
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Synopsis of Folkloric Significance with Orientations to Different Iraqi Replicas of Folklores Civilizations, Traditions, and Customs: Tales' Genres are presented as Illustrations

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| ABSTRACT

Folklore has been associated with stories and sayings due to it being a social adhesive that makes people together and shares their customs, traditions, conventions, and civilizations. The aim of this study is to illustrate the importance and significance of Iraqi folklore in terms of its precious, valuable, and wealthy information, particularly in Iraqi Literature and folkloric resources and inheritances. Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" (Arabic: علي بابا والأربعون لصا) is a folk tale from the One Thousand and One Nights. The undoubted masterpiece of ancient Iraq - and one of the great works of world literature - is the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh. The Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh is a long narrative poem that examines the universal human search for meaning and longing for life. It was originally the work of an anonymous Babylonian poet who lived in Iraq more than 3,700 years ago. He composed the epic in the Akkadian language, but the literary traditions of Gilgamesh also inform five shorter narrative poems in the Sumerian language, and these are even older. The study uses a qualitative and descriptive style and approach to illustrate the salience of Iraqi heritage and folkloristic information.

| KEYWORDS

Great, Ali, Stories, Valuable, Forty, Poems, Different, Epic, Masterpiece, Illustrate

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1. Introduction

Folklore is the body of culture shared by particular people group of people. It talks about the tradition common to that culture, such as tales, proverbs, and jokes. They include material culture, customary lore, and artifacts (Wikipedia, 2022).

Folklore is the natural and cultural heritage, and it gives voice to a growing understanding that cultural diversity is a national strength and a resource of protection. It lets people escape from repressions imposed upon them by society, justifies its rituals and institutions, uses pedagogic devices to reinforce morals and values, and builds wit. It is a means of applying social pressure and exercising social control.

It is referred to as the rural illiterate and poor. They were peasants living in the countryside folklore appeared in 1896 by the Englishman William Thomas. It is contemporary to antiquities or popular literature. Alan Dundes's (2007, p. viii) view about the folkloric material is that it must be reported as native exegesis or performance, which means broad-based analysis that involves organization and interpretation.

2. Alan Dundes's Views about the Folklore

Alan Dundes was considered a master teacher as well as a scholar. He talks about insight into instruction, which is an essential way that cultural knowledge and wisdom are passed down from generation to generation and from poor to peer. He practiced what he preached in 1994. Folklore is an instructional tool to develop tolerance; students use their own cultural traditions to enhance

learning (educational approaches). Alan concentrates on teachers' usage of raw oral lore "performed by children to digest." Lore needs description and interpretations, as Alan said to his students, to collect 50 items of folklore. Socio-psychological perspectives to decipher folk material.

Children's folklore must not be repressed but rather brought out into the open world. Auto-biography and ethnography are represented in "people's own description of themselves." Also, Anxieties are expressed in the folklore, which means the daily-conversation samples. The calls for the Civil Rights Movement are shown in "The Vietnam War".

What are black, white, and red? Cold War, Ethnic, and International Tension of cultural misunderstanding. The Mirror of Culture talks about differences and similarities in ways of thinking. The modern concept of folklore is influential in folkloristic. The Grimm brother's legacy of romantic nationalism and Folklore is an adaptive strategy for modern life. He also expanded the scope of folk materials from oral to written and material items. A new contemporary life requires a relic of the past and expression of the present-day issue. Franz Boa, the father of modern anthology folklore, is invaluable as a reflection of a particular culture's condition and values. Symbols represent folkloric performance and serve as functions of socially sanctioned outlet for suppressed wishes and anxieties. Strategic use of folklore to upset power relations.

Analyst cultural mirror to disrupt hierarchies of the observer. He identified the common cognitive pattern of trichotomy to avoid cultural bias. The Number Three in American Culture is referred to as the Essay of Interpreting Folklore in 1980 19th century as we have got "The Modern Concept." Social folklore is any group of people who share one linking factor, "We all are folklore," whether it is urban or rural, young or old, and religious or secular. So, the speech is about folkloristic writing of historical and cultural information. Human development and infantile anxieties show children's humour, dead baby jokes, folk humour, Children's Humour in 1978, From Game to War in 1997, Children's Rituals and Games, and Bloody Mary in the Mirror in 2002.

Folklore forms help teachers to understand their students better and teach them more effectively about the world and the human condition. People's descriptions of themselves and self-images; Avoid distortion in the description to make categories for special emphasis. It talks about "Culture from Inside (out) and Outside (In)? That means position, modern technologies advance, and values. Vietnamese War and American-African War Culture show that the titles of ethnocentrism and natural and right things about us and others reference in terms of strange and unnatural things and how we think about the right and wrong issues accordingly. This is seen in Greek historian Herodotus of ethnocentrism. To realize the hypothetical premise; Man can't choose outside the customs in the world. These are the traditional customs that are part of folklore. We have got quasi-universal of human experience that is represented in "Cinderella," which is a tale indexed of Indo-European folktales in 1910.

Hodja figure is the same in Turks and Greeks folktales. Lovable wise fool Arabs and Jews in which constructive forces and excessive nationalism have mentioned recognizing things perfectly. Folklore is historically inspired by the desire to preserve its national heritage. The Grimm Brothers is the beginning of the 19th century (Teutonic Tales). Analogues in European countries with oral tales and conventions in which oral material traditions of basic mistrust of folk appeared. A national treasure of the past, illiterate in the literate society (vulgar and uneducated). Folklore factors talk about religion, occupation, ethnicity, and geographical location. Folklore consists of a variety of genres, and its customs must be practiced; there is an important question they are 1.) Is folklore an error? and 2.) Is folklore dying out? Ballad must be seen as a song, but folklore makes the classroom laboratory or forum (which talks about real-life issues), and to know oral traditions, children need to study folklore. Folklore and sibling rivalry is less symbolic, but the folklore is about teachers' attitudes that reflect themselves, in students' attitudes are about their teachers, ex. "Old Deans Never Die, They Just Lose their Faculties," Paradises of teaching methods .

Folklore as a subject of study can be a most reading one. It does serve as a mirror of a culture and a mirror well worth looking into :

collecting objects.

Educational experiences of values.

Means a better understanding of ourselves.

No correct or right version in which children will learn that there is little interest in the study of an oral tradition that shows a failure to recognize oral and written or taken written notes with errors or slang similes and metaphors or avoiding clichés or unoriginal values responsibilities. The idea of dancing and the homosexuality of girls and boys is so indicative and referential .

Literature for Children and Children of Literature shows that children's folklore helps to understand children, but materials are imposed upon children by parents and teachers. An insight into parents' and teachers' worldviews of children. Literature's children receive most of the attention with references to the literature for children is an emphasis, but the literature of children is their oral literature, folklore traditions, and culture in anthropological usage refers to the total way of life of a people.

Folkloristic is an alternative name to academic studies of traditional culture from the folklore artifacts themselves. Folklore genres are classified into three types: material, verbal, and customary lore with references to child lore as a different genre in the industrial revolution of the 19th century (oral tradition) and (written identification). Folk history is a distinct sub-category of folklore in significance to cultural performance shared with ethnography and anthropology characteristics. Walter Anderson, in the 1920s, has the Theory of Self-Correction in folklore to keep its variants close to the original form. Lyric folklore song is found everywhere, but this is not true of narrative singing.

Iraq Genuineness Synopsis

Identification: Modern Iraq covers almost the same area as ancient Mesopotamia, which centered on the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. Mesopotamia, also referred to as the Fertile Crescent, was an important center of early civilization and saw the rise and fall of many cultures and settlements. In the medieval era, Iraq was the name of an Arab province that made up the southern half of the modern-day country. In the today's Republic of Iraq, where Islam is the state religion and claims the beliefs of 95 percent of the population, the majority of Iraqis identify with Arab culture. The second-largest cultural group is the Kurds, who are in the highlands and mountain valleys of the north in a politically autonomous settlement. The Kurds occupy the provinces of As Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk, and Erbil, the area of which is commonly referred to as Kurdistan.

Location and Geography: Iraq, in the Middle East, is 168,754 square miles (437,073 square kilometers), which is comparable to twice the size of Idaho. Iraq is bordered by Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and the Persian Gulf. Baghdad was the name of a village that the Arabs chose to develop as their capital and is in the central plains. The northern border areas near Iran and Turkey are mountainous and experience cold, harsh winters, while the west is mostly desert. The differences in climate have influenced the economies of the various areas and ethnic groups, especially since a large part of the economy used to be agriculturally based.

Demography: The estimated Iraqi population for 2000 is 22,675,617 people. Arabs comprise about three-fourths of the population, and Kurds compose about one-fifth. The remaining people are divided into several ethnic groups, including Assyrian, Turkoman, Chaldean, Armenian, Yazidi, and Christian.

Linguistic Affiliation: Almost all Iraqis speak and understand their official language, Arabic. Arabic, a Semitic language, was introduced by the Arab conquerors and has three different forms: classical, modern standard, and spoken. Classical Arabic, best known by scholars, is the written language of the Qur'an. Modern Standard Arabic, which has virtually the same structure in all Arabic-speaking countries, is taught in schools for reading and writing. The spoken language is Iraqi Arabic and is extremely similar to that which is spoken in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Those who go to school learn Modern Standard Arabic, and many that do not attend school are likely to at least understand it. The major differences between modern standard and Iraqi Arabic are changes in verb form and overall simplicity in the grammar of spoken Arabic.

3. Iraqi Folk Tales: "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves"

Folk tales have been an integral part of human life from the very beginning of civilization. The journey of the folk tales is like that of a flowing water body that trickles off its source and streams down, being joined on its way by rivulets to become a river to join the sea. The story doesn't end there. It again travels back, riding the clouds, and rains down over its source or on some nearby hill.

These tales mirror the cultural and social conditions of the related land. During the course of time, they keep adding new colours. Besides entertaining, these tales reflect the social history of civilization. There is a sweet mixture of sentiments, realities of everyday life, ideals, and moral values. These tales unveil the dreams and the fantasies of common rural folk or a small town common man in the simplest form.

Every society has a treasure of folk tales. Selecting stories from tens of thousands of stories was no easy task. Finally, the stories having the best ingredients of entertainment and educative values were selected. A great effort has been made to keep the language and the narrative simple and easy to make this page enjoyable for every age group besides young readers. We would welcome your reactions.

These tales and Folklore are the true mirrors of a land's civilization, culture, customs, and traditions. And the beauty is that they teach very simple and basic universal values of truth, moral character, dutifulness, love, compassion, and the brotherhood of all humans. The grassroots level texture of the stories is really endearing.

In this collection, we have compiled only the best educative and moral tales. They entertain, teach and kindle into the children a new realization of the world they are part of. The tales introduce children to the civilizations and the cultures of the far-off countries and to the diversity of their own country to embellish their general knowledge.

"Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" (Arabic: علي بابا والأربعون لصا) : is a folk tale from the One Thousand and One Nights. It was added to the collection in the 18th century by its French translator Antoine Galland, who heard it from Syrian storyteller Hanna Diyab. As one of the most familiar of the Arabian Nights tales, it has been widely retold and performed in many media, especially for children, for whom the more violent aspects of the story are often suppressed.

In the original version, Ali Baba (Arabic: علي بابا 'Alī Bābā) is a poor woodcutter and an honest person who discovers the secret of a thieves' den and enters with the magic phrase "open sesame". The thieves try to kill Ali Baba, but Ali Baba's faithful slave-girl foils their plots. Ali Baba's son marries her, and Ali Baba keeps the secret of the treasure.

The tale was added to the story collection One Thousand and One Nights by one of its European translators, Antoine Galland, who called his volumes *Les Mille et Une Nuits* (1704–1717). Galland was an 18th-century French Orientalist who heard it in oral form from a Syrian Maronite story-teller called Hanna Diyab, who came from Aleppo in modern-day Syria and told the story in Paris.[1] In any case, the earliest known text of the story is Galland's French version. Richard F. Burton included it in the supplemental volumes (rather than the main collection of stories) of his translation (published as *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*).

The American Orientalist Duncan Black MacDonald discovered an Arabic-language manuscript of the story at the Bodleian Library; however, this was later found to be a counterfeit.

4. The Story

Ali Baba and his older brother, (Arabic: قاسم :Qāsīm) Cassim (sometimes spelled Kasim), are the sons of a merchant. After their father's death, the greedy Cassim marries a wealthy woman and becomes well-to-do, building on their father's business. Ali Baba marries a poor woman and settles into the trade of a woodcutter.

One day, Ali Baba is at work collecting and cutting firewood in the forest when he happens to overhear a group of 40 thieves visiting their stored treasure. Their treasure is in a cave, the mouth of which is sealed by a huge rock. It opens on the magic words "open sesame" and seals itself on the words "close sesame". When the thieves are gone, Ali Baba enters the cave himself and takes a single bag of gold coins home.

Ali Baba and his wife borrow his sister-in-law's scales to weigh their new wealth. Unbeknownst to them, Cassim's wife puts a blob of wax in the scales to find out what Ali Baba is using them for, as she is curious to know what kind of grain her impoverished brother-in-law needs to measure. To her shock, she finds a gold coin sticking to the scales and tells her husband. Under pressure from his brother, Ali Baba is forced to reveal the secret of the cave. Cassim goes to the cave, taking a donkey with him to take as much treasure as possible. He enters the cave with the magic words. However, in his greed and excitement over the treasure, he forgets the words to get out again and ends up trapped. The thieves find him there and kill him. When his brother does not come back, Ali Baba goes to the cave to look for him and finds the body quartered, with each piece displayed just inside the cave's entrance as a warning to anyone else who might try to enter.

Ali Baba brings the body home, where he entrusts Morgiana (Arabic: مرجانة Murjāna), a clever slave-girl from Cassim's household, with the task of making others believe that Cassim has died a natural death. First, Morgiana purchases medicines from an apothecary, telling him that Cassim is gravely ill. Then, she finds an old tailor known as Baba Mustafa, whom she pays, blindfolds, and leads to Cassim's house. There, overnight, the tailor stitches the pieces of Cassim's body back together. Ali Baba and his family are able to give Cassim a proper burial without anyone suspecting anything.

The thieves, finding the body gone, realize that another person must know their secret, and they set out to track him down. One of the thieves goes down to the town and comes across Baba Mustafa, who mentions that he has just sewn the pieces of a corpse back together. Realizing the dead man must have been the thieves' victim, the thief asks Baba Mustafa to lead the way to the house where the deed was performed. The tailor is blindfolded again, and in this state, he is able to retrace his steps and find the house. The thief marks the door with a symbol so the other thieves can come back that night and kill everyone in the house. However, the thief has been seen by Morgiana, who, loyal to her master, foils the thief's plan by marking all the houses in the neighborhood similarly. When the 40 thieves return that night, they cannot identify the correct house, and their leader kills the unsuccessful thief in a furious rage. The next day, another thief revisits Baba Mustafa and tries again. Only this time, a chunk is chipped out of the stone step at Ali Baba's front door. Again, Morgiana foils the plan by making similar chips on all the other

doorsteps, and the second thief is killed for his failure as well. At last, the leader of the thieves goes and looks at himself. This time, he memorizes every detail he can of the exterior of Ali Baba's house.

The leader of the thieves pretends to be an oil merchant in need of Ali Baba's hospitality, bringing with him mules loaded with 38 oil jars, one filled with oil, the other 37 hiding the other remaining thieves. Once Ali Baba is asleep, the thieves plan to kill him. Again, Morgiana discovers and foils the plan, killing the 37 thieves in their oil jars by pouring boiling oil on them. When their leader comes to rouse his men, he discovers they are all dead and escapes. The next morning, Morgiana tells Ali Baba about the thieves in the jars. They bury them, and Ali Baba shows his gratitude by giving Morgiana her freedom.

To exact revenge, the leader of the thieves establishes himself as a merchant, befriends Ali Baba's son (who is now in charge of the late Cassim's business), and is invited to dinner at Ali Baba's house. However, the thief is recognized by Morgiana, who performs a sword dance with a dagger for the diners and plunges it into the thief's heart when he is off his guard. Ali Baba is at first angry with Morgiana, but when he finds out the thief wants to kill him, he is extremely grateful and rewards Morgiana by marrying her to his son. Ali Baba is then left as the only one knowing the secret of the treasure in the cave and how to access it.

The story has been used as a popular pantomime plot for many years. An example of the "pantomime Ali Baba" was the pantomime/musical *Chu Chin Chow* (1916). *40 Thieves* (1886) was a pantomime at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh. *Ali-Baba* (1887) is an opéra comique, with music by Charles Lecocq. *Ali Baba* (1981) is a computer video game by Quality Software. *Ali Baba* (2007) is a French telefilm starring Gérard Jugnot.

The most famous collection of Arab folk tales, *The Thousand and One Nights*, was probably put together in Iraq sometime around AD 1000–1500. Supposedly, a beautiful woman named Scheherazade marries a king who has killed all his previous wives. Every night she tells him a story that is a "cliffhanger," so that he must keep her alive to find out the ending. This goes on for one thousand and one night. Finally, the king decides to let her stay alive forever as his wife. Among the stories she tells are the well-known tales of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp," and "The Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor".

Another famous story originating in ancient Iraq (then known as Mesopotamia) is the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. The poem tells of Gilgamesh's struggles to achieve immortality.

Iraqi folklore includes some common superstitions. For example, it is considered good luck to have a stork build its nest on your roof. Women who have had no children and people with blue eyes are not allowed to attend birth celebrations to keep harm from coming to the baby.



Figure No. (1) The Pantomime Images of the Tale with Artworks Illustrations. ©Shutterstock.com

5. Epic of Gilgamesh – Epic Poem Summary – Other Ancient Civilizations – Classical Literature

(Epic poem, anonymous, Sumerian/Mesopotamian/Akkadian, c. 20th – 10th Century BCE, about 1,950 lines)

Gilgamesh is the semi-mythic King of Uruk in Mesopotamia, best known for *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (written c. 2150 - 1400 BCE), the great Sumerian/Babylonian poetic work that pre-dates Homer's writing by 1500 years and, therefore, stands as the oldest piece of epic world literature.

The motif of the quest for the meaning of life is first fully explored in Gilgamesh as the hero-king leaves his kingdom following the death of his best friend, Enkidu, to find the mystical figure Utnapishtim and gain eternal life. Gilgamesh's fear of death is actually a fear of meaninglessness, and, although he fails to win immortality, the quest itself gives his life meaning. This theme has been explored by writers and philosophers from antiquity up to the present day.

"The Epic of Gilgamesh" is an epic poem from ancient Mesopotamia and among the earliest known literary writings in the world. It originated as a series of Sumerian legends and poems in a cuneiform script dating back to the early 3rd or late 2nd millennium BCE, which were later gathered into a longer Akkadian poem (the complete version existing today, preserved on 12 clay tablets, dates from the 12th to 10th Century BCE).

It follows the story of Gilgamesh, the mythological hero-king of Uruk, and his half-wild friend, Enkidu, as they undertake a series of dangerous quests and adventures, and then Gilgamesh's search for the secret of immortality after the death of his friend. It also includes the story of a great flood very similar to the story of Noah in "The Bible" and elsewhere.

6. The story

It begins with the introduction of Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, two-thirds god and one-third human, blessed by the gods with strength, courage, and beauty, and the strongest and greatest king who ever existed. The great city of Uruk is also praised for its glory and its strong brick walls. However, the people of Uruk are not happy and complain that Gilgamesh is too harsh and abuses his power by sleeping with their women. The goddess of creation, Aruru, creates a mighty wild-man named Enkidu, a rival in strength to Gilgamesh. He lives a natural life with the wild animals, but he soon starts bothering the shepherds and trappers of the area and jostles the animals at the watering hole. At the request of a trapper, Gilgamesh sends a temple prostitute, Shamhat, to seduce and tame Enkidu, and, after six days and seven nights with the harlot, he is no longer just a wild beast who lives with animals. He soon learns the ways of men and is shunned by the animals he used to live with, and the harlot eventually persuades him to come to live in the city. Meanwhile, Gilgamesh has some strange dreams, which his mother, Ninsun, explains as an indication that a mighty friend will come to him. The newly-civilized Enkidu leaves the wilderness with his consort for the city of Uruk, where he learns to help the local shepherds and trappers in their work. One day, when Gilgamesh himself comes to a wedding party to sleep with the bride, as is his custom, he finds his way blocked by the mighty Enkidu, who opposes Gilgamesh's ego, his treatment of women, and the defamation of the sacred bonds of marriage. Enkidu and Gilgamesh fight each other, and, after a mighty battle, Gilgamesh defeats Enkidu but breaks off from the fight and spares his life. He also begins to heed what Enkidu has said and to learn the virtues of mercy and humility, along with courage and nobility. Both Gilgamesh and Enkidu are transformed for the better through their new-found friendship and have many lessons to learn from each other. In time, they begin to see each other as brothers and become inseparable. Years later, bored with the peaceful life in Uruk and wanting to make an everlasting name for himself, Gilgamesh proposes to travel to the sacred Cedar Forest to cut some great trees and kill the guardian, the demon Humbaba. Enkidu objects to the plan as the Cedar Forest is the sacred realm of the gods and not meant for mortals, but neither Enkidu nor the council of elders of Uruk can convince Gilgamesh not to go. Gilgamesh's mother also complains about the quest but eventually gives in and asks the sun-god Shamash for his support. She also gives Enkidu some advice and adopts him as her second son. On the way to the Cedar Forest, Gilgamesh has some bad dreams, but each time Enkidu manages to explain away the dreams as good omens, and he encourages and urges Gilgamesh when he becomes afraid again on reaching the forest. Finally, the two heroes confront Humbaba, the demon-ogre guardian of the sacred trees, and a great battle commences. Gilgamesh offers the monster his own sisters as wives and concubines in order to distract it into giving away his seven layers of armour, and finally, with the help of the winds sent by the sun-god Shamash, Humbaba is defeated. The monster begs Gilgamesh for his life, and Gilgamesh at first pities the creature, despite Enkidu's practical advice to kill the beast. Humbaba then curses them both, and Gilgamesh finally puts an end to it. The two heroes cut down a huge cedar tree, and Enkidu uses it to make a massive door for the gods, which he floats down the river. Sometime later, the goddess Ishtar (goddess of love and war and daughter of the sky-god Anu) makes sexual advances on Gilgamesh, but he rejects her because of her mistreatment of her previous lovers. The offended Ishtar insists that her father send the "Bull of Heaven" to avenge Gilgamesh's rejection, threatening to raise the dead if he does not comply. The beast brings with it a great drought and plague of the land, but Gilgamesh and Enkidu, this time without divine help, slay the beast and offer its heart to Shamash, throwing the bull's hindquarters in the face of the outraged Ishtar.

The city of Uruk celebrates the great victory, but Enkidu has a bad dream in which the gods decide to punish Enkidu himself for the killing of the Bull of Heaven and Humbaba. He curses the door he made for the gods, and he curses the trapper he met, the harlot he loved, and the very day that he became human. However, he regrets his curses when Shamash speaks from heaven and points out how unfair Enkidu is being. He also points out that Gilgamesh will become but a shadow of his former self if Enkidu were to die. Nevertheless, the curse takes hold, and day after day, Enkidu becomes more and more ill. As he dies, he describes his descent into the horrific dark Underworld (the "House of Dust"), where the dead wear feathers like birds and eat clay. Gilgamesh is devastated by Enkidu's death and offers gifts to the gods in the hope that he might be allowed to walk beside Enkidu in the Underworld. He orders the people of Uruk, from the lowest farmer to the highest temple priests, to also mourn Enkidu and order

statues of Enkidu to be built. Gilgamesh is so full of grief and sorrow over his friend that he refuses to leave Enkidu's side or allow his corpse to be buried until six days and seven nights after his death when maggots begin to fall from his body.

Gilgamesh is determined to avoid Enkidu's fate and decides to make the perilous journey to visit Utnapishtim and his wife, the only humans to have survived the Great Flood and who were granted immortality by the gods, in the hope of discovering the secret of everlasting life. The ageless Utnapishtim and his wife now reside in a beautiful country in another world; Dilmun and Gilgamesh travel far to the east in search of them, crossing great rivers and oceans and mountain passes and grappling and slaying monstrous mountain lions, bears, and other beasts. Eventually, he comes to the twin peaks of Mount Mashu at the end of the earth, from where the sun rises from the other world, the gate of which is guarded by two terrible scorpion-beings. They allow Gilgamesh to proceed when he convinces them of his divinity and his desperation, and he travels for twelve leagues through the dark tunnel where the sun travels every night. The world at the end of the tunnel is a bright wonderland, full of trees with leaves of jewels.

Gilgamesh flood, the epic of Gilgamesh flood, when Gilgamesh was written. The first person Gilgamesh meets there is the wine-maker Siduri, who initially believes he is a murderer of his disheveled appearance and attempts to dissuade him from his quest. But eventually, she sends him to Urshanabi, the ferryman who must help him cross the sea to the island where Utnapishtim lives, navigating the Waters of Death, of which the slightest touch means instant death. When he meets Urshanabi, though, he appears to be surrounded by a company of stone-giants, which Gilgamesh promptly kills, thinking them to be hostile. He tells the ferryman his story and asks for his help, but Urshanabi explains that he has just destroyed the sacred stones which allow the ferry boat to safely cross the Waters of Death. The only way they can now cross is if Gilgamesh cuts 120 trees and fashions them into punting poles so that they can cross the waters by using a new pole each time and by using his garment as a sail.

Finally, they reach the island of Dilmun, and when Utnapishtim sees that there is someone else in the boat, he asks Gilgamesh who he is. Gilgamesh tells him his story and asks for help, but Utnapishtim reprimands him because he knows that fighting the fate of humans is futile and ruins the joy in life. Gilgamesh demands of Utnapishtim in what way their two situations differ, and Utnapishtim tells him the story of how he survived the great flood. Utnapishtim recounts how a great storm and flood were brought to the world by the god Enlil, who wanted to destroy all of mankind for the noise and confusion they brought to the world. But the god Ea forewarned Utnapishtim, advising him to build a ship in readiness and to load onto it his treasures, his family, and the seeds of all living things. The rains came as promised, and the whole world was covered with water, killing everything except Utnapishtim and his boat. The boat came to rest on the tip of the mountain of Nisir, where they waited for the waters to subside, releasing first a dove, then a swallow, and then a raven to check for dry land. Utnapishtim then made sacrifices and libations to the gods, and although Enlil was angry that someone had survived his flood, Ea advised him to make his peace. So, Enlil blessed Utnapishtim and his wife and granted them everlasting life, and took them to live in the land of the gods on the island of Dilmun. However, despite his reservations about why the gods should give him the same honour as himself, the hero of the flood, Utnapishtim does reluctantly decide to offer Gilgamesh a chance for immortality. First, though, he challenges Gilgamesh to stay awake for six days and seven nights, but Gilgamesh falls asleep almost before Utnapishtim finishes speaking. When he awakes after seven days of sleep, Utnapishtim ridicules his failure and sends him back to Uruk, along with the ferryman Urshanabi in exile.

As they leave, though, Utnapishtim's wife asks her husband to have mercy on Gilgamesh for his long journey, and so he tells Gilgamesh of a plant that grows at the very bottom of the ocean that will make him young again. Gilgamesh obtains the plant by binding stones to his feet to allow him to walk on the bottom of the sea. He plans to use the flower to rejuvenate the old men of the city of Uruk and then to use it himself. Unfortunately, he places the plant on the shore of a lake while he bathes, and it is stolen by a serpent, which loses its old skin and is thus reborn. Gilgamesh weeps at having failed at both opportunities to obtain immortality, and he disconsolately returns to the massive walls of his own city of Uruk.

In time, Gilgamesh too dies, and the people of Uruk mourn his passing, knowing that they will never see his life again. The twelfth tablet is apparently unconnected with previous ones and tells an alternative legend from earlier in the story when Enkidu is still alive. Gilgamesh complains to Enkidu that he has lost some objects given to him by the goddess Ishtar when they fell into the Underworld. Enkidu offers to bring them back for him, and the delighted Gilgamesh tells Enkidu what he must and must not do in the Underworld in order to be sure of coming back. When Enkidu sets off, however, he promptly forgets all this advice and does everything he was told not to do, resulting in his being trapped in the Underworld. Gilgamesh prays to the gods to return his friend, and, although Enlil and Suen do not even bother to reply, Ea and Shamash decide to help. Shamash cracks a hole in the earth, and Enkidu jumps out of it (whether as a ghost or in reality is not clear). Gilgamesh questions Enkidu about what he has seen in the Underworld.

7. The Analysis

Gilgamesh tablet, Gilgamesh immortality, bull of heaven Gilgamesh The earliest Sumerian versions of "The Epic of Gilgamesh" date from as early as the Third Dynasty of Ur (2150 – 2000 BCE) and are written in Sumerian cuneiform script, one of the earliest known forms of written expression. It relates ancient folklore, tales, and myths, and it is believed that there were many different smaller stories and myths that, over time, grew together into one complete work. The earliest Akkadian versions (Akkadian is a later, unrelated, Mesopotamian language, which also used the cuneiform writing system) are dated to the early 2nd millennium.

The so-called "standard" Akkadian version, consisting of twelve (damaged) tablets written by the Babylonian scribe Sin-liqe-unninni sometimes between 1300 and 1000 BCE, was discovered in 1849 in the library of the 7th Century BCE Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal, in Nineveh, the capital of the ancient Assyrian empire (in modern-day Iraq). It is written in standard Babylonian, a dialect of Akkadian that was only used for literary purposes. The original title, based on the opening words, was "He Who Saw the Deep" ("Sha naqba imuru") or, in the earlier Sumerian versions, "Surpassing All Other Kings" ("Shutur eli sharri").

Fragments of other compositions of the Gilgamesh story have been found in other places in Mesopotamia and as far away as Syria and Turkey. Five shorter poems in the Sumerian language ("Gilgamesh and Huwawa", "Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven", "Gilgamesh and Agga of Kish", "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld," and "Death of Gilgamesh"), more than 1,000 years older than the Nineveh tablets, have also been discovered. The Akkadian standard edition is the basis of most modern translations, with the older Sumerian versions being used to supplement it and fill in the gaps or lacunae.

The twelfth tablet, which is often appended as a kind of sequel to the original eleven, was most probably added at a later date and seemed to bear little relation to the well-crafted and finished eleven tablet epic. It is actually a near copy of an earlier tale, in which Gilgamesh sends Enkidu to retrieve some objects of his from the Underworld, but Enkidu dies and returns in the form of a spirit to relate the nature of the Underworld to Gilgamesh. Enkidu's pessimistic description of the Underworld in this tablet is the oldest such description known.

Gilgamesh full story, the epic of Gilgamesh flood story, Gilgamesh vs. Noah Gilgamesh might actually have been a real ruler in the late Early Dynastic II period (c. 27th Century BCE), a contemporary of Agga, king of Kish. The discovery of artifacts dating back to around 2600 BCE, associated with Enmebaragesi of Kish (who is mentioned in the legends as the father of one of Gilgamesh's adversaries), has lent credibility to the historical existence of Gilgamesh. In Sumerian king lists, Gilgamesh is noted as the fifth king ruling after the flood.

According to some scholars, there are many parallel verses, as well as themes or episodes, which indicate a substantial influence of the "Epic of Gilgamesh" on the later Greek epic poem "The Odyssey", ascribed to Homer. Some aspects of the "Gilgamesh" flood myth seem to be closely related to the story of Noah's ark in "The Bible" and the Qur'an, as well as similar stories in Greek, Hindu, and other myths, down to the building of a boat to accommodate all life, its eventual coming to rest on the top of a mountain and the sending out of a dove to find dry land. It is also thought that the Alexander the Great myth in Islamic and Syrian cultures is influenced by the Gilgamesh story.

The "Epic of Gilgamesh" is essentially a secular narrative, and there is no suggestion that it was ever recited as part of a religious ritual. It is divided into loosely connected episodes covering the most important events in the life of the hero, although there is no account of Gilgamesh's miraculous birth or childhood legends.

The standard Akkadian version of the poem is written in loose rhythmic verse, with four beats to a line, while the older, Sumerian version has a shorter line with two beats. It uses "stock epithets" (repeated common descriptive words applied to the main characters) in the same way as Homer does, although they are perhaps more sparingly used than in Homer. Also, as in many oral poetry traditions, there is the word for word repetitions of (often fairly long) narrative and conversation sections and of long and elaborate greeting formulae. A number of the usual devices of poetic embellishment are employed, including puns, deliberate ambiguity and irony, and the occasional effective use of similes.

Despite the antiquity of the work, we are shown, through the action, a very human concern with mortality, the search for knowledge, and for an escape from the common lot of man. Much of the tragedy in the poem arises from the conflict between the desires of the divine part of Gilgamesh (from his goddess mother) and the destiny of the mortal man (his mortality conferred on him by his human father).

The wild man Enkidu was created by the gods both as a friend and companion for Gilgamesh, but also as a foil for him and as a focus for his excessive vigour and energy. Interestingly, Enkidu's progression from wild animal to civilized city man represents a kind of biblical "Fall" in reverse and an allegory of the stages by which man reaches civilization (from savagery to pastoralism to city life), suggesting that the early Babylonians may have been social evolutionists.

Historical & Legendary King

Gilgamesh's father is said to have been the Priest-King Lugalbanda (who is featured in two Sumerian poems concerning his magical abilities, which pre-date Gilgamesh), and his mother, the goddess Ninsun (also known as Ninsumun, the Holy Mother and Great Queen). Accordingly, Gilgamesh was a demi-god who was said to have lived an exceptionally long life (the Sumerian King List records his reign as 126 years) and to be possessed of super-human strength.

Known as 'Bilgames' in Sumerian, 'Gilgames' in Greek, and associated closely with the figure of Dumuzi from the Sumerian poem The Descent of Inanna, Gilgamesh is widely accepted as the historical 5th king of Uruk who reigned in the 26th century BCE. His influence was so profound that myths of his divine status grew up around his deeds and finally culminated in the tales found in The Epic of Gilgamesh. Later Mesopotamian kings would invoke his name and associate his lineage with their own. Most famously, Shulgi of Ur (2029-1982 BCE), considered the greatest king of the Ur III Period (2047-1750 BCE) in Mesopotamia, claimed Lugalbanda and Ninsun as his parents and Gilgamesh as his brother to elevate his reign in the eyes of the people.

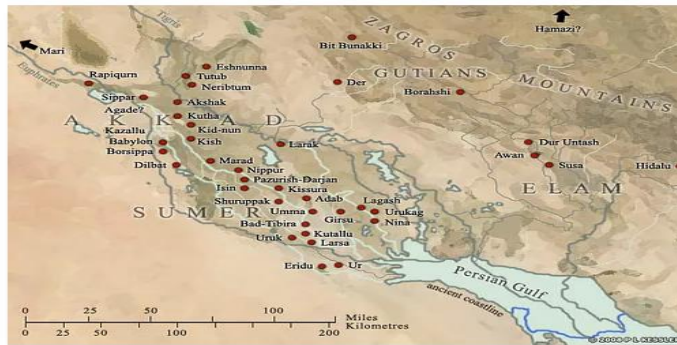


Figure No. (2) Map of Sumer. ©Google.com

8. Development of the Text

The Akkadian version of the text was discovered at Nineveh, in the ruins of the library of Ashurbanipal, in 1849 CE by the archaeologist Austin Henry Layard. Layard's expedition was part of a mid-19th century CE initiative of European institutions and governments to fund expeditions to Mesopotamia to find physical evidence to corroborate events described in the Bible. What these explorers found instead, however, was that the Bible - previously thought to be the oldest book in the world and comprised of original stories - actually drew upon much older Sumerian myths.

The Epic of Gilgamesh did likewise as it is a compilation of tales, no doubt originally passed down orally, which was finally written down 700-1000 years after the historical king's reign. The author of the version Layard found was the Babylonian writer Shin-Leqi-Unninni (wrote 1300-1000 BCE), who was thought to be the world's first author known by name until the discovery of the works of Enheduanna (2285-2250 BCE), daughter of Sargon of Akkad. Shin-Leqi-Unninni drew upon Sumerian sources to create his story and probably had a significant number of working from as Gilgamesh had been a popular hero for centuries by the time the epic was created. In the Sumerian tale of Inanna and the Huluppu Tree, in which the goddess Inanna plants a troublesome tree in her garden and appeals to her family for help with it, Gilgamesh appears as her loyal brother who comes to her aid.

In this story, Inanna (the Sumerian goddess of love and war) plants a tree in her garden with the hope of one day making a chair and bed from it. The tree becomes infested, however, by a snake at its roots, a female demon (lilitu) in its center, and an Anzu bird in its branches.

No matter what, Inanna cannot rid herself of the pests and so appeals to her brother, Utu, god of the sun, for help. Utu refuses, but her plea is heard by Gilgamesh, who comes, heavily armed, and kills the snake. The demon and Anzu bird then flee, and Gilgamesh, after taking the branches for himself, presents the trunk to Inanna to build her bed and chair. This is thought to be the first appearance of Gilgamesh in heroic poetry, and the fact that he rescues a powerful and potent goddess from a difficult situation shows the high regard in which he was held even early on.

Other tales mentioning Gilgamesh also represent him as the great hero, and the historical king was eventually accorded completely divine status as a god. He was seen as the brother of Inanna, one of the most popular goddesses, if not the most popular, in all of Mesopotamia. Prayers found inscribed on clay tablets address Gilgamesh in the afterlife as a judge in the Underworld, comparable in wisdom to the famous Greek judges of the Underworld, Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Aeacus.

The Epic Tale

In The Epic of Gilgamesh, the great king is thought to be too proud and arrogant by the gods, and so they decide to teach him a lesson by sending the wild man, Enkidu, to humble him. Enkidu and Gilgamesh are considered an even match by the people, but after a fierce battle, Enkidu is bested. He freely accepts his defeat, and the two become friends and embark on adventures together.

They kill Humbaba, the demon of the Cedar Forest, and this attracts the attention of Inanna (known by her Akkadian/Babylonian name Ishtar in the story). Inanna tries to seduce Gilgamesh, but he rejects her, citing all the other men she has had as lovers who ended their lives poorly. Inanna is enraged and sends her brother-in-law, the Bull of Heaven, down to earth to destroy Gilgamesh. Enkidu comes to his friend's aid and kills the bull, but, in doing so, he has offended the gods and is condemned to death.

9. Legacy & continuing Debate

Through his struggle to find meaning in life, Gilgamesh defied death and, in doing so, became the first epic hero in world literature. The grief of Gilgamesh and the questions his friend's death evokes resonate with every human being who has wrestled with the meaning of life in the face of death. Although Gilgamesh ultimately fails to win immortality in the story, his deeds live on through the written word, and so does he.

Since The Epic of Gilgamesh existed in oral form long before it was written down, there has been much debate over whether the extant tale is more early Sumerian or later Babylonian in cultural influence. The best-preserved version of the story, as noted, comes from Shin-Leqi-Unninni, who most likely embellished on the original Sumerian source material. Regarding this, the Orientalist Samuel Noah Kramer writes:

"Of the various episodes comprising The Epic of Gilgamesh, several go back to Sumerian prototypes actually involving the hero Gilgamesh. Even in those episodes which lack Sumerian counterparts, most of the individual motifs reflect Sumerian mythic and epic sources. In no case, however, did the Babylonian poets slavishly copy the Sumerian material. They so modified its content and molded its form in accordance with their own temper and heritage that only the bare nucleus of the Sumerian original remains recognizable. As for the plot structure of the epic as a whole - the forceful and fateful episodic drama of the restless, adventurous hero and his inevitable disillusionment - it is definitely a Babylonian rather than a Sumerian development and achievement. (History Begins at Sumer, 270)."

Historical evidence for Gilgamesh's existence is found in inscriptions crediting him with the building of the great walls of Uruk (modern day Warka, Iraq), which, in the story, are the tablets upon which he first records his great deeds and his quest for the meaning of life. There are other references to him by known historical figures of his time, such as King Enmebaragesi of Kish and, of course, the Sumerian King List and the legends which grew up around his reign.

10. A German Team Of Archaeologists Claim To Have Discovered The Tomb Of Gilgamesh In April Of 2003 CE.

In the present day, Gilgamesh is still spoken of and written about. A German team of Archaeologists claims to have discovered the Tomb of Gilgamesh in April of 2003 CE. Archaeological excavations, conducted through modern technology involving magnetization in and around the old riverbed of the Euphrates, have revealed garden enclosures, specific buildings, and structures described in The Epic of Gilgamesh, including the great king's tomb. According to legend, Gilgamesh was buried at the bottom of the Euphrates when the waters parted upon his death.

Whether the historical king existed is no longer relevant, however, as the character has taken on a life of his own over the centuries. At the end of the story, when Gilgamesh lies dying, the narrator says:

"The heroes, the wise men, like the new moon, have their waxing and waning. Men will say, "Who has ever ruled with might and with power like [Gilgamesh]?" As in the dark month, the month of shadows, so without him, there is no light. O Gilgamesh, you were given the kingship; such was your destiny; everlasting life was not your destiny. Because of this, do not be sad at heart, do not be grieved or oppressed; he has given you the power to bind and to loose, to be the darkness and the light of mankind. (Sanders, 118)."

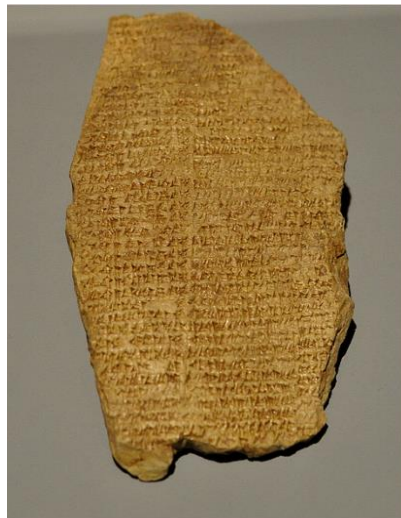
The story of Gilgamesh's failure to realize his dream of immortality is the very means by which he attains it. The epic itself is immortality and has served as the model for any similar tale which has been written since. It was no doubt widely read prior to the fall of the Assyrian Empire in 612 BCE and has become increasingly popular and influential since its rediscovery in 1879 CE.

Gilgamesh encourages hope in that, even though one may not be able to live forever, the choices one makes in life resonate in the lives of others. These others may be friends, family, acquaintances, or may be strangers living long after one's death who continue to be touched by the eternal story of the hero's refusal to accept a life without meaning. Gilgamesh's struggle against apparent meaninglessness defines him - just as it defines anyone who has ever lived - and his quest continues to inspire those who recognize how eternal and intrinsically human that struggle is.

When Enkidu dies, Gilgamesh falls into deep grief and, recognizing his own mortality through the death of his friend, questions the meaning of life and the value of human accomplishment in the face of ultimate extinction. He cries:

"How can I rest? How can I be at peace? Despair is in my heart. What my brother is now, that shall I be when I am dead. Because I am afraid of death, I will go as best I can to find Utnapishtim, whom they call the Faraway, for he has entered the assembly of the gods. (Sandars, 97)."

Casting away all of his old vanity and pride, Gilgamesh sets out on a quest to find the meaning of life and, finally, some way of defeating death. He travels through the mountains, over vast oceans, and finally locates Utnapishtim, who offers him two chances at immortality, both of which he fails. First, he cannot remain awake for six days and six nights, and second, he fails to protect a magic plant; a snake eats the plant while Gilgamesh sleeps. Failing to have won immortality, he is rowed back home by the ferryman Urshanabi and, once there, writes down his story.



The Story of Gilgamesh & Aga
Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin (Copyright)

Figure No. (3) The Tale of Gilgamesh & Aga. ©OsamaShukirHuhammedAmin

11. Richard Hooker Analysis of Gilgamesh

This summary is derived from several sources: translations, commentaries, and academic scholarship on the Shin-eqi-unninni tablets. Verses are derived from several English and French translations in consultation with the English and German language commentaries and with the Babylonian text. For the entire text, you should turn to *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans by Maureen Gallery Kovacs (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), or *Gilgamesh*, translated by John Maier and John Gardner (New York: Vintage, 1981).

As you read this short summary, ask yourself the following questions:

Themes. The first things you want to sort out are the ideas that seem to animate the work. One of the problems with literature, art, mythology, etc., is that you can never be quite sure that you've correctly identified the central ideas or philosophy of the work, but you should take a stab at it anyway. Keep in mind that there is no such thing as one and only one idea in a work of literature and

that in most art and literature, like life, there is no one correct answer concerning any single issue. To identify an idea, question, or theme that the work seems to treat, look for specific places where that idea seems to be a concern; mark these passages and combine and contrast them when you begin to try to resolve what the work seems to be about. The questions I provide in these reading notes are meant to organize the families of questions you can bring to these texts.

Structure. Try to define for yourself the overall structure of the story. This narrative has two distinct parts; what are these parts, and how are they separated? How do events in the second part of the narrative repeat or develop ideas in the first part of the narrative? Do these events contrast with or develop themes and values articulated in the first part of the narrative?

The Nature of the Heroic. When you read the myth, notice how Gilgamesh is presented as superhuman, so powerful that the gods create a counterpart to moderate his desires and actions. Do you get the sense that Gilgamesh and Enkidu should have spared the demon of the cedar forest? Despite all of Gilgamesh's power, he is unable to prevent Enkidu's death, and the narrative changes direction. How can one describe Gilgamesh as a hero in the last half of the work? What has he achieved at the end of the poem? Why is this important?

The Gods. The gods in Gilgamesh are a bit problematic. How do the gods behave? What is their relation to humans? How much freedom do humans have, or are they merely subject to the will of these gods?

The Flood. The story of the Flood is a familiar one, as we shall see in Genesis and Popol Vuh (Plato also gives an account of the Flood and the city of Atlantis in the dialogue, Critias; the Nez Perce of the Palouse also has a flood story in which the only humans that survived did so by climbing the mountain, Yamustus, that is, Steptoe Butte). The earliest surviving reference to the Flood goes back to 1900 B.C. Why is it brought in here? Why do the gods bring on the Flood? Is any reason given? (Later, compare the reasons for the floods in Genesis and Popol Vuh.) What does it tell us about the nature of history and the relation of the gods to humanity?

Tablet 1

The one who saw all [Sha nagba imuru] I will declare to the world,

The one who knew all I would tell about

{line missing}

He saw the great Mystery; he knew the Hidden:

He recovered the knowledge of all the times before the Flood.

He journeyed beyond the distant; he journeyed beyond exhaustion,

And then carved his story on stone. {naru: stone tablets}

This great hero who had all knowledge [nemequ], Gilgamesh, built the great city of Uruk; the tablet invites us to look around and view the greatness of this city, its high walls, its masonwork, and here at the base of its gates, as the foundation of the city walls, a stone of lapis lazuli on which is carved Gilgamesh's account of his exploits, the story you are about to hear.

The account begins: Gilgamesh, two-thirds god, and one-third human, is the greatest king on earth and the strongest superhuman that ever existed; however, he is young and oppresses his people harshly. The people call out to the sky-god Anu, the chief god of the city, to help them. In response, Anu creates a wild man, Enkidu, out in the harsh and wild forests surrounding Gilgamesh's lands. This brute, Enkidu, has the strength of dozens of wild animals; he is to serve as the subhuman rival to the superhuman Gilgamesh.

A trapper's son, while checking on traps in the forest, discovers Enkidu running naked with the wild animals; he rushes to his father with the news. The father advises him to go into the city and take one of the temple harlots, Shamhat, with him to the forest; 1 when she sees Enkidu, she is to offer herself sexually to the wild man. If he submits to her, the trapper says, he will lose his strength and his wildness.

Shamhat meets Enkidu at the watering-hole where all the wild animals gather; she offers herself to him, and he submits, instantly losing his strength and wildness, but he gains understanding and knowledge. He laments for his lost state, but the harlot offers to take him into the city where all the joys of civilization shine in their resplendence; she offers to show him Gilgamesh, the only man worthy of Enkidu's friendship.

Gilgamesh, meanwhile, has two dreams; in the first, a meteorite falls to earth which is so great that Gilgamesh can neither lift it nor turn it. The people gather and celebrate around the meteorite, and Gilgamesh embraces it as he would a wife, but his mother, the goddess Rimat-Ninsun, forces him to compete with the meteorite. In the second, Gilgamesh dreams that an axe appears at his door, so great that he can neither lift it nor turn it. The people gather and celebrate around the axe, and Gilgamesh embraces it as

he would a wife, but his mother, again, forces him to compete with the axe. Gilgamesh asks his mother what these dreams might mean; she tells him a man of great force and strength will come into Uruk. Gilgamesh will embrace this man as he would a wife, and this man will help Gilgamesh perform great deeds.

Tablet 2

Enkidu is gradually introduced to civilization by living for a time with a group of shepherds, who teach him how to tend flocks, how to eat, how to speak properly, and how to wear clothes. Enkidu then enters the city of Uruk during a great celebration. Gilgamesh, as the king, claims the right to have sexual intercourse first with every new bride on the day of her wedding; as Enkidu enters the city, Gilgamesh is about to claim that right. Infuriated at this abuse, Enkidu stands in front of the door of the marital chamber and blocks Gilgamesh's way. They fight furiously until Gilgamesh wins the upper hand; Enkidu concedes Gilgamesh's superiority, and the two embrace and become devoted friends.

Both Enkidu and Gilgamesh gradually weaken and grow lazy living in the city, so Gilgamesh proposes a great adventure: they are to journey to the great Cedar Forest in southern Iran and cut down all the cedar trees. To do this, they will need to kill the Guardian of the Cedar Forest, the great demon, Humbaba the Terrible. Enkidu knows about Humbaba from his days running wild in the forest; he tries in vain to convince Gilgamesh not to undertake this folly

Tablet 3

{Most of tablet three doesn't exist}

The elders of the city protest Gilgamesh's endeavor but agree reluctantly. They place the life of the king in the hands of Enkidu, whom they insist shall take the forward position in the battle with Humbaba. Gilgamesh's mother laments her son's fate in prayer to the sun-god, Shamash, asking that god why he put a restless heart in the breast of her son. Shamash promises her that he will watch out for Gilgamesh's life. Ramat-Ninsun, too, commands Enkidu to guard the life of the king and to take the forward position in the battle with Humbaba. In a panic, Enkidu again tries to convince Gilgamesh not to undertake this journey, but Gilgamesh is confident of success.

Tablet 4

Tablet four tells the story of the journey to the cedar forest. On each day of the six day journey, Gilgamesh prays to Shamash; in response to these prayers, Shamash sends Gilgamesh oracular dreams during the night. These dreams are all ominous: The first is not preserved in the second. Gilgamesh dreams that he wrestles a great bull that splits the ground with his breath. Enkidu interprets the dream for Gilgamesh; the dream means that Shamash, the bull, will protect Gilgamesh. In the third, Gilgamesh dreams:

The skies roared with thunder, and the earth heaved,
Then came darkness and a stillness like death.
Lightening smashed the ground, and fires blazed out,
Death flooded from the skies.
When the heat died, and the fires went out,
The plains had turned to ash.

Enkidu's interpretation is missing here, but like the other dreams, it is assumed he puts a positive spin on the dream. The fourth dream is missing, but Enkidu again tells Gilgamesh that the dream portends success in the upcoming battle. The fifth dream is also missing.

At the entrance to the Cedar Forest, Gilgamesh begins to quake with fear; he prays to Shamash, reminding him that he had promised Ninsun that he would be safe. Shamash calls down from heaven, ordering him to enter the forest because Humbaba is not wearing all his armor. The demon Humbaba wears seven coats of armor, but now he is only wearing one, so he is particularly vulnerable. Enkidu loses his courage and turns back; Gilgamesh falls on him, and they have a great fight. Hearing the crash of their fighting, Humbaba comes stalking out of the Cedar Forest to challenge the intruders. A large part of the tablet is missing here. On the one part of the tablet still remaining, Gilgamesh convinces Enkidu that they should stand together against the demon.

Tablet 5

Gilgamesh and Enkidu enter the gloriously beautiful Cedar Forest and begin to cut down the trees. Hearing the sound, Humbaba comes roaring up to them and warns them off. Enkidu shouts at Humbaba that the two of them are much stronger than the demon, but Humbaba, who knows Gilgamesh is a king, taunts the king for taking orders from a nobody like Enkidu. Turning his face into a hideous mask, Humbaba begins to threaten the pair, and Gilgamesh runs and hides. Enkidu shouts at Gilgamesh, inspiring him with courage, and Gilgamesh appears from hiding, and the two begin their epic battle with Humbaba. Shamash intrudes on the

battle, helping the pair, and Humbaba is defeated. On his knees, with Gilgamesh's sword at his throat, Humbaba begs for his life and offers Gilgamesh all the tress in the forest and his eternal servitude. While Gilgamesh is thinking this over, Enkidu intervenes, telling Gilgamesh to kill Humbaba before any of the gods arrive and stop him from doing so. Should he kill Humbaba, he will achieve widespread fame for all the times to come. Gilgamesh, with a great sweep of his sword, removes Humbaba's head. But before he dies, Humbaba screams out a curse on Enkidu: "Of you, two, may Enkidu not live the longer, may Enkidu not find any peace in this world"!

Gilgamesh and Enkidu cut down the cedar forest and, in particular, the tallest of the cedar trees to make a great cedar gate for the city of Uruk. They build a raft out of the cedar and float down the Euphrates river to their city.

Tablet 6

After these events, Gilgamesh, his fame widespread and his frame resplendent in his wealthy clothes, attracts the sexual attention of the goddess Ishtar, who comes to Gilgamesh and offers to become his lover. Gilgamesh refuses with insults, listing all the mortal lovers that Ishtar has had and recounting the dire fates they all met with at her hands. Deeply insulted, Ishtar returns to heaven and begs her father, the sky-god Anu, to let her have the Bull of Heaven to wreak vengeance on Gilgamesh and his city:

Father, let me have the Bull of Heaven
 To kill Gilgamesh and his city.
 For if you do not grant me the Bull of Heaven,
 I will pull down the Gates of Hell itself,
 Crush the doorposts and flatten the door,
 And I will let the dead leave
 And let the dead roam the earth
 And they shall eat the living.
 The dead will overwhelm all the living!

Anu reluctantly gives in, and the Bull of Heaven is sent down into Uruk. Each time the bull breathes, its breath is so powerful that enormous abysses are opened up in the earth, and hundreds of people fall through to their deaths. Working together again, Gilgamesh and Enkidu slay the mighty bull. Ishtar is enraged, but Enkidu begins to insult her, saying that she is next, that he and Gilgamesh will kill her next, and he rips one of the thighs off the bull and hurls it into her face.

Tablet 7

Enkidu falls ill after having a set of ominous dreams; he finds out from the priests that he has been singled out for vengeance by the gods. The Chief Gods have met and have decided that someone should be punished for the killing of Humbaba and the killing of the Bull of Heaven, so of the two heroes, they decide Enkidu should pay the penalty. Enraged at the injustice of the decision, Enkidu curses the great Cedar Gate built from the wood of the Cedar Forest, and he curses the temple harlot, Shamhat, and the trapper, for introducing him to civilization. Shamhash reminds him that, even though his life has been short, he has enjoyed the fruits of civilization and known great happiness. Enkidu then blesses the harlot and the trapper. In a dream, a great demon comes to take Enkidu and drags him to Hell, a House of Dust where all the dead end up; as he is dying, he describes Hell:

The house where the dead dwell in total darkness,
 Where they drink dirt and eat stone,
 Where they wear feathers like birds,
 Where no light ever invades their everlasting darkness,
 Where the door and the lock of Hell are coated with thick dust.
 When I entered the House of Dust,
 On every side, the crowns of kings were heaped,
 On every side, the voices of the kings who wore those crowns,
 Who now only served food to the gods Anu and Enlil,
 Candy, meat, and water poured from skins.
 I saw sitting in this House of Dust a priest and a servant,
 I also saw a priest of purification and a priest of ecstasy,
 I saw all the priests of the great gods.
 There sat Etana and Sumukan,
 There sat Ereshkigal, the queen of Hell,
 Beletseri, the scribe of Hell, sitting before her.
 Beletseri held a tablet and read it to Ereshkigal.
 She slowly raised her head when she noticed me

She pointed at me:
"Who has sent this man"?

Enkidu commends himself to Gilgamesh, and after suffering terribly for twelve days, he finally dies.

Tablet 8

Gilgamesh is torn apart by the death of his friend and utters a long lament, ordering all of creation to never fall silent in mourning his dead friend. Most of this tablet is missing, but the second half seems to be a description of the monument he builds for Enkidu.

Tablet 9

Gilgamesh allows his life to fall apart; he does not bathe, does not shave, does not take care of himself, not so much out of grief for his friend, but because he now realizes that he too must die, and the thought sends him into a panic. He decides that he can't live unless granted eternal life; he decides to undertake the most perilous journey of all: the journey to Utnapishtim and his wife, the only mortals on whom the gods had granted eternal life. Utnapishtim is the Far-Away, living at the mouth of all rivers, at the ends of the world. Utnapishtim was the great king of the world before the Flood and, with his wife, was the only mortal preserved by the gods during the Flood. After an ominous dream, Gilgamesh sets out. He arrives at Mount Mashu, which guards the rising and the setting of the sun, and encounters two large scorpions who guard the way past Mount Mashu. They try to convince him that his journey is futile and fraught with danger, but still, they allow him to pass. Past Mount Mashu is the land of Night, where no light ever appears. Gilgamesh journeys eleven leagues before the light begins to glimmer. After twelve leagues, he has emerged into the day. He enters into a brilliant garden of gems, where every tree bears precious stones.

Tablet 10

Gilgamesh comes to a tavern by the ocean shore; the tavern is kept by Siduri. Frightened by Gilgamesh's ragged appearance, Siduri locks the tavern door and refuses to let Gilgamesh in. Gilgamesh proves his identity and asks Siduri how to find Utnapishtim. Like the giant scorpions, she tells him that his journey is futile and fraught with dangers. However, she directs him to Urshanabi, the ferryman who works for Utnapishtim. Gilgamesh approaches Urshanabi with great arrogance and violence and, in the process, destroys the "stone things" that are somehow critical for the journey to Utnapishtim. When Gilgamesh demands to be taken to Utnapishtim, the ferryman tells him that it is now impossible since the "stone things" have been destroyed. Nevertheless, he advises Gilgamesh to cut several trees down to serve as punting poles; the waters they are to cross are the Waters of Death, and should any mortal touch the waters, that man will instantly die. With the punting poles, Gilgamesh can push the boat and never touch the dangerous waters.

After a long and dangerous journey, Gilgamesh arrives at a shore and encounters another man. He tells this man that he is looking for Utnapishtim and the secret of eternal life; the old man advises Gilgamesh that death is a necessary fact because of the will of the gods; all human effort is only temporary, not permanent.

Tablet 11

At this point, Gilgamesh realizes that he is talking to Utnapishtim, the Far-Away; he hadn't expected an immortal human to be ordinary and aged. He asks Utnapishtim how he received immortality, and Utnapishtim tells him the great secret hidden from humans: In the time before the Flood, there was a city, Shuruppak, on the banks of the Euphrates. There, the counsel of the gods held a secret meeting; they all resolved to destroy the world in a great flood. All the gods were under oath not to reveal this secret to any living thing, but Ea (one of the gods that created humanity) came to Utnapishtim's house and told the secret to the walls of Utnapishtim's house, thus not technically violating his oath to the rest of the gods. He advised the walls of Utnapishtim's house to build a great boat, its length as great as its breadth, to cover the boat, and to bring all living things into the boat. Utnapishtim gets straight to work and finishes the great boat by the new year. Utnapishtim then loads the boat with gold, silver, and all the living things of the earth and launches the boat. Ea orders him into the boat and commands him to close the door behind him. The black clouds arrive, with the thunder god Adad rumbling within them; the earth splits like an earthenware pot, and all the light turns to darkness. The Flood is so great that even the gods are frightened:

The gods shook like beaten dogs, hiding in the far corners of heaven,
Ishtar screamed and wailed:

"The days of old have turned to stone:
We have decided evil things in our Assembly!
Why did we decide those evil things in our Assembly?
Why did we decide to destroy our people?
We have only just now created our beloved humans;

We now destroy them in the sea"!
 All the gods wept and wailed along with her,
 All the gods sat trembling and wept.

The Flood lasts for seven days and seven nights, and finally, light returns to the earth. Utnapishtim opens a window, and the entire earth has been turned into a flat ocean; all humans have been turned to stone. Utnapishtim then falls to his knees and weeps.

Utnapishtim's boat comes to rest on the top of Mount Nimush; the boat lodges firmly on the mountain peak just below the surface of the ocean and remains there for seven days. On the seventh day:

I [Utnapishtim] released a dove from the boat,
 It flew off, but circled around and returned,
 For it could find no perch.
 I then released a swallow from the boat,
 It flew off, but circled around and returned,
 For it could find no perch.
 I then released a raven from the boat,
 It flew off, and the waters had receded:
 It eats, it scratches the ground, but it does not circle around and return.
 I then sent out all the living things in every direction and sacrificed a sheep on that very spot.

The gods smell the odor of the sacrifice and begin to gather around Utnapishtim. Enlil, who had originally proposed to destroy all humans, then arrives, furious that one of the humans had survived since they had agreed to wipe out all humans. He accuses Ea of treachery, but Ea convinces Enlil to be merciful. Enlil then seizes Utnapishtim and his wife and blesses them:

At one time, Utnapishtim was mortal.
 At this time, let him be a god and immortal;
 Let him live far away at the source of all the rivers.

At the end of his story, Utnapishtim offers Gilgamesh a chance at immortality. If Gilgamesh can stay awake for six days and seven nights, he, too, will become immortal. Gilgamesh accepts these conditions and sits down on the shore; the instant he sits down, he falls asleep. Utnapishtim tells his wife that all men are liars and that Gilgamesh will deny having fallen asleep, so he asks his wife to bake a loaf of bread every day and lay the loaf at Gilgamesh's feet. Gilgamesh sleeps without ever waking up for six days and seven nights, at which point Utnapishtim wakes him up. Startled, Gilgamesh says, "I only just dozed off for half a second here." Utnapishtim points out the loaves of bread, showing their states of decay, from the most recent, fresh bread to the oldest, moldy, stale bread that had been laid at his feet on the very first day. Gilgamesh is distraught:

O woe! What do I do now, where do I go now?
 Death has devoured my body,
 Death dwells in my body,
 Wherever I go, wherever I look, there stands Death!

Utnapishtim's wife convinces the old man to have mercy on him; he offers Gilgamesh, in place of immortality, a secret plant that will make Gilgamesh young again. The plant is at the bottom of the ocean surrounding the Far-Away; Gilgamesh ties stones to his feet, sinks to the bottom and plucks the magic plant. But he doesn't use it because he doesn't trust it; rather, he decides to take it back to Uruk and test it out on an old man first to make sure it works.

Urshanabi takes him across the Waters of Death. Several leagues inland, Gilgamesh and Urshanabi stop to eat and sleep; while they're sleeping, a snake slithers up and eats the magic plant (which is why snakes shed their skin) and crawls away. Gilgamesh awakens to find the plant gone; he falls to his knees and weeps:
 For whom have I labored? For whom have I journeyed?
 For whom have I suffered?
 I have gained absolutely nothing for myself,
 I have only profited the snake, the ground lion!

The tale ends with Gilgamesh, at the end of his journey, standing before the gates of Uruk, inviting Urshanabi to look around and view the greatness of this city, its high walls, its masonwork, and here at the base of its gates, as the foundation of the city walls, a stone of lapis lazuli on which is carved Gilgamesh's account of his exploits.

12. Conclusion

The tales of Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sindbad the Sailor have almost become part of Western folklore, though these were added to the collection only in the 18th century in European adaptations. Each evening she tells a story, leaving it incomplete and promising to finish it the following night.

Also, we need to know more about Arabic literature, the body of written works produced in the Arabic language, to comprehend its exquisiteness, loveliness, and charm. The tradition of Arabic literature stretches back some 16 centuries to unrecorded beginnings in the Arabian Peninsula. At certain points in the development of European civilization, the literary culture of Islam and its Arabic medium of expression came to be regarded not only as models for emulation but also, through vital conduits such as Moorish Spain and Norman Sicily, as direct sources of inspiration for the intellectual communities of Europe. The rapid spread of the Islamic faith brought the original literary tradition of the Arabian Peninsula into contact with many other cultural traditions—Byzantine, Persian, Indian, Amazigh (Berber), and Andalusian, to name just a few—transforming and being transformed by all of them. At the turn of the 21st century, the powerful influence of the West tended to give such contacts a more one-sided directionality, but Arab litterateurs were constantly striving to find ways of combining the generic models and critical approaches of the West with more indigenous sources of inspiration drawn from their own literary heritage.

It is the best-preserved model of the Semitic languages. Its syntax and morphology—recorded and systematized as part of the massive research endeavour that followed the production of an authoritative version of the text of the Qur'ān in the 7th century (although this date is a matter of controversy)—provide evidence of early features of the Semitic languages. The Arabic literary tradition began within the context of tribal, nomadic culture. With the advent and spread of Islam, that tradition was carried far and wide during the course of the 7th to the 10th century. The nature of “the modern” in the context of Arabic literary history involves twin processes: first, renewed contacts with the Western world, something that was considerably accelerated by European imperial incursions during the 19th century, and, second, a renewed interest in the classical heritage of the Arabic language and Islam.

One day Ali Baba is at work collecting and cutting firewood in the forest, and he happens to overhear a group of forty thieves visiting their treasure store. The treasure is in a cave, the mouth of which is sealed by magic. It opens on the words "Open, Simsim" and seals itself on the words "Close, Simsim". When the thieves are gone, Ali Baba enters the cave himself and takes some of the treasure homes.

Richard Hooker (1996) states that Gilgamesh was a historical king of Uruk in Babylonia, on the River Euphrates in modern Iraq; he lived about 2700 B.C. Although historians (and your textbook) tend to emphasize Hammurabi and his code of law, the civilizations of the Tigris-Euphrates area, among the first civilizations, focus rather on Gilgamesh and the legends accruing around him to explain, as it were, themselves. One of the greatest contributions of Iraq to human history lies in the development there, more than four thousand years ago, of a highly sophisticated written literature. This literature is today being reconstructed from many thousands of clay tablets inscribed in cuneiform script.

The genre of the story is when it was discovered in the 19th century; the story of Gilgamesh was classified as a Greek epic, a genre is known in Europe, even though it predates the Greek culture that spawned epics, specifically when Herodotus referred to the works of Homer in this way.

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Supplements and Appendixes

See also Ali Baba, fictional character, Alternate titles: 'Alī Bābā, available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Thousand-and-One-Nights>.

Kindly be informed about the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4A4XzRx0UY>, which illustrates the story of Ali Baba and The Forty Thieves in the English language in the kids' story cartoon animation style.