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Sumerian Proverbs: "Collection Four"

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## SUMERIAN PROVERBS: "COLLECTION FOUR"<sup>1</sup>

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CBS 14079 (see photographs on plates I, II, III and IV) is one of the best preserved and most carefully written Sumerian proverb tablets as yet found. It was excavated at Nippur between 1889 and 1900 by the Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania. The tablet now measures 9.0 × 13.7 cm., but was originally about 9.0 × 21.0 cm. in size.<sup>2</sup> It consists of a single column of text on the preserved 22 lines of its obverse, the 24 lines of its reverse, and three lines on the lower edge of the reverse. Originally it seems to have contained approximately sixty-two proverbs<sup>3</sup> of which thirty-two are completely preserved<sup>4</sup> (or restorable with near certainty), three almost so (with only one or two signs broken away or unidentifiable), six badly broken (but preserving enough of a text to provide at least a partial context), and one very badly broken. Of these forty-two proverbs which are preserved in whole or in part, thirty-seven<sup>5</sup> are written in one line on the tablet, three are two lines in length, and two are

of three lines each. The tablet was inscribed, probably in the early part of the Old Babylonian period, in a very fine calligraphic style (with few erasures); many of its signs are reminiscent of those of the Ur III period or of the well-formed signs on the Stele of Hammurapi.

Among the several hundred proverb tablets and fragments studied and arranged by the writer, no duplicates of this tablet have been found, and it has therefore been classed as a separate proverb collection, and designated, for convenience' sake, "Collection Four."<sup>6</sup> As for the individual proverbs, only one of the sixty-two has until now been found in any of the other Old Babylonian period proverb collections.<sup>7</sup> However, three of the proverbs in Collection Four are also found among the Neo-Assyrian bilingual proverbs from Kuyunjik.<sup>8</sup>

As in the other Sumerian proverb collections, Collection Four includes "proverbs" of several varieties.<sup>9</sup> The maxim,<sup>10</sup> the truism or simple apothegm,<sup>11</sup> the adage,<sup>12</sup> and the byword<sup>13</sup>—as

<sup>1</sup> "Collection One" and "Collection Two" have been edited in the writer's (with contributions by Thorkild Jacobsen and Samuel Noah Kramer) *Sumerian Proverbs: Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (in press—hereafter abbreviated Gordon, *SP*). "Collection Three" has also been edited, but is not yet ready for press. References to individual proverbs belonging to these three collections are cited below as follows: e.g., 1.38, 2.108, 3.167, etc.

<sup>2</sup> On the basis of the thickness of the tablet at its broken edge, and the slope of the convex surface of the reverse.

<sup>3</sup> Assuming that the tablet originally had thirty-five lines inscribed on each side, and that the missing proverbs were of the same average lengths as those which are preserved.

<sup>4</sup> The writer has had available a rough hand-copy of the tablet made by Professor Kramer a number of years ago. At four points along the broken edges of the tablet, signs or traces of signs in six of the proverbs (4.13, 4.14 and 4.15; 4.41; 4.42; and 4.61) have since crumbled away—this was prior to the baking of the tablet—and these will be annotated below as having been read from Kramer's copy.

<sup>5</sup> Note that two of these (proverbs 4.37 and 4.52) were too long for one line, and were continued below, the former in an indented portion of the line itself, the latter on the right edge of the tablet.

<sup>6</sup> See note 1 above. For details on the proverb materials, and on the recognition and reconstruction of the Sumerian proverb collections, see Gordon, *SP*, pp. 2-6. According to the "tablet-type" classification set up by the writer (*op. cit.*, pp. 6-10), CBS 14079 may be classed under Type A (Entire Collections), unless it should turn out to be merely an excerpt from a larger collection.

<sup>7</sup> Proverb 4.4 is a variant of proverb 3.167 in Collection Three.

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 4.11, 4.12 and 4.61 (see under the individual proverbs). There have thus now been identified in the Old Babylonian Sumerian proverb materials thirty-seven proverbs which are also found in the later Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian bilingual material, in addition to some five proverbs for which close analogues exist in the later materials. (The writer's statement in *BASOR*, CXXXII [1953], p. 30, note 23, should be modified accordingly.)

<sup>9</sup> For the typological classification of the Sumerian "proverbs," see Gordon, *SP*, pp. 1 and 17-19.

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 4.10 and 4.47.

<sup>11</sup> Proverbs 4.2 (?), 4.7 (?), 4.15, 4.17, 4.18 (?), 4.46, 4.50, 4.51, 4.52 (?), 4.53, 4.54, 4.58, 4.60 and 4.61.

<sup>12</sup> Proverbs 4.1, 4.3 (?), 4.12, 4.14, 4.16, 4.19 (?), 4.43, 4.44, 4.45, 4.48 (?) and 4.59.

<sup>13</sup> Proverbs 4.4, 4.8, 4.9 (?), 4.11 (?), 4.49 and 4.56 (second line?).

well as the taunt,<sup>14</sup> the compliment,<sup>15</sup> and the short fable, parable or anecdote,<sup>16</sup> which are not usually classed among proverbs elsewhere—are all represented in this collection. In respect to the subject-matter of the proverbs, it is quite varied,<sup>17</sup> and there is no such ordering of the proverbs into groups as is found, for example, in Collections One and Two. There are, however, a few instances where two to four proverbs in a row deal with related subject-matter<sup>18</sup> or contain key words,<sup>19</sup> but these seem to be the exception rather than the rule.

In common with the proverbs of the Sumerian collections already edited, those of this collection possess a number of features characteristic of proverbs the world over.<sup>20</sup> Among these are a certain degree of grammatical licence,<sup>21</sup> and the frequent

use of figures of speech<sup>22</sup> and of various types of parallelism<sup>23</sup> as rhetorical devices. While the great majority of the proverbs are in the main dialect of Sumerian, there are a number in Collection Four which are in the Emesal dialect,<sup>24</sup> as well as a few with uncommon phonetic writings.<sup>25</sup>

#### COLLECTION FOUR

#### TEXT AND COMMENTARY<sup>26</sup>

#### 4.1

diš(?)<sup>1</sup>-bi DAG.KISIM×?<sup>2</sup>-du alam-gù-  
dè-dè<sup>3</sup>

One (and the same thing are [?])<sup>4</sup> a walking(?)  
..(?)<sup>5</sup> (and) a shouting(?)<sup>6</sup> statue.

a direct quotation in the midst of a narrative context:  
4.41, 4.42, 4.55 and 4.56.

<sup>22</sup>The two most frequent figures of speech used in the proverbs of Collection Four are *irony* (14 examples: 4.8, 4.9, 4.12, 4.17, 4.43, 4.45, 4.49, 4.51, 4.54, 4.56, 4.58, 4.60, 4.61 and 4.62) and *metaphor* (10 examples: 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.9, 4.14, 4.43, 4.44, 4.45, 4.48, 4.56 and 4.59); less frequent are the following: *simile* (4 examples: 4.6, 4.7, 4.48 and 4.53[?]), *metonymy* (2 examples: 4.11 and 4.61), *personification* (2 examples: 4.16 and 4.56), *synecdoche* (one example: 4.46) and *hyperbole* (one example: 4.4).

<sup>23</sup>The most common forms of parallelism used in the proverbs of this collection are *antithetic parallelism* (13 occurrences: 4.3(?), 4.4, 4.8, 4.11, 4.12, 4.16, 4.43, 4.45, 4.47, 4.48, 4.50, 4.60 [the last two clauses] and 4.61 [the first two clauses]) and *parathetic or synonymous parallelism* (6 occurrences: 4.1, 4.7, 4.15, 4.46, 4.51 and 4.54). A somewhat more complex form of parallelism, in which a third "member" forming a "climax" is added (see Gordon, *SP*, pp. 16 f.), is also represented among the proverbs here (4 examples: 4.9, 4.18 [three parathetic parallels and a fourth member forming the "climax"], 4.42[?] and 4.44). Finally *assonance* is to be found in proverbs 4.4 and 4.18—in the former, there is an apparent "rhyme" (gùr and sur<sub>5</sub>), which is probably accidental.

<sup>24</sup>For the use of the Emesal dialect of Sumerian in the proverbs, cf. Gordon, *SP*, pp. 13 f. The following proverbs in Collection Four are in the Emesal: 4.11, 4.44, 4.50 and 4.51.

<sup>25</sup>For uncommon phonetic writings, cf. proverbs 4.1 (gù-dè-dè), 4.42 and 4.59.

<sup>26</sup>In all cases, signs which have been restored although completely broken away on the tablet are given in square brackets: [ ]. When no signs have been restored, two dots within square brackets represent a single missing sign, three dots two missing signs, and four dots three or more missing signs; in the case of a sign only partially preserved whose reading has not been restored, one dot will be found within the brackets and another outside the brackets.

<sup>14</sup> Proverb 4.62(?).

<sup>15</sup> Proverb 4.5(?).

<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 4.41, 4.42, 4.55 and 4.56.

<sup>17</sup> Among the more intelligible proverbs in this collection, the following are of interest in one way or another for their subject-matter: Climatic conditions: 4.16 and 4.58; Fauna: 4.17 and 4.49; Flora: 4.45; Economic life: 4.47, 4.46 and 4.62; Social institutions: 4.14, 4.43, 4.45, 4.51, 4.53 and 4.54; Religion: 4.11, 4.16, 4.52 and 4.58; Human personality: 4.4, 4.8, 4.10, 4.12, 4.15, 4.46 and 4.56; and Bodily functions: 4.7, 4.48, 4.59, 4.60 and 4.61.

<sup>18</sup> Proverbs 4.12, 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15 all seem to deal with food and drink; 4.41 and 4.42, as well as 4.55 and 4.56, are "anecdotal" in form. Proverbs 4.59, 4.60 and 4.61 all deal with the anus—in the latter two, contrasted with the mouth—but note that 4.48 which seems to contain a similar contrast of the anus and the mouth is separated from these proverbs.

<sup>19</sup> Proverbs 4.50 and 4.51 both begin with the Emesal ta-àm, 'what?'; 4.53 and 4.54 begin with the word a ma, 'mother' (but note that 4.62 also begins with a ma); and 4.56 and 4.57 begin with the word lú, 'man.'

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed analysis of each of these features in the proverbs of Collections One and Two, cf. Gordon, *SP*, pp. 10-17.

<sup>21</sup> For example, omission of the copula: 4.1, 4.9, 4.14, 4.44, 4.45 and 4.46; use of participles in place of finite verbal forms: 4.12 and 4.46; use of the 3rd person where the antecedent is assumed to refer to the occasion on which the proverb is used: 4.4, 4.5, 4.15 and 4.49; use of the "personal" possessive -ni ('his') instead of the "non-human" possessive -bi ('its') for personified animals: 4.56; Special uses of the optative—in the protasis of conditional sentences: 4.16, 4.41 and 4.49, or as an asseverative both in declarative sentences (4.16 and 4.17) and in questions (4.10); the use of a negative enclitic (here the enclitic na): 4.2 and possibly 4.52; the use of the particle -e-še to indicate

If analysed correctly, the proverb may state that two objects described as performing acts contradictory to their natures are alike in their incongruity.

1. The sign, if it is DIŠ, is written over an erasure.

2. The sign inscribed within DAG.KISIM looks most like GU, which, it should be noted, does not correspond to any of the known signs of the DAG.KISIM family (cf. Landsberger, *MSL* II, pp. 90 and 98-118).

3. i. e., KA-NE-NE.

4. Literally, perhaps, if the reading is correct, "their (being) one" (cf. the use of diš in proverbs 3.107 and 3.152 in Collection Three). The reading could also be gēš-bi, 'the sixty of them (are),' in which case the allusion would be totally obscure.

5. For the various possible meanings of the signs compounded with DAG.KISIM, cf. Landsberger, *loc. cit.* If the interpretation of the proverb is correct, the word should represent some object which can not be logically described as "walking" (du), possibly a maš 'stable.'

6. For this highly uncertain reading and interpretation of KA-NE-NE, see Kramer, *AS* 10, pp. 4 f., line 43, and p. 54, and *id.*, *JCS* I (1947), pp. 16 f. ("Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living," line 104), and p. 40.

#### 4.2

nig-NE-si me-ni kal-kal-àm egir-ra<sup>1</sup>-bi na

He who fills(?) ...<sup>2</sup>—his 'divine norms'<sup>3</sup> were (once) precious, (but now) they have no future!<sup>4</sup>

1. There is an erasure between -ra- and -bi.

2. nig-NE-si should be expected to refer to a person (cf. the -ni of me-ni); as for the meaning, the context seems to suggest that the expression describes a type of person who is considered undesirable in spite of the fact that his original rôle in the divine order of things was of value.

3. For the me (Akkadian *paršû*), the 'Divine Norms,' see Landsberger, *AfO* II (1924), p. 66, and Kramer, *RA* XXXVI (1939), pp. 76-80.

4. The -ra- of egir-ra-bi is difficult to explain. For the enclitic na, cf. now Jacobsen, *JNES* XII (1953), p. 183, note 62 (references there to lines 102, 109 and 120 should be to lines

105, 113 and 124). See also note 5 to proverb 4.52 below.

#### 4.3

[m]aš(?)-gín maš-gín ki-IM-DU-a-kam  
RU-gín ki-am-muš-a-kam

Half a shekel, half a shekel<sup>1</sup> is a place of . . .<sup>2</sup>;  
. . . shekel<sup>3</sup> is a place of wild-oxen and serpents.

This proverb is quite obscure.

1. The significance of the repeated maš-gín 'half a shekel,' is not clear.

2. ki-IM-DU-a-kam should in some way be expected to parallel in meaning ki-am-muš-a-kam.

3. RU-gín should somehow parallel the repeated maš-gín maš-gín.

#### 4.4<sup>1</sup>

an an-gùr<sup>2</sup> ki šu-ni-šè an-sur<sub>5</sub>

The heavens have been loaded upon him;<sup>3</sup> the earth hangs from his hands.<sup>4</sup>

Superficially this proverb suggests the picture of an as yet unknown Sumerian prototype of the classical Atlas. However, it may actually be either a sarcastic comment about a man who thinks himself to be the complete master of the universe, or else a hyperbolic statement about a person who actually has nearly complete control of his surroundings.

1. Cf. the variant of this proverb in Collection Three, proverb 3.167, which reads: an-gùr-ru ki šu-ni-šè suru<sub>5</sub>-a, "He who is loaded down with the heavens has the earth hanging from his hands." Cf. also the proverb in the bilingual Kuyunjik collection K. 8216 (Meek, *RA* XVII [1920], p. 158), lines 10-11, where the Akkadian column reads: šadâ<sup>a</sup> ta-na-aš-ši qanâ (= GI) šu (!)-gal-lu-la ul ta-le<sup>2</sup>-i, "You lift up a mountain, (yet) you can not even carry a reed!"; the Sumerian column, which is destroyed, can now be restored as follows: [kur an-gùr-ru-un], [gi šu-zu-šè nu-e-da-sur<sub>5</sub>].

2. For the reading of ÍL here as gùr, note the variant form gùr-ru in proverb 3.167 (see note 1 above); cf. however the proverb Ni. 9630 ii 8 translated in Gordon, *SP*, "Additions and Corrections" under proverb 1.12.

3. Literally, perhaps, "The heaven has been lifted up (by him)."

4. For šu-šè—sur<sub>5</sub> = Akkadian *šugallulum*,

see note 4 to proverb 1.188 and note 7 to proverb 2.66.

## 4.5

ŠUL.A.LUM-bi al-il-il

He bears the responsibility for it.<sup>1</sup>

1. Literally, "its responsibility." For ŠUL.A.LUM = Akkadian *enûnum/ennittum*, cf. ŠL 467:44. Note particularly the bilingual Utu hymn IV R 17 (Schollmeyer, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Šamaš*, p. 46) obv. 57f. (ŠUL.A.LUM-bi h<sub>é</sub>-du<sub>s</sub>-du<sub>s</sub> nam-tag-ga-bi h<sub>é</sub>-zi-zi = *en-ne-es-su lip-pa-ti-ir a-ra-an-šu li-in-na-si-il*), as well as the fact that among the passages cited in Mullo Weir, *Lexicon of Akkadian Prayers*, pp. 143 (under *kasitu*) and 116 (under *iltu*), the expression *ennittam* (variant: *innintam*) *paṭârum* occurs as a substitute for the more frequent *e'iltam paṭârum*. It is therefore assumed that *ennittum/enûnum* has the same meaning as the well-attested *e'iltum* 'liability, responsibility,' for which see also now Driver and Miles, *The Babylonian Laws*, vol. II, pp. 211 f. Cf. also the Enlil-bani Hymn OECT I, plates 10-12, lines 92-93 (see now Kapp, ZA, LI [1955], p. 79), where the word ŠUL.A.LUM (the word-division by Kapp is in error) occurs in a context which is difficult.

## 4.6

ú-a-gim sag-gú-NE-dug<sub>4</sub>-ra ba-e-a-e<sub>11</sub>-dè-dè-en

Like a provider(?)<sup>1</sup> ... (?)<sup>2</sup> I will come up.<sup>3</sup>

1. If ú-a here is the Akkadian *zâninum*, it is not certain whether it refers to the person who is the subject of the verb e<sub>11</sub> or to the verb's object (see the following notes). It is also not impossible that ú-a-gim should be translated "like food and drink."

2. The complex read sag-gú-NE-dug<sub>4</sub>-ra may perhaps be translated "to him who speaks haughtily(?)" (cf. sag-gú-tuku = Akkadian *šarḫum*, ŠL 115:113). Cf. also proverb 3.62 in Collection Three: nam-sun<sub>x</sub> (=KAL)-na-da gi-duru<sub>5</sub>-gim sag-gú-ni šu h<sub>é</sub>-b<sub>i</sub>-in-e<sub>11</sub>-dè, "Through inflexibility(?) like a cane he will forfeit his pride(?) (or, perhaps, literally, 'his head and neck')." If the reading -dug<sub>4</sub>-ra should be correct, it might be expected that the following verbal form should include the infix -na-; it is therefore possible that -KA-ra

is to be read -zú-ra 'noisy, chattering' (cf. note 5 to proverb 1.185), although this does not seem to make the context any clearer. Note too that the -NE- has been left unexplained.

3. Or, "come down." The verbal form may of course also be construed as "you will come up (or 'down')," or "I will cause you to come up (or 'down')," or even "we will come up (or 'down')," etc.

## 4.7

u<sub>4</sub>-šú-uš giš-e a ab-ra-an múd-šà-ba-gim gi-duru<sub>5</sub>-a ab(!)-lá-en

Each evening<sup>1</sup> I throw(?) water upon the penis; as if (there were) blood in it, I tie it up(?) in a cane.

The translation of this proverb is particularly difficult and its interpretation even more so. It is possible that the word-division is wrong, and that the proverb should be read: u<sub>4</sub>-šú-uš giš-e a ab-ra an-til šà ba-dím gi-duru<sub>5</sub>-a ab(!)-lá-en, "Each evening the penis ejaculates semen;<sup>2</sup> (when) it has finished, I curse<sup>3</sup> and tie it up in a cane."

1. Or "daily."

2. For a-ri<sub>x</sub> (=RA) 'to ejaculate semen,' see Landsberger *apud* Jacobsen in his "Notes on Selected Sayings" (on proverb 2.99) in Gordon, *SP*.

3. Cf. šà-dím = Akkadian *šanâšum*, ŠL 384:185.

## 4.8

lú-ga-šum-dab<sub>5</sub>-ba-ni al-me-a lú-du<sub>14</sub>(!)?<sup>1</sup>-da-ka-na ba-an-tu

He who (formerly) held back (another person)'s assassin<sup>2</sup> has (now) become<sup>3</sup> (that person)'s opponent.<sup>4</sup>

The translation of this proverb is quite tenuous because of the uncertainty of the meaning of the first complex (see note 2 below).

1. i. e., LÚ × NE.

2. Literally, perhaps, "although(?) he (once) was (=al-me-a) his man who seizes (=dab<sub>5</sub>) the assassin(?)"—assuming that ga-šum (literally, "let me slaughter!") is used as a noun of the type ga-an-tuš 'tenant' (cf. Poebel, *GSG*, pp. 45 f., paragraph 123) and ga-šám 'customer' (cf. proverb 1.164). Note, however, that in the poem "Laḫar and Ashnan," line 31 (cf., for the present, Chiera, *SRT*, p. 29), a term ga-šum seems to be some kind of milk.

3. Literally, "has entered (turned) into"; the root *tu* here governs the postposition *-a*.

4. For *lú-du<sub>14</sub>-da(-k)*, cf. proverb 1.170 and note 8 there.

## 4.9

*tu<sub>15</sub>-si-sá tu<sub>15</sub>-si-àm tu<sub>15</sub>-ul<sub>x</sub><sup>1</sup>-lu lú-  
bi si-ga-àm  
tu<sub>15</sub>-sa<sub>12</sub>-ti-um tu<sub>15</sub>-im-šèg-gá tu<sub>15</sub>-  
mar-tu lú-ti-ba dirig-ga  
tu<sub>15</sub>sa<sub>12</sub>-ti-um tu<sub>15</sub>-hè-gál-la ku-li-  
<sup>d</sup>na-ra-am-<sup>d</sup>zuen*

The north-wind<sup>2</sup> is a satisfying wind; the south-wind is harmful(?)<sup>3</sup> to its<sup>4</sup> men.

The east-wind<sup>5</sup> is a rain-wind; the west-wind increases<sup>6</sup> its healthy(?) men.<sup>7</sup>

The east-wind is a wind of prosperity: the friend of<sup>8</sup> (the divine) Narâm-Sin.

This proverb—admittedly many of its words and phrases can be translated in more ways than one—seems to contain some sort of an historical allusion.

1. i. e., GÀL.

2. Note that in each case the "winds" may actually refer to the respective "directions" or "quarters"; however, the reference to *im-šèg-gá* 'rain,' in the second line seems to suggest that it is the "winds" themselves that are actually intended.

3. For *si-ga* in the sense of "harmful, hurting, damaging," cf. proverbs 1.28, 1.99 (and note 5 there), 1.128, 1.196, 2.65 and 2.116.

4. i. e., perhaps, the men upon whom the south-wind blows.

5. For *tu<sub>15</sub>-sa<sub>12</sub>-ti-um* 'east-wind,' cf. Kraus, *ZA LI* (1955), p. 52; see also Gelb, *MAD II*, p. 89, no. 87.

6. Literally, "it is excessive in."

7. The translation of *lú-ti* (literally, "living men") here is merely a guess. Cf., however, perhaps *kur-lú-ti-la* "Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living," lines 1f., for which see Kramer, *BASOR XCVI* (1944), pp. 23 ff., and particularly notes 23, 25 and 28, and *JCS I* (1947), pp. 8f.; and possibly *lú-ti-ti* in the "Letter of Inan-nakam to the Goddess Nintinugga," line 4, for which see Van Dijk, *SSA*, p. 15, and Falkenstein in *SAHG*, p. 218 (line 3).

8. Note the omission of the expected *-na-kam* at the end of the last complex.

## 4.10

*níg-zu a-na-aš<sup>1</sup> hè-en-dè-šú*

He who knows a thing<sup>2</sup>—why should he keep it hidden?<sup>3</sup>

Cf. "Don't hide your light under a bushel!"

1. There is probably nothing broken away after the sign *-aš*.

2. One might expect *lú-níg-zu*.

3. For the optative preformative *hè-* with asseverative use in questions, cf. the occurrences cited in Gordon, *SP*, p. 13, 8b, as well as proverb 3.127 in Collection Three.

4.11<sup>1</sup>

*dìm<sup>2</sup>-ma-mu ki na-ma-ba-al èm-ú-  
gu-dé-a-mu nu-ub-pàd-dè-en*

As regards my corpse<sup>2</sup>—let not the ground be dug for me; you will not find what I have lost!

Perhaps a saying of an *aluzinum* or female (note the Emesal *èm-* for *níg-*) "music-hall 'clown'"—see now Van Dijk, *SSA*, p. 99—which might be paraphrased "Don't dig a grave for me, since you will not discover in the ground the soul which I have lost, and thereby bring me back to life!"

1. Cf. the Kuyunjik bilingual fragment K. 11608 (to be published by W. G. Lambert), lines 7-10, which reads: *lú(sic!) - [dìm-ma-mu], ki na-a [n(?!) - ba-al], èm-ú- [gu-dé-a-mu], nu-un-p [àd-dè-en]*—the Akkadian column is completely broken away.

2. i. e., *LÚ.ŠEŠŠIG+GAM*. For the rather complex problem of the forms of this sign—"LÚ+GAM" (?), *LÚ.ŠEŠŠIG*, *LÚ.ŠEŠŠIG* × *UG<sub>7</sub>*, and the later *RAB+GAM* / *LUGAL+GAM*—see *ŠL* 150:1, 330<sup>a</sup> and 330<sup>b</sup>, and especially Landsberger, *MSL II*, p. 78, lines 632f. (and the notes to these lines); cf. also Oppenheim, *Cat. Eames*, pp. 134f. (under S 5), where the sign *LÚ.ŠEŠŠIG* is termed "lú+gunû." The reading *dìm* for *LÚ.ŠEŠŠIG+GAM* is indicated here by the following *-ma*. The meaning "corpse" for the sign even when it has the reading *dìm* seems to follow from the context in this proverb.

4.12<sup>1</sup>

*máš a-a lú ba-ni-in-e<sub>11</sub>-dè kaš<sup>2</sup>-a  
su-búru*

A kid can be made to go down<sup>3</sup> into water; in beer(?)<sup>4</sup> it balks(?).<sup>5</sup>

Cf., for the first half of the proverb, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink!" A possible alternative translation of the proverb is: "The result<sup>6</sup> of (drinking) water: a man can (still) climb up (or 'down'); of (drinking) beer: flabby flesh."<sup>7</sup>

1. Cf. also the Kuyunjik bilingual fragment K. 11608 (see note 1 to proverb 4.11), lines 11-13, which reads: m á š a-[a], l ú b a-ni-i[n-e<sub>11</sub>-dè], EDIN(?!)-a s[u-búru]; the Akkadian column is, here too, broken away, which is particularly unfortunate in view of the ambiguity of m á š and su-búru.

2. Note that K. 11608 (see note 1 above) seems to have EDIN for kaš.

3. Literally, "a man can make it descend."

4. The implications of a kid "in beer" are quite obscure.

5. Cf. su-búr-ra = Akkadian *rušumtum* 'quicksand, quagmire' (*ŠL* 7:41b, and Delitzsch, *HWB*, p. 629b), which is assumed to derive from a compound verb su—búr(u), meaning, perhaps, "to be bogged down, to be held back." (See, however, note 7 below.) The form here would thus be a predicatively used participle, a frequent occurrence in the Sumerian proverbs (cf. Gordon, *SP*, pp. 10 and 11, 3a).

6. Literally, "returns (from investment, of a harvest)"; cf., in addition to the common usage of m á š (= Akkadian *šibtum*), the term m á š-a-šà-ga, for which see Oppenheim, *Cat. Eames*, p. 57.

7. Cf. búr = *šahâhum ša šêrim* (= su) 'to be flabby (of the flesh)' (*ŠL* 11:9).

#### 4.13

[. . .] . . . [.]<sup>1</sup>-UL(?) šagar<sup>2</sup>-mu ab-  
[.] . (?) -e

[. . .] . [.] s my hunger.<sup>3</sup>

1. Traces of these two unrestorable signs are to be seen on Kramer's rough hand-copy (see note 4 on p. 67).

2. i.e., KÚ (= KA × GAR).

3. For the reading and meaning of šagar, cf. Landsberger *apud* Kramer, *JAOS* LXIX [1949], p. 214 (note to line 14), and Landsberger, *MSL* II, p. 56, line 312. Cf. also proverb 1.142.

#### 4.14

l ú<sup>1</sup>-tur-ga-nu-un-[d]a-kú-a ama-zu  
sún-kurun(!?)<sup>2</sup>-a<sup>3</sup>

Little fellow, who can not be fed (his mother's) milk, your mother (is) a cow (which gives) dark-beer!<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps, if read and translated correctly, a humorous saying used to coax an infant into allowing his mother to nurse him.

1. So according to Kramer's rough hand-copy (see note 4 on p. 67).

2. i.e., KAŠ.TIN (cf. the form of the sign TIN here—resembling the sign A slanted obliquely—with the sign as it appears in several of the texts of proverb 1.66 = 2.119).

3. -a is assumed to be for -a-kam.

4. For kurun 'dark-beer,' see now Oppenheim, *JAOS*, *Suppl.* no. 10 (1950), pp. 22f. and p. 43 (note 38). The word sún, because of the context as a whole, is understood in its most common sense *rimtum*—usually translated "wild cow," but note that in proverb 2.89 (see note 6 there), sún is found alongside gud 'ox,' while in proverb 2.94, it is šilam (= Akkadian *lit-tum*, 'wild cow') which is parallel to am 'wild ox'—rather than as the equivalent of Akkadian *narīabum* 'malt-mash(?)' (Oppenheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 24f., and 48, note 67), in spite of the association with kurun.

#### 4.15

[n]í(?)<sup>1</sup>-te-gá-ni nu-u[b]-da-an-til  
nig-[k]ú ab-ta-tar

(Because) his [f]right(?) did not let him finish it, the d[inn]er was cut off(?).

Perhaps an allusion to a man or child—there is possibly even a connection with the preceding proverb—who has been interrupted in the middle of his meal.

1. Traces of this sign are visible but not certain on Kramer's rough hand-copy (see note 4 on p. 67).

#### 4.16

[a-z]i-ga-gim ki-a h é-da-ḥ úl<sup>1</sup>[did]igna  
-a ù-ba-gál-la-g[i]m<sup>2</sup> en-líl h é-  
da-ḥ úl

As (at the time of) an [inu]ndation the river-beaches<sup>1</sup> rejoiced, and as when after (the waters) had (once more) subsided<sup>2</sup> into the Tigris, Enlil rejoiced.

The meaning of this proverb is probably that while the alluvial lands are "glad" to be freshly refertilized, the god Enlil himself is happy only after the river has returned to its normal course. For the association of Enlil with the Tigris inundation, cf. the introductory passage of Gudea, "Cylinder A," i 5-9 (see now Falkenstein in *SAHG*, p. 138).

1. For *ki-a* ' (low-lying) beaches ' see note 4 to proverb 1.87.

2. For this use of the verb *gál*—as the opposite of *zi(-g)* 'to rise up'—cf. proverb 1.195, and particularly the note to that proverb by Jacobsen in his "Notes on Selected Sayings" in Gordon, *SP*.

## 4.17

[ur-zír(?!)]-šag<sub>5</sub>-ga-zu zú ḥé-kur<sub>5</sub>  
[A wild dog(?!)<sup>1</sup>] which you have petted(?)<sup>2</sup> will bite.<sup>3</sup>

1. For the restoration *ur-zír*, note not only the reference to biting, but also proverb 2.113, as well as the as yet unpublished proverb from Ur (U. 17207-15) which reads: *ur-šag<sub>5</sub>-ga ur-tur-šè in-tu*, "A dog which is petted(?) becomes a puppy." See note 7 to proverb 1.65 and note 4 to proverb 2.113 for *ur* and *ur-zír*.

2. For this translation of *šag<sub>5</sub>* in connection with dogs, cf. note 2 to proverb 2.113 and the Ur proverb quoted in the preceding note.

3. For the reading and translation of *KA-TAR* as *zú—kur<sub>5</sub>*, 'to bite,' see now note 14 to proverb 2.11.

## 4.18

[. . ḥun-g]á-àm gada ḥun-gá-àm za  
ḥun-g[á]-àm šu ḥé-ma-gál

[. .] is [soot]hing,<sup>1</sup> linen is soothing, a stone(?)<sup>2</sup> is soothing: a hand may be placed upon them.<sup>3</sup>

The meaning of this proverb is so obscure that it seemed advisable to give a literal translation only.

1. For a passage with similar and equally obscure repetition of the expression *ḥun-gá-àm* in connection with objects or materials, cf. *TRS* II 93 rev. 9-11 (see now Van Dijk, *SSA*, p. 105): *šà-ga ḥun-gá-àm bar-ra ḥun-gá-àm, kug ḥun-gá-àm za-gin ḥun-gá-àm, giš ḥun-gá-àm gidru(?) ḥun-gá-àm*.

2. For *za* 'stone' or even 'lapis lazuli,' cf. now Landsberger, *MSL* II, p. 134, lines 56 f.

3. The actual meaning of *šu ḥé-ma-gál*—analysed as *ḥé-(i) m(m) a-gál*—is not clear.

## 4.19

[. . . .] . sU-ni ì-ka[l(?)]-k[al(?)] . . . .  
engur(?)<sup>1</sup> a mu-dè-daḥ-e<sup>2</sup>

[. . . .] . his(?) flesh(?) is pr[ecious(?); . . . .]  
the sea(?) adds water to it(?).

1. Note that the traces of the sign preceding *engur(?)* do not point to *A*.

2. The word-division may actually turn out to be *a-mu bí-daḥ-e*.

## 4.20

[. . . .]-re(?)

[. . . .] . . . .

4.21-4.40<sup>1</sup>

1. At this point the obverse breaks off, and since the tablet probably had originally 35 lines to each side (see note 3 on p. 67), it is assumed that approximately 20 proverbs are broken away.

## 4.41

[. .]-an-na<sup>1</sup>-. . . . b]ala(?) -e-da  
[. . ḥa(?) -ba(?) -š]i(!?) -íb-íl-e(?)  
[. .] . (?) <sup>š</sup>ištukul á-gud è[n]  
ma(!?) -tar-re-e-še

[. .] . . . . [when] he lifts up [. . .] in order to cro[ss(?)] . . .<sup>2</sup>, (he says)<sup>3</sup> "[. .] . will take care of the weapons and the oxen-rent<sup>4</sup> for me!"

1. So according to Kramer's rough hand-copy (see note 4 on p. 67).

2. Restore perhaps [. . . . íd-da b]ala-e-da 'in order to cro[ss] the river.'

3. i. e., -e-še, for which see note 21 on p. 68; cf. also note 10 to proverb 1.142.

4. For *á-gud* = Akkadian *enitum* / *inítum* 'rent for a team of oxen,' see Landsberger, *MSL* I ("Ana Itti-šu"), p. 92, line 14, and pp. 232-245.

## 4.42

[. .] mu-n[a<sup>1</sup>-a]b-ši-gi-ri-dè-[eš(?)]  
[. .] .(?) -àm giš ab-ra-ra  
[. .] egir-[. .]<sup>2</sup> a-ni in-su-re-eš a  
ugu(!?) -mu-uš àm-kúm-e-še  
sig<sub>7</sub>(?)<sup>3</sup> b[í(!?)]-e<sub>11</sub><sup>4</sup>-dè-eš izkim ba-  
ab-ti

[They(?)] . . d<sup>5</sup> towards(?) a . . for him, but<sup>6</sup>  
the [. .] was struck down.

[. .] behind(?) .[. (?)] they squeezed out(?)<sup>7</sup>

his . . . (and he said)<sup>8</sup> "The water is (too) hot<sup>9</sup> for me!"<sup>10</sup>

They (then) brought up a ..(?), (and) he was entrusted with it.

The readings of several of the complexes in this "anecdotal" proverb are quite uncertain, and the meaning is quite obscure.

1. So probably according to Kramer's rough hand-copy (see note 4 on p. 67).

2. So according to Kramer's rough hand-copy (see preceding note); the traces of the broken sign following *egir* do not point to *-ra*.

3. The sign is written over an erasure.

4. *DUL.D[U]* according to Kramer's rough hand-copy (see note 1 above).

5. *-gi-ri-dè-* may perhaps represent a verbal root *girid*, of unknown meaning.

6. i. e., *-àm*.

7. *-su(-r)* is assumed to be a phonetic writing for the root *sur*.

8. i. e., *-e-še* (see note 3 to proverb 4.41 above).

9. For *NE=kúm* 'hot' cf. note 6 to proverb 1.147.

10. More literally, perhaps, "upon(?) me."

#### 4.43

*t ú g í b - t [ a g<sub>4</sub>(?) ḥ ] a (!) - l a - d u m u - g e m é - k a m í b - t a - š u b i n - b u<sub>5</sub> b u<sub>5</sub> - a b í - i n - a k*

A ['second-ha]nd(?) garment:<sup>1</sup> it is the (inheritance-)sha[re]<sup>2</sup> of the slave-girl's child; it has fallen(?) off(?) him: it became<sup>3</sup> nothing but<sup>4</sup> "chaff."<sup>5</sup>

This proverb, if translated correctly, seems to refer to the poor lot of the children born to slave-girls.

1. If the restoration should prove correct, perhaps, literally, "A garment was abandoned."

2. If the sign before *-la* is correctly restored as *ḥa-*, the complex might be expected to read *ḥa-la-dum u-gemé-ka(!)-kam*.

3. Literally, *bí-in-ak* here is perhaps "it was treated."

4. The *-a* of *in-bu<sub>5</sub>-bu<sub>5</sub>-a* is assumed to be for *-àm*.

5. For *in-bu<sub>5</sub>-bu<sub>5</sub>*—perhaps, literally, "it blows (away)," and therefore not to be read *in-nin<sub>7</sub>* or *in-nenni* (cf. Deimel, *ŠL*, Teil III, Bd. 1, p. 136, and Bd. 2, p. 342)—= Akkadian

*pû* 'chaff' cf. *ŠL* 148:55. Cf. also the Neo-Babylonian bilingual proverb BM 38596 = 80-11-12, 480 (to be published by W. G. Lambert) obv. i 9.

#### 4.44<sup>1</sup>

*Ḥ A R - U Š š u - k é š - d a - n i i à - r i - a i a - š [ e ] š<sub>4</sub> - d a - n i*  
*è m - s i - g a a - N U M Ú N — m u - n á - d a - n i*

A ... (?) (is) his clasped(?) hands; .. (?) oil (is) his ointment.<sup>2</sup>

... (?)<sup>3</sup> (is) the water-rushes<sup>4</sup> (which make up) his bed!

The readings and meanings of several of the complexes in this Emesal proverb (cf. *è m-* and *m u - n á (-d)*, but note however *i à* where the Emesal *u<sub>5</sub>* might have been expected) are uncertain.

1. Proverbs 4.43 and 4.44 here are treated separately, although there is no separating line between them, on the basis of the spacing of the signs in each, the differing structure of the parallelism in each, and the fact that proverb 4.43 is not in the Emesal dialect (cf. *-gemé-* not *-gi<sub>4</sub>-in-*).

2. Literally, "anointing oil"; cf. *ŠL* 231:213 ff., and particularly Legrain, *UET* III nos. 1137 and 1422 (Legrain read the term as *i à - e r i n*, translating it "cedar-oil," but note that in no. 1137 it is in apposition to "sesame-oil," *i à - g i š*). If the restoration of the sign *šes<sub>4</sub>* here is correct, the root "to anoint" is perhaps to be understood as *šešd*, with which are to be compared *kéš* (=the root *kešd*), and the roots *peš(-d)* and *peš<sub>4</sub>(-d)*, for which see note 14 to proverb 1.109.

3. A meaning for the complex *è m - s i - g a* based upon the root *sì(-g)* 'to damage, hurt, etc.' (cf. note 3 to proverb 4.9 above), does not seem to fit the context. Perhaps it is the Emesal form *níg-sì-ga* = Akkadian *tamšilum* 'comparison, similarity' (*ŠL* 597:183), although this too does not seem to fit the context.

4. For (<sup>6</sup>) *a - N U M Ú N* 'water-rushes' see now note 3 to proverb 2.64.

#### 4.45

*š i š k i š i<sub>16</sub> n a m - l ú - i n i m - m a ḥ a r u b (!)<sup>1</sup> - b a - à m i m - t a - è - a*

Witness-ship is an acacia-tree,<sup>2</sup> but<sup>3</sup> carobs<sup>4</sup> are produced by it.<sup>5</sup>

The acacia-tree, a thorny bush, nevertheless

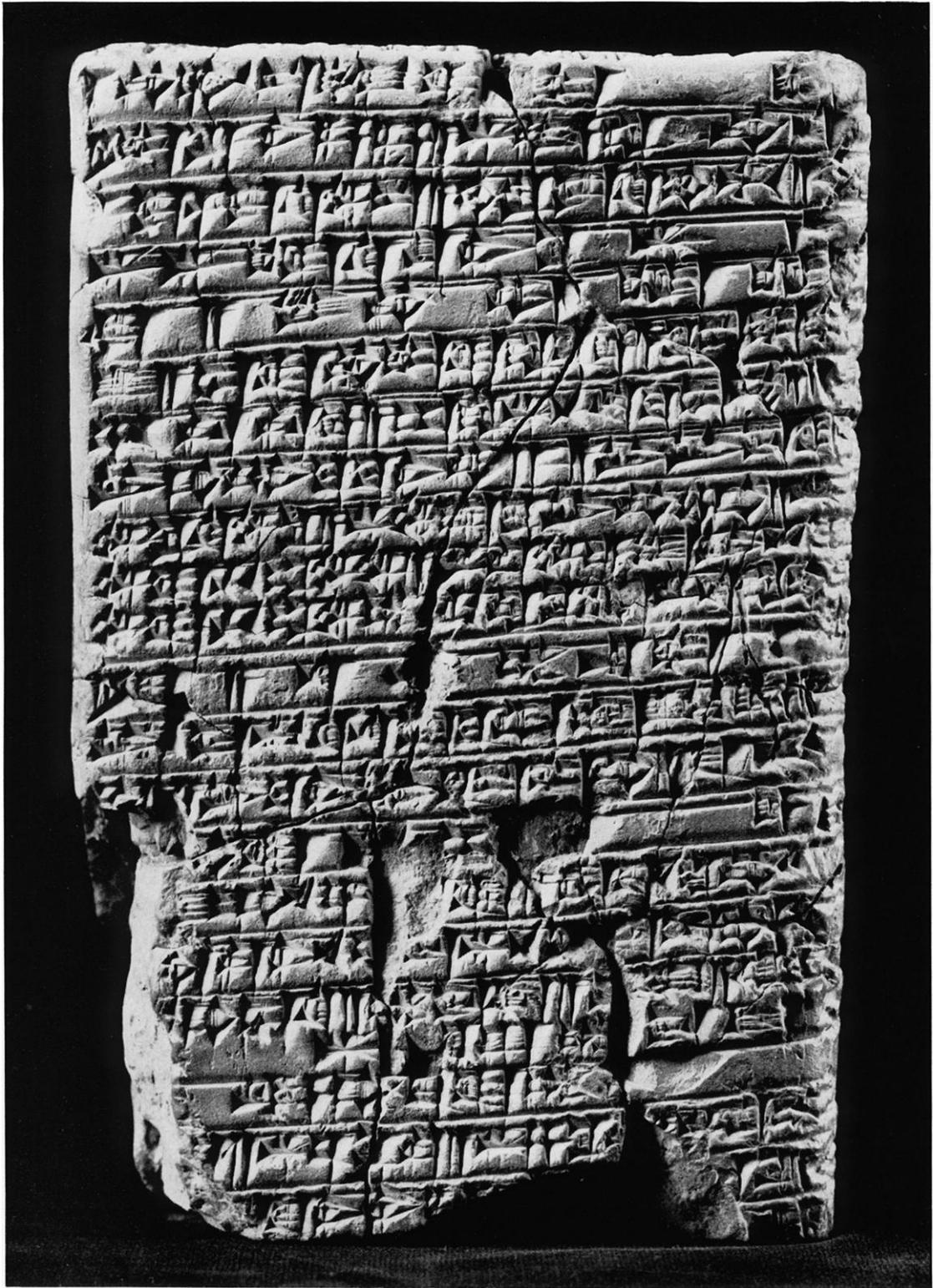


PLATE I. CBS 14079 (obverse).

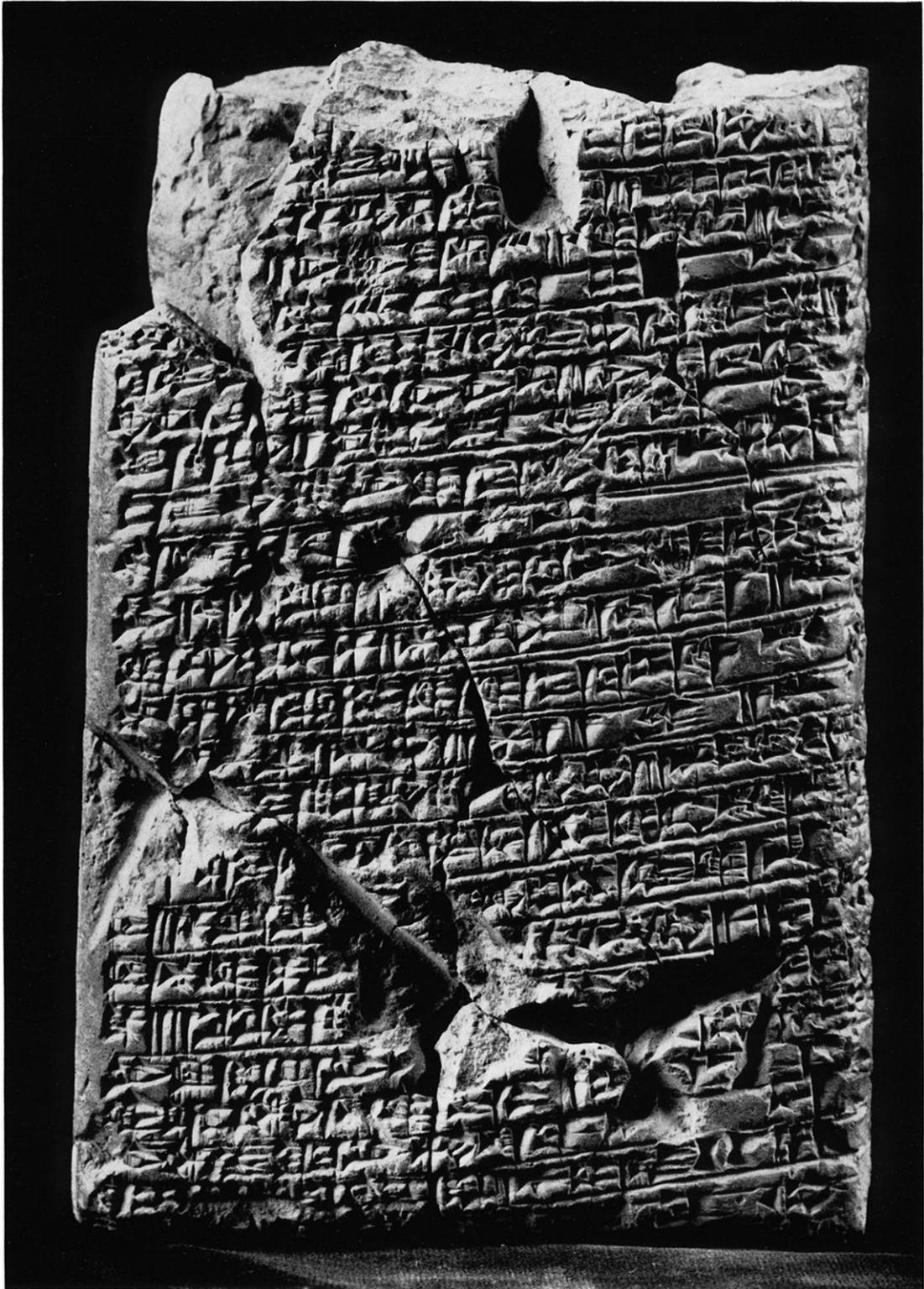


PLATE II. CBS 14079 (reverse).



PLATE III. CBS 14079 (right edge).



PLATE IV. CBS 14079 (lower edge of reverse).

produces a useful and tasty fruit, the carob. Similarly, perhaps, a witness may find giving testimony distasteful, but some good can always be expected to develop from it. Note the possibility, however, of an alternative translation: "The acacia-tree—there is witness (to the effect) that carobs are produced by it."

1. i. e., DAG.KISIM × Ú.GÍR—although the inscribed signs are not quite clear, the association with  $g^{i\check{s}}ki\check{s}i_{16}$  (=  $g^{i\check{s}}\acute{u}.GÍR$ ), as well as the phonetic indicator -ba- which follows the sign, point to the reading  $\check{h}arub$ .

2.  $g^{i\check{s}}ki\check{s}i_{16}$  = Akkadian  $^{i\check{s}}a\check{s}\acute{a}gum$ , cf. *ŠL* 318:23 b, and Campbell-Thompson, *Dictionary of Assyrian Botany*, pp. 182 ff. and 186.

3. i. e., the -àm of  $\check{h}arub-ba-àm$ .

4. For  $\check{h}arub$  (DAG.KISIM × Ú.GÍR) = Akkadian  $\check{h}ar\acute{u}bum$ , and the meaning "carob" (not an insect) or "false carob (*Prosopis stephani*ana)," cf. Landsberger, *MSL* II, p. 90, line 851, and especially, p. 118, as well as *MSL* III, p. 145, line 250.

5. Literally, "comes forth from it."

#### 4.46

$\check{s}\grave{a}-n\acute{i}g-\check{s}ED-nu-zu$  [ $\check{s}$ ]  $\grave{a}-igi(!)^1-g\acute{a}l-tuku$

The heart<sup>2</sup> which does not think<sup>3</sup> about financial matters<sup>4</sup> (is) a heart which has intelligence.

Perhaps an expression of a humanist's contempt for business matters.

1. The sign -igi- is clearer on the tablet itself than the photograph indicates.

2. For other proverbs which illustrates the rôle of the "heart" in Sumerian "psychology"—as the seat of man's inner thoughts as well as of his emotions—see proverbs 1.95, 1.98, 1.99, 1.101, 1.102 and 1.108.

3. Literally, "does not know."

4. Literally, "accounting; budget." For the possibility that  $n\acute{i}g-\check{s}ED$  is to be read  $n\acute{i}g-gaz_x$ , see note 3 to proverb 1.52.

#### 4.47

$l\acute{u}-a-\check{s}\grave{a}-ur_x^1-ru-ke_4$   $a-\check{s}\grave{a}$   $\check{h}\acute{e}-ur_x^1-ru$   
 $l\acute{u}-\check{s}e-\check{s}u-su-ub-bu-da-ke_4$   $\check{s}e$   $\check{s}u$   
 $\check{h}[\acute{e}]-eb-su-ub-b\acute{e}$

The man (with the job) of field-cultivating<sup>2</sup> should cultivate a field, (and) the man (with

the job) of barley-harvesting<sup>3</sup> should harvest barley.

That is, in effect, "Shoemaker, stick to thy last!" Cf. also proverb 1.100.

1. i. e., APIN/URU<sub>4</sub>.

2. For the genitival construction of  $l\acute{u}$  with verbal infinitives, cf., for example,  $l\acute{u}-\acute{e}-d\acute{u}-a-ke_4$ , etc., of the Gudea inscriptions (see Falkenstein, *GSGL* I, p. 138, and *GSGL* II, p. 74).

3. Cf.  $\check{s}u-su-ub$  = Akkadian *esēpum* (and *qatāpum*), *ŠL* 354:28 a and e.

#### 4.48

$ka-bi$   $UM-gim$   $ma\check{s}-\grave{a}m$   $b\acute{i}d-bi$   $\acute{u}-a$   
 $G\acute{A}-\grave{u}r-\grave{a}m$

Its mouth like a ..(?) is a ..(?); its anus<sup>1</sup> ...(?) is a ...(?).

The readings and meanings of most of the words in this proverb are either ambiguous or obscure. The words  $ka-bi$  and  $b\acute{i}d-bi$  seem to be parallel (cf. also proverb 4.60 as well as 4.61) as do  $ma\check{s}-\grave{a}m$  and  $G\acute{A}-\grave{u}r-\grave{a}m$ ; however the complexes  $UM-gim$  and  $\acute{u}-a$  seem not to be parallel, and their relation syntactically to the rest of the sentence is obscured by their ambiguity in meaning.

1. For the reading of  $KU/D\acute{U}R$ , "anus," as  $b\acute{i}d$ , see note 7 to proverb 2.100.

#### 4.49

$mu\check{s}$   $un-na-dab_5$   $e-ne$   $inim-inim-ma$   
 $ba-ab-sim-mu$

After the serpent has been caught for him, he is given the charm.

That is, the help finally arrives after the job has been done by others.

#### 4.50

$[t]a-\grave{a}m$   $ganam_4-\grave{a}m$   $ta-\grave{a}m$   $a-a-lum-$   
 $\grave{a}m$

What is a ewe? What is a stag(?)<sup>1</sup>?

The implications of this proverb in the Emesal dialect (cf.  $ta-\grave{a}m$  for  $a-na-\grave{a}m$ ) are obscure. Note that while the name of the first animal is Sumerian, the name of the second seems to be in Akkadian (see note 1 below).

1. For the Akkadian *aialum* (usually equated with either Sumerian  $lu-lim$  or  $d\grave{a}ra-ma\check{s}$ ) as the "stag"—but possibly originally a type of

"ibex" — cf. Landsberger, *Fauna*, pp. 98 f. and 94, note 4. If the animal here mentioned should actually turn out to be a species of sheep or goat, cf., perhaps, the passage in Radau, *HAV* 13 v 11-12 (ninda-a-ni a-ka-lu-um-ma kaš-a-ni ši-ka-ru-um-ma), for which see Falkenstein, *ZA* XLV (1939), pp. 171 f., note 1, and especially Jacobsen, "Notes on Selected Sayings" (comment to proverb 1.10) in Gordon, *SP*.

## 4.51

[ta-à]m ma-mú-gi<sub>4</sub>-in-na-kam ta-àm  
sizkur-sizkur-e-re-si-ki-in-na-  
kam

[Wha]t are the dreams of a slave-girl? What are the prayers of a . . .<sup>1</sup> male-slave?

This Emesal proverb (cf. ta-àm for a-na-àm, e-re for arád, and gi<sub>4</sub>-in for gemé) may imply that the dreams and prayers of slaves are not to be considered worthy of attention by men and gods.

1. For the adjective(?) si-ki-in-na, which seems here to describe the male-slave, cf. the likewise obscure túg-giš-ba-an-si-ki-na in Kramer *et al.*, *Belleten* XVI (1952), p. 362, line 27.

## 4.52

[az]a[g(?)]<sup>1</sup> e-da-[k]ú(!?) ug<sub>7</sub>-e-da-  
gim níg-šú-dug<sub>4</sub>-ga-mu ki-  
dingir-ra na-nam ba-e-ug<sub>7</sub>-en

I have [ea]ten some(?) [consec]ra[ted food(?)]<sup>2</sup>; (being) as (a person) on the point of dying<sup>3</sup> what I have (now) touched<sup>4</sup> is indeed<sup>5</sup> taboo(?), (and so) I will die!

The translation of this proverb includes a number of assumptions (see notes below) which make it most uncertain.

1. i.e., perhaps, [KUG.D]IN[GIR].

2. Or possibly, "I have made use of things consecrated to the gods"; for a zag = Akkadian *asakkum*, "tabooed food, consecrated objects," see Landsberger, *ZA* XLI (1933), pp. 218 f., and Thureau-Dangin, *RA* XXXVIII (1941), pp. 41 ff. For the verb kú, 'to eat,' in this connection, cf. *asakkam akâlum*, *ibid.*, and in the Mari texts cited by Finet in *ARMT* XV, p. 176. Note that, if the form e-da-kú has been correctly analysed, the infix -da- is assumed to be for -ta- (cf. Falkenstein, *GSGL* I, p. 215, note 2) in a partitive

sense (cf. also note 6 to proverb 2.88), and that e- is assumed to represent the thematic particle i- (cf. also note 2 to proverb 4.54 below).

3. More literally, perhaps, "like (one) about to die."

4. Literally, "what I have laid hands upon"; for níg-šú-dug<sub>4</sub>-ga, cf. "Death of Gilgamesh" B, line 6 (Kramer, *BASOR* XCIV [1944], pp. 8 and 10); "Dumuzi and Enkimdu," line 15 (Kramer, *JCS* II [1948], pp. 60 and 64, and Van Dijk, *SSA*, pp. 67 and 71, "line 69"); and Falkenstein, *ZA* XLIX (1949), pp. 116 f., rev. line 16.

5. i.e., na-nam (note the unexpected separation of na- and -nam; cf. photograph). For the possibility that na is the negative enclitic — it can hardly be the possessive -n(i-)a since there seems to be no antecedent in the third person — see note 4 to proverb 4.2; in this case, nam would probably be the prohibitive preformative belonging to the following verb.

6. ki-dingir-ra, literally "the place of a god," is assumed to be a Sumerian equivalent of the Akkadian *anzillum* 'forbidden place, consecrated spot,' for which see Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

## 4.53

ama-ér-še<sub>x</sub>-še<sub>x</sub><sup>1</sup>-[gi]m(?) [...].(?)  
ur<sub>5</sub>-ra bí-ib-kú-en

[Lik]e(?) a mother in mourning<sup>2</sup> you must eat [...]. in debt.<sup>3</sup>

This proverb seems to contain an allusion to an impoverished woman who has perhaps lost both husband and sons.

1. i.e., ERIN/ŠEŠ<sub>4</sub>-ERIN/ŠEŠ<sub>4</sub>.

2. Literally, "a weeping mother."

3. For a similar association of ur<sub>5</sub>, 'debt, interest-bearing loan' and the verb kú, cf., perhaps, Entemena, Cone A ii 23 = Cone B iii 7 (see Poebel, *Haupt Anniv. Volume*, p. 233).

## 4.54

ama-mu sag-ri[g<sub>7</sub> nu(?) -na(?)-sím(?)-  
m]u(!?) gemé-mu al-me-a-gim  
e-ak-e

My mother i[s not(?) being gi]ven(?) (her) dowr[y]<sup>1</sup>; she is treated<sup>2</sup> as though she were my slave-girl.

The complaint of a son who was not the chief

heir, about the mistreatment of his mother in the execution of his father's estate. Cf. "Code of Hammurapi," Law 172, according to which it was a widow's right to receive the dowry originally given by her parents (in addition to a share of her husband's estate) as her own property. (Cf. also "Code of Hammurapi," Laws 170-171 and 173-174, as well as "Code of Lipit-Ishtar," Law 24.)

1. For *sa-g-ri-g<sub>7</sub>* = Akkadian *šeriktum* 'dowry' (cf. "Code Lipit-Ishtar," Law 24 (Steele, *AJA* LII [1948], p. 441, col. xvi, line 27)).

2. *e-ak-e* is assumed to be for *i-ak-e* (cf. note 2 to proverb 4.52).

## 4.55

*sig<sub>7</sub>-a-a-si-si bí-in-[...]. lú-[...]. sím(?)]-ma-ab mu-sím-e-še*

He who fills the water with . . .<sup>1</sup> [..]d (and said)<sup>2</sup> ["...], a man [..(said) 'Give me the [..]!'] (and) I have given (them)!"

1. The reading and meaning of the noun *sig<sub>7</sub>* are quite obscure; the complex is literally "*sig<sub>7</sub>* — in the water — he who fills."

2. i. e., *-e-še* (cf. note 3 to proverb 4.41 above) at the end of the entire speech quoted. For the assumed reconstruction of a quotation within a quotation, cf., perhaps, the proverb quoted in the midst of note 14 to proverb 1.175.

## 4.56

*lú-ùr-ra-ke<sub>4</sub> lú-ga[lga(?)-a(?)-r]a(?) in[im(?)] m[u-na-a]b-bé [z]a(!) im-ma kug(!?)-zi(!?)-e-še ug-e é-ní-te-na-ka-da-dù-a a b-lá-lá*

The hot-headed man<sup>1</sup> sp[o]ke a wo[rd(?)] t[o] the refle[ctive] man,<sup>1</sup> (and said)<sup>2</sup> "[Y]ou<sup>3</sup> (are) on record(?)<sup>4</sup> (as a) spendthrift(?)<sup>5</sup>!"

The lion lacks boards with which his own house has been built!<sup>6</sup>

The first line of this "parable" presents a situation in which a man who is perhaps himself a spendthrift criticizes a prudent man; the character of the "hot-headed man" seems to be commented upon figuratively in the second line, where he is represented as a "lion" whose own house is in imperfect condition. With the proverb as a whole, cf. "One should first cast out the beam from his own eye!" or "First set your own house in order!" or even "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone!"

1. For both *lú-ùr-ra(-k)* and *lú-galga-a(k)*, cf. proverb 2.126, and particularly notes 1 and 5 there.

2. i. e., *-e-še*, for which cf. note 3 to proverb 4.41 above.

3. *za* is assumed to be for the usual *za-e*.

4. Literally, perhaps, "on clay"; cf. the term *im-ma* in the Ur III economic documents (see *ŠL* 399:165).

5. Perhaps, literally, "one who spends silver"; cf. *zi-ga*, 'expenditures' (see commentary to proverb 1.32).

6. Literally, "of his own house, the building-boards." For "his" (*-na-*) with reference to personified animals in the Sumerian proverbs, cf. Gordon, *SP*, pp. 10 and 12 (no. 7).

## 4.57

[l]ú-IM-TUM TÚG-ba lú-ge-na ba-a[n]-dím

[M]en . . .,<sup>1</sup> in their ..(?)<sup>2</sup> steadfast men have been fashioned.

The meaning of this proverb is altogether obscure.

1. *IM-TUM* may perhaps be a verbal form *im-ib* 'they became angry'; cf. *mu-da-ib* in Kramer, "Man and His God," line 33 (*Vetus Testamentum, Supplements*, vol. III [1955], pp. 174 and 178). Perhaps, however, it is the Akkadian *imtum* 'venom' or even *emdum* 'support.'

2. *TÚG* here is perhaps to be read *umuš* 'reasoning, discernment.'

## 4.58

*ki a b-k[a]l(?) di[n]gir-ra-kam saḥar-ra-àm bí-ib-šú-šú-un*

The earth is ba[rr]en<sup>1</sup>: It is (an act) of the g[o]ds,<sup>2</sup> but<sup>3</sup> (as for me), I am covered with dust.

Perhaps the angry statement of a man whose lands have suffered from a drought.

1. Or, perhaps, "has been left fallow." Cf., perhaps, the term *ki-kal(-la)*, for which see note 9 to proverb 1.38 (and references cited there); cf. also *ki-gal<sub>s</sub>* (= *ki-UD*) in note 6 to proverb 2.144.

2. Cf. proverb 1.7, and perhaps also 1.160.

3. i. e., *-àm* of *saḥar-ra-àm*.

## 4.59

zi(!)-ga sag-gar-ga-ra-ka bîd ab-  
gu<sub>5</sub>-ul

In respect to<sup>1</sup> (both) expenditures<sup>2</sup> and capital goods,<sup>3</sup> the anus<sup>4</sup> is great.<sup>5</sup>

That is, perhaps, in terms humorously drawn from administrative phraseology, the anus is said to have a continuous supply of faeces.

1. -ka at the end of the second complex is assumed to be for -kam.

2. For zi-ga, 'expenditures,' see commentary to proverb 1.32.

3. For the reading sag-gar-ga-ra(-k) — not sag-nîg-ga-ra(-k)—and its meaning, cf. now Oppenheim, *Cat. Eames*, pp. 56 (E34) and 79 (H2, sub b).

4. For bîd (=KU/DÚR), 'anus,' cf. note 1 to proverb 4.48 above (see also proverb 4.60 below).

5. -gu<sub>5</sub>-ul (i.e., -KU-ul) is assumed to be for the usual -gu-ul.

## 4.60

nam-šeš-a bîd ib-ra ka ba-an-tu

A pungent(?) taste<sup>1</sup> strikes<sup>2</sup> at the anus<sup>3</sup> (although) it has entered by (way of) the mouth!

1. Literally, 'bitterness' (it is hardly likely that nam-šeš would have the meaning 'brotherhood' in this context). For the use of the element nam-elsewhere in connection with the taste or flavour of foods, cf. nam-gar à š<sup>3</sup>ar 'the flavour of leek' and nam-lu-úb<sup>3</sup>ar-da 'the flavour of turnips' in proverb 3.67 in Collection Three.

2. Literally, "has struck."

3. For bîd 'anus,' cf. note 1 to proverb 4.48 above, as well as proverb 4.59.

4.61<sup>1</sup>

gu-du<sup>2</sup> še<sub>10</sub>(!)-dúr-e<sup>3</sup> dug<sub>4</sub>-ge inim-  
dirig-ge<sup>4</sup> àm-ta-ab-tùm<sup>5</sup>

The anus<sup>6</sup> breaks wind<sup>7</sup>; the mouth<sup>8</sup> chatters(?).<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps a sarcastic comment about an excessively loquacious person; cf. the similar idea in the English expression "verbal diarrhoea."

1. There is no separating line between proverbs 4.60 and 4.61, but note that the separating line is also omitted between proverbs inscribed on the lower edge of the reverse of tablet "D" (CBS

14050) of Collection Three, the one other extant proverb tablet with an inscribed lower edge of the reverse. For this proverb, cf. also the hitherto unrecognized Kuyunjik bilingual fragment K. 5688, lines 1-4 (*VR* 20, no. 5, lines 54-57c and d), where the Akkadian column reads: [gin-na]-tum šú-ru-tam pu-ú ba-ba-nu-tam ub-lam.

2. In CBS 14079 there seems to be a broken sign between -du and še<sub>10</sub>-, which may have, however, been erased by the scribe; note that K. 5688 has nothing between -du and še<sub>10</sub>-.

3. i.e., KU/DÚR(!)-dúr-e (so CBS 14079); K. 5688: še<sub>10</sub>-dúr-ru.

4. Co CBS 14079 (according to Kramer's rough hand-copy; see note 4 on p. 67); K. 5688: inim-dirig-ga for inim-dirig-ge.

5. So CBS 14079; K. 5688: ba-ab-tùm.

6. For gu-du = Akkadian *qinnatum* 'anus,' see *ŠL* 559:43, Holma, *Körperteile*, pp. 65 f. (as amended, *op. cit.*, p. 172), and Meissner, *MVAG* 12/3 (1907, *Assyr. Stud.* IV), pp. 11 f. Cf. also the broken proverb 1.123, where the complex read gu-gub-ba may perhaps turn out to be gu-du-ba 'in its anus.'

7. Literally, "(has brought forth) breaking of wind." For the compound še<sub>10</sub>-dúr = Akkadian *šaratum* 'to break wind,' see "Additions and Corrections," notes to proverbs 1.12 and 2.80 in Gordon, *SP*.

8. Literally, "speech," on the assumption that dug<sub>4</sub>-ge stands for ka 'mouth,' by some sort of metonymy (cf. perhaps, proverb 1.108 where šà-ge 'the heart,' and dug<sub>4</sub>-ge are parallel). Note that the Akkadian (cf. note 1 above) has pû 'the mouth.'

9. Literally, "has brought forth chattering." The translation "chattering" attempts to render inim-dirig-ge — or perhaps better still, inim-dirig-ga as in K. 5688 (see note 4 above) — (literally, "excessive words"), and it is assumed that only inim-dirig-ge (cf., however, *ŠL* 15:120 and 85.125) corresponds to the Akkadian *babanûtam* of the bilingual (cf. note 1 above). For quite a differing meaning of an Akkadian *bab(b)anûtam*, which however does not seem to make any sense in this context, see Landsberger, *ZA* XXXIX (1935), pp. 293 f., Meissner, *BAW* I (*AS* I/1), pp. 12 ff., Ebeling, *Glossar zu den neubabylonischen Briefen*, pp. 72 f., and possibly Finet in *ARMT* XV, p. 192.

4. 62<sup>1</sup>

a m a -š[u]l(?)<sup>2</sup>-l a m á-add[ir]<sup>3</sup>-r a a  
n u-t u k u-m e-e n

O ..(?) mother, I have no water in the ferry-boat!

Perhaps the words of a boatman to a thirsty woman passenger in mid-stream. Cf. "Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink!"

1. There is no separating line between proverbs 4.61 and 4.62, but cf. note 1 to proverb 4.61.

2. So perhaps over an erasure. The sign is badly broken, and it is difficult to determine which traces belong to the assumed erasure and which to the sign, which might perhaps eventually turn out to be lul-, gu-, or even SAL-..(?), rather than šul as has been assumed here.

3. i.e., probably, A . P A . B I + I Z . [ P A D . D I R I G ] .

## PROCOPIUS ON THE GHASSANIDS

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THE PRIMARY AND PRINCIPAL SOURCE for the study of the Ghassānid Dynasty during the reign of its first and most illustrious ruler, Arethas, son of Jabalah, is undoubtedly the *History* of Procopius of Caesarea. Thucydidean<sup>1</sup> in his conception but Herodotean in the execution of his task and the quality of his historiography, he set out to write the history of the wars of Justinian, and in the process recorded from first hand information the wars of his vassal, Arethas, both the ones he fought as a Roman phylarch and the ones he fought as an Arab chief. With the problem of the *ira et studium* which infects the works of Procopius this article is not concerned.<sup>2</sup> Not that the well-known problem has no bearing, direct or indirect, on the picture he drew of Arethas. His *studium* for Belisarius was, indeed, the controlling condition of drawing that picture at all, and as a historian he can be used with profit only when the distinction between the facts he describes and the motives he assigns is vividly remembered. It is rather that this article is concerned with facts not motives, and thus its concern with the one to the exclusion of the other is a recognition and an application of the distinction between the two. By isolating fact from motive, it attempts to arrive at as correct a measure as possible of the value of Procopius, which rests—at any rate for the history

of the Ghassānids—on the factual information he conveys rather than on the interpretations and the constructions he puts on events.

The value of Procopius as a source on which to draw for writing the history of the Ghassānid Phylarchate derives from a number of reasons of various orders and degrees of importance.

In the first place he is a primary source, and primary in the most favored sense of the word. Not only was he a contemporary historian like Malalas, but was also an eyewitness<sup>3</sup> of the events he described or part of them. He was appointed as ξύμβουλος<sup>4</sup> to Belisarius under whom Arethas fought, and was in an excellent position to write on the wars of the period in which the Ghassānid King took part. Consequently he is unique among the historians in whose works the Ghassānids receive mention, in that he actually saw the Ghassānid *auxilia* in action and also their King Arethas. But he was relieved later from his office on the staff of Belisarius, around the year 540, and therefore ceased to be an eyewitness of the events he describes after that date. Thus he was probably not present at the siege of Sisauranon where Arethas and his *auxilia* are discussed,<sup>5</sup> unlike the battle of Callinicum, A. D. 531, when he was certainly on the spot. His place appears to have been taken by George.<sup>6</sup> This break in his *cursus officiorum* natu-

<sup>1</sup> *History*, I. i. 1-17.

<sup>2</sup> This is the subject of a forthcoming publication. See Irfan Kawar, "Procopius and Arethas," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Vol. L, i, ii.

<sup>3</sup> *History*, I. i. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *History*, I. i. 3; xii. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *History*, II, xix. 11-18.

<sup>6</sup> *History*, II. xix. 22-23.