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# THE BABYLONIAN MAP OF THE WORLD

By WAYNE HOROWITZ

The Late Babylonian tablet BM 92687 preserves a unique Babylonian birds-eye-view sketch of the Earth's surface.<sup>1</sup> The sketch, commonly called "The Babylonian Map of the World" or "Mappa Mundi", occupies the lower half of the obverse while the remainder of the obverse and entire reverse preserve related textual information. The tablet was first published almost a century ago by F. E. Peiser in *ZA* 4 (1889), 361–370, and has since attracted a great deal of attention. In 1906, R. C. Thompson re-copied the tablet as *CT* 22, 48. This second copy served as the basis for later studies by E. F. Weidner in *BoSt* 6 (1922), 85–93 and E. Unger in Unger, *Babylon*, 254–8 (1931).<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, neither the early copy by Peiser, nor *CT* 22, 48, is completely reliable. The two copies disagree on a number of points, and a new collation of the tablet revealed a number of errors. For instance, Peiser drew two *nagû* at the bottom of the map which are omitted in *CT* 22, 48, and both copyists read the label in the lowest oval inside the circle (no. 8) sideways! Thus a new copy and edition of the text is warranted although a few signs may have disappeared over time. (Copy: see Fig. 2 p.152; photographs, Plate X).

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on a chapter that appears in an unpublished Birmingham University Ph.D. thesis entitled *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* that was prepared under the supervision of Professor W. G. Lambert. I would like to thank Professor Lambert for his advice and support during the preparation of the thesis, and Professor A. Shaffer who graciously assisted with the preparation of both the original thesis chapter, and this article. The copies of BM 92687 are published by permission of the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> For photographs of the obverse only see Beek, *Bildatlas*, 75; E. Unger, *Antiquity* 9, 312–13; *Ancient Cosmologies*, pl. 15; No photograph of the reverse has previously been published. Note also *RLA* 6, 466–7 with bibliography; *CT* 22, p. 12; J. J. Glassner, *Akkadica* 40, 20; B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* II, 378–9; A. Oppenheim in *Dictionary of Scientific Bibliography* 15, 637–8; R. North, *A History of Biblical Map Making*, 17–22; S. Smith, *Early History of Assyria*, 85–6.

The Text: the Map

1	šá-du- <sup>1</sup> ú <sup>1</sup> —mountain	18	[na-gu-ú]	Region
2	uru—city	3	<sup>1</sup> bēru <sup>1</sup>	3 leagues
3	ú-ra-áš-tu[m]—Urartu		ina bi-rit	in between
4	<sup>kur</sup> aš + <sup>šur</sup> ki—Assyria		a-šar <sup>d</sup> šamaš	where the Sun
5	dēr(BAD.AN) <sup>ki</sup> —Der		la innammaru	is not seen
6	x-ra-[ . . .		(nu.igi.lá)	
7	ap-pa-r[u]—swamp	19	na-gu-ú	Region
8	[š]uša[n] ( [M]úš. <sup>1</sup> EREN <sup>1</sup> )—Susa	6	bēru	6 leagues
9	bīl-qu—channel		ina bi-rit	in between
10	bīl-ia-’-ki-nu—Bit Yakin	20	[na-gu]- <sup>1</sup> ú <sup>1</sup>	[Regio]n
11	uru—city		[ ( . . . )	[ ( . . . )
12	ha-ab-ban—Habban	21	[na-gu-ú]	[Region]
13	tin.tir <sup>ki</sup> —Babylon		[ ( . . . )	[ ( . . . )
14	<sup>id</sup> mar-ra-tum—ocean	22	na-gu-ú	Region
15	[ <sup>id</sup> mar-ra-tum]—[ocean]		<sup>1</sup> 8 <sup>1</sup> bēru	8 leagues
16	[ <sup>id</sup> m]ar-ra-tum—[o]cean		ina bi-rit	in between
17	mar-r[a-tum]—oce[an]	23–25	No Inscription	

The Text: Obverse

- 1' . . . . . ] x x x x [ . . . . .  
2' . . . . . ] x ālānu<sup>meš</sup> ab-t[u-tu . . . . .] <sup>1</sup>KI<sup>1</sup> [ . . ]  
3' [ . . . tam-tum rapaštum<sup>tu</sup>m šá i-bar-ru-ú <sup>d</sup>[marduk<sup>1</sup> ti-tú-<sup>1</sup>rī<sup>1</sup> qé-[reb?-šá?]  
4' . . . b]i u ilānu<sup>meš</sup> ab-tu-tu šá ina lib-bi tam-tim ú-[še-šib]  
5' . . . x]-x-<sup>1</sup>šú<sup>1</sup> iz-za-zu ba-aš-mu mušhuššu rabû(muš.huš gal) ina libbi an-zu-ú  
girt[ablullû] (gir.t[ab.lú.ùlu<sup>u</sup>]<sup>3</sup>  
6' . . . a]r-mu ša-bi-tum ap-sa-su-ú <sup>1</sup>nim<sup>1</sup>-ru ki-sa-<sup>1</sup>rī<sup>1</sup>-[ku]  
7' [ . . n]ēšû(ur.mah) barbaru(ur.bar.ra) lulīmu(lu.lim) ù bu-ú-[su]  
8' [pa-gu]-<sup>1</sup>ú<sup>1</sup> pa-gi-tum turāhu(dāra) lu-ur-mu š[u]-ra-nu hur-ba-bi-li  
9' [ . . . ] ú-ma-mu šá ina muhhi tam-tim gal-la-[t]im <sup>d</sup>marduk ib-nu-šu-[nu-ti]  
10' [ . . m] <sup>d</sup>[ul-napištim(zi) <sup>im</sup>šarru-kin u nūr-<sup>d</sup>[d]a-gan šar bur-š[a-h]a-an-[da]  
11' [ . . k]a-ap-pi iṣṣuriš(mušen)<sup>niš</sup>-ma man-ma qé-reb-ši-na ul <sup>1</sup>i<sup>1</sup>-[du-ú]

The Text: Reverse

- 1' . . . . . ] x [ . . . . .  
2' . . . . . ] x tab-r[a?-ti? . . . . .  
3' . . . . . ] ra-bi-tú [ . . . . .  
4' [mah-ru? na-gu-ú? ina e-re]-bi-šú tal-l[a-ku x bēru . . .

5' [a-na šanû<sup>u</sup> na-gu-ú] <sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>-šar tal-la-ku 7 b[ēru . . .

6' [ . . . . ] <sup>1</sup>išten<sup>len</sup> x x šap-[liš/lat . . .

<sup>3</sup> The reading *girtablullû* for *gir.tab.lú.ùlu<sup>u</sup>* is suggested by the loan-word *lullû* from Sumerian *lú.ùlu* (see *CAD* L, 242). There are no phonetic writings of the word, to confirm this reading, or *girtablilu* as proposed in *AHw*, 291.

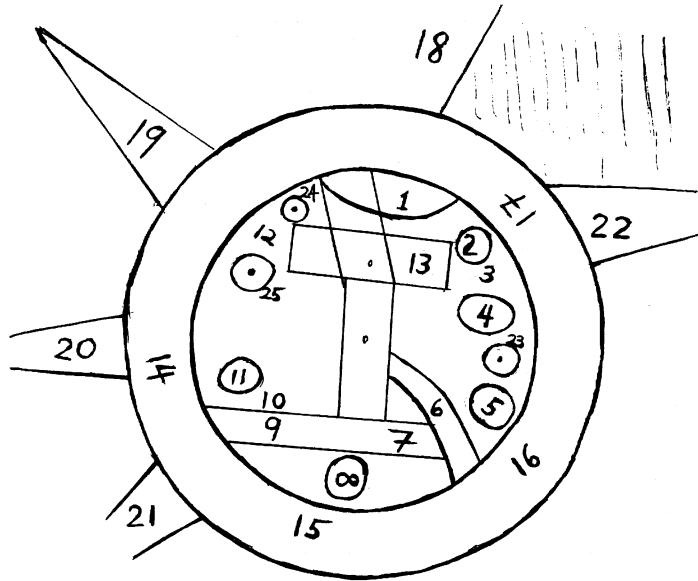


Fig. 1

- 1' .....] ..... [ .....  
 2' .....] .. the rui[ned] cities [ ..... ] . [ . ]  
 3' ... the vas]t [sea] which Marduk saw. The bridge in[side her?]  
 4' ... ] . the ruined gods which he [settled] inside the Sea.  
 5' ....] .. are present; the viper, great sea-serpent inside. The *Anzu*-bird, and  
 scorp[on-man]  
 6' ... moun]tain goat, gazelle, zebu, panther, bull-m[an]  
 7' [ . . l]ion, wolf, red-deer, hye[na],  
 8' [monk]ey, female-monkey,<sup>4</sup> ibex, ostrich, cat, chameleon,  
 9' [ . . . ] beasts which Marduk created on top of the restless sea,  
 10' [ . . U]tnapištim, Sargon, and Nur-[D]agan the King of Buršahanda,  
 11' [with w]ings like a bird, whose expanse no one can u[nderstand].

- 1' .....] x [ .....  
 2' .....] x wond[ers? .....  
 3' .....] great [ .....  
 4' [The first? region?, when one ent]ers it you tra[vel ... leagues ...

---

5' To the second region] where you travel 7 le[agues ...

---

6' [ . . . . ] one ... be[low ...

---

<sup>4</sup> For *pagû* and *pagîtu* as male and female monkeys see *pa-gi-ti* (*MSL* VIII/2, 16).  
*Hh* XIV 118-9: ugu.dul.bi = *pa-gu-û*, <sup>monu</sup>ugu.dul.bi =

7' [a-na šalšu]<sup>ʔšú</sup> na-gu! (text DU)-ú a-šar tal-la-ku 7 bē[ru . . .  
 8' [iṣ-šu]-ru mut-tap-ri-ši la ú-šal-l[a-mu uruh-šú]

9' [a-na re]-bi-i na-gu-ú a-šar tal-la-ku 7 bē[ru . . .  
 10' [x x x]-du ik-bi-ru ma-la par-sik-tum 10/u ubānu(šú.si) [ . . .

11' [a-na hanš]u<sup>ʔšú</sup> na-gu-ú a-šar tal-[la]-ku 7 bē[ru . . .  
 12' [x x m]i-lu-šú 1 uš<sup>ta.ām</sup> su-ub-ban x [ . . .  
 13' [x x x] x zi-nu-šú a-na áš-la<sup>ta.ām</sup> [ . . .

14' [x x x]-mi da-mi-šu ul im-mar [ . . .  
 15' [x x x n]i-il-lu aš-ri tal-la-[ku . . .  
 16' [x x x x x] al-la-ku<sup>ʔ7</sup> b[ēru . . .  
 17' [x x x x x x].A a-ši-i ša ina<sup>ʔšú</sup>-[ . . .  
 18' [x x x x]-šú i-bi-ri [ . . .

19' [a-na šeššú<sup>šú</sup> na-g]u-ú a-šar tal-la-ku<sup>ʔ7</sup> [ bēru . . .  
 20' [x x x x x ina?] muhhi a-na-ku x [ . . .

21' [a-na sebi]<sup>ʔi</sup> na-gu-ú a-šar tal-la-ku [ 7 bēru . . .  
 22' šá alpu(gu<sub>4</sub>) qar-nu šak-nu [ . . .  
 23' i-<sup>ʔ</sup>la<sup>1</sup>-as-su-mu-ma i-kaš-šá-du-<sup>ʔ</sup>ú [ . . .

24' a-na [šam]anī<sup>i</sup> na-gu-ú a-šar tal-la-ku 7 bē[ru . . .  
 25' [x x x x]<sup>ʔ</sup>a<sup>1</sup>-šar ti-še-<sup>2</sup>-ru ina ha-an-du-ri-šú<sup>ʔ</sup>ú/šam<sup>1</sup>-[x-x]

26' [x x x x x]-ti šá kib-ra-a-ti er-bet-ti šá kal x [ . . .  
 27' [x x x x x] x : qé-reb-ši-na man-ma la<sup>ʔi</sup>-[du-ú]

28' [x x x x x] x ki-ma la-bi-ri-i-šu ša-ti-ir-ma ba-r[i]  
 29' [x x x x x] mār-šú šá<sup>m</sup>iṣ-šu-<sup>ʔ</sup>ru<sup>1</sup> [mā]r<sup>md</sup>ea(idim)-bēl(en)-il[ī<sup>meš</sup>]

7' [To the thir]d region, where you travel 7 lea[gues ...

8' A winged [bi]rd cannot safely comp[lete its journey]

---

9' [To the fo]urth region, where you travel 7 lea[gues ...

10' [...] . are thick as a *parsiktum* measure/vessel, 10/and finger(s) [...

---

11' [To the fif]th region, where you travel 7 leagu[es ...

12' [... is] its height/flood; 780 cubits is its [...

13' [...] . its frond/rain; as much as 120 cubits is [ its ...

---

14' [...] . its blood he does not see[ ...

15' [...] we will c]limb, where you trave[l ...

16' [.....] I will travel 7 le[agues ...

17' [.....] . the departure which is in . [...

18' [.....] his ... he crossed [...

---

19' [To the sixth reg]ion, where you travel 7 [leagues ...

20' [..... on? ] top, I . [...

---

21' [To the seven]th region, where you travel [ 7 leagues ...

22' where cattle equipped with horns [...

23' they run fast and reach [...

---

24' To the [ei]ghth region, where you travel 7 lea[gues ...

25' [.... the p]lace where ... dawns at its entrance?.

---

26' [.....] . of the Four Quadrants of the entire . [...

27' [.....] . : whose interior no one can kn[ow]

---

28' [.....] . copied from its old exemplar and colla[ted]

29' [.....] the son of Işşuru [the descend]ant of Ea-bel-il[i]

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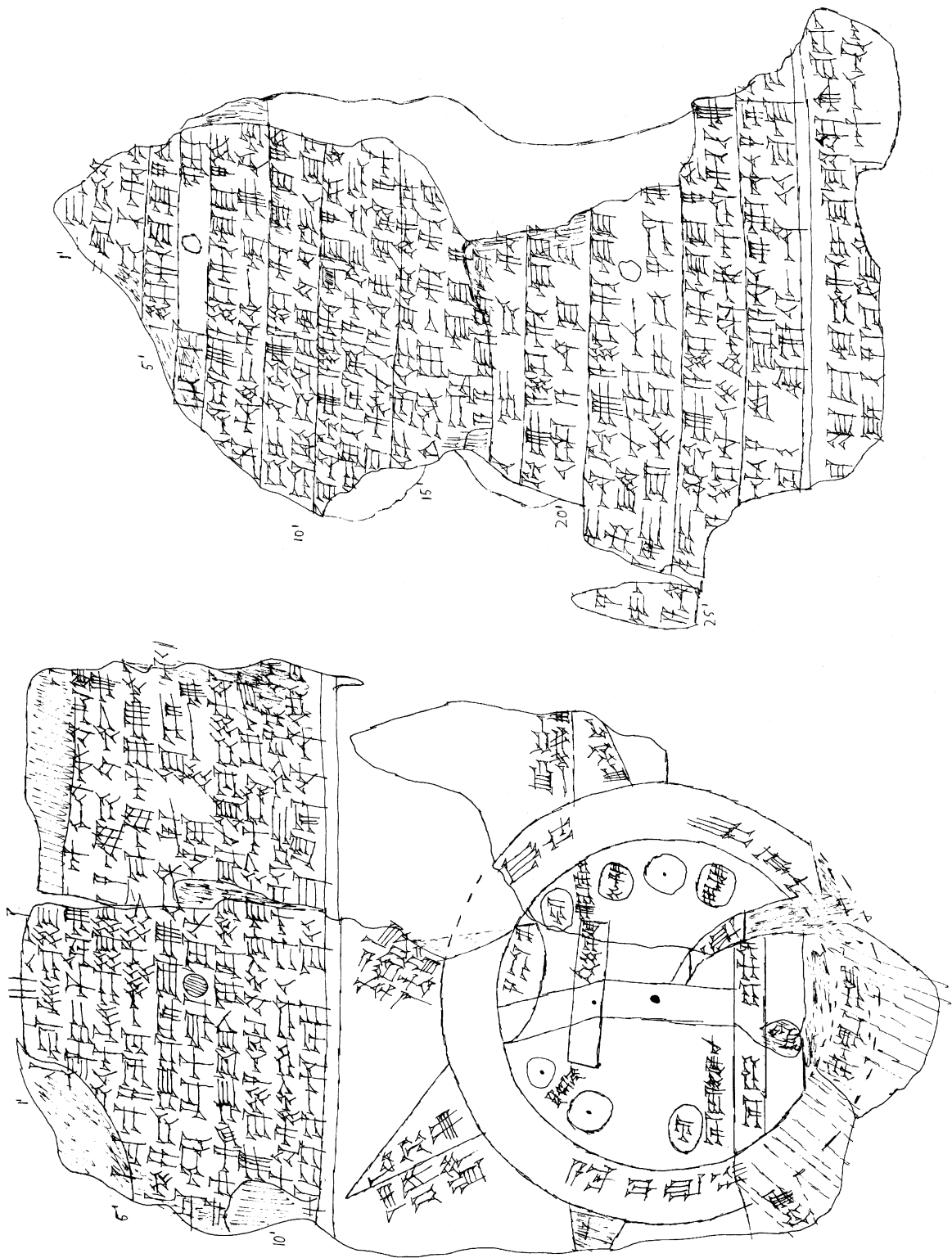


Fig. 2

*The Date and Composition of the Text*

The map, at least, can be no older than the 9th century. The author of the map calls the ocean *marratu*, “salt-sea”, and includes the sites of Bit-Yakin (no. 3) and Urartu (no. 10). The earliest example of *marratu* occurs in a Shalmaneser III inscription (858–824) that identifies the name as a loan-word from a Chaldean dialect into Akkadian:

*ka-šid ištu tam-ti<sub>4</sub> rabīti<sup>ti</sup> ša māt a-mur-ri ša šul-me<sup>d</sup> šam-ši a-di tam-ti<sub>4</sub> ša māt kal-di ša<sup>id</sup> mar-ra-tú i-qa-bu-ši-ni*

*KAH*, 100 3–6 (E. Michel, *WO* I, 387)

Conqueror from the Great Sea of the Land of Amurru of the setting of the Sun to the Sea of the Land of Chaldea which they call the *marratu*.

Likewise, Bit-Yakin also occurs for the first time during the 9th century (see Brinkman, *PKB*, 169, 199), and Urartu occurs regularly in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions beginning at this time, although an earlier form Uruatri occurs in Middle-Assyrian inscriptions (*RGTC* 5, 274–275; H. J. Kellner ed., *Urartu*, p. 11). It is likely, however, that the map dates to the late eighth, or seventh century. In the Shalmaneser III inscription, only the Persian Gulf is called the *marratu*, while the World Map identifies the entire ocean by this name. The earliest evidence for the Mediterranean being called *marratu* is found in a Sargon II inscription (721–705), where the king rules the <sup>id</sup>*marrati elīti* and <sup>id</sup>*marrati šaplīti*, “Upper and Lower Ocean” (R. C. Thompson, *Iraq* 7, 113 fig. 1: 12).

It is not certain if the text on the obverse and reverse were composed together with the map. The text on the reverse was probably written to accompany the map since both include *nagû*, but the text on the obverse was probably composed separately and joined to the map by a later editor. The text calls the ocean *tāmtu*, instead of *marratu*, and does mention any of the places drawn on the map.

The map was composed in Babylonia rather than Assyria. Babylon is represented by a large rectangle encompassing almost half the width of the central continent, while Assyria is represented as a small oval.

The provenance of the Late Babylonian copy BM 92687 itself is uncertain. Most of the 82–7–14 collection (BM 92687 = 82–7–14, 509) is from Sippar, but it is possible that the tablet comes from Borsippa. The tablet preserving the map (82–7–14, 509) is assigned an out-of-sequence BM number (see E. Leichty, *Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum* VI, p. xxxiii) suggesting that the tablet may not be from Sippar, and the colophon of the tablet identifies the scribe who prepared BM 92687 as a descendant of Ea-bel-ili. In an economic document, a scribe of the same name is identified as being from Borsippa:

<sup>m</sup>*itti*-<sup>d</sup>*nabû-balāṭu mār-šú šá* <sup>m</sup>*la-a-ba-ši mār* <sup>md</sup>*ea-bēl-ilī* <sup>meš</sup> *bar-sipa*<sup>ki</sup>

*TuM* II/III, 220: 12–13

Itti-Nabu-balaṭu, the son of Labaši, the descendant of Ea-bel-ili of Borsippa

*The Map*

The map, as preserved, depicts the earth’s surface as two concentric circles with triangular areas radiating from the outer circle. The area within the inner circle



represents the central continental portion of the earth's surface where important sites such as Babylon and Assyria are located. The area between the two circles is identified as the *marratu*, "ocean". On the map, this cosmic ocean encircles the central continent. The area beyond the outer circle consists of the triangular areas which are identified as *nagû*, "regions", and uncharted space.

The drawing is unique among ancient Mesopotamian maps. Numerous small scale maps or plans of cities and rural areas, such as the map of Nippur (S. N. Kramer, *FTS*, 274),<sup>5</sup> are known, but only the World Map is drawn on such a large world-wide scale. Nevertheless, the World Map utilizes standard Mesopotamian cartographic conventions. Both the World Map and small scale maps use geometric shapes to represent topographic features. For instance, the placement of the *marratu*, "ocean", within two concentric circles is comparable to the practice of drawing rivers and canals within parallel lines representing their banks. One small map fragment (*RA* 4, plates following p. 84 no. 72) even preserves a circular segment of a river or canal that is similar in shape to the cosmic ocean on the World Map.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the World Map differs from the small scale maps and plans in other respects. On the small scale drawings, rivers, fields, buildings, and other features are drawn to scale, and the relative positions of features seem reasonable. In contrast, the relative size and location of many of the features on the World Map seem preposterous. For instance, the circle representing the city of Der (no. 5) is as large as the circle representing Assyria, and Assyria is drawn downstream from Babylon.

### *The Continent*

The continent on the World Map contains various geometric shapes representing places and topographic features. The place-names include the countries of Assyria (no. 4), and Urartu (no. 3); the cities of Babylon (no. 13) and Der (no. 5); and Bit-Yakin (no. 10) and Habban (no. 12). Topographic features include *šadû*, "mountain" (no. 1), *apparu*, "swamp" (no. 2), and *bitqu*, "channel" (no. 9). The oval labelled Susa (no. 8), is placed within the circle representing the continent, but is located across the "swamp" and "channel" from Babylonia. The area surrounding Susa apparently represents the land of Elam.

The parallel lines that begin in the region marked "mountain", and end in the rectangle marked "channel" and "swamp", provide the means for interpreting the map. On small scale maps and plans, such parallel lines represent river banks. On the World Map, the parallel lines are not identified, but the course of the lines reveals that they represent the banks of the Euphrates. Near the middle of the map, the two parallel lines bisect the rectangle labelled "Babylon". In the first millennium, the Euphrates flowed through the centre of this city. Herodotus, in Book I 180, states "There are two sections of the city (Babylon), for a river flows through the middle. Its name is the Euphrates"; Nebuchadnezzar speaks of building projects on both sides of the river (*VAB* 4, 130: 7–132: 30); and the excavations of Babylon by

<sup>5</sup> The map of Nippur is also published in C. S. Fisher, *Excavations at Nippur*, pl. 1. For other maps and plans see *RIA* 6, 464–467. Note also *JCS* 16, 81; *JNES* 21, 80; *RA* 4, plates following p. 84 n. 63–74; *RA* 12, 49; Unger,

*Babylon*, 254 no. 5; *Studia Pohl* 11, passim; *TIM* 9, 104.

<sup>6</sup> For drawings of rivers and canals note for example the Map of Nippur (*FTS*, 274); *CT* 22, 49; *HSS* 10, no. 1; *KAV*, 25; and *JNES* 21, 80.

Koldewey found architectural remains on both sides of the ancient course of the river (see R. Koldewey, *Excavations at Babylon*, 16–22).

When the parallel lines are identified as the Euphrates, the location of many of the other features on the map become clear. The “mountain” at the source of the river represents the mountains of southern Turkey where Shalmaneser III visited the sources of the Tigris and the Euphrates:

*ina 15 palē(bala)<sup>meš</sup> ina rēš e-ni šá<sup>id</sup>idiglat(hal.hal) <sup>id</sup>puratti(a.rat) a-lik ša-lam šarru-ti-ia ina ka-pi-ši-na ul-ziz*

Layard, *ICC*, 92: 92–3 (E. Michel, *WO* 2, 152)

In the 15th year of my reign, I went to the source of the Tigris and Euphrates. My royal relief I erected at their cliffs.

On the bronze gates of Balawat, this expedition to the sources of the river is depicted in mountains (L. W. King, *Bronze Reliefs*, pl. LIX).

The rectangle at the mouth of the river marked *apparu*, “swamp”, and *bitqu*, “channel”, represents the swamps along the lower Euphrates, and a waterway connecting the mouth of the Euphrates with the Persian Gulf. The modern Euphrates does not issue directly into the Persian Gulf, but joins with the Tigris to form the Shatt-al-Arab, a channel connecting the rivers to the Gulf. The left edge of the rectangle on the World Map, by the label *bitqu*, touches the shore of the *marratu*, so the *bitqu* is probably an ancient equivalent of the Shatt-al-Arab. This ancient *bitqu* is located near Bit-Yakin in a letter (*ABL* 542: 13, rev. 1’), just as Bit-Yakin is drawn along the shore of the *bitqu* on the map. It is likely that this *bitqu* was a shipping channel that enabled ships to by-pass the marshes of southern Babylonia on their way to the open sea, since the *bitqu* on the map connects the mouth of the Euphrates with the ocean, and leads away from the area marked “swamp”.

The bend of the Euphrates by the rectangle marked “Babylon” apparently represents the shift in the course of the river from south-west, to nearly due south, near Babylon, rather than the great bend of the Euphrates upstream.

In contrast to the relatively accurate depiction of the course of the Euphrates, the map omits the Tigris altogether. The Tigris should rise in the oval marked “mountain”, and pass through Assyria before emptying into the rectangle marked “channel” and “swamp”.

The locations of other features are more problematic. Assyria and Urartu are correctly placed east of the Euphrates with Urartu north of Assyria, but Assyria is located too far to the south in relation to Babylon. Bit-Yakin, the southernmost entity in Babylonia during the first millennium, is correctly positioned near the mouth of the Euphrates, but is moved from the east side of the river to the west. Susa and Elam are correctly positioned below the outlet of the Euphrates, but should be located to the right of Babylon, rather than directly below the city. The location of Habban (no. 12) presents even more difficulties. This site is located west of the Euphrates although the land and city Habban of the Kassite tribe Bit Habban were located east of the Tigris.<sup>7</sup>

Other features on the map cannot be identified. The crescent-shaped area

<sup>7</sup> *RLA* 4, 147; Brinkman, *PKB*, 317, and 121, 200, 232, 248, 251, 256, 259.

extending from the east bank of the Euphrates to the *marratu* (no. 6) may represent an arm of the ocean separating southern Babylonia from Elam since the traces inside the figure can be restored [*ma*]r-ra-[*tum*]. This crescent, however, might also be an arm of the Euphrates ([*p*]u-ra-[*tu*]), a canal, or even a road ([*ha*]r-ra-[*nu*]) leading from the river to the coast. Of course, the two circles identified uru, “city”, and the three circles containing only compass points cannot be identified. The reason that these sites are not labelled is unclear. Their names may have been damaged on an earlier copy of the map, but it is also possible that they represent the *ālānu abtūtu*, “ruined cities” in obv. 2'. The names of ruined cities might no longer have been remembered.

### *The marratu “Ocean”*

The circular band enclosing the continent is identified four times on the map as the *marratu*, “ocean” (no. 14–17). The term “*marratu*” is a first millennium synonym of *tāmtu*, “sea”. For instance, Sargon II of Assyria states that the gods entrusted him with leadership of the peoples from “the Upper Ocean to the Lower Ocean” (see above p. 153), just as Sargon of Akkad is given the *tiamtam alītam u šapīltam*, “Upper and Lower Sea”, by Enlil in a third millennium inscription (H. H. Hirsch, *AfO* 20, 48: 9–13).

The term *marratu*, unlike *tāmtu*, is often written with the *íd* determinative used for rivers and canals. This suggests that the *marratu* was thought to be a relatively narrow body of water rather than a boundless sea. On the map, the *marratu* is bounded on both sides by circles, and as drawn, is not much wider than the Euphrates. This mistake in scale almost certainly reflects the crudity of the map, rather than a belief that the world ocean was almost as narrow as a major river. Similarly, the fact that the lines marking the banks of the Euphrates touch the inner shore of the *marratu* need not necessarily mean that Mesopotamians thought that the Euphrates began at the cosmic sea.

### *The nagû*

The four triangular areas (no. 19–22) radiating from the outer circle are identified as *nagû*. When complete, the map may have included as many as eight such *nagû*. The text on the reverse describes eight *nagû*, the map preserves an inscription for a missing northern *nagû* (no. 18), and there is room for additional missing *nagû* along the broken bottom edge of the map where Peiser draws two *nagû* (*ZA* 4, 369). Nevertheless, it cannot be certain that the *nagû* described on the reverse are identical to those drawn on the map. On the reverse, the *nagû* are said to be seven leagues *ina birīl*, “in between”, but the *nagû* on the map itself are not equidistant from each other. The *nagû* on the map, however, are all equidistant from the coast of the continent, so “seven leagues” may measure the distance across the *marratu* to the *nagû*, rather than the space between *nagû*.

In the first millennium, the geographic term *nagû* is common in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, but rare in Late Babylonian royal inscriptions and literary texts. In Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, *nagû* is used with a political nuance to refer to administrative districts or provinces. For example, Sargon II states that he conquered 430 cities belonging to seven *nagû*, “districts” (*TCL* 3, 66: 422), and

Sennacherib conquers the *nagû*, “province”, of Judah (*OIP* 2, 86: 15).<sup>8</sup> This Assyrian meaning of *nagû* is not appropriate for the World Map since there is no evidence that any Mesopotamian king conquered any of the *nagû*, nor are the *nagû* across the *marratu* divided into political units. In Late Babylonian royal inscriptions, the term *nagû* is used for distant unspecified areas. This sense of the word is appropriate for the World Map.

The term *nagû* occurs five times in Late Babylonian royal inscriptions: four times in the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar, and once in those of Nabonidus. In three of the Nebuchadnezzar examples, the *nagû* are located *ina qereb tâmti*, “in the sea”, suggesting that the *nagû* are islands.<sup>9</sup> The clearest example is found in a description of the empire that Marduk granted to Nebuchadnezzar:

*ku-ul-la-at ma-ti-la-an gi-mi-ir ka-la da-ad-mi ul-tu ti-a-am-tim e-li-tim a-di ti-a-am-tim ša-ap-li-tim mātāti* (ma.da.ma.da) *ru-qā-a-tim ni-ši da-ad-mi ra-ap-ša-a-tim šarrāni*<sup>mes</sup> *ša-di-i ne-su-tim à na-gi-i bé-e-ru-tim ša qé-re-eb ti-a-am-tim e-li-tim à ša-ap-li-tim ša* <sup>d</sup>*marduk be-lí a-na ša-da-ad si-ir-di-šu ši-ra-at-si-na ú-ma-al-lu-ù qa-tu-ú-a*  
BE I/1, 85 ii 13–29 (*VAB* 4, 146 ii 17–33) (cf. *VAB* 4, 146 iii 2–7; 206: 17)

All the lands, the entire inhabited world from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, distant lands, the people of vast territories, kings of far away mountains and remote regions in the Upper and Lower Sea, whose lead-rope Marduk, my lord, placed in my hand in order to pull his “yoke”.

In the remaining Nebuchadnezzar inscription (*CT* 46, 45 v 23–24) and the Nabonidus inscription (C. J. Gadd, *AnSt* 8, 52: 20), *nagû* are also said to be distant (*nesû*), but it is not clear if they are located in the sea since both passages are broken.<sup>10</sup>

Further evidence for *nagû* as islands is found in *The Gilgamesh Epic* where *nagû* emerge at the edge of the sea as the waters of the flood recede:

*ap-pa-li-is kib-ra-a-ti pa-tú tâmti* (a.ab.ba)  
*a-na* 12 (var. 14)<sup>ta.ām</sup> *i-te-la-a na-gu-ú*  
*a-na* <sup>kur</sup>*ni-muš i-te-mid* <sup>giš</sup>*elippu*(má)  
*šadû*<sup>u</sup> <sup>kur</sup>*ni-muš* <sup>giš</sup>*elippa is-bal-ma a-na na-a-ši ul id-din*  
*Gilg.* XI 138–141 (Thompson, *Gilg.*, pl. 48)

I scanned the regions at the edge of the sea.

At (each) 12 (var. 14) an “island” appeared.

After the ship put in at Mt. Nimuš,

the mountain Mt. Nimuš held the boat fast, did not allow it to rock.

In this passage, the *nagû* are the first outcroppings of dry land to emerge after the flood. These *nagû*, therefore, seem to be temporary islands surrounded by the receding waters of the flood.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For other examples of *nagû* in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions see *CAD* N<sub>1</sub>, 121–2, *nagû* A 1.

<sup>9</sup> A. L. Oppenheim, in *Dictionary of Scientific Bibliography* 15, 655 n. 36, connects this sense of *nagû* with an Aramaic cognate *nagwān*.

<sup>10</sup> Note also the distant Assyrian *nagû* of Lydia in

Streck, *Asb.*, 20: 95 and 166: 13, which is said to be *nēberti tâmti*, “across the sea”.

<sup>11</sup> H. and J. Lewy, in *HUCA* 17, 12–13, argue that the *nagû* on the World Map are mountains rising out of the sea that are drawn from a frontal view, rather than regions in the sea that are drawn from a birds-eye view.

The *nagû* on the World Map may also be islands since they lie across the sea from the continent. Yet, this cannot be certain since two sides of the *nagû* extend into an uncharted area. This area could be a body of water such as a portion of the *tâmtu* beyond the *marratu*, or even the Apsu, but it is also possible that this terra incognita is a distant land-mass. Another possibility is that the *nagû* extend over the far edge of the earth's surface, and that a traveller crossing over the sides of the *nagû* beyond the cosmic ocean would fall directly into the Apsu or underworld.

*The Missing Northern Nagû (no. 18)*

The inscription by the missing northern *nagû* identifies this *nagû* as *a-šar dšamaš la innammaru*, “a place where the Sun is not seen”. There are two possible explanations for this statement. First, the northern *nagû* may be a region of perpetual darkness. Comparable dark regions are found in *Gilg.* IX iv–v, where Gilgamesh follows the *harrân dšamšī*, “Path of the Sun”, through total blackness, and an omen apodosis where Sargon of Akkad traverses a dark region:

... *a-mu-ut* <sup>1</sup>*šar-ru*<sup>1</sup>-*ki-in ša ek-le-tam el-li-ku-ma nu-ru-um ú-ši-aš-šum*  
V. Scheil, *RA* 27, 149: 16–17

... the omen of Sargon, who went through the darkness and a light came out for him.

Second, the missing northern *nagû* may be called “a place where the Sun is not seen” because the Sun, when viewed from the latitude of Mesopotamia, never passes through the northern portion of the sky. North of the Tropic of Cancer, the Sun describes an arc in the southern sky throughout the entire year.<sup>12</sup> If so, the missing northern *nagû* need not necessarily be a land of everlasting night.

*The Text on the Obverse*

The obverse preserves eleven lines of text. This text is difficult to interpret because the beginnings and ends of each line are missing, and the opening portion of the obverse is almost completely lost. Nevertheless, a general concern with distant places and early times is discernible.

*Obverse 1'–2'*

The first two lines yield only the single phrase *ālānu abtūtu*, “ruined cities”. The adjective *abtu*, when applied to buildings, refers to old buildings that have fallen into disrepair (*CAD* A1, 67). Thus the “ruined cities”, as noted earlier, could be the ruins of uninhabited ancient sites that could no longer be identified by name, such as the ovals labelled *uru*, “city”, on the map (no. 2, 11).

*Obverse 3'–9'*

Lines 3'–9' provide information relating to the earliest of times, the era of creation. Lines 3'–4' parallel passages in *Enūma Eliš*. The ruined gods in the sea in line 4' are probably to be identified with the creatures of Tiamat that Marduk defeats in *Enūma Eliš*. In *Ee* VI, 151–154, Marduk is praised by the name *Asalluhi-Namtila*, and hailed as the saviour of these gods:

<sup>12</sup> This interpretation is suggested by C. B. F. Walker in a short British Museum leaflet.

<sup>d</sup>asal-lú-hi <sup>d</sup>nam-ti-la šá-niš im-bu-u ilu muš-neš-šu  
 šá ki-ma bi-nu-ti-šú-ma ik-ši-ru ka-lu ilāni ab-tu-ti  
 be-lum šá ina šip-ti-šu el-le-ti ú-bal-li-tu ilāni<sup>meš</sup> mi-tu-ti  
 mu-ab-bit eg-ru-ti za-<sup>3</sup>-i-ri i ni-<sup>1</sup>u-da<sup>1</sup>

*Ee* VI, 151–154

Asarluhi-Namtila secondly they named him, the healing god,  
 who mended the ruined gods in accordance with its (the name's) structure.

The Lord, who gave life to the dead gods with his holy incantation,  
 who destroys wicked enemies, let us praise (him).

In a Sennacherib inscription listing elements of a relief depicting the battle with Assur replacing Marduk, the creatures of Tiamat are said to be inside the goddess, just as the “ruined gods” are inside the sea in obv. 4':

[ti]-amat a-di nab-nit qer-bi-šú

Meissner-Rost, *Senn.*, pl. 16 edge 2 (*OIP* 2, 142 b 2) (cf. *OIP* 2, 140: 10–12)

[Ti]amat together with the creatures inside her.

An analogous tradition is preserved in *The Babyloniaca* of Berossus. Here creatures are placed inside primeval darkness and water which is later identified with the waters of the primeval Sea-goddess:

They say there was a time when everything was darkness and water, within  
 which monstrous being lived, which were born alive having strange forms.

F. Jacoby, *FGrH* 3/1, p. 370(6); (Burstein, Berossus, p. 14 2.1)

Later Marduk defeats the sea and splits it in half. Thus the sea in Berossus must be identified as the goddess Tiamat, whom Marduk divides into two parts in *Ee* IV, 137–138.

Line 3' mentions Marduk and a bridge. This line can be compared with *Ee* VII, 74–75, where Marduk as <sup>d</sup>sirsir crosses the sea during battle as if crossing a bridge:

šá ti-amat rapašta<sup>a</sup> i-ti-ib-bi-ru uz-zu-uš-šú  
 ki-i ti-tur-ri i-ti-it-ti-qu a-šar šá-áš-me-šá

*Ee* VII, 74–75

who crosses the broad sea in his fury,  
 passed over its place of battle as if on a bridge.

Lines 5'–9' list animals, beasts, and fantastic creatures. These beings are divided into two groups. The first group consists of only two beings, the *bašmu*, “viper”, and *mušhuššu rabū*, “great sea-serpent”, which live *ina libbi*, “inside”, presumably inside the sea. Mythological *bašmu* and *mušhuššu* are placed inside the sea in other works. *Angimdimma*, 139 (Cooper, *Angim*, p. 80) compares a mace with the *mušhuššu* of the sea (muš.huš a.ab.ba = *mušhuš tâmtim*), and the *Labbu* myth speaks of a 60-league long, fantastic *bašmu* that was created in the sea:



*i-na támti*(a.ab.ba) *ib-ba-ni* <sup>muš</sup>*ba*-[*aš-mu*]

1 *šu-ši bēru*(danna) *ša-kin ú-rak*-[*šú*]

*KAR*, 6, 21'–22' (cf. *CT* 13, 33: 5–12)

In the sea the vi[per] was created.

[His] length was set at 60 leagues.

The remaining beings are explained in line 9' as “beasts which Marduk created on top of the restless sea”. This group consists of the *anzû*, “fabulous eagle or winged horse”;<sup>13</sup> *girtablullû*, “scorpion-man”; *armu*, “gazelle”; *šabītu*, “gazelle”; *apsasû*, “zebu, water-buffalo”;<sup>14</sup> *nimru*, “panther”; *kusarikku*, “bull-man”; *nēšu* “lion”; *barbaru*, “wolf”; *lulīmu*, “red-deer”; *būšu*, “hyena”; *pagû*, “monkey”; *pagītu*, “female-monkey”; *turāhu*, “ibex”; *lurmu*, “ostrich”; *šurānu*, “cat”; and *hurbabillu*, “chameleon”.

The statement that Marduk creates these animals “on top of the sea” may be compared with the account of the creation of animals in *The Bilingual Account of the Creation of the World by Marduk* (*CT* 13, 35–38). In this text, Marduk creates dry land on top of the sea by building a reed-raft and pouring out dirt (*CT* 13, 36: 17–18). Later, in lines 20–22, Marduk creates mankind and the animals on top of the raft which floats on the sea. Thus the two groups of animals may represent the sea-animals which inhabit the *marratu*, and the animals which live above the sea on the continent and the *nagû*.

With the exception of the cat, all the beings listed in lines 5'–8' were not common in Mesopotamia, although they were familiar to Mesopotamians from depictions and statues, literary works, and military campaigns in distant lands. For example, representations of the *mušhuššu*, *apsasû*, *anzû*, *kusarikku*, lion, ape, and monkey adorned the public buildings of Babylonia and Assyria;<sup>15</sup> Assyrian kings brought home hyenas, panthers, red-deer, lions, monkeys, ostriches, and gazelles with them from their campaigns;<sup>16</sup> and the *bašmu*, *mušhuššu*, *girtablullû*, and *kusarikku* are listed among the eleven creatures of Tiamat in *Enūma Eliš* (*Ee* I, 141–146).<sup>17</sup> These familiar beings, which were not seen locally, could have been considered the fauna of distant lands, and as such would have provided a tangible link with the far-off places on the map.

<sup>13</sup> For the *anzû* as winged-horses in first millennium materials note *KAR*, 307: 25, where horses hitched to a chariot are mystically identified with *anzû*; and *Afo* 19, 107: 21, where the “*anzû*-star” is identified with the “Horse-star”.

<sup>14</sup> In the third millennium, at least, the *apsasû* (Sumerian *áb.za.za*) is a real animal that was imported to Mesopotamia from afar (Cooper, *Curse of Akkad*, 50: 21), and is probably to be identified with the Indian water-buffalo (see R. M. Boehmer, *ZA* 64, 11–13) or the Indian zebu-bull. First-millennium *apsasû*, on the other hand, are mythological composite creatures which are often represented in palace reliefs (see *CAD* A<sub>2</sub>, 193–4).

<sup>15</sup> Note for example, *AKA*, 146: 16–147: 17; Borger, *Esarh.*, 61 15–18, 87 rev. 4; Rost, *Tigl.*, III 76: 29; *TCL*

3, 58: 379; and see R. D. Barnett, *Assyrian Palace Reliefs* 9, 33–4 for drawings of elephants and monkeys. Note also *5R* 33, iv 50–3, for relief drawings of the *bašmu*, *kusarikku*, and *girtablullû* in Babylon during the Kassite Dynasty.

<sup>16</sup> Note for example *AKA*, 89: 5–90: 6, 141: 19–25, 201: 41–203: 46; *KAH*, 84: 126–7; and D. J. Wiseman, *Iraq* 14, 34: 97–100.

<sup>17</sup> For additional literary examples of the beings listed in obv. 5'–8' note the *anzû* in *Lugalbanda* and the various recensions of *The Anzu Myth* (see *HKL* III, 62; W. Hallo and W. Moran in *JCS* 31, 65–115); the *girtablullû* that live by Mt. Mašû in *Gilg.* IX, ii; and the hyena, panther, red-deer, lion, and ibex that are included among the *būlu nammaššê šēri*, “herd animals of the steppe”, in *Gilg.* VIII (see O. R. Gurney, *JCS* 8, 94: 9–11).

*Obverse 10'*

Line 10' continues the theme of distant lands and distant times, but is concerned with human beings rather than animals. The line lists three famous figures from the third millennium who are associated with far away places: Utnapištim, Sargon of Akkad, and Nur-Dagan. The first, Utnapištim, is the hero of the flood story that is incorporated into tablet eleven of *The Gilgamesh Epic*. In this account of the flood, Utnapištim is settled in the distant locale *ina pí nārāli*, “at the source of the rivers”, as a reward for saving the human race (*Gilg.* XI, 193–8). In the Sumerian flood story, the hero Ziusudra is settled in Dilmun (Lambert-Millard, *Atrahasis*, 144: 258–260). Both the home of Utnapištim and Dilmun (modern Bahrain), like the *nagû*, are located across the sea from Mesopotamia.

The second figure, Sargon of Akkad, is the famous third millennium king who was remembered as a conqueror of the entire world. Lines 41–44 of the first millennium work *The Sargon Geography* includes distant lands across the Upper and Lower Seas within Sargon's empire:

- 41 *a-na-kù<sup>ki</sup> kap-ta-ra<sup>ki</sup> mātātu(kur.kur) eberti(bal.ri) [lām]ti elīti(an.ta)*  
 42 *tilmun<sup>ki</sup> má-gan-na<sup>ki</sup> mātātu(kur.kur) eberti(bal.ri) tām̄ti šaplīti(ki.ta)*  
 43 *ù mātātu(kur.kur) ultu s̄il<sup>d</sup>ša[mšī](<sup>d</sup>utu.ʿè!'.[a]) adi erēb<sup>d</sup>šamšī(<sup>d</sup>utu.šú.a)*  
 43a ..... ] *sihirti(nigin)<sup>ti</sup> māti kališa(kur.dù.a.bi)*  
 44 *ša šarru-kēn šār kišša[ti](ki[š]) adi 3-šú qāt-su ik-šú!-du*

A. K. Grayson, *Afo* 25, 62: A 41–44//B rev. 1–2 (collated)

- 41 Anaku and Kaptara, the lands across the Upper Sea,  
 42 Dilmun and Magan, the lands across the Lower Sea,  
 43 and the lands from sunrise to sunset, the sum total of all the land,  
 44 which Sargon, the King of the Univer[se] conquered three times.

In terms of the World Map, the empire of Sargon would have included the entire central continent, as well as the *nagû* across the *marratu*.

The third figure, Nur-Dagan, the king of Buršahanda, is the antagonist of Sargon of Akkad in *The Šar Tamhari Epic*. The Amarna version of the epic (*VS* 12, 193; EA 359) describes the long and arduous journey from Akkad to far away Buršahanda. Hence, Nur-Dagan may be listed on the obverse because he was an ancient ruler of a distant city.

*Obverse 11'*

The final line of the obverse preserves two phrases joined by *ma*. The first phrase, “[. . w]ings like a bird”, may either describe the heroes in line 10', or serve some other function. In *Descent of Ištar*, 10 (Sladek, *I.D.*, 241) and *Gilg.* VII, iv 38, the dead in the underworld wear birdlike garments. It is not unreasonable for the three heroes in line 10' to wear similar clothing, although Utnapištim, who is granted eternal life, should not be placed in the underworld.

If the phrase does not describe the heroes, it may refer back to a statement in the broken opening lines of the obverse. In this case, “[. . w]ings like a bird” could explain that the world map offers a view of the earth's surface that only birds, or passengers on birds' wings could have seen. One such passenger could have been



another third millennium hero, Etana, who flies up into heaven on the back of an eagle in *The Etana Epic* (see J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Legend of Etana*, 111–119).

The possibility that obv. 11' refers back to the broken opening section finds support in the closing phrase *manma qerebšina ul i[dū]*. This phrase includes a suffix which has no suitable antecedent in the surviving text. It is possible that this antecedent is *kibrāt erbetti*, “four quadrants” of the earth’s surface, since the closing phrase of the obverse is repeated almost verbatim in rev. 27', and *kibrāt erbetti* occurs in rev. 26'.

### *The Text on The Reverse*

The reverse is divided into nine sections comprising 27 lines of text. Sections two through eight contain standardized descriptions of the second through eighth *nagû*. Each section opens with an introductory line that identifies the *nagû* by number, and assigns a distance of seven leagues to the *nagû* with the phrase *ašar tallaku*, “where you go”. A short passage describing the *nagû* then follows. These descriptions are limited to one or two lines, with the exception of the description of the fifth *nagû* that occupies seven lines. Only the descriptions of the third, fifth, seventh, and eighth *nagû* are even partially intelligible due to breaks in the text.

Three lines in the descriptions are written in the first person. Reverse 15'–16' preserve the first person subjunctive verbs *nillu*, “we will climb”, and “*allaku*”, “I will go”, while rev. 20' preserves the first person pronoun *anāku*, “I”. These lines may preserve direct quotes from travellers to the *nagû*.

The first and ninth sections of the reverse do not describe *nagû*. The first section is almost completely lost, but the surviving traces suggest it introduced the reverse and explained how to identify the first *nagû*. The word *tabrāti*, “wonders”, may be preserved in rev. 2'. The following descriptions of the *nagû* relate wondrous features. Line 4', which may preserve the phrase “*ina erēbišu*, “when he enters it”, could have explained how to enter the map at the first *nagû*. Without such an introduction, it is impossible to correlate the *nagû* on the map with the descriptions on the reverse. The ninth section (rev. 26'–27') apparently provides a summary of the reverse. This section refers to the *kibrāt erbetti*, “four quadrants” (of the earth’s surface).

### *The Third nagû (rev. 7'–8')*

The third *nagû* is described in rev. 8' as a place that winged birds cannot reach. This *nagû* may be a distant desert or a mountainous region. The inscriptions of Assurbanipal describe the desert area of Hararina and Ayalla as “a place where there are no steppe animals and the bird of heaven does not establish a nest” (Streck, *Asb.*, 70: 87–8). In the inscriptions of Šamši-Adad V, three mountains in Na'iri are described as “hanging from heaven like a cloud which winged birds cannot pass” (I R 30, ii 47–9).<sup>18</sup>

### *The Fifth nagû (rev. 11'–18')*

The description of the fifth *nagû* is by far the longest, but is difficult to interpret due to the poor preservation of the tablet, and the insertion of a horizontal ruling

<sup>18</sup> For similar phrases see *AKA* 270, 49; Streck, *Asb.*, *AfO* 6, 82: 30. 72: 10, 204: 11–12, 31–2; *TCL* 3, 16: 98; E. F. Weidner,

between the third and fourth lines of the passage (rev. 13'–14'). It is also not clear why the narrative changes from second person to first person in rev. 15'–16'.

Two possible interpretations of the fifth *nagû* derive from the ambiguous writings *MI.LU* and *ZI.NU* in rev. 12' and 13'. First, the *nagû* may be a region of wondrous trees. If the word *MI.LU* is interpreted as *mēlû*, “height”, then line 12' may explain that the *nagû* contained tall trees. Elsewhere, distant lands are noted for their unusual trees. Gilgamesh visits a grove of stone-bearing trees in *Gilg.* IX, v 47–vi 36, and the Sumerian epic *Gilgamesh and The Cedar Forest* speaks of a larger-than-life cedar forest.<sup>19</sup> If *MI.LU* refers to the height of trees, then *ZI.NU* in rev. 13' can represent the word *zinu*, “date-frond”, and *damišu*, “its blood”, in rev. 14' can refer to the sap of the tree, since tree sap as well as animal blood is called *damu*. For instance, in *Šumma Alu*, a felled date-palm sheds its “blood”:<sup>20</sup>

*šumma* <sup>gis</sup>*gišimmarā šap-liš tak-ki-is-ma da-mi iq-qí* . . .

CT 41, 19: 12 (cf. CAD D, 79, *damu* d)

If you cut a date-palm down and it sheds sap . . .

Further support for the identification of the fifth *nagû* as a region of trees is found in rev. 16', “I go seven leagues”. In *The Šar Tamhari Epic*, the road to Buršahanda is blocked by a seven-league region of forested mountains (*VS* 12, 193: 28–32). The verbal form *nillu*, “we will climb”, in rev. 15' may then refer to an ascent of tree covered mountains, or an attempt to climb the fantastic trees themselves.<sup>21</sup>

Second, the *nagû* may be a region of high rainfall and flooding since *MI.LU* could represent *mīlu*, “flood”, and *ZI.NU* could represent *zinnu*, “rain”. It is difficult, however, to explain *damu* in this context.

The only clues which might help identify *MI.LU* and *ZI.NU* are the figures of 780 cubits and 120 cubits in rev. 12'–13'. These measurements, however, probably belong to the missing second halves of the lines, rather than to *MI.LU* and *ZI.NU*.

#### *The Seventh nagû (rev. 21'–23')*

The seventh *nagû* is described as the home of horned cattle. Horned cattle may have been included among the fauna of distant lands together with many of the animals on the obverse. It is probable that rev. 23', “move fast and reach”, describes the horned cattle, although there may be room for a change of subject at the end of rev. 22'.

#### *The Eighth nagû (rev. 24'–25')*

The eighth *nagû* may be located in the far east where the Sun rises. The verb in line 24', *ti-še'-ru* may be understood as a third person feminine present subjunctive of *šēru*, “to become morning” (*AHw*, 1219), with an incorrect prefix *ti/te*<sub>9</sub> for

<sup>19</sup> A now outdated edition of this epic with the title “Gilgamesh and The Land of the Living” was published by S. N. Kramer in *JCS* 1, 3–46. For the Cedar Mountain in this work see p. 12 and 18. A new edition is being prepared by A. Shaffer (see *JAOS* 103, 307, n. 1).

<sup>20</sup> The identification of the fifth *nagû* as a region of

noteworthy trees was suggested to me by A. Shaffer.

<sup>21</sup> Note also the seven mountains that Gilgamesh crosses in *Gilgamesh and The Cedar Forest* (*JCS* 1, 12: 62) and the seven mountains that Lugalbanda crosses in *Lugalb.*, 122: 344.

Babylonian dialect “*ta*”. A reading *te*<sub>9</sub> provides a possible Assyrian form, but the World Map is a Babylonian text.

The noun *handūru* may refer to a gate of sunrise at the eastern end of the Earth’s surface, or to part of such a gate. In astronomical contexts, the Sun, Moon, and stars often enter and leave the sky through heavenly gates. In *Enūma Eliš*, for example, Marduk fastens bolts on gates at the right and left sides of heaven in *Ee* V, 9–10, after arranging the stars in *Ee* V, 1–8:<sup>22</sup>

*ip-te-ma abullāti*(ká.gal)<sup>meš</sup>      *ina ši-li ki-lal-la-an*  
*ši-ga-ru ú-dan-ni-na*      *šu-me-la u im-na*  
*Ee* V, 9–10

Then he opened the gates on the two sides,  
strengthened the bolts on the right and left.

Evidence associating *handūru* with gates is found in the inscriptions of Sennacherib and lexical lists. In a Sennacherib inscription, one of the western gates of Nineveh is named *abul handūri*:

<sup>d</sup>šár-ur<sub>4</sub> mu-šam-qit a-a-ab šarri abul ha-an-du-ú-ri  
*CT* 26, 32 viii 3 (*OIP* 2, 113)

“Šarur, destroyer of the enemies of the king”, (is the name of) the *handūru* -gate.

In both *Malku* II and *Explicit Malku* III (*ZA* 43, 240: 170; *CT* 18, 3 ii 17), a near homonym *andurū* is equated with the noun *daltu*, “door”.<sup>23</sup> However, there is no definitive proof that *andurū* and *handūru* are related, and *handūru* in the gate-name may have nothing to do with the gate itself.

Without the missing first part of the line it is not possible to determine if -šu in *handūrišu* refers back to the eighth *nagū*, or to a different antecedent. Likewise, the last word *ú/šam*-[x-x] may be a II- or III-stem main verb, or a noun acting as the subject of *tišēru*.<sup>24</sup>

### *The Ninth Section (rev. 26'–27')*

Reverse 26' refers to the *kibrāt erbetti*, “four quadrants” of the Earth’s surface, but the complete phrase is missing due to a break. Peiser’s early copy preserves a full *HI* sign (𐎶) after *kal*, instead of the single stroke (𐎵) now preserved at the end of the line. This *HI* can be read *šár*, or taken as the first half of *IM*, allowing for three possible restorations:

... *kib-rat er-bet-ti ša kal kiššati*(šár)  
... four quadrants of the entire universe.

<sup>22</sup> In numerous Akkadian and Sumerian texts, the Moon, Sun, Venus, and the stars are said to pass through heavenly gates. As these astronomical bodies rise or appear in the sky, they are said to enter the heavens through gates. Conversely, as they set or disappear, they leave the heavens through gates. Note for example the *abulli ša šamē rapšūti*, “gate of the vast heavens”, in a Prayer to the Gods of the Night (*OECT* 6, pl. XII 10–14); the *si.gar.an.na* = *šigar šamē*, “bolt of heaven”, in a bilingual hymn (*SBH* 53, rev. 42–3); and

an *ikribu*-prayer to Sin, where the Moon-god enters the door of heaven as he appears in the sky (S. Langdon, *RA* 12, 190: 3).

<sup>23</sup> The alteration of *a* and *ha* in opening syllables also occurs in the words *annū/hannū* and *ammu/hammu*.

<sup>24</sup> The last word, if it is a noun, may be restored *šam*-[šá-tu], “sun-[disk]”, with the translation “where the sun-disk dawns at its entrance”. For *šamšatu* in astronomical contexts, see *AHu*, 1158 2.

... *kib-rat er-bet-ti ša kal šā[rē]* (I[M]<sup>mes</sup>)  
 ... four quadrants of all the wi[nds.]  
 ... *kib-rat er-bet-ti ša kal šā[r erbetti]*  
 ... four quadrants of all fo[ur winds]

Parallel passages where the “four winds” refer to the entire Earth’s surface are found in *The Šamaš Hymn* (BWL, 134: 151–2) and *The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* (Machinist, *TN Epic*, 66 I:A 13’).

Reverse 27’ preserves the phrase *qerebšina manma la idû*, “whose interior no one can know”. The suffix *-šina* in this phrase, as noted earlier, apparently refers back to *kibrātu* to the north, south, east, and west of Babylonia.

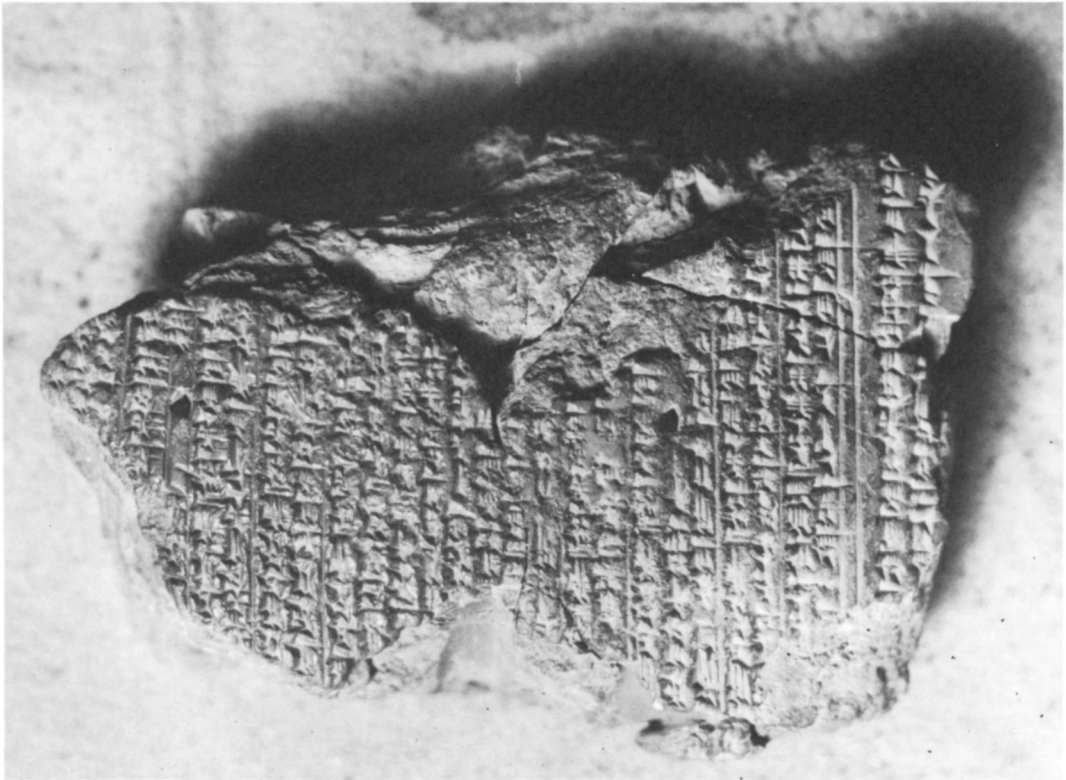
### *The Purpose of “The Babylonian Map of The World”*

The emphasis on distant places in the texts accompanying the map suggests that the purpose of BM 92687 was to locate and describe distant regions. The map illustrates where these distant areas were located in relation to familiar locales such as Babylon, Assyria, and the Euphrates. The obverse related these distant places to familiar literary figures and exotic animals, while the reverse describes conditions in far-away regions. The ancient author’s concern with distant places reflects a general interest with distant areas during the first half of the first millennium, when the Assyrian and Babylonian empires reached their greatest extents. Other manifestations of this interest include the construction of *kirimāhu*, “botanical gardens”, filled with the flora of distant lands in Assyria during the reigns of Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Assurbanipal (see *CAD* κ, 406), the aforementioned expedition of Shalmaneser III to the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates (Layard, *ICC*, 92: 92–3), and the composition of *The Sargon Geography* (A. K. Grayson, *Afo* 25, 56–64) during the Neo-Assyrian period.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> In *Afo* 25, 57, A. K. Grayson proposes that *The Sargon Geography* was either first composed or largely re-edited during the reign of Sargon II of Assyria. This is

supported by the appearance of the place-names Munna and Karzina in lines 50, 57, as these places are not known before the first millennium.

PLATE X



BM 92687 (reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).