

Conventions for Damaged Text

[Gilgamesh]: Square brackets enclose words that are restored in passages where the tablet is broken. Small breaks can often be restored with certainty from context and longer breaks can sometimes be filled securely from parallel passages.

Gilgamesh: Italics are used to indicate insecure decipherments and uncertain renderings of words in the extant text.

[*Gilgamesh*]: Within square brackets, italics signal restorations that are not certain or material that is simply conjectural, i.e. supplied by the translator to fill in the context.

...: An ellipsis marks a small gap that occurs where writing is missing through damage or where the signs are present but cannot be deciphered. Each ellipsis represents up to one quarter of a verse.

.....: Where a full line is missing or undeciphered the lacuna is marked by a sequence of four ellipses.

* * *: Where a lacuna of more than one line is not signalled by an editorial note it is marked by a succession of three asterisks.

*Humbaba: In old material that has been interpolated into the standard version of the epic some proper nouns are preceded by an asterisk. This is to signify that for consistency's sake the name in question (e.g. Huwawa) has been altered to its later form.

Dramatis Personae

Note: This is the listing of Principal Characters from beginning of the Penguin edition. An acute accent marks the vowel of a stressed syllable. Where such a vowel falls in an open syllable it will often be long (e.g., Humbaba). In some names the position of the stress is conjectural.

Gilgámesh, king of the city-state of Úruk
Nínsun, a goddess, his mother
Enkidu, his friend and companion
Shámhat, a prostitute of Uruk
Shámash, the Sun God
Humbába, the guardian of the Forest of Cedar
Íshtar, the principal goddess of Uruk
Shidúri, a minor goddess of wisdom
Ur-shanábi, the ferryman of Uta-napishti
Úta-napishti, survivor of the Flood

Glossary of Proper Nouns

ABZU See Ocean Below.

ADAD The Storm God, venerated as a supreme power especially in Syria and Lebanon, where in the epic he has a particular association with the Forest of Cedar.

AKKA King of Kish, possibly Gilgamesh's nephew.

AN 'Sky': the name of heaven in Sumerian, equals Anu in Babylonian.

ANSHAN An area of south-western Iran.

ANTU The wife of Anu, and at Uruk the mother of Ishtar.

ANU The father of the gods, the god of the sky, but also resident in Uruk, where he is Ishtar's father.

ANUNNA See Anunnaki.

ANUNNAKI A traditional name for one of the two divisions of the pantheon, in the later periods assigned to the gods of the Netherworld; see Igigi.

ARALLI A name of the Netherworld.

ARATTA A city-state far away in the highlands of Iran, traditionally a rival of Uruk.

ARURU Another name for Belet-ili, the Mother Goddess.

ASAKKU See Azag.

ATRA-HASIS 'Surpassing Wise': an epi-

thet of Uta-napishti.

AYA Goddess of dawn, the bride of Shamash.

AZAG A demon.

BELET-ILI 'Lady of the Gods': the Mother Goddess, who created mankind with Ea, also known as Aruru. As Mother Earth she once enjoyed the attentions of Anu, the sky.

BELET-SERI 'Lady of the Desert': the scribe of the Netherworld, who keeps tally for Ereshkigal.

BIBBU Ereshkigal's butcher and cook.

BIRHURTURRA One of Gilgamesh's personal guard. The reading and meaning of the name are uncertain.

BITTI Or Bidu, 'He opens!'. The gate-keeper of the Netherworld.

DIMPIKUG A Netherworld deity.

DUMUZI 'Steadfast Child': the Babylonian Tammuz, lover and husband of Ishtar, punished with annual death and descent to the Netherworld.

EA The god of the freshwater Ocean Below (*Apsû*). The wisest of the gods, he is adept in every skill and finds a solution to every problem. His expertise enabled the Mother Goddess to create mankind, whom he civilized and saved from the wrath of Enlil.

EANNA 'House of Heaven': the temple of the goddess Ishtar and the god Anu in the city of Uruk.

EBABBARA 'Shining House': the temple of Shamash at Larsa.

EBLA A town in north Syria, now Tell Mardikh, south-west of Aleppo.

EKUR 'Mountain House': the temple of Enlil at Nippur.

ENDASHURIMMA and **NIN-DASHURIMMA** Ancestors of Enlil, resident in the Netherworld.

ENDUKUGA and **NINDUKUGA** Ancestors of Enlil, resident in the Netherworld.

ENGILUA Or Idengilua, a waterway of Uruk. Perhaps a variant form of Idurungal, the principal eastern branch of the river Euphrates.

ENKI The name of Ea in Sumerian.

ENKI and **NINKI** Ancestors of Enlil, resident in the Netherworld.

ENKIDU 'Lord of the Pleasant Place': in the Babylonian tradition a wild man created by the gods as Gilgamesh's equal, in the Sumerian his favoured servant.

ENLIL 'Lord Air': the divine ruler of Earth and its human inhabitants. Aided by Anu, Ea and the Mother Goddess he governs the cosmos. His cult-centre was Nippur. His ancestors counted as 'dead' gods, and dwelt in the Netherworld.

ENMEBARAGESI Apparently the elder sister of Gilgamesh, but in history an early ruler of Kish, and assumed to be male.

ENMESHARRA Uncle of Enlil, resident in the Netherworld.

ENMUL and **NINMUL** Ancestors of Enlil, resident in the Netherworld.

ENUTILA Ancestor of Enlil, resident in the Netherworld.

ERESHKIGAL 'Mistress of the Great Earth': the queen of the Netherworld.

ERIDU An ancient city in the far south of Babylonia, the cult-centre of Enki-Ea. Now Tell Abu Shahrein, south-west of Nasiriyah.

ERRAKAL A manifestation of Nergal as a god of wanton devastation.

ETANA A legendary king of Kish, who rode an eagle to heaven, but remained a mortal. In the afterlife he was, like Gilgamesh, an officer in the court of the Netherworld.

GANZIR The first of seven gates of the Netherworld.

GILGAMESH A legendary king of Uruk, son of a goddess but doomed to die. In the afterlife he became a judge in the Netherworld.

GIPAR The private chambers of Inanna in her temple Eanna.

GIRSU A city-state of eastern Babylonia, now Tellah, north of Nasiriyah.

HAMRAN A mountain of uncertain location, on the way to the Cedar Forest.

HUMBABA The monstrous guardian of the Forest of Cedar, appointed by Enlil to protect its timber.

