

## Towards a reading of "Gilgamesh and Agga"

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[This contribution is the first in a series intended to furnish materials towards a "Reading" of the epic poem "Gilgamesh and Agga". Based upon close scrutiny of the textual material, this first instalment tries to present a reasoned grouping and evaluation of texts, series and recension resulting in the tentative reconstruction of what is considered to be the best version or recension, which will underly the next instalments].

### *Part I: The Text*

0. The recent publication of a new treatment of this short narrative poem by Römer has already spawned considerable offspring in the form of reviews or independent studies of detail<sup>1</sup>. Now that the composition is very nearly complete, it invites close reading. The series of contributions starting with this paper is intended to provide some hopefully useful steps towards the fuller understanding and better appreciation of this text, *not* to attempt a "definitive" interpretation<sup>2</sup>.

#### 1. Discovery.

In 1935 T. Fish published one important fragment (the Rylands tablet) and identified two more pieces

1. See e.g. J. Cooper's review article in *JCS* 33(1981, publ. 1983)224-241 (on p.233 *ibid.* sub "specific Comments", 3rd line from top, read 6. for 4.; 4th line from top, read 8. for 5.; 5th line from top read SĪG for SIG); P. Michalowski's shorter review in *BSOAS* 45(1982) 577-578. Both reviews are essential, not only because of the important collations. Further contributions are by W.G. Lambert in *Or* 49(1980)339-340; W. Heimpel in *JCS* 33(1981)242-246; J. Klein in *JAOS* 103(1983)201-204; A. Shaffer in *JAOS* 103(1983)307-313. Römer's edition is: W.H.Ph. Römer, *Das sumerische Kurzepos "Bilgameš und Akka"* (Neukirchen 1980). My own first hand acquaintance with much of the Nippur material dates from a number of visits to the University Museum in Philadelphia, and owes much to the splendid generosity of the tablet curator, A.W. Sjöberg, and to the Dutch Foundation for Scientific Research, whose generous grants made these visits possible. My gratitude to both.

2. Projected are studies of the structure and the poetics of the composition.

FROM Nippur that had already been published elsewhere<sup>3</sup>. These three MSS were used in 1936 by M. Witzel, who added one more piece, in a first attempt at a complete edition which now has only historical interest<sup>4</sup>. In 1949 S.N. Kramer not only added seven new pieces but also gave the first scholarly and complete edition, translation and interpretation - a pioneering activity that has become his hallmark since<sup>5</sup>. Now, in 1980, Römer has added four fragments to which Cooper adds one more in 1981 (though this only appeared in 1983)<sup>6</sup>.

There are thus to date sixteen (fragments of) tablets representing the poem. Owing to Nippur Expedition conditions, and in a lesser way to the Hilprecht controversy, the Nippur material (fifteen pieces out of sixteen) is scattered over three collections in three countries. This does not favour a secure grasp of the nature of the text material. However, an attempt will be made here.

## 2. Manuscripts.

The list of manuscripts presented by the recent edition thus consists of fifteen items, to which number one should be added. However, several of these pieces are in fact fragments belonging together. Furthermore, as will be shown in the section 3. below, some of the resulting 'complete' tablets consist of complete editions of the text divided over two half tablets, so that they *should* be subsumed under the same symbol. However, the introduction of 'new' sigla is rightly regarded as lamentable practice, so that it is better, though cumbersome, to maintain the sigla system of Römer's edition, which is summarized here for convenience.

- A: *BJRL* 19 (1935) 369-372 (R.ed. pl. i-iv)
- B: TMH NF 4 5
- C: CBS 10335 (Kr.ed. fig. 1; FTS f.p. 29; R.ed. pl. v)
- D: TMH NF 4 6
- E: Ni 2302 (SLTNi 3)
- F: Ni 9743 (Kr.ed. fig.5; ISET 2 53)
- G: Ni 4396 (Kr.ed. fig.4; ISET 2 20)
- H: Ni 4351 (Kr.ed. fig.4; ISET 2 54)
- I: CBS 4564 (PBS 10/2 5; R.ed. pl. vi)
- J: Ni 4448 (Kr.ed. fig.3; ISET 2 54)
- K: Ni 2334 (SRT 38)
- L: CBS 6140 (SEM 29; R.ed. pl. vii-viii)
- M: Ni 4402 (Kr.ed. fig.6; ISET 2 53)
- N: N 4236 (R.ed. pl. ix)
- O: CBS 15164 (R.ed. pl. x-xi)
- X: N1250 (unpublished)

2.1. Fragments M and O are from the same tablet. Although they do not touch, the fragment cores may fit together. They represent the upper left and lower right corners of the complete tablet. The discrepancy (obverse: nine-line gap between frgts.; reverse: only six lines) is only apparent, since this edition will have had

3. T. Fish, "A Rylands Cuneiform Tablet Concerning the Conquest of Kish under Agga, by Gilgamesh", in *BJRL*, 1935, pp.362-372.

4. M. Witzel, "Gilgamesch erobert Kisch und bereitet dessen Dynastie (unter Agga) ein Ende", in *Or* 5(1936)331-346.

5. S.N. Kramer (with Comments by Th. Jacobsen), "Gilgamesh and Agga", in *AJA* 53(1949)1-18. Also A. Falkenstein gave a number of useful comments in his "Zu 'Gilgamesch und Agga'", in *AFO* 21(1966)47-50.

6. See n. 1.

the spurious *sag-lum-lum* line after 1. 110, and omits 1. 102. The fragments therefore constitute one MS: M(+) O: obv. 61-66...76-90; rev. 91-107...113-114.

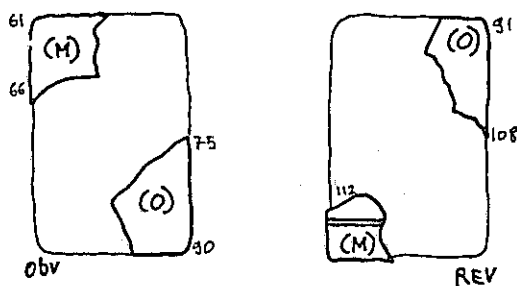


Fig. 1. D<sub>2</sub>.

2.2. Another MS results from G + N + J. G + J was noted as a possibility by Römer: although they do not touch, *only* G has 1. 28 at the end of the obverse, and 1. 56 at the end of the reverse, implying a distribution of lines in which only the two other fragments – themselves constituting a perfect fit – N + J can be placed. This tablet has therefore: obv. 1-28; rev. 29-56.

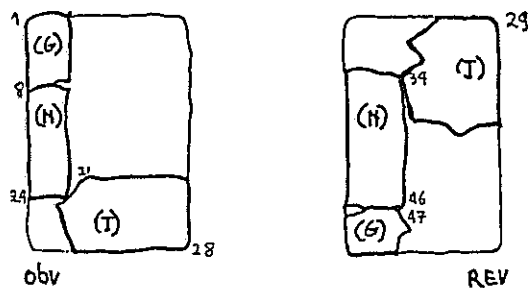


Fig. 2. E.

2.3. D + F(+) I are also one tablet. D + F is a perfect fit, as can easily be ascertained from the copies. The inclusion of I, also noted as a possible join by Römer, is almost certain. Again, the tablet cores may well fit, but the main reason for this join is that only these fragments, while complementing each other, show a distribution of 40 lines per side, *viz.* obv. 1-12...16-40; rev. 41-66...68-82.

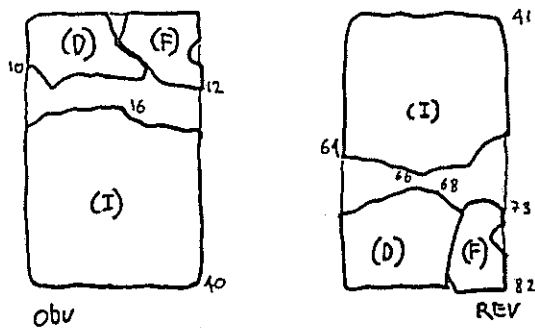


Fig. 3. F.

2.4. A word needs be said about the other proposals for joins in the recent publication. D(+)I and G+J are all right, but the inclusion of O in the latter group is of course impossible: G rev. ends with 1.56, while O obv. begins with 1.76. A further proposal is F+L. The photograph published by Römer, as well as the earlier copy, shows that this tablet is intact. The puzzling statement that these proposals are taken from "Angabe des Kataloges der Tontafelsammlung im University Museum, Philadelphia" is made even more mysterious by the fact that M.W. Green in *BiOr* 35(1978)180-181 also notes two of these spurious joins (G+J+O; F+L). Is there a common ancestor to these statements?

2.5. As a result, what we are left with are *eleven* pieces, viz. A,B,C,D+F+I, E,G+N+J,H,K,L,M+O, and X. Furthermore, it will be shown that B, H and L belong together, and should be treated that way; the same applies to E and M(+O), so that the conclusion must be that what we have in fact are *eight* different texts (A; B and H and L; C; D+F+I; E and M+O+; G+N+J; K; X) of which total only two MSS may count as real 'duplicates' (B and H).

### 3. Typology.

As to *provenience*, all tablets, except A, come from Nippur.

As to *format*, the following types are represented:

i: double column tablets, ab. 30 lines per column: A

ii: single column tablets, subdivided into:

iiia: long and narrow tablets, ab. 60 lines per side: C

iiib: short tablets, ab. 40 l.p.s.: D+F(+I); K?

iiic: short tablets, ab. 30 l.p.s.: B;H;L;E;M(+O);G+N+J

Since no copy or photograph of X is available, the format of X must remain unknown for the present. Furthermore, G+N+J should more properly be called a *subtype* of iic, since it contains a few lines less than the other exemplars (only 56 lines in all).

As to *edition format*, we must distinguish between complete editions and extracts. It is obvious that both A and C are complete editions on a *single* tablet. The half text tablets, commonly regarded as extracts, are nothing of the kind: they represent also complete editions of the text, written on *two* tablets. The catch-line (1.61) which appears on tablets B,L,E and M(+O), and the slight variant *in* this catch-line allows us to group them into: B/H with L against E with M(+O)<sup>7</sup>. The difficulty here lies in deciding whether B or H represents the first tablet of the series of which L is the second one. It is clear that H belongs here, not in the other group: adding the four lines missing on the obverse of H to the reverse results in the number of lines needed, and the variant in 1.57 places it in the B-L tradition against the E-M(+O) tradition<sup>8</sup>. A comparison of B and H yields no results, mainly because H contains only 34 signs. An argument against placing B in the L group may be thought to exist in the fact that B consistently spells the name of the Urukian volunteer with final *-ra*, while

7. The relevant score for this line is:

B	ká-abul-la-ka	mu-ni-in-dab <sub>5</sub> -bé-eš
L	ká-abul-ka	mu-ni-in-dab <sub>5</sub> -bé-eš
E	[ ]-abul-ka	mu-un-dab <sub>5</sub> -bé-eš
M	ká-abul-la-[ka]	[ ]

The spelling variant in the second sign—which is a logogram anyway—is of course far less relevant than the use of a different verbal chain.

8. Score for 1. 57:

B	lugal-mu	gá-e	ag-ga-šè	ga-gin
H	lugal[			]
E		gá-e	ag-ga-šè	ga-an-ši-[gin]
I		gá-e	ag-ga-šè	ga-a-an-ši-gin

L uses *-re*. But this is only a negative indication and anyway at least one other text actually mixes the two forms (D + F(+)I)<sup>9</sup>. Here the matter must rest provisionally: while it remains uncertain whether B or H were the actual first tablet of the L series, it is certain that they both belong here, not in the other group. They (B & H) are to be regarded as real duplicates, and this state of affairs *may* imply that there was *another* tablet duplicating L as the second half of the composition – but this tablet is now lost.

Actually, the same may apply to G + N + J: given this first tablet of 56 lines, we may presume a second tablet containing the rest of the composition, but we have not found it. As stated above, this format is only a subtype of the format iic, and the division of the text over two such tablets would be more pleasing mathematically.

Text D + F(+)I is peculiar in format. The Philadelphia piece (I), though not joining physically (but the cores may fit) must belong to the perfectly fitted pieces from Jena (D) and Istanbul (F), since the caesure obv.-rev. at l. 41 must lead to a tablet containing ab. 82 lines – as it happens, I. The question is here what is supposedly to happen to the remaining twenty-odd lines? These are not even sufficient to fill one side of the smallest format attested (iic G + N + J). This type of long extract seems also to be the type of K: however minute the fragment (26 signs in all), the disposition of lines 58-66 on one side excludes an assignation to types represented by B or E and the other members of that group. Theoretically not impossible would be a tablet of type iia (C) – of which tablet it *could* perhaps even be a part!) on the reverse, or an obverse of a *second* tablet in the G + N + J series. However, in *both* cases the fragment would have to be located very near the top of either obverse or reverse, which the copy seems to contradict.

Tablet x, for obvious reasons, cannot be assigned.

#### 4. Recensions.

4.1. In view of the above, it may now be practical to distinguish the recensions from the actual tablets. The symbols for these recensions are in *BOLD ITALIC* type, and the concordance is as follows:

*A* = A  
*B* = C  
*C* = B, H and L  
*D* = E and M(+ )O  
*E* = G + N + J  
*F* = D + F(+)I  
*G* = K  
*X* = X

4.2. Since all our manuscripts with a single exception come from one place, and without exception from a relatively short period of time (a few centuries after the beginning of the second millennium, to err on the side of safety), the matter of separating different recensions and their relation or perhaps filiation is much complicated - or simplified, according to one's preference.

In any case, here as with so many Standard Sumerian compositions from the Old Babylonian period, criteria such as "vowel lengthening", spelling of postpositions or other final morphemes, even sometimes representation of infixes, though important in themselves, can hardly be used for this purpose.

The main reason for this state of affairs is *not* that the results will more often than not be equivocal, even contradictory. The main reason is that this simply reflects the basic fact that any syllabic system, and *a fortiori* a mixed logographic-syllabic system such as Sumerian, shows at its very core a far greater variability

<sup>9</sup> I has *-ra* in l. 55 against *-re* in ll. 59-60. One wonders whether the former is perhaps a dative in disguise (*-tu(r) + ra*) against an ergative (*-tu(r) + e*). Although in the present line the dative would be incorrectly used, it might explain the divergent spelling.

than a monophonemic system, since in every kind of symbolic series the degree of stability in use of the symbols is inversely proportionate to their number. Also, on a less abstract plan, we must be ready to admit that our scribes did sometimes create innovations - or made mistakes<sup>10</sup>.

Different recensions can therefore generally only be traced through variants of stylistic or lexical nature interfering with the structure of the compositions. And while these variants are often quite rare in Nippur versions of compositions in the Old Babylonian period, *Gilgamesh and Agga* happens to show a few important ones. It is not easy to see what this implies for the 'mechanics' of the tradition of this text, but Cooper is undoubtedly right in pointing out that there are two really different versions in our material - so different that they are in a way different (or alternate) stories<sup>11</sup>. He has separated A/C from L/M - a scheme which may now be expanded taking into account the first half of the poem as well, since both A and C are complete editions and should thus be compared to the groups C and D. Furthermore, since lines 108-110 have their counterpart in lines 33-35, we may also regard G-N-J and D-F-I as closer to the C/D groups than to the A/B family (being tablets A and C). But before trying to fill out Cooper's scheme it may be useful to list the most salient features of the extant editions.

#### 4.3. Group $\alpha$ .

As has already been indicated above, and will be argued below (section 5), the A/B reading is superior, and within this group, B seems to be the best manuscript. Matters are complicated here, because A is lost between 11. 18-31, 50-81 and 97-111, while C has no text for 25-88, so that there is no A/B evidence for 11. 25-31 and 50-81. See, however, the discussion of  $\chi$  below.

##### 4.3.1. B (= C)

Even so, B has its own idiosyncracies: the variant reading of C in 11. 5, 11 and 20 is undoubtedly elegant, but best regarded as an innovation, since neither A nor the other group has it<sup>12</sup>. The variant in 1. 18-19 on the other hand can be judged to be less "correct" than the { recensions. Not only does it break the parallelism with 11. 3-4, but it also results in an overlong l. 19<sup>13</sup>. The status of the "additional" lines 99' and 102' cannot be ascertained, since we have no text from A here. In both cases stylistics speak for the B recension: in 99' - a line admittedly not recuperable as it stands - the conclusion reached so far seems to be expressed by the conclusive opposition between the now captive(?) king of Kish and the victorious(?) king of Uruk<sup>14</sup>; in line 102' we may have an instance of a climactic series strengthened by the repetition of *šagina*<sup>15</sup>. If both lines from B are original, they provide additional evidence for a separate tradition of the { group.

##### 4.3.2. A (= A)

MS A is strongly in the tradition of B on all significant points (11.33-35, 42, 90, 92, 111-113), but seems to be a worse copy. Since the aberrations are not solely due to bad copying, we may regard it as a product of a

10. For other aspects of the difficulties often encountered with grammatical or subgrammatical variants, see G. Gragg, "Observations on Grammatical Variation in Sumerian Literary Texts", in *JAOS* 92(1972)204-213.

11. See Cooper, *op. cit.*, in p.232, n. 1, with the stemma in a subsequent volume of the journal.

12. In these lines C has ...túl-túl-kalam til-le-da where the other MSS ... have túl-kalam til-til-le-da

13. C has: 18 m in-kam-ma-šé ḡgilgameš en-kul-ab<sup>kl</sup>ake<sub>4</sub>

19 igi-guruš-uru-na-ke<sub>4</sub> inim ba-an-gar inim i-kin-e

The other MSS omit en-...-ke<sub>4</sub> and have igi-...-ke<sub>4</sub> as second hemistich of l. 18.

14. Only C has this line. It reads: [ ] unug<sup>kl</sup>ga-ke<sub>4</sub> erin-bi [ ], i.e. "... of Uruk, its army ...", and to speculate beyond the conjecture offered here would probably be foolish.

15. C caps the undoubtedly meaningful gradation (1. *ugula*; 2. *nu-banda*; 3. *ensí*; 4. *šagina*) with a repetition and specification ("of the army") of the last and most important term. As will be argued in a following contribution, this probably harks back to the guruš' argument in ll. 25-28.

closely related recension to *B* which we call *A*. In some points the { group is even superior to this *A*: in 11. 37 and 44 the omission of the postposition is surely a mistake, and I am also disinclined to favour *A*'s reading of 1. 41: in this line we expect a double and parallel expression, as given by the other MSS<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, *A* is undoubtedly better in 1. 89. All in all, the gaps in tablets *A* and *C* remain bothersome.

#### 4.3.3. *X* (= *X*)

Tentatively, I would propose that the mysterious fragment *X* be placed in this group, preserving the better tradition. From the transcription one cannot exclude that it would somehow be part of tablet *C*. But far more important is the observation that over 11 lines of text, and showing only 30 signs in all, it offers superior grammar in three places: a correct plural infix in 1. 52; a correct second person plural in 1. 53, and a correct postposition in 1. 55<sup>17</sup>. Thus we seem to have a text substantially different from what we thought we had, which illustrates that the *textus recepti* published so far placed far too great a confidence in the { group's tradition. And could not do otherwise, I hasten to add.

#### 4.4. Group *B*

All other recensions seem to form one group to be distinguished from the  $\alpha$  tradition. This is clear from the different recension of 11. 108-113, combined with their partial counterpart in 11. 33-35, at least for tablets *B*, *L* and recensions *E* and *F*<sup>18</sup>. For the *D* recension there is no direct evidence, since tablets *E* and *M*(+)0 lack these passages. However, *D* follows *C* against *A/B* in 11. 86, 89, 90, 92 and against *B* in 11. 99, 101, 102, 104-106. While this indicates that the *C* (i.e. *B*, *H* and *L*) and *D* recensions are very closely related, it also makes it very probable that *M*(+)0 shared the corresponding variation in 11. 108-113<sup>19</sup>.

16. *L. 37*: should read: gin-a-ni-ta, as in MSS *B*, *N* and *I*. This may be argued further from the parallel (a-ga-bi-ta) in 1. 38, but also from the choice of the verbal root /te/ in 1. 37 and assuredly from the resulting internal parallelism in 37: gin a n ita // a g i n i (m u) n i t e

*L. 44*: Surely á-zu-šè. The scribe seems to have been led astray by the preceding line (á-m è), and did perhaps not understand the line: -zu (*si vera lectio*) makes no sense in the context.

*L. 41*: *A* omits šá-ga-ni an-hú l, which in view of the corresponding 1. 17 (... šá-šè --- gid) seems improbable. The -šè postposition is correct against *B*, which has -ka.

17. *L. 52*: MSS *B*, *E*, *G* and *I* all indicate the plural in the nominal chain; only *X* has the corresponding plural in the verbal chain. To be quite fair, it should be noted that only *B* and *I* show the verbal chain completely. *L. 53*: In view of 1. 52, of the nominal complex in 53 (ur-sag-m u-n e, i.e. "My warriors") and because of the situation (Gilgamesh is addressing his soldiers) we must have a 2nd p.pl. form as given only by *X*. The 3rd plural given by *B* and *I* (read probably MÚŠ as su h<sub>10</sub>) cannot be correct. *L. 55*: the absolute case in 1. 56 (zà-mi) implies an ergative postposition in 1. 55.

18. The  $\alpha$  tradition for both passages is given in the reconstructed text but see already Cooper's review p.231 and his translation. The other tradition has:

33) bād-gal bād an-né ki-ús-sa

34) ki-tuš-maḥ an-né gar-ra-ni

35) sag mu-e-sum za-e lugal-ur-sag-bi

which is grammatically poor and contextually isolated, while the good tradition fits the (discourse and syntactical) context beautifully. See also the remarks in section 5 of his contribution. The corresponding passage in the  $\beta$  tradition is even worse, since it mutilates the formal arrangement of the poem as a whole (see following contributions and, provisionally, section 5 of this one) by simply repeating 33-35 and throwing in 36 (the sag-lum-lum line) as well. At the end, one of the most important formal properties of the composition is obscured by the switching of lines 111 and 112. It is not impossible that this represented a (rather pathetic) attempt at aesthetics, by giving Gilgamesh the last word. But it misses the correspondence (or structural opposition) between 1. 112 and 1. 1.

19. 86) *A* guruš-unug<sup>ki</sup>-ga-ke<sub>4</sub> <sup>si</sup>tukul-mé šu-ne-ne bí-[ ]

*L* guruš-unug<sup>ki</sup>-ga-ke<sub>4</sub> <sup>si</sup>tukul-mé á-ne-ne bí-in-si

*O* [ ]tukul-mé-a á-ne-ne bi-in-si

4.4.1. *C/D* (= B/H and L; E and M(+))

The only significant differences between these two complete recensions sharing the same tablet format are found in ll. 57 and 61<sup>20</sup>. At present the first half of recension *C* is not clear (i.e. it is not clear whether tablet B or tablet H was the 'first volume' of tablet L). Their close relationship might be thought to be marred by a few other variants, but a number of these are either graphic idiosyncracies (E uses inconsistently *ti* for *til* in ll. 5-6; but l. 7 has *til*.) or more or less free variations or mistakes. Line 89 might be a 'real' variant<sup>21</sup> but on the whole it must be stated that both recensions are related very closely indeed, so that cross-influence cannot be excluded.

4.4.2. *E* (= G + N + J)

A gap in tablet E makes it impossible to relate G + N + J to either the *C* or the *D* recension. Provisionally it will be best to regard *E* therefore as generally in the *C/D* tradition; the incorrect and unintelligible *RIRI* in l. 27 (text J) and the omission of *-bi* in l. 52 (text G) may mean no more than that this is a bad copy.

4.4.3 *F* (= D + F(+))

The long extract *F* goes with *D* in at least 3 places (ll. 61, 62 and 82), but with *D* against *C* in 3 others (ll. 2, 8 and 57). Also texts D + F in line 10 preserve the correct grammar of the tablets A and C (*A/B* recensions!). Both features may plead for placing *F* as earlier in the tradition than the closely related parallel recensions *C* and *D*<sup>22</sup>.

- 89) A <sup>d</sup>gilgameš bād-da gú im-ma-an-lá  
 C <sup>d</sup>gilga[meš] [ ]  
 L <sup>d</sup>gilgameš bād-da gú-na im-ma-an-lá  
 O [[gilga]meš bād-šè gú-na im-ma-an-lá
- 90) A igi bar-re-da-ni ag-ga igi ba-ni-in-du<sub>g</sub>  
 C igi bar-re-da-ni ag-[ ]  
 L ag-ga igi ba-ni-in-du<sub>g</sub>  
 O [ ] igi ba-ni-in-du<sub>g</sub>-a
- 92) A lú-še lugal-mu i-me-a  
 C lú-še lugal-mu x[ ]  
 L [ ] lugal-mu  
 O [ ]-še lugal-mu
- 99) C [agl-ga lugal-kiš<sup>kl</sup>-a-ke<sub>4</sub> šá-erín-na-[ ]  
 L ag-ga lugal-kiš<sup>kl</sup>-a šá-...  
 O [ ] šá-...
- 101) C [ ]-ga-aš sá mu-na-ni-ib-bé  
 L ag-ga-a gú mu-na-dé-e  
 O [ ] [mu-na-dé-e
- 102) C see already n. 18; both L and O omit the important line 102.  
 104-106) both L and O have sequence 106-104-105.  
 108-113) see n. 18.
20. 57) B lugal-mu gá-e ag-ga-šè ga-gin  
 H lugal-[ ]  
 E gá-e ag-ga-šè ga-an-ši-[gin]<sup>l</sup>  
 I gá-e ag-ga-šè ga-a-an-ši-gin
- 61) see n. 7.
21. See n. 19.
22. 61) see n. 7; I has: ká-abul-ka mu-[ni]-[ ]  
 62) L and I have bir-ḥur-tu<sub>19</sub>-re; M and K have bir-ḥur-tu<sub>19</sub>-ra  
 82) F shares with L the infix /b/ in the verbal chain, while O has /n/  
 2) F and E have ... mu-un-ši-re<sub>7</sub>-eš; B has ... mu-un-ši-gin-eš.



4.4.4.  $G (= K)$ 

This small fragment can hardly be assigned. Its format may link it with text D + F (+ I), but the volunteer's name is spelled as in M (+ O). 4.5. With due caution these recensions may be brought together in a stemma, which cannot lay any claim to originality since its main outline is identical to Cooper's proposal for part of the text.

The merits of this completed scheme are perhaps : 1. incorporation of all text material in the form of the different recensions; 2. incorporation of the X MS, which is thought to complete the better  $\alpha$  tradition; 3. illustration of the very close relationship between the members of the  $\beta$  family.

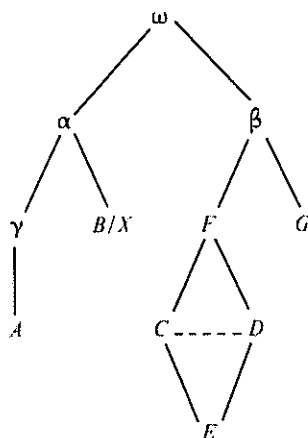


Fig. 4.

## 5. Evaluation.

How to evaluate these recensions? With Cooper, I propose that the MSS belonging to the first group (i.e. A, B and possibly X) preserve the better tradition. This can be seen most easily in lines 107ff. The relevance of the repetition of ll. 30-36 is almost lost in the version of the second group because l. 110 is taken over mechanically from l. 35, which in turn led to the inclusion, also mechanically, of the here hardly relevant l. 36, resulting in the loss of the clinching *alteration* of l. 35 into l. 110 - presupposed by l. 111 which has to follow immediately in order to be properly understood. Moreover, to any sensible reader l. 112 *must* be the last line of the composition, since it is so obviously the counterpart to the opening lines 1-2. But also the composition of the whole hymnal passage (ll. 30-36 and 106-109) is much better in the first group. The almost synonymous reference to An in the  $\beta$  texts in ll. 33-34 and 108-109 is much inferior to the  $\alpha$  text, and does not read at all smoothly. One might even suspect Akkadianisms in l. 34 = 109 (something like *mušabšu širu ša Anum ippušu*, which would "explain" the strange 3rd p. poss. suffix in the Sumerian) and l. 35 = 110 (*atta šarru qarassu* or something similar) against the much better grammar of A/B/X (see earlier under section 4 *apud X*). A similar disregard for grammar (or stylistics - where do they differ?) may be found in l. 92: of course the i-me-a version is better, since the short version is merely *awīlu šū šarri*<sup>23</sup>.

8) D and F have nam ba- in both verbs; B has ba-an.../ nam ba...

57) See n. 8.

10) D shares with both A and C the correct dative postposition omitted by both B and E.

The argument proposed may be thought to be weakened by the fact that in lines 79 and 80 D shows the probably less correct forms in -ka against the much better 2nd p. -zu in L, while the verbal chain of F in l. 81 is totally mistaken.

23. See already n. 18.

Apart from variant spellings, alluded to in section 4, and downright mistakes (e.g. the first verbal complex in *B l. 23*)<sup>24</sup>, the variants may perhaps very roughly be classified into three groups: "free" and acceptable alterations (e.g. *šubur* vs. *arád* in l. 42; different recension of the second hemistich in l. 5-11-20 in text C), grammatically and/or stylistically weaker versions (ll. 33-36; l. 92) where an Akkadian substratum shows through, and which may lead to mistakes (verbal complexes in ll. 52-53), and lastly rather thoughtless repetitions which may then result in missing stylistic points (the colourless root GIN in l. 57 is taken over mechanically from l. 54, whereas the  $\alpha$  text may have had  $gu_4-gu_4-ud = šahātu$ , here perhaps "strut")<sup>25</sup> or even obscuring the story (ll. 30ff and 108ff). It may be fruitless to speculate on the origins of these alterations, but the texts in the  $\beta$  group may possibly have been written from dictation or memory (faulty at that) in an early stage<sup>26</sup>. On the other hand, the muddled version of ll. 108ff results from the uncritical repetition of ll. 30ff, typically on second halves originating very probably from what must have been *extracts* (see section 3). The scribes surely had the first half tablet in mind. Did they also have it in sight?

## 6. Reconstruction.

Since no composite text has been given by the recent editor, an attempt is being made here. Where possible, the version of the  $\alpha$  recension is given as it stands, or reconstructed (indicated by asterisks); lines for which we have no or not sufficient material from the  $\alpha$  recension are indicated by crosses (+). For the variants, see the recent edition with the collations by Cooper and Michalowski. The aim of this reconstruction is simply to produce a working text reasonably close to the *best* tablets upon which ensuing contributions may be based.

- 1 lú-kin-gi<sub>4</sub>-a-ag-ga-dum u-en-me-bára-ge<sub>4</sub>-si-ke<sub>4</sub>
- 2 kiš<sup>ki</sup>-ta <sup>d</sup>gilgameš-ra unug<sup>ki</sup>-šè mu-un-ši-re<sub>7</sub>-eš
- 3 <sup>d</sup>gilgameš igi ab-ba-uru <sup>ki</sup>-na-šè
- 4 inim ba-an-gar inim i-kin-kin-e
- 5 túl til-le-da túl-kalam til-til-le-da
- 6 túl <sup>ni</sup>bàn-da kalam til-til-le-da
- 7 túl búru-da ešé-lá til-til-le-da
- 8 é-kiš<sup>ki</sup>-šè gú nam-ba-gá-gá-an-dè-en  
<sup>gi</sup>tukul ga-àm-ma-sig-ge-en-dè-en
- 9 unkin-gar-ra ab-ba-uru-na-ka
- 10 <sup>d</sup>gilgameš-ra mu-na-ni-ib-gi<sub>4</sub>-gi<sub>4</sub>
- 11 túl til-le-da túl-kalam til-til-le-da
- 12 túl <sup>ni</sup>bàn-da kalam til-til-le-da

24. The personal suffix cannot, of course, consist of both ZĒ and DĒ.

25. See Cooper's review, p.236.

26. Lines 8/14/23/29 (the question to which Gilgamesh seeks an answer) has not been used in the study of the different recensions mainly for the very reason alluded to here. The form this question –and the replies thereto–takes has badly suffered from understandable but unwarranted levelling, as has been shown already by Cooper (see p.224-225, n. 1, and 239). With Cooper, and before him, Kramer, the form presented by c.q. reconstructed from text C is not only the best; it is also the only one that is correct, in that it had the sequence *n a m b a - / g a -* in ll. 8,23 and 29 against the sequence *g a - / n a m b a -* in l. 14. A (also in other instances a worse text than C: see section 4 sub A) already missed the point and *either* used the same formula, which was that of l. 8, throughout, *or* used a different formula twice in ll. 23 and 29 (a second person variant ??). As far as the lines are preserved, D + F(+)I uses the correct system of prefixes in the first verbal form (*n a m b a -* in ll. 8/23/29; no text for 14), but has levelled the line itself: also the second verb has *n a m b a -*. If Cooper's surmise (review [see n. 1], p.225, n. 9) is correct, there might be an attempt at an alternative version by opposing the 2nd p.pl. to the 1st p.pl. (-enzen vs. -enden). N+J is only preserved for l. 23 and l. 29, and has normalized l. 23 in the 2nd p. form, while it goes with I in l. 29. The C tradition and perhaps also D seems to have opposed ll. 8 and 14 to 23 and 29: 1st p.pl. in 8 and 14; an attempt –completely muddled (see l. 23)– at 2nd p.pl. style in 23 and 29.

- 13 túl búru-da ešé-lá til-til-le-da  
 14 é-kiš<sup>ki</sup>-šè gú ga-àm-gá-gá-an-dè-en  
     <sup>giš</sup>tukul nam-ba-sig-ge-en-dè-en  
 15 <sup>d</sup>gilgameš en-kul-ab<sup>ki</sup>-a-ke<sub>4</sub>  
 16 <sup>d</sup>inanna-ra nir-gál-la-e  
 17 inim-ab-ba-uru-na-ke<sub>4</sub> šà-šè nu-um-gíd  
 18 mìn-kam-ma-šè <sup>d</sup>gilgameš igi-guruš-uru<sup>ki</sup>-na-šè  
 19 inim ba-an-gar inim i-kin-kin-e  
 20 túl til-le-da túl-kalam til-til-le-da  
 21 túl <sup>ni</sup>gbàn-da kalam til-til-le-da  
 22 túl búru-da ešé-lá til-til-le-da  
 \*23 é-kiš<sup>ki</sup>-šè gú nam-ba-gá-gá-an-dè-en  
     <sup>giš</sup>tukul ga-àm-ma-sig-ge-en-dè-en  
 \*24 unkin-gar-ra guruš-uru-na-ka  
     <sup>d</sup>gilgameš-ra mu-na-ni-ib-gi<sub>4</sub>-gi<sub>4</sub>  
 +25 gub-gub-bu-dè tuš-tuš-ù-dè  
 +26 dumu-lugal-la-da ri-e-dè  
 +27 ḥaš-anše dab<sub>5</sub>-dab<sub>5</sub>-bé-e-dè  
 +28 a-ba zi-bi mu-un-tuku-e-še  
 \*+29 é-kis<sup>ki</sup>-šè gú nam-ba-gá-gá-an-dè-en  
     <sup>giš</sup>tukul ga-àm-ma-sig-ge-en-dè-en  
 +30 unug<sup>ki</sup> giš-kin-ti-dingir-re-e-ne  
 +31 é-an-na é an-ta e<sub>11</sub>-dè  
 32 dingir-gal-gal-e-ne me-dím-bi ba-an-ak-eš-àm  
 33 bád-gal mûru ki-uš-sa-a-ba  
 34 ki-tuš-maḥ an-né gar-ra-a-ba  
 35 sag mu-e-sum za-e lugal-ur-sag-me-en  
 36 sag-lum-lum nun an-né ki-ág  
 37 gin-a-ni-ta a-gin<sub>7</sub> ní mu-ni-in-te  
 38 erín-bi al-tur a-ga-bi-ta al-bir-re  
 39 lú-bi-ne igi nu-mu-un-da-ru-gú-uš  
 40 u<sub>4</sub>-bi-a <sup>d</sup>gilgameš en-kul-ab<sup>ki</sup>-a-ke<sub>4</sub>  
 \*41 inim-guruš-uru-na-šè šà-ga-ni an-ḥúl ur<sub>5</sub>-ra-ni ba-an-zalag  
 \*42 arád-da-ni <sup>d</sup>en-ki-du<sub>10</sub>-ra gú mu-na-dé-e  
 \*43 ne-šè <sup>giš</sup>šu-kár á-mè sa ḥé-em-mi-gi  
 \*44 <sup>giš</sup>tukul-mè á-zu-šè ḥé-em-mi-gi<sub>4</sub>  
 \*45 ní-gal-me-lám-ma ḥé-em-dím-dím-e  
 \*46 e-ne gin-a-ni-ta ní-gal-mu ḥé-eb-šú  
 \*47 dím-ma-ni ḥé-sùḥ galga-a-ni ḥé-bir-re  
 \*48 u<sub>4</sub> nu-iá-àm u<sub>4</sub> nu-u-àm  
 \*49 ag-ga dumu-en-me-bára-ge<sub>4</sub>-si-ke<sub>4</sub> unug<sup>ki</sup> zá-ga ba-an-dab<sub>5</sub>-bé-eš  
 \*50 unug<sup>ki</sup>-ga dím-ma-bi ba-an-sùḥ  
 \*51 <sup>d</sup>gilgameš en-kul-ab<sup>ki</sup>-a-ke<sub>4</sub>  
 \*52 ur-sag-bi-né-er gú mu-ne-dé-e  
 \*53 ur-sag-mu-ne igi mu-un-suḥ-suḥ-en-zé-en  
 \*54 šà-tuku ḥé-en-zi-zi-i ag-ga-šè ga-an-ši-gin  
 \*55 bir-ḥur-tu<sub>19</sub>-re lú-sag-lugal-a-ni-ke<sub>4</sub>

- \*56 lugal-a-ni-ir zà-mí mu-na-ab-bé  
 \*57 lugal-mu gá-e ag-ga-šè ga-na-gu<sub>4</sub>-gu<sub>4</sub>-ud  
 \*58 dím-ma-ni hé-sùḫ galga-a-ni ḫe-bir-re  
 \*59 bir-ḫur-tu<sub>19</sub>-re abul-la ba-ra-é  
 +60 bir-ḫur-tu<sub>19</sub>-re abul-la è-da-ni  
 +61 ká-abul-la-ka mu-ni-in-dab<sub>5</sub>-bé-eš  
 +62 bir-ḫur-tu<sub>19</sub>-re sukud-du-ni mu-ni-in-kum-kum-ne  
 +63 igi-ag-ga-šè mu-ni-in-te  
 +64 ag-ga-šè gù mu-na-dé-e  
 +65 inim-ma-ni nu-un-til zabar-dab-unug<sup>ki</sup>-ga-ke<sub>4</sub> bád-šè im-me-e<sub>11</sub>-dè  
 +66 bád-da gú-na im-ma-an-lá  
 +67 ag-ga igi im-ma-ni-in-du<sub>8</sub>  
 \*+68 bir-ḫur-tu<sub>19</sub>-ra gù mu-na-dé-e  
 +69 arád lú-še lugal-zu-ù  
 +70 lú-še lugal-mu in-nu  
 +71 lú-še lugal-mu hé-me-a  
 +72 sag-ki-huš-a-ni hé-me-a  
 +73 igi-alim-ma-ka-a-ni hé-me-a  
 +74 su<sub>6</sub>-<sup>na</sup>za-gin-na-ka-a-ni hé-me-a  
 +75 šu-si-sa<sub>6</sub>-ga-ni hé-me-a  
 +76 šár-ra la-ba-an-šub-bu-uš šár-ra la-ba-an-zi-ge-eš  
 +77 šár-ra saḫar-ra la-ba-da-an-šár-re-eš  
 +78 kur-kur-dù-a-bi la-ba-da-an-šú-a  
 +79 ka-ma-da-zu saḫar-ra la-ba-da-an-si  
 +80 si-<sup>biš</sup>má-gur<sub>8</sub>-zu la-ba-ra-an-kud  
 +81 ag-ga lugal-kiš<sup>ki</sup>-a šà-erín-na-ka-ni ešda<sub>4</sub>-a la-ba-ni-in-ak  
 \*81 mu-ni-ib-ra-ra-ne mu-ni-ib-sig-sig-ge-ne  
 \*83 bir-ḫur-tu<sub>19</sub>-re sukud-du-ni mu-ni-in-kum-kum-ne  
 \*84 egir zabar-dab-unug<sup>ki</sup>-ga-ke<sub>4</sub> <sup>d</sup>gilgameš bád-šè im-me-e<sub>11</sub>-dè  
 \*85 ab-ba-di<sub>4</sub>-di<sub>4</sub>-lá-kul-ab<sup>ki</sup>-ke<sub>4</sub> me-lám bí-ib-šú-šú  
 \*86 guruš-unug<sup>ki</sup>-ga-ke<sub>4</sub> <sup>biš</sup>tukul-mè šu-ne-ne bí-in-si  
 \*87 <sup>biš</sup>ig-abul-la-ka sila-ba bí-in-gub  
 88 en-ki-du<sub>10</sub> abul-la dili ba-ra-é  
 89 <sup>d</sup>gilgameš bád-da gú im-ma-an-lá  
 90 igi bar-re-da-ni ag-ga igi ba-ni-in-du<sub>8</sub>  
 91 arád lú-še lugal-zu-ù  
 92 lú-še lugal-mu i-me-a  
 93 bí-in-du<sub>11</sub>-ga-gin<sub>7</sub>-nam  
 94 šár-ra ba-an-šub-bu-uš-ám šár-ra ba-an-zi-ge-eš-ám  
 95 šár-ra saḫar-ra ba-an-šár-re-eš-ám  
 96 kur-kur-dù-a-bi ba-an-da-šú-ám  
 97 ka-ma-da-ka saḫar-ra ba-da-an-si  
 98 si-<sup>biš</sup>má-gur<sub>8</sub>-ra-ke<sub>4</sub> ba-ni-in-kud  
 99 ag-ga lugal-kiš<sup>ki</sup>-a-ke<sub>4</sub> šà-erín-na-ka-ni ešda<sub>4</sub>-a ba-ni-in-ak  
 \*99' [lú<sup>?</sup>]-unug<sup>ki</sup>-ga-ke<sub>4</sub> erín-bi[ ]  
 100 <sup>d</sup>gilgameš en-kul-ab<sup>ki</sup>-a-ke<sub>4</sub>  
 101 ag-ga-aš sá mu-na-ni-ib-bé

- 102 ag-ga ugula-mu ag-ga nu-bàn-da-mu  
 \*102' ag-ga ensi-mu ag-ga šagina-mu  
 103 ag-ga šagina-erín-na-mu  
 104 ag-ga zi mu-e-sum ag-ga nam-ti mu-e-sum  
 \*105 ag-ga lú-kar-ra úr-ra bi-in-tùm-mu  
 106 ag-ga mušen-kar-ra še bí-ib-si-si  
 107 unug<sup>ki</sup> giš-kin-ti-dingir-re-e-ne-ke<sub>4</sub>  
 \*108 bád-gal muru<sub>9</sub> ki-ús-sa-a-ba  
 \*109 ki-tuš-maḥ an-né gar-ra-a-ba  
 \*110 sag mu-e-sum šu-mu gi<sub>4</sub>-ma-ab  
 111 igi-<sup>d</sup>utu-šè šu-u<sub>4</sub>-bi-ta e-ra-an-gi<sub>4</sub>  
 112 ag-ga kiš<sup>ki</sup>-šè šu ba-ni-in-ba  
 113 <sup>d</sup>gilgameš en-kul-ab<sup>ki</sup>-a-ke<sub>4</sub>  
 114 zâ-mí-zu du<sub>10</sub>-ga-âm