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**WORLD
HISTORY**

≈ VOLUME I: TO 1850 ≈

Documents in World History

Volume I: To 1850



Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458



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CONTENTS

Part 1

THE FERTILE CRESCENT

1.1	Lugal Sulgi: Role Model for Mesopotamian Royalty	1
1.2	The Nippur Murder Trial and the “Silent Wife”	3
1.3	The Reign of Sargon	4
1.4	The Epic of Gilgamesh	5
1.5	The Code of Hammurabi	20
1.6	Daily Life in Egypt	21
1.7	A Humble Farmer Pleads His Own Case: The Workings of Ma’at	23
1.8	Some Common-sense Advice from the Scribe Any to His Son	31
1.9	Hebrew Scriptures	39
1.10	Assyrian War Tactics	41

Part 2

EARLY CIVILIZATION IN EAST ASIA

2.1	Might makes Right: the “Shu ching” Sets Forth the Mandate of Heaven	42
2.2	The Spirit World	46
2.3	Ch’u Yuan and Sung Yu: Individual Voices in a Chaotic Era	47
2.4	Confucius: Analects	49
2.5	Mencius: the Counterattack on Legalism	53
2.6	Taoism	56
2.7	Sima Qian: The Historian’s Historian Writes About the Builder of the Great Wall	66
2.8	Shi Huang Ti of Qin: A Study in Absolutism	69

Part 3

EARLY CIVILIZATION IN SOUTH ASIA

3.1	Rig Veda	72
3.2	Bhagavad Gita: Hinduism	73
3.3	The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness	90
3.4	Dhammapada: Buddhism	92
3.5	Mahavira: The “Great Hero” of the Jain Religion	99
3.6	Asoka: How a Life Was Turned Around	100
3.7	“King Milinda”: The Greek World’s Incursion Into India	102
3.8	Fa-Hsien: A Chinese Perspective on Gupta India	104

Part 4

GREECE AND THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

4.1	Homer: The Iliad	107
4.2	Empires and Military Glory: Herodotus Relates the Story of Thermopylae	109
4.3	Thucydides	112
4.4	From Confederacy to Empire: Thucydides	120
4.5	The City-State of Sparta	120
4.6	The First Philippic: A Great Orator Warns of Macedonian Imperialism	121
4.7	The Figure of Alexander	124
4.8a	Against Communism	124
4.8b	Virtue and Moderation: The Doctrine of the Mean	125

Part 5

ROME

5.1	A Hero Under Fire: Livy Relates the Trials and Tribulations of Scipio Africanus	127
5.2	“The War with Catiline”: Sallust’s Insights Into the Roman Republic’s Decline	129
5.3	The Transition from Republic to Principate: Tacitus	130
5.4	“All Roads Lead to Rome!”: Strabo	131
5.5	Gladiatorial Combat: Seneca	131
5.6	The Stoic Philosophy	132
5.7	Sidonius Appolinaris: Rome’s Decay, and a Glimpse of the New Order	133

Part 6

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

6.1	The Acts of the Apostles	136
6.2	Pliny the Younger on the Vesuvius Eruption and the Christian “Controversy”	139
6.3	Julian Emperor: The Ultimate Pagan	142
6.4	Bishop Synesius of Cyrene: A Lukewarm Churchman	144
6.5	Leo I: The Man Who Laid the Foundations for the Medieval Papacy	145
6.6	St. Augustine of Hippo, The Just War	146
6.7	Paulus Orosius, History Against the Pagans	148
6.8	St. Benedict	149

Part 7**MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATION AFTER THE FALL OF ROME**

7.1	Procopius, History of the Wars	153
7.2	Iconoclasm and Orthodoxy: The Second Council of Nicaea (787)	154
7.3	A Western Attitude Toward the Byzantine Greeks (1147): Odo of Deuil	155
7.4	Einhard	156
7.5	The Missi Dominici (802)	167
7.6	Launching the Crusades (1095): "It Is the Will of God!"	167

Part 8**ISLAM**

8.1	The Koran	169
8.2	Al-Tabari: an Early biography of Islam's Prophet	177
8.3	Orations: The Words of the Prophet Through His Speeches	178
8.4	Islam in the Prophet's Absence: Continuation Under the Caliphate	179
8.5	Harun al-Rashid and the Zenith of the Caliphate	181
8.6	Al-Farabi: The Perfect State	183
8.7	Islamic Science and Mathematics	186
8.8	The Caliphate in Decline: Al-Matawwakil's Murder	188
8.9	Shiism and Caliph Ali: Controversy Over the Prophetic Succession	190

Part 9**IMPERIAL CHINA AND THE DIFFUSION OF EAST ASIAN CIVILIZATION**

9.1	The Tang Dynasty (618–907): The Art of Government	193
9.2	Sung (Song) China: Imperial Examination System	194
9.3	Record of Ancient Matters: Futo No Yasumaro	195
9.4	Prince Shotoku's Seventeen Article Constitution	200
9.5	Pilgrimage to China (840): Ennin	202
9.6	Thai Civilization: Southeast Asia	202

Part 10

THE FORMATION OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION

10.1	St. Hildegard of Bingen, Know the Ways	205
10.2	St. Francis of Assisi, “The Rule of St. Francis”	207
10.3	The Goodman of Paris	209
10.4	The Love of God	211
10.5	St. Thomas Aquinas	211
10.6	Unam Sanctam (1302): Pope Boniface VIII	215
10.7	“A Most Terrible Plague”: Giovanni Boccaccio	216

Part 11

EURASIAN CONNECTIONS BEFORE EUROPEAN EXPANSION

11.1	Mansa Musa: The “King Who Sits on a Mountain of Gold”	218
11.2	The Cities of the Zanj and The Indian Ocean Trade	221
11.3	Ibn Battuta in Mali	223
11.4	The Mongol Khan’s Ultimatum to the Nations of Europe	225
11.5	William of Rubruck: Impressions of The Medieval Mongols	226
11.6	The Book of Ser Marco Polo	230
11.7	John Pian del Carpini, The Tartars	239
11.8	Kuyuk Khan, Letter to Pope Innocent IV	241

Part 12

ISLAMIC EMPIRES

12.1	Sunni versus Shi’ite: “We Exhort You to Embrace the True Faith!”	242
12.2	Süleyman “The Lawgiver” and the Advantages of Islam: Oigier de Busbecq	243
12.3	Women in Ottoman Society: Oigier de Busbecq	244
12.4	The Ottomans: Empire-builders at the Crossroads of Three Continents	245
12.5	The Safavid Shi’ite Empire of Persia	247
12.6	Shah Abbas the Great: The Resurgence of the Persian Empire	249
12.7	Moghul Apogee: Akbar the Enlightened	252

Part 13**RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION IN EUROPE**

13.1	Oration on the Dignity of Man (1486)	256
13.2	The Soul of Man (1474)	256
13.3	Castiglione's "Courtier": Prosperity Makes a Gentleman	257
13.4	Martin Luther	260
13.5	Luther vs. Erasmus: A Reformer's Attack on Free Will	266
13.6	John Calvin and the Genevan Reformation	269
13.7	Council of Trent: The Catholic-Reformation	270
13.8	The Society of Jesus	276

Part 14**EUROPEAN EXPLORATIONS AND EXPANSION**

14.1	Kilwa, Mombasa, and the Portuguese: Realities of Empire	278
14.2	Vasco da Gama, Journey to India	281
14.3	The Portuguese in Africa and India: Duarte Barbosa	284
14.4	"Cut Off Their Ears, Hands and Noses!": Gaspar Correa	285
14.5	Christopher Columbus	285
14.6	Bernal Díaz del Castillo	289
14.7	Bartolome De Las Casas: Persecutor Turns Protector	296
14.8	The British Encounter Maoris: A Sailor's Impressions	300
14.9	The Prospects of Christian Conversion: Saint Francis Xavier	302

Part 15**TRADE AND EXPLOITATION ACROSS THE ATLANTIC**

15.1	The "Black Legend" of Spain: Bartolomé de las Casas	303
15.2	"Our Kingdom Is Being Lost": Nzinga Mbemba (Afonso I)	304
15.3	Olaudah Equiano, The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African	305
15.4	Commerce, Slavery, and Religion in North Africa	306
15.5	Thomas Nelson, Slavery and the Slave Trade of Brazil	310

PART 1

The Fertile Crescent

1.1 Lugal Sulgi: Role Model for Mesopotamian Royalty

The Sumerians often endowed the original lugals (priest-kings) of their city-states with extra-human power and semi-divine ancestry. In the case of the legendary Sulgi of Nippur, his parentage included the deities Ninsun and Lugalbanda. In the cuneiform tablet that relates the story of his reign, "Sulgi, the Ideal King," he is held up as being what the perfect lugal should be; modesty certainly not being one of his flaws.

Source: Jacob Klein, "The Royal Hymns of Sulgi, King of Ur," in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, v. 71, pt. 7 (1981), Philadelphia; pp. 13, 15, 17, 19.

The hero avenged his city,
Whatever had been destroyed in Sumer, he destroyed in the foreign land,
He made the god of its city withdraw from it.
Its spirit (of) the good eye, (and) its angel (of) the good eye he caused to stand aside,
In its cultivated fields of lustrous barley, he caused weeds to grow,
He destroyed its wide and large trees (with) the axe,
He tore down its date-palms by their crown,
He uprooted its small trees,
In its orchards and gardens, where the 'honey' of fig-trees had been produced, he made weeds grow,
So that *thistles* and *thorns* broke through the ground.
The king—after he destroyed the cities, ruined the walls,
Terrified the evil land (like) a flood,
Dispersed the seed of the Gutians like seed-grain,
The pure lapis-lazuli of the foreign land he loaded into leather-sacks and leather-bags,
Heaped up all its treasures,
Amassed all the wealth of the foreign land.
Upon its fattened oxen (and) fattened sheep,
He invokes the name of Enlil,
He invokes the name of Ninlil (sD 334–353.)

Let me extoll all my achievements!
The fame of my power has reached very far,
My wisdom is full of subtleties,
What of mine is not a mystery?

That the king might let known his enduring name into distant days,
That sulgi, the king of Ur—
The hymn of his power, the song of his might,
That the wise one—the everlasting name of his preeminence,
Unto the offspring of future days might hand down,
For the mighty one, the son of Ninsun,
The Wisdom of the future was brought to the fore.
He praises his (own) power in a song,

Part 1: The Fertile Crescent

He exalts his own intelligence, the good that he has acquired from birth (lines 1–9).

As a youth, I studied the scribal art in the e d u b a, from the tablets of Sumer and Akkad,
Of the nobility, no one was able to write a tablet like me,
In the place *where* the people *attend* to learn the scribal art,
Adding, subtracting, counting and accounting—I completed all (their courses);
The fair Nanibgal, Nisaba,
Endowed me generously with wisdom and intelligence (lines 13–19).

(Then) I arose like a hawk, (like) a falcon,
(And) returned to Nippur in my vigor.
On that day, the storm shrieked, the west wind whirled,
The north wind and the south wind howled at each other,
Lightning together with the ‘seven winds’ devoured each other in heaven,
The thundering storm made the earth quake.
Iskur roared in the broad heavens,
The clouds of heaven mingled with the waters of the earth,
Their small (hail-)stones and their large (hail-)stones
Were striking on my back.
I, the king, I feared not, nor was I terrified.
Like a fierce lion I gnashed my teeth.
Like a wild ass I galloped.
With my heart full of joy, I ran onward.
Racing like a solitary wild-donkey,
(Before) Utu set his face toward his ‘house’,
I traversed a distance of fifteen ‘miles’.
My sag-ur-sag priests gazed at me (with astonishment):
In Nippur and Ur, in one day, I celebrated their e s e s- festival!
With my ‘brother (and) companion’, the hero Utu,
I drank beer in the palace, founded by An,
My singers sang for me to the (accompaniment of) the ‘seven’ t i g i-drums,
(And) my consort, holy Inanna, the lady, the joy of heaven and earth,
Sat there with me at the banquet.

My shining like fine silver,
My (having a perfect) ‘ear’, and being an expert in song and speech,
I, the shepherd, my attaining a perfect control of anything,
In my kingship, let all these be seemly recited!
As many lines as there may be in my songs,
None of them is false, (all of them) are verily true!
My songs, be they royal prayers or supplications,
Be they long-ballads, the praises of kingship,
Be they psalms, love-poems or love dialogues,

Be they flute-songs or drum-songs—
 In order that they shall never pass from memory, and that they
 shall never depart from (man's) lips,
 Let no one neglect them in the cult-places!
 Let them never cease (to be sung) in the lustrous Ekur!
 Let them be played for Enlil, in his New-Moon shrine!
 In its *monthly-festivals*, where sparkling beer is copiously libated
 like water,
 Let them be firmly established for Enlil and Ninlil, who dwell
 there together!

I, the upright, the benefactor of the land—
 Let my songs be (placed) in every mouth,
 Let my poems never pass from memory!
 That these, my paeans, spoken in praise,
 These (laudatory) words, which Enki established for me,
 These, the joyfully *deliberated wisdom* of Gestinanna,
 Should not be forgotten for distant days—

Questions:

1. What was involved in carrying out a successful military campaign of retaliation?
2. In what ways does Sulgi's prowess go beyond the military realm?
3. Using Sulgi's reputed words as a clue, what virtues did the Sumerians consider most important in their rulers?

1.2 The Nippur Murder Trial and the "Silent Wife"

One of the earliest known examples of a criminal justice proceedings was the trial of men accused of murdering a temple servant (nishakku) at Nippur. The Assembly of Nippur whose responsibility it was to render a verdict also had to make a ruling on the situation of the victim's wife, who had been informed of the murder (by the murderers) after the crime had been committed, but had chosen to remain silent on the matter, and was therefore prosecuted as an accessory to murder.

Source: Samuel Noah Kramer, *From the Tablets of Sumer* (Indian Hills, Co: Falcon's Wing Press, 1956), pp. 53–54.

Nanna-sig, the son of Lu-Sin, Ku-Enlil, the son of Ku-Nanna, the barber, and Enlil-ennam, the slave of Adda-kalla, the gardener, killed Lu-Inanna, the son of Lugal-apindu, the *nishakku-official*.

After Lu-Inanna, the son of Lugal-apindu, had been put to death, they told Nin-dada, the daughter of Lu-Ninurta, the wife of Lu-Inanna, that her husband Lu-Inanna had been killed.

Nin-dada, the daughter of Lu-Ninurta, opened not her mouth, (her) lips remained sealed.

Their case was (then) brought to (the city) Isin before the king, (and) the King Ur-Ninurta ordered their case to be taken up in the Assembly of Nippur.

(There) Ur-gula, son of Lugal-..., Dudu, the bird-hunter, Ali-ellati, the dependent, Buzu, the son of Lu-Sin, Eluti, the son of...-Ea, Shesh-Kalla, the porter (?), Lugal-Kan, the gardener, Lugal-azida, the son of Sin-andul, (and) Shesh-kalla, the son of Shara-..., faced (the Assembly) and said:

"They who have killed a man are not (worthy) of life. Those three males and that woman should be killed in front of the chair of Lu-Inanna, the son of Lugal-apindu, the *nishakku-official*."

Part 1: The Fertile Crescent

(Then) Shu..lilum, the..official of Ninurta, (and) Ubar-Sin, the gardener, faced (the Assembly) and said:

“Granted that the husband of Nin-dada, the daughter of Lu-Ninurta, had been killed, (but) what had (?) the woman done (?) that she should be killed?”

(Then) the (members of the) Assembly of Nippur faced (them) and said:

“A woman whose husband did not support (?) her—granted that she knew her husband’s enemies, and that (after) her husband had been killed she heard that her husband had been killed—why should she not remain silent (?) about (?) him? Is it she (?) who killed her husband? The punishment of those (?) who (actually) killed should suffice.”

In accordance with the decision (?) of the Assembly of Nippur, Nanna-sig, the son of Lu-Sin, Ku-Enlil, the son of Ku-Nanna, the barber, and Enlil-ennam, the slave of Adda-kalla, the gardener, were handed over (to the executioner) to be killed.

(This is) a case taken up by the Assembly of Nippur.

Questions:

1. *What possible motive is suggested for the wife’s “silence”?*
2. *Summarize briefly the argument presented, and accepted by the Assembly, for sparing the wife’s life.*
3. *What appears to have been the standard legal procedure in Sumerian criminal cases, and how might it compare/contrast to contemporary procedure in the U.S. legal system?*

1.3 The Reign of Sargon

The city-states that developed in the region of Mesopotamia after about 3500 B.C.E. were ruled by various kings who established local control. One of the first kings to successfully conquer and control the region was Sargon of Akkad, who ruled around 2300 B.C.E. The following excerpt from a tablet in the British Museum recounts his authority.

Source: The Reign of Sargon” is from George W. Botsford, ed., *A Source-Book of Ancient History* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 27–28.

Sargon, King of Akkad, through the royal gift of Ishtar was exalted, and he possessed no foe nor rival. His glory over the world he poured out. The Sea in the East he crossed, and in the eleventh year the Country of the West in its full extent his hand subdued. He united them under one control; he set up his images in the West; their booty he brought over at his word. Over the hosts of the world he reigned supreme. Against Kassala he marched, and he turned Kassala into mounds and heaps of ruins; he destroyed the land and left not enough for a bird to rest thereon. Afterward in his old age all the lands revolted against him, and they besieged him in Akkad; and Sargon went forth to battle and defeated them; he accomplished their overthrow, and their wide-spreading host he destroyed. Afterward he attacked the land of Subartu in his might, and they submitted to his arms, and Sargon settled that revolt, and defeated them; he accomplished their overthrow, and their wide-spreading host he destroyed, and he brought their possessions into Akkad. The soil from the trenches of Babylon he removed, and the boundaries of Akkad he made like those of Babylon. But because of the evil which he had committed, the great lord Marduk was angry, and he destroyed his people by famine. From the rising of the sun unto the setting of the sun they opposed him and gave him no rest.

Questions:

1. *What type of “order” did Sargon establish?*
2. *How does this chronicle judge his reign?*

1.4 The Epic of Gilgamesh

The epic of Gilgamesh is one of the oldest stories of which we have a written record. Presumably recited orally for generations before it was inscribed on clay tablets in cuneiform script, it tells of the life and exploits of a young nobleman and king, who ruled the city of Uruk in ancient Sumer, probably between 2700 and 2600 B.C. Sumer, generally recognized to be the earliest human civilization, was centered in the lower valley between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is contemporary Iraq; Uruk was not far from the present capital city of Baghdad.

It is almost fortuitous that we have the epic in written form today. In the seventh century B.C. (two thousand years after the time of Gilgamesh) the Assyrian king Assurbanipal, who ruled over the territory including what had been the ancient Sumerian civilization, built a great library in his capital city of Ninevah. Included among its holdings was a copy of the epic. But in 612 B.C. an invading army of Medes and Babylonians overran Ninevah, destroying the city and burying it (with its library) beneath the desert sands. There all remained lost and virtually forgotten for over two millennia until, in 1839, a young English archaeologist stumbled on this magnificent treasure. Over several decades the tablets containing the epic (as well as many other ancient writings) were unearthed and deciphered. Later other copies were discovered elsewhere. The epic, as we now have it, is a collation pieced together from these various cuneiform tablets. Although the epic is sufficiently complete to tell its story, some portions are missing and have been reconstructed by the translator.

Source: From *Gilgamesh* by William Ellery Leonard, translated by William Ellery Leonard. Translation copyright 1934 by William Ellery Leonard, renewed © 1962 by Barbara A. Hayward. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Books USA Inc.

GILGAMESH

All things he saw, even to the ends of the earth,
He underwent all, learned to know all,
He peered through all secrets,
Through wisdom's mantle that veileth all.
What was hidden he saw,
What was covered he undid;
Of times before the stormflood he brought report.
He went on a long far way,
Giving himself toil and distress;
Wrote then on a stone-tablet the whole of his labour.
He built the walls of ramparted Uruk,
He laid the foundations, steadfast as bronze,
Of holy Eanna, the pure temple...

Two thirds of him is god,
One third of him is man,
There's none can match the form of his body...

[The inhabitants of Uruk call upon the gods for help:]

"Gilgamesh keeps the son from the father,
Building the walls through the day, through the night.
He is herdsman of ramparted Uruk,
He is herdsman and lord of his folk,
Strong and splendid, knowing wisdom.
Gilgamesh keeps the lover from the maiden,
The daughter of a hero,
The chosen of a noble!"
The great gods heard their outcries.

Part 1: The Fertile Crescent

The gods of heaven called the lord Anu:
"Was he not of thy making, this almighty wild bull,
This hero Gilgamesh?
He hath not his like in the whole land....
Gilgamesh keeps the son from the father,
Building the walls through the day, through the night.
He is herdsman of ramparted Uruk,
He is herdsman and lord of his folk,
Strong and splendid,
Knowing wisdom.
Gilgamesh keeps the lover from the maiden,
The daughter of a hero,
The chosen of a noble!"
The great god Anu lent ear to their cries.
Aruru was summoned, she the great goddess:
"Thou, Aruru, madest Gilgamesh;
Now make another like unto him.
So long as he pleases
Let him come at Gilgamesh.
Let them contend together,
That Uruk may have peace."

As Aruru this heard,
She shaped in her heart a warrior of Anu.
Aruru washed her hands,
She pinched up some clay and spat on it.
She moulded Engidu,
Fashioned a hero, a glorious scion,
A fighter of Ninurta's.
His whole body was shaggy with hair,
Hair he bore on his head like a woman,
The plenty of his hair sprouted like grain.
He knew naught of land and people,
He was clothed like the god of the herds.
With the gazelles he eats the plants,
With the wild beasts he drinks at the watering-place,
With the throng at the water he makes glad his heart.

He walked to the watering-place
Toward a hunter, a stalker of wild beasts;
On one day, on a second, and a third,
Toward the hunter he walked to the watering-place.
The hunter saw him, the hunter's face grew troubled.
Without his quarry he turned back to his house.
He was down-cast, troubled; he shrieked.
His heart was afraid and his face was dark.
Grief made way into his heart,
And he looked like a wanderer of far ways.

...

[The hunter] started on the way, he entered into Uruk.
He goes to Gilgamesh, and to him he says:
"A man that came from the hills
Hath become strong indeed in the land.
Mighty in power like a fighter of Anu's.
Ever he goeth along on the hills,

He is ever beside the wild beasts,
Ever are his feet at the watering-place.
I am afraid, I cannot go near to him.
He hath filled my pits which I dug;
My traps which I laid
He hath destroyed.
So from my hands he let my quarry get away,
The throngs of the fields;
No catch he allows me."

Gilgamesh says to him, to the hunter:
"Go, my hunter, and get thee a priestess.
When the wild beasts come to the watering-place,
Then let her cast her garment off,
That he may take his fill of her.
When he sees her, he will draw near;
Then will he become a stranger to his wild beasts,
Who on his own steppes grew up with him."

The hunter went yonder and got him a priestess.
They made themselves ready, went forth straight on.
On the third day they came to their goal:
The hunter and the priestess sat themselves down.
One day, a second day, they sat by the watering-place.
The wild beasts come along and drink at the watering-place.
Glad is the throng of the flood.
So too comes he, Engidu....
With the gazelles he eats the plants,
With, the beasts he drinks at the watering-place,
His heart is happy with the throng of the flood.
Then the priestess saw him, the great strong one,
The wild fellow, the man of the steppes:
"There he is, woman!"

Loosen thy buckle,
Unveil thy delight,
That he may take his fill of thee!
Hang not back, take up his lust!
When he sees thee, he will draw near.
Open thy robe that he rest upon thee!
Arouse in him rapture, the work of woman.
Then will he become a stranger to his wild beasts,
Who on his own steppes grew up with him.
His bosom will press against thee."
Then the priestess loosened her buckle,
Unveiled her delight,
For him to take his fill of her.
She hung not back, she took up his lust,
She opened her robe that he rest upon her.
She aroused in him rapture, the work of woman.
His bosom pressed against her.
Engidu forgot where he was born.
For six days and seven nights
Was Engidu given over to love with the priestess.
When he had sated himself with the fill of her,
He raised up his face to his wild ones:
At sight of Engidu, the gazelles flee away,

Part 1: The Fertile Crescent

The wild of the fields shrink back before him.
Then Engidu marvelled,
His body stood as in a spell,
His knees quivered, because his wild ran off...
The speed of his onset is not what it was.
He hearkens and opens his ear:
He turns about and sits down at the feet of the priestess.
He looks the priestess in the face,
And to what the priestess now speaks
His ears give heed.

The priestess says to him, to Engidu:
"Engidu, how beautiful thou, how like a god!
Why must thou rush with animals over the steppes?
Come, I will lead thee into ramparted Uruk,
To a pure house, the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar,
Where Gilgamesh lives, matchless in might,
And like a wild bull lords it over the folk..."
She talks to him, till he likes her words.
Knowing his own heart, he seeketh a friend.
Engidu says to her, to the priestess:
"Woman, go to! Lead me to the pure, the holy house,
The dwelling of Anu and Ishtar,
Where Gilgamesh lives, matchless in might,
And like a wild bull lords it over the folk.
I will challenge him to a fight.
I will call the strong one.
I will call out in Uruk:
'I too am a strong one!'
I alone can alter fate,
I, born on the steppes, matchless in might.
O Gilgamesh, may I behold thy face!
Well I know what the outcome will be."

...

Engidu goes along the market-street
Of ramparted Uruk.
Marvelling he looks at the mighty work;
He bars the way of the warriors of Uruk;
Then the folk of Uruk crowd against him,
The land is assembled .
But in fear the folk turn away.
They fall down. . . like a weak child...
The couch had been spread for goddess Ishtar...
At the gates of her house
Engidu barred the going-to,
Allowed not Gilgamesh that he enter in.
They grappled each other at the gates of her house.
They fought in the street...
That the doorposts quaked and the wall swayed ...
Gilgamesh crumpled his leg to the ground,
His anger softened, he checked his onset.
When he had checked his onset, Says Engidu to him,
to Gilgamesh:

“Thee, as one matchless, thy mother bore,
 The wild cow of the fold, the goddess Ninsun.
 Over all men is thy head lifted up, Ellil to thee hath allotted The
 kingdom over mankind!”

...

[After their wrestling match Gilgamesh and Engidu become good friends. Together they trek into a far-distant cedar forest where they slay the monster, Khumbaba. But Gilgamesh later spurns the goddess, Ishtar, who then persuades her father, Anu, to send the bull of heaven to kill Gilgamesh—*Ed.*]

Anu lent ear to [Ishtar's] words,
 Let a bull-of-heaven descend
 And come unto Uruk...
 At his first snort he kills
 Three hundred warriors.
 And Engidu grasped the bull-of-heaven
 By his horns.
 At his second snort
 Two hundred warriors he knocks over.
 At his third snort
 Engidu stalks up to him,
 Leaps on his back,
 And grasps him by the thick of the tail...
 Then Engidu opened his mouth and speaks,
 Says to Gilgamesh:
 “My friend,
 We have made our name glorious...”
 And Gilgamesh, like a huntsman,
 Thrusts his sword between nape and horns.
 When they had laid low the bull-of-heaven,
 Their heart had peace...
 And in front of Shamash they sat down to their rest,
 Both of the brothers.

Then Ishtar mounted the walls of ramparted Uruk,
 Sprang on the battlements and shrieked down:
 “Woe unto Gilgamesh who affronted me,
 Who killed the bull-of-heaven.”
 As Engidu heard these words of Ishtar,
 He tore loose a thigh-bone from the bull-of-heaven,
 And flung it into her face:
 “Could I but get hold of thee, I would do unto thee as unto him!
 Round thy neck would I hang his entrails!”
 Then Ishtar assembled the damsels of the temple,
 The harlots and the priestesses;
 Over the thigh-bone of the bull-of-heaven
 They wailed a chant...
 Gilgamesh called the masters, the handworkers all.
 The masters praise the thickness of the horns;
 Thirty pounds of lapis lazuli was the weight of each.
 Two fingers thick was their shell.
 Six measures of oil (as much as both horns held)
 Did he pour, as oil of anointing,
 To his god, Lugalmaraḍda;