

The Buried Foundation of the  
Gilgamesh Epic

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# The Buried Foundation of the Gilgamesh Epic

The Akkadian Huwawa Narrative

Daniel E. Fleming  
Sara J. Milstein

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Atlanta

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*“He has seen the path,  
he has traveled the road.  
[He knows] the entrances to the forest  
(and) all the plots of Huwawa.”*

*Yale VI 252–254*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AHw	W. von Soden. <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963–1981
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARM	Archives Royales de Mari
ASJ	<i>Acta Sumerologica</i>
AuOr	<i>Aula Orientalis</i>
BCSMS	<i>Bulletin. The Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies</i>
CAD	I.J. Gelb et al. eds. <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–
CRRAI	Compte Rendu de la Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
FM	<i>Florilegium Marianum</i>
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
KBo	Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi
LAPO	Littératures Anciennes du Proche-Orient
MB	Middle Babylonian (Akkadian)
MVAG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft
N.A.B.U.	<i>Notes assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires</i>
OB	Old Babylonian (Akkadian)
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
RA	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
SAK	Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur
SB	Standard Babylonian (Akkadian)
SBV	Standard Babylonian Version (of the Gilgamesh Epic)
WAW	Writings of the Ancient World
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie</i>

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TABLE 1

EARLY SECOND-MILLENNIUM GILGAMESH NARRATIVE

*Sumerian Compositions*<sup>1</sup>

Gilgamesh and Huwawa, version A  
 Gilgamesh and Huwawa, version B  
 Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven  
 Gilgamesh and Aga  
 Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld  
 The Death of Gilgamesh

*Akkadian Texts*<sup>2</sup>

Penn	Six-column “Tablet II” of <i>šūtur eli šarrī</i> series, 240 lines; found at Larsa?; in University Museum of Philadelphia.
Yale	Six-column tablet, part of same series as Penn, roughly 295 lines; found at Larsa?; in Babylonian Collection of Yale University.
UM	Fragment of multi-column tablet for part of series, roughly 20 lines partly visible; uncertain origin; in University Museum of Philadelphia.
Schøyen-1	Single-column extract, 13 lines partly preserved; uncertain origin; in private collection.
Schøyen-2	Single-column extract, 84 lines mostly visible; uncertain origin; in private collection.
Schøyen-3	Proposed as one tablet from numerous small fragments; single-column extract; uncertain origin; in private collection.
Nippur	Single-column extract, 25 lines mostly visible; from House F at Nippur; in Iraq Museum of Baghdad.
Harmal-1	Single-column extract, all 17 lines preserved; from Shaduppum; in Iraq Museum of Baghdad.

<sup>1</sup> Titles match those found in Oxford’s on-line Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk).

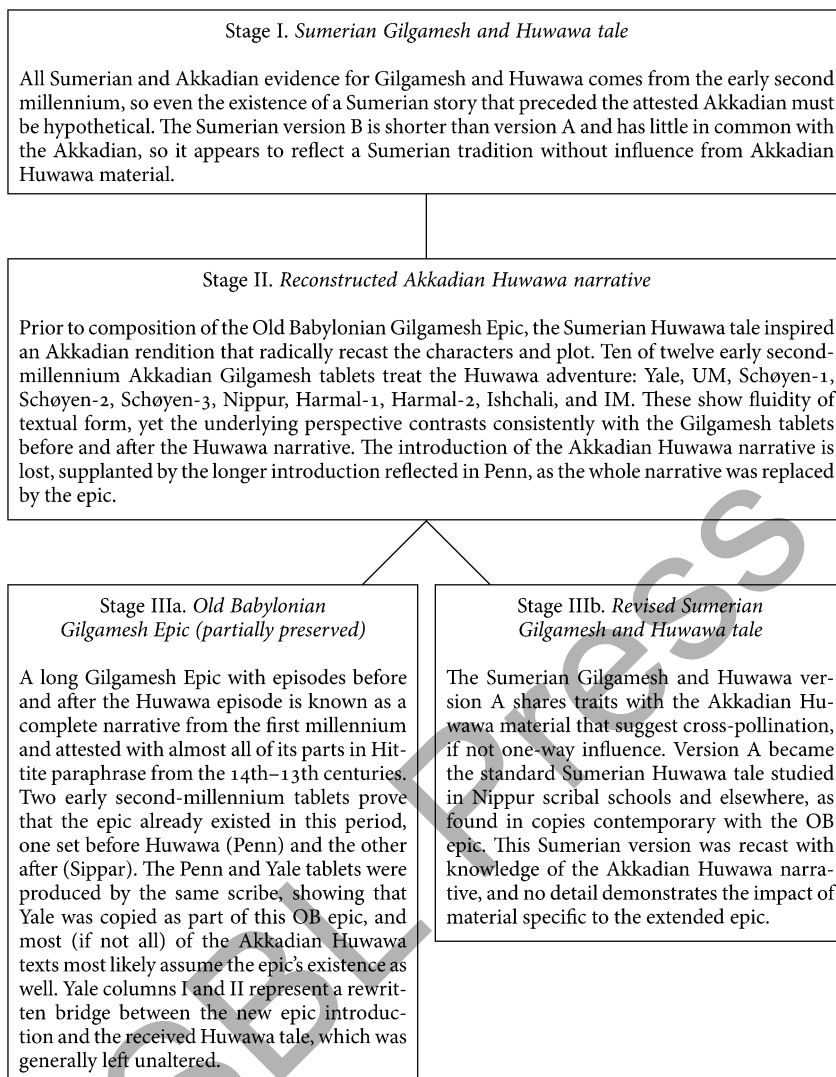
<sup>2</sup> The texts are listed according to Andrew George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), in which they follow the narrative sequence.

Harmal-2	Single-column extract, roughly 63 lines, poorly preserved; from Shaduppum; in Iraq Museum of Baghdad.
Ishchali	Single-column extract, 45 lines partly preserved; from Nerebtum; in Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago.
IM	Single-column extract, roughly 40 lines partly visible; uncertain origin; in Iraq Museum of Baghdad.
Sippar	Four-column tablet, originally 180 lines, slightly less than half of these visible; found at Sippar?; two fragments joined but left separate at British Museum of London and Vorderasiatisches Museum of Berlin.

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TABLE 2

RECONSTRUCTED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EARLY  
SECOND-MILLENNIUM GILGAMESH COMPOSITIONS



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## FOREWORD

This project had its genesis in the fall of 2005 in an Akkadian seminar taught by Daniel Fleming at New York University, in which the following students participated: Sara Milstein, Ian Case, Cory Peacock, and Nathanael Shelley. After reading the Pennsylvania tablet (“Tablet II”) of the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, we moved naturally to the Yale tablet (“Tablet III”), where Gilgamesh and Enkidu set out to confront Huwawa, the fearsome guardian of the Cedar Forest. Given that Yale belongs to the same series as Penn, we expected to find continuity from one tablet to the next, and our task was to search for connections across the texts in terms of content, language, and orthography. What we found, however, was not what we expected. At just those points where Yale appeared to recall events that were described in Penn, the details did not match up. The more we read, the more we came to the realization that Yale did not necessarily assume the storyline of the Penn tablet. But how could this be, given that the two belonged to the same series, and were even copied by the same scribe?

In the spring of 2006, Sara Milstein wrote a paper on the narrative logic of the Yale tablet alone, if read without assuming the contents of Penn, and this project led to the two of us presenting joint papers at the 2007 Meeting of the American Oriental Society in San Antonio, Texas, on the limited issue of how Penn and Yale were related. Without addressing all of the Old Babylonian evidence or the Sumerian Gilgamesh texts, we tentatively proposed that the Gilgamesh Epic had to have been preceded by a previous Akkadian narrative that included at least the expedition to the Cedar Forest. Feedback at the meeting was both enthusiastic and hesitant. The notion that the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, that brilliant creation of the early second millennium, had a hitherto unnoticed literary precursor was not going to go down easy. We welcomed the questions and challenges, and over the course of the next few months, set out to address them, one by one.

A systematic study would have to account for all of the early second-millennium Gilgamesh evidence, of which there are at present a total of twelve Akkadian tablets and numerous copies of Sumerian tales. In particular, what we call the “Sippar” tablet represents the only Old Babylonian text that follows the trip to combat Huwawa, and it showed striking

correlations with the language and perspective of Penn. The remaining Akkadian material for the Huwawa adventure offered a consistent contrast to what preceded and followed, suggesting the possibility of a separate Huwawa-focused narrative. Moreover, the two Sumerian versions of Gilgamesh and Huwawa demonstrated that the Huwawa “episode” could exist on its own as an independent tale. One version of the Sumerian Huwawa tale was the most widely copied Gilgamesh tale, with nearly one hundred copies attested for Babylonia. The Old Babylonian evidence confirmed the priority of the Huwawa adventure in early second-millennium scribal interest in Gilgamesh, with ten of the twelve tablets related to this tale. To our delight, the Sumerian and Akkadian evidence converged. When second-millennium scribes were copying Gilgamesh texts, they were copying the Huwawa story more than anything else, whatever the language. In this broader context, our solution to the problem was beginning to make sense.

For both of us, this was our first full-scale joint project, which posed its own set of advantages and challenges. We started by dividing up sections to write, and then handed these sections over to one another for thorough revision. After several rounds of revision, we swapped responsibilities, so that we were now accountable for those sections that we had not written originally. This was accompanied by numerous conversations about the project, which constantly informed our writing. It was important that we were always on the same page, that our newest discoveries and revelations were incorporated into every section of the book. At each juncture where we disagreed, one had to convince the other that his/her argument was more tenable. What emerged was a truly collaborative project, with every page of the book the product of collective thought.

In order to follow our argument, we felt it was necessary to provide the reader with a fresh translation of all of the second-millennium evidence that related directly to our hypothesis, Sumerian and Akkadian. Andrew George’s foundational edition, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, remains an invaluable resource, and the reader is directed there for the Akkadian transliterations as well as for extensive and thoughtful discussions of all Akkadian Gilgamesh evidence. It goes unsaid that translation reflects interpretation, and our sense that the Yale tablet and the nine other “Huwawa texts” do not assume the logic of the Penn tablet informed our translations of key sections in the Akkadian Gilgamesh material. With our translations, we hope first and foremost to offer readers access to the Huwawa texts on their own terms, as the first preserved expressions of Gilgamesh in Akkadian.

We are aware that our approach to the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh material involves the postulation of a narrative that cannot yet be proven to exist as a separate text in Akkadian, and this is not common practice in Assyriology. As a rule, Assyriologists base their analyses of literary expansion on hard evidence, namely, multiple copies of the same work deriving from different time periods. The birth of Akkadian literature in the early second millennium, however, presents a particular problem. Many tales in both Sumerian and Akkadian are first attested in this period without adequate evidence to track either their variability or their antecedents. More than any other body of related material, the Gilgamesh texts in both languages allow exploration of these questions through comparing roughly contemporaneous evidence. As we began our work, marked contrasts between the Huwawa-oriented texts on the one hand and the Penn and Sippar tablets on the other compelled us to seek some sort of explanation. We do not presume that we can reconstruct every detail of an “original” Akkadian Huwawa narrative. What we do propose, however, is that we have discovered a new way of looking at this hoary text, a way that illuminates the logic of the Gilgamesh story at an earlier phase of its existence. In coming to the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh material afresh, we found ourselves discovering another voice buried beneath the final form. We only hope that our effort will inspire future readers to revisit the material with open eyes, too, and to discover something new.

This project has benefited from the suggestions and support of several colleagues. Tzvi Abusch offered enthusiastic support from the very beginning, provided helpful feedback on the manuscript at multiple phases, and shepherded the volume through submission and editing for the Cuneiform Monographs series at Brill. Michiel Swormink and Jennifer Pavelko handled this process from the Brill side. Anne Porter and Cory Peacock read the manuscript at an early phase and offered important suggestions for its improvement and clarification. Sarah Graff not only offered reactions but was also instrumental in providing us with the terrific images of Huwawa reprinted in the book. Paul Delnero reviewed our final version of the introduction and offered essential insight into the Sumerian Gilgamesh and Huwawa A and into questions of textual transmission. As always, we are most thankful to and for our wonderful spouses, Aaron and Nancy, who have had to endure numerous conversations about Mesopotamian literary history. Dan cannot think about Gilgamesh without the constant memory of his advisor William Moran, for whom this text was an abiding delight. And I, Sara, would also like

to acknowledge my beloved daughter Aviva, whose birth coincided with the first draft of the manuscript, and whose current pronunciation of her name, “A-wa-wa,” sounds uncannily like the central figure of this book.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The Epic of Gilgamesh is best known from its first-millennium rendition, the Standard Babylonian Version, a sequence of twelve tablets that detail the adventures of Gilgamesh, king of the Sumerian city of Uruk. The epic appears to have been composed in the early second millennium, however, and so the Old Babylonian (OB) period must be the focus of any exploration of its origins. Although we do not have access to the complete (or *a* complete) rendition of the OB epic, the existence of two tablets in particular confirm that a Gilgamesh Epic from this period existed on a smaller but no less impressive scale.<sup>1</sup> The six-column Pennsylvania Tablet (“Penn”), marked “Tablet II” of the series *šūtur eli šarrī*, “Surpassing above kings,” covers the famed encounter between Gilgamesh, the aggressive king of Uruk, and Enkidu, his wild counterpart from the steppe. We then have the good fortune of having access to a copy of the third tablet in the same series, known as the Yale Tablet (“Yale”), which is also six columns long and shows evidence of having been produced by the same scribe.<sup>2</sup> In this tablet, which picks up where Penn leaves off, Gilgamesh persuades Enkidu to join him on an expedition to confront Huwawa, the fearsome guardian of the Cedar

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<sup>1</sup> By the first millennium, reproduction of Gilgamesh seems to have settled into a more standardizing mode, with closer adherence to a fixed wording than is indicated for earlier copies. Even here, however, considerable variation is preserved in the available texts, and as much as twenty percent of the Standard Babylonian epic is still missing. As more tablets are discovered, the textual variability of the complete epic in its later form remains a constant consideration. For this issue and throughout our work, we benefit from the masterful and exhaustive publication of Andrew George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). On “textual variants and recensional differences” in the Standard Babylonian epic, see pp. 419–431. George calls the term “epic” a “coinage of convenience” (p. 3), a coinage that we likewise retain.

<sup>2</sup> The Penn and Yale tablets were bought close to the same time from the same dealer. In his description of the two texts, George notes, “Very similar in clay, size and general appearance, they exhibit the same format of three columns on each side, the same orthographic conventions and, most importantly, they are inscribed in hands that are indistinguishable” (*Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 159). Both tablets also have the unusual trait of clay lumps on the edges.

Forest. Given that Penn is marked Tablet II and that Yale concludes with the men just setting out for the forest, it is safe to say that this version of the epic would have covered at least four tablets, six columns apiece.

With good reason, Penn and Yale have generally been treated as deriving from the same authorial vision, notwithstanding the likelihood that these represent just one rendition of a text that could vary significantly in its reproduction.<sup>3</sup> In Penn, we are introduced to Gilgamesh, who is in the process of recounting two dreams that anticipate the arrival of Enkidu, his perfect match. In the second column of the tablet, the wild man Enkidu is ensconced with the harlot Shamkat, who informs him that he is like a god and should start behaving like one. She leads him to a shepherds' camp and introduces him to the trappings of civilization: clothing, bread, and beer. After this process of acculturation to life in human company, Enkidu heads to Uruk to confront the king, who, he has just learned, has been violating the brides of the city. The two engage in a ritualized wrestling match, which concludes with Enkidu's praise of Gilgamesh. In the next tablet, the two men form a partnership, apparently in the presence of the harlot.<sup>4</sup> Gilgamesh proposes an expedition to the Cedar Forest, and Enkidu, master of the steppe, promptly shoots down the idea. This exchange continues onto the reverse of Yale, until Enkidu finally concedes to serve as Gilgamesh's guide on the adventure. Gilgamesh then has them equip themselves with tools and weaponry before he sets out to persuade the citizenry and leadership of Uruk to endorse their plan. The tablets appear to fit neatly as two major components in an extended sequence. Penn closes with Enkidu's exaltation of Gilgamesh, whom he has just met, and although the first column of Yale is broken, it clearly opens with the two men in conversation, kissing and joining as partners. Penn exists to set up the relationship between

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<sup>3</sup> George attributes original authorship of a coherent epic to the work of a poet who performed it without the involvement of scribes, so that even the earliest written text would have followed a long phase of oral transmission (*Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 21). In spite of what he considers the probability of substantial change through repetition, George concludes that the OB material as a whole reflects the conception of a single creator. "Nevertheless, such is the beauty and power of the Old Babylonian fragments that one may be sure that the poem was originally the work of a single poetic genius, whether he sang it or wrote it" (p. 22).

<sup>4</sup> The first two columns of the Yale tablet are severely damaged, and this obscures the transition between the meeting of Gilgamesh and Enkidu in Penn and the direct concern with Huwawa in the rest of Yale. We will discuss this problem in detail in Chapter 5.

Gilgamesh and Enkidu that will be played out in the adventure they undertake together in Yale. The two tablets, as they stand, are inextricable from one another.

At the same time, the contents of Yale are rooted in a story that is known to stand on its own in other Gilgamesh material from the OB period. The tablet is preoccupied entirely with Gilgamesh's plan to confront Huwawa and to make a name for himself. It is safe to conjecture that this tablet would have been followed by an actual encounter with Huwawa, a notion encouraged by the fact that we have access to nine other OB tablets that cover the pair's journey to the forest and confrontation with the forest guardian. Even where these "Huwawa texts" reflect variant forms of the OB narrative, they likely match the broad outlines of Yale and what one would expect to follow Yale in the *šūtur eli šarri* series.<sup>5</sup> The heroes' trek is punctuated by dreams that terrify Gilgamesh, while Enkidu offers comforting interpretations, yielding a prolonged, dramatic build-up to the actual confrontation. When they arrive, Huwawa is dispatched and trees are harvested.

The Huwawa story of Yale and the nine other OB texts is familiar as a separate Sumerian tale, found in two versions from the same period as the first Akkadian Gilgamesh. In spite of contrasts between the Sumerian and the Akkadian Huwawa tales, the areas of overlap demonstrate a direct relationship. Above all, the Sumerian versions show that the story of Gilgamesh and Enkidu's battle with Huwawa could—and did—stand alone.<sup>6</sup> The Akkadian Huwawa material therefore belongs to a tradition of telling this tale for its own sake, so that Penn somehow introduces the

---

<sup>5</sup> The specific evidence will be introduced in the next section. Potential parallel sections are only present in the much-copied Huwawa material. All of UM and the reverse of Schøyen-1 compare closely to parts of Yale, whereas the obverse of Schøyen-1 seems to be independent of Yale, and the dream content of Schøyen-3 appears to overlap with the fourth dream in the Nippur text without matching it closely.

<sup>6</sup> Although the Sumerian Huwawa adventure was generally treated as a distinct text and tale, the OB period copies do suggest some sense of their combination, whether or not by any association with the new Akkadian epic. The hymn that introduces Gilgamesh and Huwawa version B is found only in B:1–4, version A:130–135 and 164–171, and Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven 91–96 (unprovenanced text; cf. Me-Turan fragment D:39–41). It is very possible that all of these texts once existed in a form without this shared hymn to Gilgamesh, which is applied to different settings in each. With its current distribution, the hymn functions to join the two stories of the heroic victories of Gilgamesh and Enkidu over superhuman antagonists. Another indication that the Sumerian Gilgamesh stories of Old Babylonian scribal circles could be read in combination comes from the Hadad/Me-Turan source for Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld, which ends with a catch-line for Gilgamesh and Huwawa A, as the next in a sequence (see A. Cavigneaux

adventure in new terms. This origin of the Yale material in a separate Huwawa story calls for explanation in relation to its combination with Penn.

It is nothing new to conclude that the Huwawa episode in the OB Gilgamesh Epic relies on a prior Sumerian tale.<sup>7</sup> The centrality of this fact, however, was not evident without the texts gathered in Andrew George's recent publications.<sup>8</sup> Ten out of the twelve attested OB Gilgamesh tablets cover the Huwawa account. Moreover, because both the Huwawa and the Bull of Heaven episodes of the Standard Babylonian epic have Sumerian versions, it is not generally observed that only Huwawa receives full narrative treatment in both the Sumerian and the known OB Akkadian evidence.<sup>9</sup> Until now, all components of the OB Gilgamesh have seemed equal, and without earlier Akkadian texts, there has been no basis to disentangle further the relationship between the first epic and its sources. With this project, armed with the litany of evidence now available, we aim to take one major step in that direction.

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and F.N.H. Al-Rawi, "La fin de Gilgameš, Enkidu, et les Enfers d'après les manuscrits d'Ur et de Meturan," *Iraq* 62 [2000] 1–19). This evidence was brought to our attention by Paul Delnero.

<sup>7</sup> In his examination of changes in the Gilgamesh Epic through time, especially the contrast between OB evidence and the SBV, Jeffrey Tigay followed S.N. Kramer's groundbreaking conclusion that the Akkadian epic was created under the influence of separate Sumerian stories that had not yet been gathered into a single narrative; *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982); S.N. Kramer, "The Epic of Gilgameš and its Sumerian Sources: A Study in Literary Evolution," *JAOS* 64 (1944) 7–23. For another early comparison of Sumerian and Akkadian material, see Lubor Matouš, "Les rapports entre la version sumérienne et la version akkadienne de l'épopée de Gilgameš," in Paul Garelli ed., *Gilgameš et sa légende* (CRRAI 7; Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1960) 83–94. George emphasizes the diversity of texts and tales from which the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh was drawn, including more than just the Sumerian Gilgamesh stories of standard scribal training. Gilgamesh and Huwawa would have been the best known of these (*Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 18), but the Akkadian version was composed without any attempt to translate the Sumerian, and it represents an independent creative work. The variety and distinctness of OB Gilgamesh themes with echoes in other Mesopotamian literature suggest to George the likelihood of an oral component to the process of the epic's formation (pp. 20–22).

<sup>8</sup> Along with George's 2003 Gilgamesh edition, see his updates to the Schøyen texts in *Babylonian Literary Texts in the Schøyen Collection* (Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 10; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2009), numbers 4–6, as Schøyen-1, Schøyen-2, and Schøyen-3.

<sup>9</sup> For further discussion of the Bull of Heaven, see Chapter 3. It is still possible that this tale was already incorporated into the Gilgamesh Epic in the OB period, but this cannot be taken for granted. In the first millennium, the Sumerian tale of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld was translated into Akkadian and appended awkwardly to the end of the epic as Tablet XII, a completely different phenomenon.



We propose that the Yale Tablet and the nine other Huwawa texts represent evidence of a once-independent tale that we call the “Akkadian Huwawa narrative.” Rather than envision a primary creative act by a single epic poet, elaborated by countless imitators and copyists, we propose that there were at least two major acts of composition. The Gilgamesh Epic began above all with the Huwawa story, which we understand to have been known in Sumerian before any Akkadian rendition appeared. Between the Sumerian Huwawa story and the OB epic, there was an intermediate compositional stage in which the Sumerian tale alone was reimagined in Akkadian. This tale can be shown to manifest a rather different perspective from both that of the Sumerian account and that of the epic writer. The primary goal of this book is to identify and interpret the Akkadian Huwawa narrative for the first time on its own terms. In the process, we aim to calculate the relationship of this first Akkadian Gilgamesh tale both to its new epic offspring and to its Sumerian predecessor.

### I. *Early Second-Millennium Evidence for Gilgamesh in Akkadian and Sumerian*

The number of known Old Babylonian Gilgamesh texts continues to increase, and the contents of future finds will provide the crucial test for this hypothesis.<sup>10</sup> We begin with what we have now, which includes three new tablets from the Schøyen collection. If we join George in attributing the cluster of Schøyen fragments listed as MS 3263 to a single tablet, there are now twelve OB texts.<sup>11</sup> As described already, by far the two largest blocks of writing survive in the six-column tablets of Penn and Yale, the first of which is nearly complete. Penn consists of 240 lines, while Yale would have had nearly 300. The labeling of Penn as “Tablet II” gives the impression of a standard division, though this could equally be the count of a single rendition.<sup>12</sup> Only two other texts display the same

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<sup>10</sup> Iconography can offer further evidence for narratives known or implied. See the forthcoming doctoral dissertation on Huwawa by Sarah Graff (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University).

<sup>11</sup> George, *Babylonian Literary Texts*, 37, number 6.

<sup>12</sup> George remains agnostic on this question: the text of the Yale tablet shows considerable effort to reach a certain point in the narrative, evidently the heroes’ point of departure, but we cannot assume that this goal follows a received pattern (*Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 160).

format of multiple columns on front and back, neither of which preserves a colophon to indicate a series, though comparison with the two six-column texts could suggest such. Text UM, a fragment at the museum of the University of Pennsylvania, overlaps slightly with the contents of Yale.<sup>13</sup> The fourth multi-column text contrasts with Penn and Yale, having just two columns on each side, and a large top portion lost. This tablet, which we will identify by its apparent origin in Sippar, provides the only OB evidence for a Gilgamesh narrative that continues beyond the Huwawa account.<sup>14</sup> A Sippar location for this text would perhaps suit the unusual speaking role for Shamash, the patron deity of the city, though the sun god plays a part in defeating Huwawa, in any case.

Among the OB Gilgamesh texts so far discovered, the more common type has a single column on each side, with varying size and format. The Nippur text was found in House F, which contained the extensive literary remains of a scribal school, and the limited length of such tablets suggests no attempt to create a full series.<sup>15</sup> These appear instead to represent extracts from a longer text or tale, evidently as school exercises.<sup>16</sup> The longest of these extract tablets may have been those in the Schøyen collection. Schøyen-2 is completely preserved, with 84 lines, not quite filling the reverse side; and Schøyen-1 may have had room for up to 120

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<sup>13</sup> This designation reflects George's "OB UM" (*Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 216). With our focus on the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh, we omit the "OB" with names that otherwise follow those from George. There are both OB and MB texts from Nippur, but we will identify the OB text simply as "Nippur," with the later tablet not in view.

<sup>14</sup> The first publication of the probable "Sippar" tablet was by Bruno Meissner in 1902 (*Ein altbabylonisches Fragment des Gilgames Epos. MVAG 7/1*), with a second piece published by A.R. Millard in 1964 ("Gilgamesh X: A New Fragment," *Iraq* 26, 99–105; with copy in *CT* 46 16). The tablets belong to collections in Berlin and London, but a direct join has been confirmed (George, *Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 273–274). The original dealer stated that the tablet came from Sippar, which would fit the upstream orthography, but such a conclusion must remain tentative (p. 272). We nevertheless adopt the identification by tentative origin over the cumbersome identification by museum names as OB VA+BM, in part because we repeat the name so often in our exposition. The independent scribal tradition visible in the Sippar text, when compared to Penn and Yale, is reflected in different constructions for quoting direct speech; see Karl Hecker, *Untersuchungen zur akkadischen Epik* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1974) 196.

<sup>15</sup> See Eleanor Robson, "The Tablet House: A Scribal School in Old Babylonian Nippur," *RA* 95 (2001) 39–66.

<sup>16</sup> We use the term "extract" to emphasize the continuity between these single-column texts and the Sumerian "Type III" texts of similar type, where both groups clearly represent only a fraction of a larger narrative. Our analysis thus parallels the framework adopted by Paul Delnero, "Sumerian Extract Tablets and Scribal Education" (under review by *JCS*, 2009/2010). We thank the author for sharing this manuscript with us.

lines.<sup>17</sup> Schøyen-3 is too broken for proper evaluation, though George considers it to have been a complement to Schøyen-2, so perhaps of similar scale.<sup>18</sup> Other examples were less ambitious. In descending order of probable size are Harmal-2, Ishchali, IM, Nippur, and Harmal-1, the last of which includes only 17 lines, all preserved.<sup>19</sup> This range of length compares generally with the Type III Sumerian extracts from literary texts used in scribal training.<sup>20</sup>

The most striking feature of the single-column extract tablets, taken together, is their content: all eight of them belong to the Huwawa narrative, with a remarkably generous spread. Schøyen-1 overlaps Yale and treats the period before Gilgamesh and Enkidu leave Uruk. Gilgamesh's dreams during the journey to the Cedar Forest were a popular subject, with four representatives: Schøyen-2 and -3, Nippur, and Harmal-1. Finally, Harmal-2, Ishchali, and IM address the sweep of events after they reach Huwawa, from first meeting through taking his life and selecting timber for a gift to Enlil. When scribes assigned themselves or their students the task of copying Gilgamesh in Akkadian, they chose the Huwawa narrative. Evidence for a larger OB epic comes only from the multi-column tablets. With the habit of writing segments from the Huwawa adventure, it is difficult to judge the nature of the narrative from which these were taken. Certainly we must beware of reconstructing an epic by numbered tablets from such material, and it is not immediately clear what kind of text provided the basis for such extracts.

Contemporary with the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh tablets are a multitude of Sumerian Gilgamesh texts, far more numerous than the Akkadian texts from the same period. These come from five stories, in which Enkidu plays a supporting role as faithful and capable servant of Uruk's king.<sup>21</sup> Although the theme of death, which already occupies the OB

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<sup>17</sup> See the discussion of this tablet's length and contents in Chapter 5.

<sup>18</sup> George, *Babylonian Literary Texts*, 37.

<sup>19</sup> Stephanie Dalley tentatively identifies several fragments from early second-millennium Nineveh as belonging to Gilgamesh literature, if not part of any known text ("Old Babylonian Tablets from Nineveh, and Possible Pieces of Early Gilgamesh Epic," *Iraq* 63 [2001] 155–169). George finds no substantial connection, and we also decline to include them (*Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 23).

<sup>20</sup> For the Decad of scribal training texts, the Type III tablets range from 13 to 73 lines in length (Delnero, "Sumerian Extract Tablets," Table 2). The unusual, even awkward, length of the Schøyen texts stands out.

<sup>21</sup> For Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven, see the edition by A. Cavigneaux and F.N.H. Al-Rawi, "Gilgameš et Taureau de Ciel (Šul.mè.kam). Textes de Tell Haddad IV," *RA* 87 (1993) 97–129. The first evidence for the Bull of Heaven episode in the Gilgamesh

epic, is central to two of these, The Death of Gilgamesh and Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld, one Sumerian story has particular importance for comparison with the earliest Akkadian Gilgamesh texts.<sup>22</sup> A freestanding account of Gilgamesh and Huwawa is known in two versions, typically designated A and B, with version A found in more copies than any other Gilgamesh narrative from the period.<sup>23</sup> When we consider the large proportion of OB Akkadian tablets devoted to the Huwawa narrative, including every extracted text, this phenomenon must be understood in light of the Sumerian evidence. At one level, the existence of both Sumerian and Akkadian Gilgamesh tales in the early second millennium must be considered part of a single intellectual world. Both sets

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epic comes from the Hittite paraphrase of the 14th and 13th centuries, if we set aside the broken references to an ox and “its tail” in one of Dalley’s Nineveh texts, without reference to any characters from the Gilgamesh tradition (“Old Babylonian Tablets from Nineveh,” 162–163). George (*The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 23) observes that this episode “is not acknowledged by other Old Babylonian poems that cite Gilgamesh’s achievements, and occurs in art only from the Middle Assyrian period.” He considers its original incorporation an open question. It is easy to envision the later addition of the Bull of Heaven story to the Gilgamesh Epic, based on familiarity with the Sumerian tale. The tale of Gilgamesh and Aga never found its way into the epic. See W.H.Ph. Römer, *Das sumerische Kurzepos ‘Bilgameš und Akka’* (AOAT 209/I; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1980); Dina Katz, *Gilgamesh and Akka* (Groningen: Styx, 1993); Claus Wilcke, “‘Gilgameš und Akka’: Überlegungen zur Zeit von Entstehung und Niederschrift wie auch zum Text des Epos mit einem Exkurs zur Überlieferung von ‘Šulgi A’ und von ‘Lugalbanda II,’” in M. Dietrich and O. Loretz eds., *Dubsar anta-men. Studien zur Altorientalistik. Festschrift für W.H.Ph. Römer zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres* (AOAT 240; Neukirchener: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1998) 457–485. There is disagreement over how to read the earlier Sumerian renditions of the name Gilgamesh, with some advocating the form “Bilgameš” (see George, Chapter 2). Recently, Gonzalo Rubio has argued that the particular signs on which the /Bil-/ pronunciation is based are in fact to be rendered /Gil-/, and we therefore retain the same form for both Sumerian and Akkadian texts. See Rubio, “Excursus: The Reading of the Name of Gilgamesh,” in *Sumerian Literary Texts from the Ur III Period* (Mesopotamian Civilizations; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming). We thank the author for pointing out his discussion and providing us advance copy of his manuscript.

<sup>22</sup> For “Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld,” see the edition by Aaron Shaffer, “Sumerian Sources of Tablet XII of the Epic of Gilgameš” (University of Pennsylvania PhD, 1963); for “The Death of Gilgameš,” see Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, *Gilgameš et la Mort. Textes de Tell Haddad VI* (Groningen: Styx, 2000); Niek Veldhuis, “The Solution of the Dream: A New Interpretation of Bilgameš’ Death,” *JCS* 53 (2001) 133–148.

<sup>23</sup> Robson counted 92 exemplars of Gilgameš and Huwawa A and 59 of Gilgameš, Enkidu, and the Netherworld (“Tablet House,” 54). Since that time, several joins have reduced the number of distinct copies, so that Delnero’s score for Gilgameš and Huwawa A now includes 85 total, mostly of the Type III extract category (*Variation in Sumerian Literary Compositions: A Case Study Based on the Decad*, University of Pennsylvania Ph.D., 2006).

of stories circulated at the same time, and apparently among the same scribal circles, as at Nippur, though they seem to have served different purposes. Based on the sheer numbers of copies, the Sumerian was rendered in writing far more often, evidently reflecting its widespread use in scribal training, where Akkadian literature appears to have played a smaller role than Sumerian. The contrasting perspectives of the Sumerian and Akkadian tales would have stood in tension or in conversation, with the Sumerian more oriented toward the attitudes of the Sumerian third dynasty of Ur, in the late third millennium. At another level, the Sumerian stories do appear to be older than the Akkadian, with actual roots in the Ur III period.<sup>24</sup> In the Huwawa story, this is manifest in the location of Huwawa's mountains in the east, to fit the political interests of the Ur kingdom, in contrast to the far western location in the OB Huwawa narrative. In spite of the contemporaneous copies, it is indeed likely that the Akkadian Gilgamesh tales were composed with awareness of existing stories in Sumerian.

The early second-millennium evidence for Gilgamesh shows considerable variation in both the Akkadian and the Sumerian texts. The Sumerian Huwawa version A has a much less common and apparently more archaic alternative in version B. Each of these maintains a generally consistent sequence in the plot and dialogue, yet with varied expression of repetition, shifts in wording, and occasional diversions.<sup>25</sup> There are far fewer copies of the Akkadian than of the Sumerian Huwawa version A, but the overlap of two fragments with Yale and the evident contrast between Nippur and Schøyen-3 suggest an at least equal diversity in the OB Huwawa material. There is still no sign that the basic elements of plot and sequence of dialogue were abandoned in any particular retelling. When we explore the role of new composition in the development of

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<sup>24</sup> Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven is known from a brief Ur III fragment (see Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, "Gilgameš et Taureau de Ciel," 101–103); and two otherwise unknown Gilgamesh fragments to be published in Rubio, *Sumerian Literary Texts*. None of these offers a direct textual continuity with the early second-millennium Sumerian stories.

<sup>25</sup> The degree and character of variation is particularly visible in version A, which is known from so many more copies. At line 148, with the account of taking Huwawa's terrors from him, the handling of the text varies considerably. On the one hand, the Isin text IsA condenses the account into a simple list of the terrors, in a single line, while on the other hand, two extract-length texts of unknown provenience (FLP 1053 and IM 11053) are entirely free accounts of this occasion, with no reference to the surrounding narrative. At the same time, this extensive freedom with the narrative is focused on a specific moment in the exposition and does not apply equally to every part of the text.

the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, we must keep in mind the reality of variation in the reproduction of this literature. At the same time, the concentration of Sumerian and Akkadian Huwawa texts allows us to see what continuities of structure and perspective persisted in each narrative tradition.

## II. *The Case for an Independent Akkadian Huwawa Narrative*

A basic feature of the Old Babylonian evidence is diversity of origin and variation of text, where overlap allows comparison. In light of the general pattern, the continuity between Penn and Yale, as the longest available texts, offers a unique opportunity to read an extended section of the OB Gilgamesh Epic with certainty of a single hand and intent. Given the single hand, we cannot help but expect continuity of voice, logic, and perspective across the two texts, even as the scenes change and the plot advances. We should find not only that Penn anticipates material in Yale but also that Yale shows awareness of the events that took place in Penn. At the outset, there is no reason to expect a disruption of this continuity.

Our investigation of these sequential texts yielded unexpected results. In the places where Yale appears to recall the events described in Penn, we find that the details do not match. This is especially notable with regard to the depictions in Penn and Yale of Enkidu's life in the steppe. Whereas Penn has Enkidu roaming with the *nammaštum*, for example, Yale makes reference to Enkidu roaming about with the *būlum*. While the former term may refer broadly to all animals and in its context denotes wild animals, the latter term is used only for domesticated animals in the early second millennium.<sup>26</sup> This subtle difference is tied to a whole host of details that point toward a fundamental distinction in the authorial visions of Penn and Yale. As we use the term, authorship is the composition of a new written work, with a profoundly new structure and point of view, even if this work is developed from an existing composition.<sup>27</sup> By

<sup>26</sup> The distinct usages and contexts will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

<sup>27</sup> The OB Gilgamesh Epic appears to stand in literary relationship to the Akkadian Huwawa narrative as its predecessor. While the Akkadian Huwawa narrative shows no evidence of following either Sumerian Huwawa story directly, we consider it to represent a conceptual recasting of the Sumerian as a known composition. Given the written production of the Sumerian Huwawa texts, the setting for this recasting was evidently

authorial vision, we refer to the overarching structure and point of view that persist through every reproduction of a narrative.<sup>28</sup>

Because Penn and Yale were copied by the same scribe, it is significant and perhaps surprising that the two tablets preserve strong evidence for separate authorial visions. In Penn, Enkidu is depicted as a wild man who is removed from all human company, suckled by beasts. Yale, in contrast, envisions a different Enkidu, an Enkidu who is, in fact, a herdsman from the steppe. This Enkidu is known to have fought off a lion and young marauders in his efforts to protect his flocks. This Enkidu has expert knowledge from his life in the steppe, and for this reason, he is the best possible partner for Gilgamesh on his expedition. But this Enkidu was never a wild man separate from humans. This Enkidu, it seems, did not go through the transformation depicted in Penn. In sum, although Yale is part of the same series as Penn, it is not clear that the majority of its content assumes that of Penn or was constructed from the perspective that marks Penn.

We conclude that the contents of Yale are rooted in a once-separate story, the Akkadian Huwawa narrative. This separate Huwawa story had its own author, with an authorial vision distinct from that of the longer epic, though both would have been reproduced with the expected variability of form within these visions. After a transitional section that is damaged and difficult to assign securely, the Yale tablet settles into a consistent point of view that includes contrasts with Penn in both perspective and language. Enkidu is Gilgamesh's partner, not his passion. They are not godlike physical specimens but bold heroes with natural human limitations. Enkidu and Gilgamesh make equal contributions to the defeat of Huwawa, the one representing the capacities of the steppe and the other the ambition of the city.

From Yale alone, it appears that the Huwawa narrative was preserved with little adjustment. The epic author then took up this Huwawa tale and recast it according to a radical new vision, producing the change by adding material to the front and back of the received narrative. With the massive contribution represented in Penn alone, he re-imagined the partnership between Enkidu and Gilgamesh in passionate and heroic

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among scribes, so that the new Akkadian Huwawa narrative is most easily understood to be a scribal creation, i.e. written. In spite of this preference, our basic ideas regarding the development of the Huwawa tale would also apply to oral composition.

<sup>28</sup> When we define the specific traits that distinguish the Akkadian Huwawa narrative in Chapter 3, these embody what we understand by authorial vision.

terms. Gilgamesh and Enkidu were recast as a fated match, both endowed like gods. To this end, Enkidu had to undergo a major transformation. Where he had been a hero among herdsmen, expert in the ways of the steppe, Enkidu was now recast as a wild man with tremendous strength, so that he could better serve as the king's perfect match. By creating and attaching an extensive new introduction to the front of his received story, the epic author managed to transform its reception without eliminating the distinct vision of the older tale. Certainly the Akkadian Huwawa narrative had to be adjusted at the beginning so that the new epic contribution would flow into it, and as it stands, the Yale Tablet cannot launch the beginning of a separate story. Yet it is not evident that the bulk of the narrative had to be altered in order to accommodate the new epic vision. The very contrasts between Penn and Yale, especially in their portrayal of Enkidu and his bond with Gilgamesh, suggest that much of the older Akkadian Huwawa narrative in the Yale text was simply retained and reinterpreted through the lens of the new material.

The discovery that Yale preserves a radically different authorial vision from that of Penn calls for the reevaluation of the rest of the OB Gilgamesh evidence in Akkadian. We find that of the ten other tablets, only Sippar seems to share the vision of the epic author. Gilgamesh's grief over Enkidu's death in Sippar suits the perspective of Penn, with its portrayal of the two as a perfect match. Further connections in language and motifs suggest that Sippar and Penn share a unified perspective, despite the fact that Sippar is not from the same series and seems to manifest its own set of local idiosyncrasies. Besides Sippar, we are left with a set of texts that cover only events related to the Huwawa adventure: the preparations, the nerve-wracking journey there, and the ensuing success. Close examination of these texts indicates that all of them share the distinct perspective of the Akkadian Huwawa narrative that is preserved in the Yale Tablet. Enkidu is repeatedly cast in terms similar to those of Yale: he is the one with knowledge of Huwawa and his domain; he is the one who advises Gilgamesh and reassures him when he falters. Though these texts demonstrate evidence of variation, their overall portrayal of Enkidu and Gilgamesh meshes with the picture presented in the Yale Tablet. We conclude that they, too, can be classified as relics of the "Akkadian Huwawa narrative," even if individual tablets were produced with awareness of the epic. This must remain an open question, to be addressed text by text, but all of them nevertheless preserve the contrasting perspective that marks the prior Akkadian narrative.



Whether or not the OB Huwawa material was produced with reference to or knowledge of a longer Gilgamesh Epic, the eight extract texts offer one concrete indication that the Akkadian Huwawa narrative was treated as a piece of literature distinct from the larger epic. These appear to reflect patterns of scribal education that are better established with the more numerous Sumerian literary texts. If the Akkadian Huwawa extracts indeed mirror the usage of Sumerian extracts, they show that this one Akkadian narrative was part of scribal curriculum across some portion of Babylonia, along with Sumerian literature. The larger Gilgamesh Epic does not appear to have been part of such training; at least, no evidence so far indicates it.

In his new study of Sumerian “extract tablets” as part of scribal training, Paul Delnero argues that single-column (Type III) extracts from the longer literary texts represent the first stage in mastery of this literature, before students would have to produce the full narratives as multi-column (Type I) tablets.<sup>29</sup> With the more frequently copied literature, it is possible to evaluate the relative proportions of single-column and multi-column tablets in the evidence as a whole, as well as the length and text selection in the extracts. The extracts are not selected according to popular episodes or meaningful units, and they are distributed evenly across each full narrative, so that all sections of the narratives are equally represented in extract evidence. On average, roughly four extract tablets would cover the contents of a full narrative, and among actual finds, there are roughly four times as many single-column as multi-column tablets. Thus, it appears that we have a random sampling of the remains from a practice whereby each scribe would have to produce one version of a literary work in extracted segments, and then copy the whole work on one multi-column tablet.

The OB Huwawa evidence offers an unexpectedly close approximation of this phenomenon, given the limited number of texts and their range of separate origins. As observed already, the Huwawa extracts are distributed across the whole narrative, with little overlap. Where two tablets come from the same find spot, like Harmal-1 and -2, and evidently Schøyen-2 and -3, they cover sequential and non-overlapping material. There are far too few texts to constitute a proper sample, but the initial impression fits the Sumerian pattern remarkably well. The extract

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<sup>29</sup> “Sumerian Extract Tablets and Scribal Education,” see above. The manuscript was provided to us by the author, in pre-published form.

format of itself is important and suggests that the OB Gilgamesh also contributed to scribal training, though its use is much less widely attested than the Sumerian literature. Only the Huwawa narrative, however, was extracted, according to existing evidence, and only this Akkadian literary work can be considered part of such education. So far, there is no sign that the larger epic was copied in this phase of scribal training, because it is only known from two multi-column tablets, Penn and Sippar. The fact that only Huwawa material was extracted for this training process appears to offer indirect evidence that the Akkadian Huwawa narrative once held a place in the scribal repertoire as an independent text.

### III. *The Sumerian Pedigree of the Huwawa Tale*

The relationship between the Akkadian Huwawa narrative and the surrounding epic material is only one part of the equation. Once we manage to isolate and characterize the distinct logic of the Akkadian Huwawa narrative, it is equally necessary to determine the relationship between this tale and its Sumerian predecessor. The Akkadian Huwawa narrative, as represented in Yale and the other nine Huwawa texts, is not a direct translation or even an approximation of the Sumerian Huwawa tale. Just as the epic represents a radical repackaging of the old Akkadian Huwawa tale, so too does the Akkadian Huwawa tale manifest a fundamentally new perspective with respect to its Sumerian antecedent. As such, it displays, like the epic, the work of what we identify as an author, with a new authorial vision that marks this creative composition. It should be noted, however, that these two phases of authorship are marked by radically different processes. Where the epic author took up the old story and built around it, the author of the Akkadian Huwawa narrative worked internally, thoroughly rewriting the older Sumerian piece more or less from scratch.

Between versions A and B of the Sumerian tale, the latter is shorter and probably preserves a more archaic form of the story, as stated above.<sup>30</sup> The two versions diverge in a number of important ways, yet they have

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<sup>30</sup> As with the OB Akkadian texts, actual copies of the two Sumerian versions of the Huwawa story are contemporaneous, and judgment of version B as more archaic is based on evaluation of content, partly with respect to the Akkadian Huwawa narrative. For full discussion, see Chapter 4.

much more in common than either one has with the Akkadian Huwawa narrative. In both Sumerian versions, Gilgamesh, suddenly aware of his own mortality, informs his servant Enkidu that he wants to make the perilous trek to the highlands for felling cedar in order to bring back timber. Without much discussion, the two head to the forest and are struck by the tremendous force of Huwawa's auras. In both, the two manage to trick Huwawa into giving them his auras and to capture the forest guardian. Unfortunately, the end of version B is broken, and it is difficult to determine how the text would have concluded. At the end of version A, Enkidu lops off Huwawa's head, an act that angers Enlil but does not lead to the death of either Enkidu or Gilgamesh.

The Huwawa account from the OB evidence represents a drastically new rendition of the old Sumerian story, which survives most essentially in the simpler version B. On the one hand, the Akkadian loosely follows the plot of the Sumerian tale. Gilgamesh proposes his plan to Enkidu; the two make arrangements to head to the forest. Just as in the Sumerian story, Gilgamesh experiences fear along the way, this time depicted by a series of nightmares that Enkidu interprets favorably. The two confront Huwawa; in the Ishchali tablet, Gilgamesh lops off Huwawa's head as per Enkidu's advice. On the other hand, the Akkadian Huwawa narrative represents a changed and much more extensive version of the old Sumerian tale. In the Sumerian version B, the period before Gilgamesh and Enkidu set out covers 56 lines; in the Yale tablet, this is covered by six columns with almost 300 lines! In the Sumerian, Enkidu is Gilgamesh's trusty servant from Uruk, while according to the recollection in Yale IV 151–153, Enkidu was summoned from the steppe by Gilgamesh because of his great fame among herdsmen. As a free agent, Enkidu is free to reject Gilgamesh's idea, and he resists stubbornly before finally consenting to serve as Gilgamesh's guide. Where the appearance of Huwawa comes as a complete surprise in the Sumerian version B, the desire to battle Huwawa is central to Gilgamesh's plan from the very beginning. Strictly speaking, the Akkadian tale is more a "Huwawa narrative" than its Sumerian precursor.

The differences between version B and the OB Huwawa evidence are triggered by specific transformations in the logic from the Sumerian to the Akkadian, such as Enkidu's shift from servant at Uruk to partner from the steppe, and Huwawa's move from unexpected antagonist to Gilgamesh's anticipated target. In light of these straightforward changes, the relationship of version A to these tales becomes clear. Both D.O. Edzard and more recently Tzvi Abusch have proposed that version A may reflect

awareness of the OB Gilgamesh Epic.<sup>31</sup> In other words, the relationship between the Sumerian and the Akkadian tales is two-way. While the Sumerian tale doubtless prompted the first rendition of the tale in Akkadian, the ensuing dialogue between Sumerian and Akkadian perspectives on Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the Old Babylonian period also had particular influence on the most popular Sumerian Gilgamesh story. We further propose that version A may reflect awareness of the Akkadian Huwawa narrative alone, without reference to the specific perspective of the OB epic. The divergences between versions A and B seem therefore to precede the composition of the epic, or at least its supplanting of the Akkadian Huwawa narrative.

In the end, our goal has been to find a way beyond the impasse in investigating the origins of the Gilgamesh Epic. Readers are faced with significant textual variability in both Akkadian and Sumerian Gilgamesh material, at the same time as the OB epic displays an enormous range of likely and potential sources. It has not been clear how to discern any specific process behind the creative act of epic composition. We conclude that beneath the surface of the OB Gilgamesh Epic, an earlier compositional phase can be discerned, still in Akkadian, and comprised only of the Huwawa adventure. This narrative, the unique perspective of which is still preserved in the Yale tablet and in the nine other Huwawa texts, has long been read and interpreted through the lens of the epic framework. It is our goal to unearth this old Akkadian Huwawa story and to reconstruct it to the best of our ability, with the intention of reading it on its own terms. As we reconstruct the relationship between the epic and the Huwawa narrative, with their particular linguistic and thematic contrasts, we envision a literary rather than an oral process of expansion. A written expansion better accounts for the incorporation of a long received narrative into a wholly new product without smoothing out the tensions created by the contrasts between old and new material. Our proposal is intended, however, to be adaptable to different notions of narrative transmission, including an early oral phase for the Akkadian in particular. Upon isolation of the Akkadian Huwawa story's logic from

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<sup>31</sup> See Edzard, *"Gilgameš und Huwawa": Zwei Versionen der sumerischen Zedernwaldepisode nebst einer Edition von Version "B"* (Munich: Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1993) 53–59; Abusch, "Hunting in the Epic of Gilgamesh: Speculations on the Education of a Prince," in M. Cogan and D. Kahn eds., *Treasures on Camels' Humps: Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient Near East Presented to Israel Eph'al* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2008) 17.

that of the epic, we are in a better position to understand the early evolution of the Huwawa episode from the Sumerian to the Akkadian. The distinction between the logic of the Akkadian Huwawa narrative and that of the epic also allows us to evaluate the contributions of the epic writer in a new light. By our estimation, this visionary was no less inventive than past assessments have allowed, but he did have at his disposal a lengthy work in Akkadian. By separating out the perspective of the old Huwawa narrative from that of the later epic, we can better assess and appreciate the ingenuity of the epic writer, the first creator of the OB Gilgamesh Epic.

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