

Gilgameš and the bull of heaven

(Sumerian text, 3rd Millennium BC, University of Oxford translation, The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature)

Segment A

I will sing the song of the man of battle, the man of battle. I will sing the song of Lord Gilgameš, the man of battle, I will sing the song of him with the well-proportioned limbs, the man of battle. I will sing the song of the mighty lord, the man of battle.

I will sing the song of the lord with the very black beard, the man of battle. I will sing the song of athletic strength, the man of battle. the king, the man; my king, my lord garden courtyard, *ĝipar*; his mother who bore him spoke to the lord: "My king in the river, my lord your garden."

2 lines unclear

unknown no. of lines missing

Segment B

2 lines unclear

In the great courtyard, without there being any combat, a man She perceived the canopy, the canopy, holy Inana perceived the canopy, from the palace of the *abzu*, she perceived the canopy

"My wild bull, my man, I shall not let you go! Lord Gilgameš, my wild bull, my man, I shall not let you go! I shall not let you go to dispense justice in the E-ana! I shall not let you go to pronounce verdicts in my holy *ĝipar*! I shall not let you go to dispense justice in the E-ana beloved by An! Gilgameš, may you be, may you be"

(Gilgameš speaks:) "I shall certainly not try to take over the portion of Inana in your *ĝipar*. Ninegala will not because of my valorous strength. But Inana, lady, don't you block my way, either! My wish is to catch mountain bulls, to fill the cow-pens. I wish to catch mountain sheep, to fill the sheepfolds. I wish to silver and cornelian."

The queen spoke with a snort. Inana spoke with a snort: "..... say to you. say to you., Gilgameš."

7 lines fragmentary

(An speaks:) "Its entrails..... Its hide Its blood"

1 line fragmentary

"Inana, it will muddy the waters; it will cowpats. My one beloved by An,"

He let her hold the leash. An "My child, what use would it be? It will stir up the waters, it will leave cowpats! If the great bull is let loose, Unug! If the great bull is let loose against Gilgameš, Unug! I will not give her that which bears my own name."

(Inana speaks:) "Maybe it will muddy the waters, and will leave gigantic cowpats, but let my father give me the Bull of Heaven, so I can kill the lord, so I can kill the lord, so I can kill the lord, Lord Gilgameš!"

Great An replied to holy Inana: "My child, the Bull of Heaven would not have any pasture, as its pasture is on the horizon. Maiden Inana, the Bull of Heaven can only graze where the sun rises. So I cannot give the Bull of Heaven to you!"

Holy Inana replied to him: "I shall shout, and make my voice reach heaven and earth!"

He was frightened, he was frightened, he was frightened of Inana. Great An replied to holy Inana: "I shall give her the Bull of Heaven." She made her voice reach heaven, she made her voice reach earth; she made her voice reach heaven, she made her voice reach earth. It covered them like a woollen garment, it was spread over them like a linen garment. who could speak to her? who could speak to her? gave

In masculine fashion, the maiden Inana grasped it by the lapis-lazuli tether. Holy Inana brought the Bull of Heaven down. At Unug, the Bull devoured the pasture, and drank the water of the river in great slurps. With each slurp it used up one mile of the river, but its thirst was not satisfied. It devoured the pasture and stripped the land bare. It broke up the palm trees of Unug, as it bent them to fit them into its mouth. When it was standing, the Bull submerged Unug. The aura of the Bull of Heaven submerged Kulaba.

Gilgameš spoke to Lugal-gabaĝal: "Lugal-gabaĝal, tune your strings; I wish to have a drink!" (Lugal-gabaĝal answers:) "..... drink, that is why nothing of yours is important." replied to Lugal-gabaĝal.

Lord Gilgameš Inana the Bull of Heaven. At Unug, the Bull, and drank the water of the river in great slurps. With each slurp it used up one mile of the river, but its thirst was not satisfied. It devoured the pasture and stripped the land bare. His lady Gilgameš said, "My mother, my sister, will the cattle to their tethering stakes, will the sheep to their tethering stakes, will to their tethering stakes." Gilgameš, "Bull of Heaven, you, yes you,,; you, yes you -- you do not" Gilgameš

5 lines unclear

"They will throw your corpse in the deserted streets, and throw your intestines in the broad square. They will send your carcass to the knacker's, and I shall share out your meat in baskets to the widows' sons who are citizens of my city I shall make flasks of your two horns for pouring fine oil to Inana in E-ana."

Inana watched from the top of the ramparts. The Bull bellowed in the dust, and Gilgameš walked at its head as Enkidu climbed up the rope of its Their fellow-citizens came along It covered them with dust, like a young calf unused to the yoke. Enkidu stood behind the Bull and went round He put and seized its tail. He spoke to his master Gilgameš:

"Ho, magnificent one, extending your staff of office, born of noble lineage, splendour of the gods, furious bull standing ready for battle, who is respected as the great lord Gilgameš of Unug! Your mother was truly skilled in bearing children, and your nurse was truly skilled in suckling her charges! Lord born of noble lineage, Do not fear, the warrior without strength himself. There where the road is straight
..... axe"

4 lines unclear

unknown no. of lines missing

A version from Me-Turan

Segment A

I will sing the song of the man of battle, the man of battle. I will sing the song of Lord Gilgameš, the man of battle, I will sing the song of the lord with the very black beard, the man of battle. I will sing the song of him with the well-proportioned limbs, the man of battle. I will sing the song of him in his prime, the man of battle. I will sing the song of him who batters the wicked, the man of battle. The king, the lord, having as his mother who bore him, wishing to wash in the river.

My lord, having sought entry into the garden planted with junipers, the lord, coming from the *ĝipar*, sheared the wool of the fleecy sheep; he sat down The king bending with the oar, the prince covered with the oar, as if it was of flourishing reed. You covered their wicked ones, as if, with water. He gave to his mother who bore him. In the wide courtyard, Gilgameš

1 line unclear

In the great courtyard

Then the canopy Holy Inana perceived the canopy, from the palace of the *abzu*, she perceived the canopy:

"My wild bull, my man, I shall not let you! Gilgameš, I shall not let you! I shall not let you dispense justice in my E-ana! I shall not let you pronounce verdicts in my holy *ĝipar*! I shall not let you dispense justice in the E-ana beloved by An! Gilgameš, may you, may I"

The king, his mouth, the king to his mother who bore him. Gilgameš to Ninsumun: "O mother who bore me, how! By the door of the great gate From the crenellations of the wall: "My wild bull, my man, I shall not let you go! Gilgameš, I shall not let you go! You dispensed justice in my E-ana -- I shall not let you go! You pronounced verdicts in my holy *ĝipar* -- I shall not let you go, in his beloved E-ana!"

When he had spoken thus to the mother who bore him, the mother who bore him replied to Gilgameš:

approx. 8 lines missing

Segment B

1-6. Holy Inana An the bond of heaven. An to holy Inana: "My child," Inana replied

19 lines fragmentary

unknown no. of lines missing

Segment C

It is uncertain if this segment belongs here.

5 lines fragmentary

unknown no. of lines missing

Segment D

4 lines fragmentary

"My musician, Lugal-gabaĝar, perform your song, tune your strings! Give me beer to drink! Fill my bronze jug again!" Lugal-gabaĝar replied to his master, Gilgameš: "My master, you may eat, and you may drink, but as for me, how does this matter concern me?"

To defeat the Bull,, Gilgameš, to defeat the Bull, his harness of fifty (*text: five-sixths*) minas. his sword weighing seven talents and thirty minas. his battle axe. "My mother who bore me"

His sister His mother who bore him Peštur, his little sister Gilgameš "My mother who bore me, in the house of Enki Peštur, the little sister,, will bring back the cattle to their tethering stakes, will bring back the sheep to their tethering stakes"

"Bull of Heaven, you, you,, yes, you! You crush them, and I crush them If you crush them, They shall consign your hide to the streets They shall consign your intestines to the broad square The widows' sons of my city shall each take their share of your meat in baskets. They shall consign your carcass to the knacker's, and I shall turn your two horns into flasks for pouring fine oil to Inana in E-ana."

The Bull in the dust. Gilgameš and Enkidu Their fellow-citizens with dust, like a young calf unused to the yoke. Enkidu stood by the Bull's head and spoke to Gilgameš:

"Ho, magnificent one, extending your staff of office, born of noble lineage, splendour of the gods, furious-hearted bull, standing ready for battle, warrior, your hand! The people, the people"

When Enkidu had spoken thus to Gilgameš, Gilgameš himself smote its skull with his axe weighing seven talents. The Bull reared up so high, so high that it overbalanced. It spattered like rain, it spread itself out like the harvested crop.

49-52. The king took his knife in his hand, just as if he were a master chef. He hit Inana with a haunch, he made her flee away like a pigeon, and demolished those ramparts. Standing by the Bull's head, the king wept bitter tears: "Just as I can destroy you, so shall I do the same to her."

As he spoke, he consigned its hide to the streets, he consigned its intestines to the broad square, and the widows' sons of his city each took their share of its meat in baskets. He consigned its carcass to the knacker's, and turned its two horns into flasks for pouring fine oil to Inana in E-ana. For the death of the Bull of Heaven: holy Inana, it is sweet to praise you!

Fragment of an earlier version from Nibru, dating to the Ur III period

Segment A

unknown no. of lines missing

Seed of the *ĝipar* (= Gilgameš?); he sat on the; that which was in the marsh, my king, to bend that which was in the marsh with the oar, the lord covered it with water with the oar, as if they were flourishing reeds. That which exceeded, as if it was a reed, he covered with water. In the wide courtyard of the temple of Inana Gilgameš

My king, having sought entry into the garden of junipers, the seed of the *ĝipar* the sheep of the queen sheared the wool; he sat on the He leant over the marsh; my king leant over the marsh; he bent it with the oar.

The lord covered it with water as if they were flourishing reeds; that which exceeded, as if it was a reed, he covered it with water.

unknown no. of lines missing

Segment B

I shall not try to take over the portion of Inana in the *ĝipar*; shall not cover my valiant arm with a garment!