Åke W. Sjöberg, for calling to my attention and putting at my disposal the unpublished tablets cited in n. 30, and for helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.

Special abbreviations:

DG The Death of Gilgamesh, ed. Kramer, BASOR 94 (1944) 2-12; ANET³ pp. 50-52
GA Gilgamesh and Agga, ed. Kramer, AJA 53 (1949) 1-18; ANET³ pp. 44-47
GBH Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven (cf. P. M. Witzel, AnOr 6 [1933] 45-68)
GE The late ("canonical") version of the Gilgamesh Epic, cited according to Thompson, *Gilg.*
GEN Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld, ed. Shaffer, as below
Gilg. Bo. KUB 4 12: Thompson, *Gilg.* pp. 43f.; ANET³ p. 82 (obv.)
Gilg. Har. B van Dijk, Sumer 13 (1957) 66 and 91, ed. van Dijk, Sumer 14 (1958) 114-21; ANET³ p. 504
Gilg. Me. Meissner, MVAG 7 (1902); ANET³ 89f.
Gilg. Meg. Goetze and Levy, Atiqot 2 (1959) 121-28 pl. XVIII
Gilg. Mi CT 46 16, ed. Millard, Iraq 26 (1964) 99-105; ANET³ p. 507

Gilg. O.I. Bauer, JNES 16 (1957) 254-62; ANET³ pp. 504f.
Gilg. P Langdon, PBS 10/3 (1917); ed. Jastrow and Clay, YOR 4/3 (1920) 62-86; Thompson, *Gilg.* pp. 20-24; ANET³ pp. 76-78
Gilg. Ur UET 6 394, ed. Gadd, Iraq 28 (1966) 105-121
Gilg. Y Jastrow and Clay, YOR 4/3 (1920) 87-102; Thompson, *Gilg.* pp. 25-29; ANET³ pp. 78-81
GLL Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living, ed. Kramer, JCS 1 (1947) 3-46; van Dijk in Garelli, *Gilg.* pp. 69-81
Hit. Gilg. The Hittite version(s); Tablet I cited from ed. Otten, Ist.Mitt. 8 (1958) 93-125; other fragments from ed. Friedrich, ZA 39 (1929) 1-82 (cf. Laroche, RHA 82 [1967] 121-38); for no. 8, see ANET³ pp. 85f.
Shaffer, Sources A. Shaffer, Sumerian Sources of Tablet XII of the Epic of Gilgameš (unpubl. Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1963)
2. C. J. Gadd, Teachers (1956) p. 7f.; D. O. Edzard, in H. W. Haussig (ed.), Wörterbuch der Mythologie 1 (1965) 72; T. Jacobsen and W. W. Hallo apud H. N. Wolff, JAOS 89 (1969) 393 n. 2. Cf. the doubt about Gilg Me implied by von Soden, MDOG 85 (1953) 21.
3. S. Langdon, JRAS 1932 912; Shaffer (Sources, p. 4) also cites SRT 35.
4. S. N. Kramer, "The Epic of Gilgameš and its Sumerian Sources: A Study in Literary Evolution," JAOS 64 (1944) 7-23, 83.
5. Kramer, JAOS 64 (1944) 18. Cf. Jack M. Sasson, "Some Literary Motifs in the Composition of the Gilgamesh Epic," Studies in Philology 69 (1972) 264. For a possible seventh Sumerian episode see Kramer in UET 6/1 p. 7 no. 60.
6. Garelli, *Gilg.* p. 87f.

