

## MM 818: A New LB Fragment of Atra-ḫasīs I

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In the course of catalogue work on the cuneiform material of the Museu Bíblic de Montserrat,<sup>1</sup> only a handful of inscribed fragments of clay tablets defied decipherment, mainly due to their poor condition of preservation. During one of our visits to the monastery museum, we were able to identify one of these fragments, namely MM 818, as part of a new manuscript of Tablet I of the Akkadian myth of Atra-ḫasīs.<sup>2</sup>

It is a real pleasure to dedicate the publication of this modest “jewel” which has been sleeping in the lap of this Catalan “magic mountain” for over sixty-five years to our good friend (and Ignacio’s teacher) Gregorio, who built up, with his characteristic eagerness, his own “Miramar” school of Oriental research at Barcelona, and who has always shown a great deal of interest and expertise in the interpretation of ancient Near Eastern, particularly Ugaritic, mythology and literature.

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1. MM 818 is the lower part (75 x 60 x 20 mm) of a one-column tablet. It preserves the last ten lines of the obverse and the first thirteen lines of the reverse. The script is Late Babylonian. According to the contents of the text the original tablet must have contained some fifty lines per side, a feature that agrees well with the standard format for the poem of Atra-ḫasīs at Sippar in this late period.<sup>3</sup> Nothing is known of its place of origin; however, it may be worth noting that some of the cuneiform tablets and bricks acquired by P. Ubach for the Museu Bíblic during his stay in the Near East in the early 1920s come from Babylon itself.<sup>4</sup>

It should be mentioned from the outset that the whole text of the reverse and some lines of the obverse are poorly preserved, and that unfortunately no parallel text is available for these hardly intelligible passages. Moreover, as regards the hand of the scribe one should note that some cuneiform

1 See *Tabulae Montserratinae. Estudios de catalogación del Museo de Montserrat (Barcelona) dedicados al Padre Guiu Camps con ocasión de su 80 aniversario* (= *Aula Orientalis* 15 [1997]), Sabadell (Barcelona) 1998.

2 Once more we should like to thank P. Guiu Camps for his constant help and kind permission to study and publish the piece in question. We are, as usual too, very grateful to C.B.F. Walker for his kind permission to collate the manuscripts kept at the British Museum.

3 See A.R. George - F.N.H. Al-Rawi, “Tablets from the Sippar Library. VI. Atra-ḫasīs”, *Iraq* 48 (1996) 147.

4 NB brick inscriptions (MM 715.007, 715.010, 715.024, 715.008; cf. *AuOr* 15, pp. 86ff.), NB/LB records (a very large number of them, see e.g. MM 1145 and 1153 from the Kašr archive, or MM 833, 1031, and 1089 from the Nappāḫu family archive; cf. *AuOr* 15, pp. 148ff.), medical texts (MM 479 and 501) and literary texts (see the comments of M. Civil in *AuOr* 15, p. 44). A study by M. Molina and I. Márquez Rowe on the origin of the Montserrat cuneiform bricks and tablets is forthcoming.

signs have a cursive and coarse shape, and that the lines of poetry may not always be duly preserved. Therefore, our transliteration and translation of the text are not without gaps and, admittedly, tentative readings. Nevertheless, it must also be stated that the intelligible or deciphered parts of the text provide both a few restorations and interesting insights on the story, and mythology, of the first act of Atra-ḫasīs, namely the episode that concerns the mutiny of the drudging Igigi gods against Enlil.

## 2. The manuscripts

Besides our Montserrat fragment, there are six extant Late Babylonian manuscripts of the myth titled in antiquity *enūma ilū amēlu* "When the Gods Were Man". Two very small fragments come from Babylon and were published by W.G. Lambert and A. Millard as MSS x and y in the standard edition of the poem;<sup>5</sup> and four almost complete tablets came to light in 1986 during the excavation of the library of the temple of Šamaš at Sippar and have been recently published by A.R. George and F.N.H. Al-Rawi.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the text preserved in MM 818, as part of the opening episodes of Tablet I, was partially known from three other manuscripts.

- A BM 78941+78943 (CT 46 1, Lambert and Millard's MS A).  
Sippar(?). Damaged Old Babylonian eight-column tablet, dated to Ammišaduqa year 12. Scribe: Kasap-Aya (perhaps to be read Nūr-Aya).<sup>7</sup>
- B K 10082 (CT 46 7, Lambert and Millard's MS J).  
Nineveh. Late Assyrian small center fragment from Ashurbanipal's library with two columns preserved.
- C IM 124646 (transliterated and translated by George - Al-Rawi, *Iraq* 48 [1996] 158-161, photos in figs. 1-5).  
Sippar. Late Babylonian one-column complete tablet.
- D MM 818  
Babylon(?). Late Babylonian fragment of the lower part of a one-column tablet.

Lambert and Millard suggested that MS J (our source B) together with other Kuyunjik fragments possibly are to be considered descendants of the Old Babylonian or Kasap-Aya's edition (our source A).<sup>8</sup> With the finding of the Sippar late version (our source C), George and Al-Rawi have confirmed that opinion, and they have further deduced that the manuscripts of the late recension from Sippar, Babylon and Ashurbanipal's libraries (except for MSS STU, the so-called "Assyrian Recension") must represent «the standard text of Atra-ḫasīs current in Babylonia in the first millennium».<sup>9</sup> As far as Tablet I is concerned, the Standard Babylonian edition, remarked George and Al-Rawi, «presents a slightly more condensed version of the opening episodes than that given in the Old Babylonian text».<sup>10</sup>

5 *Atra-ḫasīs. The Babylonian Story of the Flood*, Oxford 1969.

6 "Tablets from the Sippar Library. VI. Atra-ḫasīs", *Iraq* 48 (1996) 147-190.

7 As proposed by von Soden in ZA 68 (1978) 50f.

8 *Atra-ḫasīs*, p. 34.

9 *Iraq* 48 (1996) 148.

10 *Ibid.* p. 151

MM 818 (D), like K 10082 (B) and IM 124646 (C), can indeed be regarded as a descendant of the Old Babylonian version BM 78941+78943 (A). However, although the fragment from Ashurbanipal's library and the tablet from the Sippar library can be said to follow a standard text (the so-called SB recension), the Late Babylonian fragment MM 818 shows some divergences in the parallel passages; both interpolations and omissions are attested.

As a result, and also because a considerable part of the parallel text in the Sippar Tablet I (our source C) is too badly damaged for decipherment, we have considered it inappropriate for the time being to use the so-called SB version as the guiding or "ideal" text in our transliteration, and more reasonable to follow the numbering of lines proposed in Lambert-Millard's edition, that is Kasap-Aya's version (the SB numbering of lines will be included in brackets).

### 3. Transliteration

The transliteration of sources A and B (collated) follows that of Lambert and Millard; only occasionally, however, have we suggested new restorations on the basis of the preserved text of the Montserrat fragment. Likewise, a few alternative readings have been proposed to the transliteration of source C offered by George and Al-Rawi. All new suggestions will be discussed under the commentary section.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the few signs and traces of signs preserved in the first two lines of the obverse and the last two of the reverse are not included in the transliteration score mainly because of their hardly intelligible condition and the lack of textual correspondence with the other manuscripts. What we read there is the following:

obv. 1': DINGIR.MEŠ 'x' [

obv. 2': 50 ir-{ir-}'te<sup>1</sup>-'x' [

rev. 12: 'x'-x [

rev. 13: [x]-'x' [

38	A	[i <sup>2</sup> -lu <sup>2</sup> du]-ul-lam	iz-bi-lu mu-ši ù ur-ri
	C (38)	'i <sup>1</sup> '-l <sup>1</sup> lu <sup>1</sup> du-ul-lu	iz-bi-lu x x x x :
	D	i-lu du-ul-la	i-za-'bi <sup>1</sup> -l[u <sup>2</sup>

39	A	[(x) wa <sup>2</sup> -aš <sup>2</sup> ]-bu-ma	i-ik-ka-lu ka-ar-ši
	C (39)	x x x x x-ma	ik-ka-[lu ka-ar-ši]
	D	aš-bu-ma	ik-ka-lu kar-ši

40	A	[ut-ta-az]-za-mu	i-na ka-la-ak-ki
	C (40)	ut-ta-az-za-mu	ik-ka-la-ak-(ki)
	D	ut-ta-[(az-)za-mu ]	

40a	D	tup-ši-ik-ku-ma GAZ-na-ši ka-'bi <sup>1</sup> du-u[l-lu]
	A, B and C	omit

40b	D	<ma->a- 'ad <sup>1</sup> šap-ša-aq-ni
	A, B and C	omit

- 41 A [x x] x-ni GU.ZA.LÁ i ni-im-hu-ur-ma  
 B (41) [ ]-a i ni-<sup>1</sup>na-ra<sup>1</sup>-a[š-šu]  
 C (41) al-ka-a-nim GU.ZA.LÁ-a<sup>2</sup> i ni-na-ra-<sup>1</sup>x x<sup>1</sup>  
 D al-ka-ni <sup>eiš</sup>gu-za-la-ni i ni-<ni<sup>2</sup>>-ri-am-ma [
- 42 A [ka-a]b-tam du-ul-la-ni li-ša-sí-ik el-ni  
 B (41a) [ ]x i ni-iš-bi-ir ní-ra  
 C (41a) omits  
 D ù ka-ab-ta du-ul-la-ni i ni-iš-h[u<sup>2</sup>-u<sup>2</sup>]
- 43 A [x x m]a-li-ik i-li qú-ra-dam  
 B, C and D omit
- 44 A [al-k]a-nim i ni-iš-ši-a i-na šu-ub-ti-šu  
 B, C and D omit
- 45 A [<sup>d</sup>en-líl m]a-li-ik i-li qú-ra-dam  
 B, C and D omit
- 46 A [al-k]a-nim i ni-iš-ši-a i-na šu-ub-ti-šu  
 B, C and D omit
- 47 A [<sup>d</sup>PI<sup>2</sup>]-<sup>1</sup>e<sup>1</sup> pí-a-šu i-pu-ša-am-ma  
 B (42) [ ] i-pu-ša-am-ma  
 C (42) <sup>d</sup>PI<sup>2</sup>-<sup>1</sup>e<sup>1</sup> pa-a-šu i-pu-ša-am-(ma)  
 D un ša i-šu-ú i-lu te-ma [ / <sup>1</sup>pa<sup>1</sup>?<sup>1</sup>šú<sup>1</sup> <i>-pu-ša<sup>1</sup>-<sup>1</sup>ma<sup>1</sup>
- 48 A [is-sà-qa]r a-na i-li ah-hi-šu  
 B (43) [ ]x ana i-lu ah-he-e-šu  
 C (43) iz-za-<sup>1</sup>ka-ra<sup>2</sup> a-na i-li ah-he-(e-šu)  
 D ana DINGIR.MEŠ [i]z-za-kar
- 49 A [ ]x <sup>1</sup>GU.ZA.LÁ la-bi<sup>1</sup>-ru-tim  
 B (44) [ ]x GÚ.ZA.LÁ-e la-bi-ru-tim  
 C (44) <i<sup>2</sup>> ni-[im-ha]-aš-ma GU.ZA.LÁ-e la-bi-(ru)-ú-(ti)  
 D [i] <sup>1</sup>ni<sup>1</sup>-im-ha-aš-ma <sup>eiš</sup>gu-za-la <la>-bi-<ru>-ti
- 50 A [ ] <sup>d</sup>en-]<sup>1</sup>lí<sup>1</sup>?  
 B (45) [ ] i-ša-ak-ka-na <sup>d</sup>en-líl  
 C (45) i-x x x x i-ša-ak-<sup>1</sup>ka-na<sup>1</sup> <sup>d</sup>en-(líl)  
 D [x] <sup>1</sup>x<sup>1</sup> te <sup>1</sup>x<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup> i-ša-ka<sup>1</sup>-an <<sup>d</sup>>en-líl
- 51 A [ ]  
 B (46) [ ]-né-e i-ša-ka-an  
 C (46) illegible  
 D [x] šu <sup>1</sup>x<sup>1</sup> [x] <sup>1</sup>x<sup>1</sup> i-ša-ka-an{-nu}

- 52 A [ ] x ni  
 B (47) [ ] x x iq-qu-ú x x x x  
 C illegible  
 D ʿne¹ ʿx¹ [x] ʿx¹ ʿi¹-na mah-ri-ni an mim na
- 53 A not preserved  
 C illegible  
 D ʿx¹ ʿx¹ ʿx¹ [x] ʿx¹-mu-u un-ni-ni al-ka-ni
- 54 A not preserved  
 C illegible  
 D ʿx¹ ʿx¹ ʿx¹-šal-bi-ra ni-ir-ni
- 55 A not preserved  
 C illegible  
 D ʿa¹-ʿka¹²-ni ab ʿx¹ ʿx¹ ʿx¹-na-ni nu-ʿka¹-an-n[i]
- 56 A not preserved  
 C illegible  
 D probably included in the preceding lines
- 57 A ma-li-[ik] i-[li] qú-ra-dam  
 C (49ʹ) i-lu ma-ʿli¹-ik x[ :]  
 D ʿx¹-ni-iš ma-lik DINGIR.MEŠ qú-ra-[]
- 58 A al-k[a-<nim>²] ʿi¹ ni-iš-ši-a i-na šu-ub-ti-šu  
 C (50ʹ) [ ]  
 D al-ka-ni i ni-iš-[ši]-ʿa¹-ʿšu¹ i-na šu[b]-t[i-šu]
- 59 A ʰen-líl [ma-li-i]k i-li qú-ra-dam  
 C (51ʹ) ʰen-líl ma-li-ik x[ :]  
 D ʰen-líl ma-lik DINGIR.ʿMEŠ ʿqú¹-[ra-
- 60 A al-[ka-<nim>²] ʿi¹ ni-iš-ši-a i-na šu-ub-ti-šu  
 C (52ʹ) [ ]  
 D [K]IMIN
- 61 A a-nu-um-ma ti-si-a tu-ʿqú¹-um-tam  
 C (53ʹ) ʰa-nu-[u]m-ma lu-ga-[ar-ri? :]  
 D ʰa¹-[

5. Translation

The following is the translation of the lines of the Montserrat text. In order to properly set the scene of the passage, we begin with a short synopsis of the opening missing portion in the inimitable words of T. Jacobsen.<sup>11</sup>

*(Before man had been created, the gods had had to work themselves, dig canals and shoulder all the other hard tasks of irrigation agriculture. The three highest gods, Anu, Enlil, and Enki had divided the universe between them by lot, much as sons divide a paternal estate, and thus Anu, their father and king, got heaven, the warrior Enlil, their counsellor, got earth, and Enki, the clever one, received the underground waters and the sea.*

*Enlil, having received the earth as his share, was in charge of the gods who toiled endlessly away day and night, year after year, digging out the Euphrates and the Tigris.)*

...  
 obv. 1' The gods ...  
 Fifty they...  
 The gods had been bear[ing] the work ...  
 (Then) they convened and began to complain (and) gru[mble]:  
 5' 'The toil indeed is killing us, hard is the wo[rk],  
 Too much our distress!  
 Come, let us slay our steward, ...  
 And cast [off] our heavy work!'

*(A adds: ... the counsellor of the gods, the hero, / Come, let us fetch him from his dwelling! / Enlil, the counsellor of the gods, the hero, / Come, let us fetch him from his dwelling!')*

(Then) ..., the god who took the initiative,  
 10' Opened his mouth and addressed the gods:  
 rev. 1 'Let us smite the steward of old time,  
 Enlil will (then) ...  
 He will ...  
 ... before us. ...  
 5 ... the plea. Come,  
 ... prolongue<sup>2</sup>our yoke,  
 Come, ... our<sup>2</sup> ... we shall establish.  
 ..., the counsellor of the gods, the her[o,]  
 Come, let us fetch him from his dwel[ling!]  
 10 Enlil, the counsellor of the gods, the he[ro,]  
 Ditto. A[nu ...  
 ...

11. *The Treasures of Darkness. A History of Mesopotamian Religion*, New Haven - London 1976, p. 117.

## 6. Commentary

MM 818 thus contains the significant passage of the myth which introduces the mutiny of the Igigi gods who became tired of their assigned labour. Significant because, as is well known, it is precisely to remedy this situation that man will be created.

The obverse of the fragment preserves the words of complaint of the gods. Indeed, once seated in assembly, they all as one raised their protest and decided to get rid of their drudging duty as well as their steward. One god then arose and proclaimed his plan of action to his rebel companions. The leader's speech covers the whole reverse of the piece which unfortunately, as mentioned above, is rather damaged; we have been able to make sense of only isolated words in six lines of this section. Yet, it is possible to read both the start and the end of the plan of the rebellion: first, the gods would smite the steward, and finally they would lay siege to the residence of their boss Enlil.

38. The beginning of the line (*i-lu*) is preserved in MM 818, so that A and C can now be safely restored (von Soden's restoration *kab-tam* in A proposed in ZA 68 [1978] 56 is accordingly to be discarded). Note that the verb is in the durative, agreeing thus with the "tense" of the narration used in the following lines, but in contrast to the "preterite" form in A and C.

39. A restoration [*wa-aš*]-*bu-ma* in A seems now preferable to [*i-da-bu*]-*bu-ma* (so Lambert-Millard, *Atra-Ḫasis*, p. 44, and cf. von Soden, ZA 68 [1978] 56, 78) or [*i-na-bu*]-*bu-ma* (so von Soden *ibid.*) both in the meaning of "they complain(ed)", in the light of the new manuscript (nevertheless, one should note that, as indicated by the editors of A, there may be space for a third sign in the broken gap).

40. There seems to be no space for *ina kalakki* at the end of the line.

40a-b. This interpolated sentence opens the words of complaint of the convened rebellious gods; interestingly, these are the words of the first lines of the myth (OB I 3-4 = SB I 3-4) which also occur rather frequently throughout the first episode (OB I 149-150 = SB II 35-36, OB I 162-163 = SB II 47-48, and cf. OB I 177 = SB II 64). No doubt the importance of the sentence marks the situation or condition of the Igigi gods as intolerable and announces the irreversibility of their decision (as a matter of fact, and as we know, their claim will be justly admitted by the higher gods).

As variants of this phrase, one should note the addition of *-ma* after *tupšikku* and the logographically written verb (GAZ). Unusual, however, is the use of the dative suffix (*-nāši*) instead of the expected accusative.

41. Note the syllabic writing of *guzalū* preceded by the classifier *giš* (also in l. 49).

The proposed verbal form *ninēr(i)* is emended from the parallel text in B and C (there conjugated with the alternative form *ninār*).

42. The verb is neither *šussuku* (A) nor *šebēru* (B). The broken sign may be HU, in which case one could tentatively restore the verbal form *i nišḫuṭ*, from *šaḫāṭu* "to cast off", a meaning that would well agree with the context.

43-46. It seems that this OB passage was dropped in later times.

47. Who is the leader of the rebellion? To this crucial question the new manuscript throws both light and shade. What is written on the tablet, at the beginning of the line, is a clear UN sign, without divine classifier. Then follows the deity's epitheton *ša išū ilu iēma*. The same cognomen occurs not in this line but in a later passage both in Kasap-Aya's text and the SB Sippar version. There, namely OB I 223 and SB II 103, it is used to qualify the god who was finally slain and with whose flesh and blood mixed with clay

man was fashioned. MM 818 thus confirms the opinion that the chief rebel and the slaughtered god are one and the same deity (suggested, for example, by Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness*, p. 118; see also George and Al-Rawi, *Iraq* 48 [1996] 149f.; von Soden, on the other hand, suggested to restore Enki, ZA 67 [1977] 56, and *TUAT* III/4, Gütersloh 1994, p. 619, a restoration that does neither really agree with the traces of the last sign preserved on the tablet, see Lambert's collation in *Atra-ḫasis*, pl. 11 [after collation we favour his first reading, that is a broken vertical, apparently like George and Al-Rawi, see *Iraq* 48 [1996] 150]). The divine name in the older version (A) is spelled <sup>d</sup>PI-*e*, and accordingly it has been restored in the line under discussion [<sup>d</sup>PI]-<sup>r</sup>*e*<sup>1</sup> (George - Al-Rawi, *ibid.*, p. 150). To judge from the set of photos published by George and Al-Rawi, we would tentatively also read <sup>d</sup>rPI-*e*<sup>1</sup> in SB I 42 and SB II 103 (the editors, however, prefer to read <sup>d</sup>NAGAR). Now, the question arises: did our scribe miscopy PI-*e*, perhaps due to a misunderstanding of the name (so much debated on the other hand among modern scholars), and wrote instead the sign UN (somewhat similar in design)? (It may also be tempting to contribute to the discussion of the name and point out that UN has the meaning of “mankind”.) We are not able, however, to offer a satisfactory answer or interpretation for the time being.

As for the deity's cognomen, one should note that the same aberrant or non-normative word-order is attested in the Sippar text (SB II 103: *ša i-šu-ú i-lam ṭè-e-ma*); compare the OB version (OB I 223: *i-la ša i-šu-ú<sup>1</sup> ṭe<sub>4</sub>-e-ma*).

49. The violent action of the plan against “the steward of old time” is now confirmed. The same verb can be plausibly restored in C (one can now decipher the sign AZ in the photograph).

50-51. We do not translate the verb *šakānu* (e.g. with “to establish”) because it may well be part of an idiom.

51. The emendation is based both on the parallel in B and the aberrant writing for the possible plural form (an interpretation *i-ša-ka-(an-)nu*, however, is of course also possible; cf. the missing AN sign as divine classifier in the previous line or the word *i-ša-ka-an* written just above it as possible sources for the mistake).

52. Perhaps the only sign preserved in A corresponds to the last sign in the expression *ina mahrini*. If so, the three signs that follow, for which we are not able to propose any meaning, may belong to the next line of poetry (cf. next line).

The traces in the Montserrat text do not seem to correspond with the sequence *iq-qu-ú* in B.

53-56. This entire passage is only, and badly, preserved in D (von Soden, for example, did not attempt to translate the whole passage of ll. 49-56 in *TUAT* for the sake of clarity noting that it is «fast ganz zerstört»). The editors of A tentatively restored the number of lines (of poetry), namely four. MM 818 preserves, however, three lines. It is possible, therefore, that the lines of poetry are not, like in C, duly preserved. This may be confirmed by the fact that the introductory word *alkāni* is found at the end of l. rev. 5 (cf. also the commentary to l. 52 above).

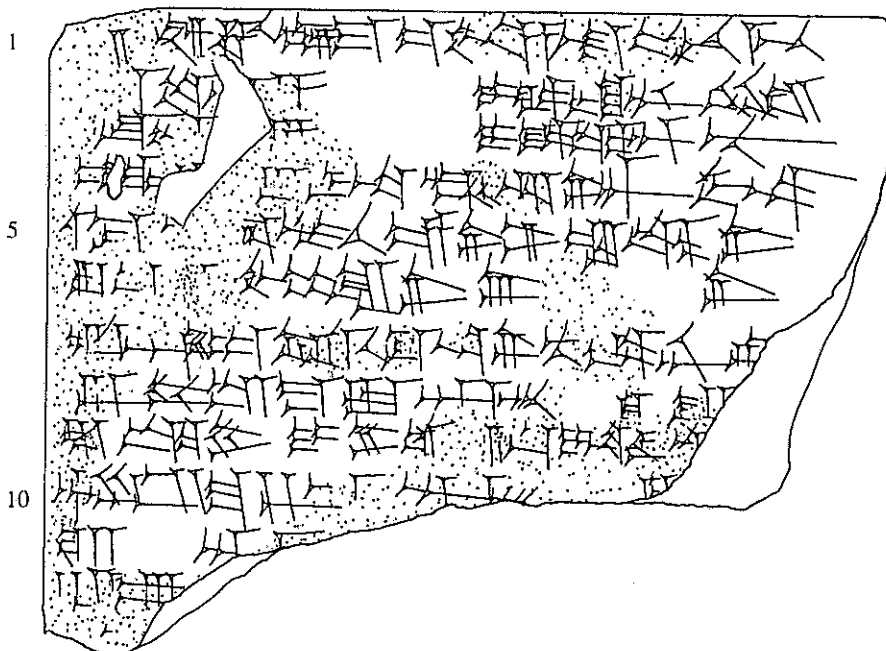
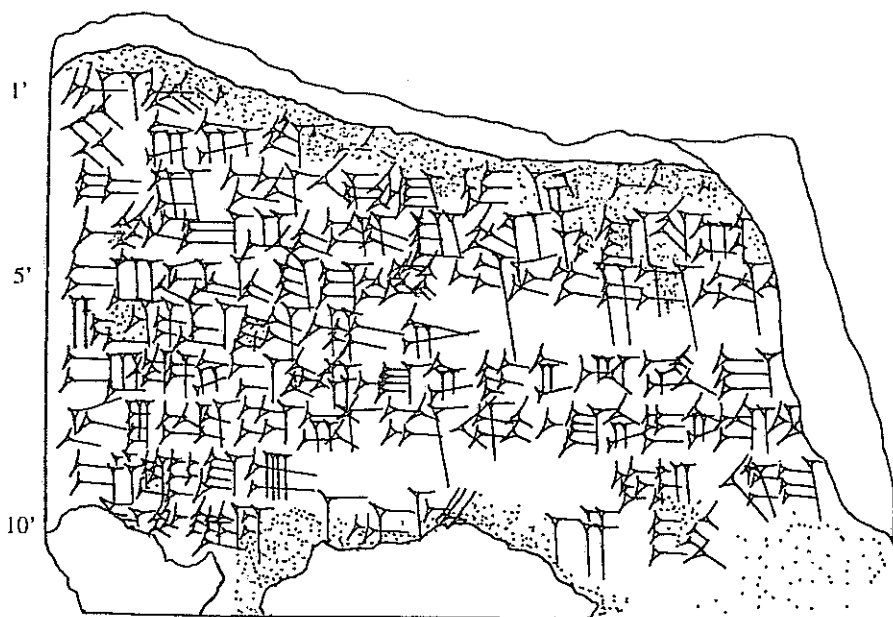
54. We have tentatively suggested in the translation to understand the three first intelligible signs as belonging to a verbal form of *labāru* (cf. *CAD* L, p. 16a).

57. The late versions added one word at the beginning of the line. One could indeed postulate that it was forgotten by Kasap-Aya (A): on the one hand, there is a lack of *parallelismus membrorum* with l. 59; and on the other hand the same passage is quoted in ll. 43-46 (omitted in the late versions) and l. 43 (// l. 57) was certainly introduced by a word apparently written with two signs (as clearly restored by Lambert and Millard); note, moreover, that the scribe seems to have omitted the sign NIM in ll. 58 and 60. George and al-Rawi have read *i-lu* in SB 49'. Von Soden, in turn, restored *be<sup>2</sup>-lam<sup>2</sup>* in OB 43 (ZA 67 [1977] 56, see



also *TUAT* III/4, p. 619). What is preserved in MM 818, however, is neither *ilula* nor *bēla(m)*. The word in question seems to denote an adverb.

60. Note that the text curiously replaces the whole line of poetry by KIMIN, which obviously refers to line 58.



1:1.5

MM 818 (copy by B. Böck)



MM 818 Obv.



MM 818 Rev.