

The Epic of Gilgamesh - *He Who Saw the Deep*



By Martha Keltz

"The cultures of the ancient Indian, Persian and Egyptian ages represent a descent from clairvoyant vision to the purely human vision of the Greek age. What begins with our own age, and must be attained in ever-increasing measure during the coming centuries and millennia, should be conceived as a reascent, a reattainment of forms of culture imbued

with clairvoyance. The Egypto-Babylonian-Chaldean age is therefore to be regarded as the last stage of preparation for the essentially human culture of Greece." - Rudolf Steiner, Occult History.

Cosmic and Earthly Origins, Language, Gods

According to the Sumerian King List, the origins of Mesopotamia, in the geographical area of modern Iraq, date back millennia before the flood. Thus it appears that these prehistoric civilizations existed parallel with the later ages of the Atlantean epoch. The enormous amount of contemporary

scholastic and scientific work regarding all aspects of Mesopotamian life, from mythology to recorded history, should likewise begin to cast light on the mysteries of Atlantis. As one delves deeply into studies of Sumerian, Akkadian, Chaldean and Babylonian histories, genuine understanding requires recognition of the Atlantean great epoch as fundamental, as vast panoramic background, as original source and bearer of all significant ancient cultures, of all spiritual wisdom. From the Atlantean epoch onwards, long into recorded history, *water was the source of all wisdom*, and union with the cosmos, with the spiritual world, was sought within the fresh, pure waters, within the sweet waters. Nowadays wisdom must be sought through the Spirit of the Earth.

The Sumerian King List was recorded by a scribe during the reign of King Utukhegal of Uruk in 2125 BC, during the time of the later Akkadian Empire. By 2125 BC the reigns of the kings occurred within the span of a single lifetime. However, long before the flood and beginning with the first city of Eridu, each kingship lasted for generations, with the name of the original king carried by his sons or spiritual descendants. The lifespan of the human being may then have been longer than today. Also, prior to the emergence of self-consciousness, as noted in the *Atlantean Cataclysms* article, there was a far slower passing of time as well as a different kind of memory. The List reveals that a flood swept over everything after the kingship had passed to Ubara-Tutu, and the dynasty of Kish is recorded as the first after the flood. Around 2600 BC the king En-me-barage-si is listed. He is the earliest ruler confirmed from epigraphical evidence. His son was Aga of Kish, and Aga was a contemporary of **Gilgamesh**. Because En-me-barage-si and Aga are named in the Epic, Gilgamesh is considered to be an actual historical

king, the fifth king of Uruk who ruled in 2600 BC, or according to Rudolf Steiner, around the middle of the third cultural age.

The Sumerian language is considered by linguists to be a *language isolate*, which is defined as a natural language with no relation to other languages. It is the oldest of written languages and its use is dated from around 3100 to 2000 BC, to the time of the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur. A characteristic feature of the language is the large number of homophones, words with the same sound structure but with different meanings. Hence the scholars and authorities of today, such as Andrew George, can list many variations of the name Gilgamesh, all with different sounds, spellings and nuances of meaning. Similarly, in Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, the Greek gods have many different phonetic variations in their names, depending upon the intent or deed of the god. For example, in *The Odyssey* Hermes (Mercury) is called "speedy-comer," "fortune-bringer" and "giver of good things." Gilgamesh is Akkadian, and the Sumerian version of the name is Bilgames. Variations as to the meaning of Gilgamesh are: 1. the Fire-god is a commander, 2. the old man is a young man (*der Alte ist ein junger Mann*), 3. Gilga the hero, 4. the forebear was a hero, 5. search for life, 6. he who saw the deep, also the original title of the epic, 7. the offspring is a hero, 8. offshoot of the mes tree, 9. offspring of Mash, 10. the axe of Mash. "The Fire-god is a commander" was the meaning given by Dr. Stephen Langdon (1876-1937), who was translating the Epic in 1908. However, this interpretation has not been wholly accepted by other scholars. (A certain professor thought that the name Bilga-Mash was West Semitic and preferred his own interpretation, "the axe of Mash.") Andrew George writes that Gibil (related to ga-mes) was the fire god and should not

refer to Gilgamesh. However, Rudolf Steiner related this name to the fiery spiritual Being who stands behind Gilgamesh, Marduk or the Archangel Michael, which places Langdon's interpretation in a much different light.

According to George, one version of the name seeks to associate Gilgamesh with the god Papilsag. Papilsag is a centaur and is represented in the constellation Sagittarius. Rudolf Steiner stated that Gilgamesh, and modern man, could be spiritually perceived in the symbol of the centaur, a symbol which indicates the division of humanity into higher and lower or animal selves. - see *Occult History*.

"The language of the ancient Sumerians... was like a primal human language, although even then not in complete purity... A tone or a sound evoked a definite feeling... In the personal element, feeling for language ceases." - *Occult History*.

After the flood, the fertility of the valley situated between the two rivers, the Euphrates and Tigris - which also allowed for irrigation during dry periods - gave rise to new civilizations and Sumer arose from around the fifth to the third millennium BC, the latter marking the beginning of the third cultural age, called the Egypto-Chaldean-Babylonian age. According to archaeologists, a serious flood occurred in Shuruppak, not far from Uruk, around 2900 BC. This was not the Deluge but may have been related to it, as the "little ice age" that began in 1250 is related to the last great ice age of 10,000 years ago. Dark shadows from this horrific past would have resurfaced. Rudolf Steiner stated that many ancient peoples left historical records or legends referring to a 'Flood' that took place around 3000 BC, and he relates this to the *Kali Yuga* of 3101 BC, the beginning of the dark age. The darkness was felt to be spreading over the people like a

flood; many went to sleep and did not awaken. - see *The Signature of Human Evolution*.

The Chaldean Initiates established the sciences of astronomy, mathematics and measurement. It was they who discovered and taught that the sun rose at the vernal equinox of a given constellation for 2,160 years. During the third cultural age, the sun rose in the constellation of Taurus, the Bull. It goes without saying that the bull was one of the most significant symbols in Mesopotamian civilization and this animal is referred to repeatedly and powerfully in the epic. The spiritual focus for physical development during the Indian age was on the thorax, during the Persian age the focus was on the intestines and digestive processes, and during the third age on the larynx and speech. - *Ancient Myths*. As the Individuality behind Eabani emerges powerfully during the third age, an overall mission in regard to the development of the larynx and speech can be ascertained.

In India it was the great Hindu Initiates who taught that the year 3101 BC marked the beginning of the dark age, *Kali Yuga*. "It was the mission of the Babylonians to lead the spiritual world down to the physical plane... The Indian, Persian and Egyptian [cultural] epochs were periods of *descent*... Underlying external Babylonian civilization was a Chaldean Mystery-culture. But all was to be applied to earth, not for ascent into the spiritual world." - *Occult History*. The astronomy and mathematical sexagesimal system, the laws of measure, were all given in order to meet the needs of outer, practical life. The worship of the bull continued on into early pre-Christian times, and beyond, in the cults of Mithraism.

Uanna, Ea, Sophia, Marduk-Micha-el, and Enuma Elish

An extraordinary and unique divine-human Being established the first city and culture of Eridu. His name was Adapa, **U-an, Uanna** or Uanna-Adapa. The Greek version of this name, given by Berossus (third century BC) is his *Babyloniaca*, is **Oannes**. Uanna, the "fish-man," strongly suggests *John, Baptist*, and was the first of the antediluvian Seven Sages, or seven apkullu, alluded to in the third tablet of the incantation series *Bit Meseri*. The seven apkallu became associated with laying the foundations of the seven ancient cities: Eridu, Ur, Nippur, Kullab (part of Uruk), Kesh, Lagash and Shuruppak. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* the seven sages are called "counselors," and in the earlier Sumerian poems, **Enkidu** is also a counselor and a spiritual servant to Gilgamesh. The name Adapa is interpreted, in Sumerian, as meaning "recovered from the water," a reference to the recovery of the Atlantean antediluvian wisdom, found beneath the briny sea, below the earth, in the sweet and pure waters, fountain of youth and wisdom. The god of wisdom, of the sweet waters, is the Sumerian **Enki** or the Akkadian **Ea**. Uanna and Enkidu (Akkadian **Eabani**) are the spiritual sons of Enki. Enki is associated with the Egyptian god Thoth, the Greek god Hermes and the Roman god Mercury. Ea and Uanna may be represented in the constellation Capricorn.

Oannes is described by Berossus as a man "whose whole body was that of a fish, that under the fish's head he had another head, with feet also below, similar to those of a man, subjoined to the fish's tail... He taught letters, sciences and arts of every kind; he taught the construction of cities, law, geometry [and] agriculture. After the sun had set he retired again into the sea and passed night there, for he was amphibious... After Oannes there appeared [others] like him. His voice and language were articulated and a human representation of him is preserved to this day. "

The illustration is after a relief in the temple of the god Ninurta at Kalhu (Biblical Calah), 883-859 BC. However, a perfectly-formed human being is depicted under the garment of the fish. Enkidu is associated with the fish-men or fish-apkallu, who are apparently depicted in the constellation Pisces Austrinus, with the same open mouth as is illustrated on the relief. The brightest star in Pisces Austrinus is Fomalhaut, associated in ancient Persia with Ahriman. The open mouth may indicate an ahrimanized or materialistic form of speech, for speech descended, became dispersed into many languages, and began to be used personally and profanely during the third cultural age (*Tower of Babel*). According to Rudolf Steiner, speech is to be redeemed and will again be sacred in the future, thus Pisces Austrinus continues to receive sweet water from the jug of Aquarius, sign of the Sixth Age. Enkidu is also associated with the god Ninurta, the war god and of the planet Saturn. The name Ninurta was "...The later form of Ningursu, a warrior and god of war, a herald, the south wind, and god of wells and irrigation. According to one poem Ninurta once dammed up the bitter waters of the underworld and conquered various monsters." - *N.K. Sandars*.

"Oannes is an emblem of priestly, esoteric wisdom; he comes out from the sea, because the 'great deep,' the water, typifies the secret doctrine." - *Helena P. Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled*.

Fomalhaut is one of the stars of the Cosmic Cross, or four cardinal points, associated with the four Archangels: Fomalhaut, Gabriel, South; Aldebaran, Michael, East; Regulus, Raphael, West; Antares, Uriel, North. "The tropical position of Fomalhaut (3 degrees Pis 52) is exactly conjunct with the Descendant of the Crucifixion of Christ." - *T.*

Maiwald, J. Gillen.

Rudolf Steiner apparently preferred the name Eabani over Enkidu because of the significance of the sounds E A. In the lecture *Michael, Sophia and Marduk*, he stated that human beings at that time - from the beginning to about the middle of the third cultural age - experienced reality in sleep far more vividly than in waking life. This state of sleep was called **Tiamat**, while waking life was called **Apsu**. In Tiamat "Human beings were closer to truth and reality than when they lived their conscious life among minerals, plants and animals. Tiamat was nearer to the Ground of the world, more closely related to the human world than Apsu. Apsu was more remote. But in the course of time Tiamat underwent changes... demoniacal forms emerged, equine shapes with human heads, leonine forms with the heads of angels. These demoniacal forms that became hostile to human beings arose out of the warf and woof of Tiamat. Then there appeared in the world a powerful Being, Ea. Anyone today who has an ear for sounds can feel how the conjunction of these two vowels (E and A) points to that powerful Being who, according to those old Mystery teachings, stood at a person's side to help when the demons of Tiamat grew strong. Ea or Ia later became - if one anticipates the prefix 'Soph' - **'Soph-Ea.'** - **Sophia**. Ea means, approximately, abstract wisdom, wisdom that permeates all things. 'Soph' is a particle that suggests (approximately) a state of being. Sophia, Sophea, Sopheia, the all-pervading, omnipresent wisdom sent to humanity her son, then known as Marduk, the son of Ea, wisdom: **Marduk-Micha-el**.

"...All these surging, mobile, demoniacal forms, conjoined as the mighty Tiamat, were arrayed against Marduk... All these demons together were envisaged as the adversary - a

powerful Dragon embodying all the demoniacal powers born of Tiamat, the night. And this Dragon-Being, breathing fire and fury, advanced upon Marduk. Marduk-Micha-el first smote it with various weapons and then drove the whole force of his storm-wind into the Dragon's entrails, so that Tiamat burst asunder and was scattered abroad. 'The North Wind bore it to places undisclosed' [from *Enuma Elish*]. And so Marduk-Micha-el was able to create out of the civilization."

Most interpretive sources describe Ea as god of the freshwater subterranean ocean, while Tiamat, a female monster, is god of the salt water. "The waters of Apsu were thought of as held immobile underground by the 'spell' of Ea, in a death-like sleep." - *N.K. Sandars*. This could be an unintended allusion to the center of the Earth, where the Mother dwells within the realm of the golden Sun, Shamballa. The freshwater subterranean ocean, the underground, could be alluding to this Sun sphere as the source of day-consciousness. Then it was watery, now it is earthly. To enter consciously into this sphere it is first necessary to traverse the ever-deepening levels of the underworld. Dante's *Inferno* describes nine levels of the underworld in medieval times, but by Dante's time there is also Purgatory and Paradise.

Rudolf Steiner was certainly familiar with the **Enuma Elish**, which means "When on high heaven..." It is believed to have been written later in Mesopotamian history, around the 18th century BC. It was first published in English by George Smith in 1876. The *Enuma Elish* consists of seven tablets about Babylonian cosmology that were recovered from the library of **Ashurbanipal**. They reveal aspects of the Creation Myth or Genesis and record Marduk's battle with Tiamat. By

Tablet V, Marduk is victorious and establishes the foundations for the new civilization. In Tablet VII, Marduk is given fifty names or spiritual dominions - "Let us then proclaim his fifty names!" - and each name is listed. The last given is Ea.

A temple built for Marduk in accordance with his exact specifications is described. From *Babylonian Topographical Texts*: "The temple itself is divided into four parts arranged around the four sides of a roofed court, each served by its own gateway. The rooms described in the text are six cellae or chapels and two other chambers: off the east side of the courtyard are the cellae of Marduk, Nabu and Tasmetum; to the north lie the chapels of Ea and Nuska, to the south that of Anu and Enlil. Behind the courtyard's west front are the tu'um and the staircase; the tu'um comprises two parts, an inner and an outer chamber..."

In addition to Ea (Mercury), other Mesopotamian gods include Anu, Father; Antu, Mother; Utu or Shamash, Sun; Nanna, Moon; Inanna or Ishtar, Venus; Gugalanna or Nergel, Mars; Enlil, Jupiter; Ningirsu or Ninurta, Saturn. There is a wealth of information about the Mesopotamian civilizations on the internet, revealing the tremendous amount of interest in this time period. There appears to be even more interest in ancient Egypt, one reason being that both of these civilizations have a deep occult connection with our fifth cultural age. - see *Atlantean Cataclysms*. However, one should be wary of certain "new age" informational sources that base a modern religious or belief system on, i.e., the gods of Mesopotamia, such as Ishtar. According to Rudolf Steiner, as noted above, an opposite direction is now occurring in human spiritual evolution, a reascent. Imagine a graph: the level of the rising curve (today) is exactly opposite

the descending curve of the third millinneum BC. At the lowest point of the graph, between these two curves, is the Mystery of Golgotha.

About The Epic

The standard *Epic of Gilgamesh* is taken from the translation of Sumerian, and several contemporary languages, into Akkadian cuneiform by the scribe Sin-Liqe-Unninni, whose name means "Moon god, accept my plea," or "Sin [the Moon god] is the one who accepts a prayer." This translation is believed to have been done between 1300 and 1000 BC, and Sin-Liqe probably added some contributions of his own. In the nineteenth century tens of thousands of clay cuneiform tablets were excavated from what had been the library of the last great Assyrian king, **Ashurbanipal** (668-627 BC). Cuneiform was first deciphered in 1857, and German and English translations of the standard version, Tablets I through XI, became available not long thereafter. Tablet XII, *Bilgames and the Netherworld*, is generally not included in standard editions because many scholars do not understand how Gilgamesh could be communicating with Eabani after Eabani's death. As will be detailed below, Rudolf Steiner casts considerable light on these after-death communications and their deep significance for Gilgamesh. The initial public interest in the epic was due to its story of the Great Flood, which affirmed the account in the Bible. Another older Sumerian poem normally not included in the standard version is titled *Bilgames and Akka (Aga)*. This will be touched upon below.

Upon reading the epic, it is best to work with a translation that reveals how much has been lost or damaged. It may be that some passages on the tablets were deliberately mutilated,

such as the exact wording of Eabani's curse on Humbaba, or a certain detail about a god. A more "literal" translation will also reveal the numerous rhythmically repeated phrases. These repetitions of phrases were an aid to memory, for in the third cultural age people did not have the kind of memory that takes the consciousness back in time. Therefore orally transmitted rhythmic repetitions of sounds and meanings were essential and many of these were retained in the cuneiform. The Atlanteans also had no chronological memory of the past, but a vivid consciousness of the present moment, the "eternal now," far superior to our own consciousness of the present moment. This is one reason why prehistoric and ancient peoples left monuments, as these monuments served to function as localized memory. - see *World History*.

The translations of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* studied for this article are those of Nancy K. Sandars and Andrew R. George. The work of N.K. Sandars is poetically sensitive and intuitive. This slim Penguin Epics edition, first published in 1960, can be read as a first introduction to the material because the narrative flow is not interrupted. This can then be followed with Andrew George's translation, which draws together all the more recent discoveries that have been made toward the reconstruction and revivification of this ancient literary work. George's translation is thorough, clear and expert in all respects. It marks, in brackets, italics, ellipses, and asterisks, all that is lost, damaged, uncertain, and interpretive or freely rendered. He also brings in segments from a later or separate discovery in order to make the narration flow better. For example, "What happens next is best preserved in the Old Babylonian tablet reportedly from Sippar," "The text of Tablet X resumes." With the inclusion of the *Dramatis personae* of the epic at the beginning, his

translation sets the proper tone for a literary work.

Regarding *Bilgames and the Netherworld*, the netherworld or underworld is accepted as reality in all of ancient literature and mythology. Like the reality of the gods, the underworld does not stem from imagination, fantasy or primitive naivete, although it may be described in poetic or imaginative form. Prior to the Mystery of Golgotha, all human beings after death could only descend to the underworld; the life after death was experienced in darkness. But on the Saturday after the Crucifixion, Christ descended to the underworld and brought Divine Light and release to the souls there. Since the time of that Sacrifice, ascent to the heavenly spiritual worlds after death has been possible.

A passage from "The Land of the Dead," in Homer's *The Odyssey* is revealing. Odysseus says: "So when with prayers and vows I had implored the peoples of the dead, I took the sheep and cut their throats over the pit, and forth the dark blood ran. Then gathered there spirits from out of Erebus of those now dead and gone - brides, and unwedded youths, and worn old men, delicate maids with hearts but new to sorrow, and many pierced with brazen spears, men slain in fight, wearing their blood-stained armor. In crowds around the pit they flocked from every side, with awful wail." In one passage from the misunderstood Tablet XII Gilgamesh implores the spirit of Eabani to tell him of those departed souls he had known, to tell him of their fate, including offspring who had been stillborn. Eabani replies that the stillborn "play amid syrup and ghee at tables of silver and gold." This indicates that the souls of the stillborn did not descend to the underworld, for they were entirely innocent and were cared for in the spiritual spheres of the Sun, gold, and the Moon, silver.

In style and purpose, the epic is complex: it is *exoteric*, intended for the people in the story form of myth, which can evolve through minor variations and additions and lends itself to endless interpretations; *esoteric*, containing, i.e., planetary references and deep spiritual symbolism, including the journeys and trials of Gilgamesh in his quest for immortality; *historic*, as a record of the achievements of Gilgamesh and Eabani. This record was essential, especially for future ages, for Gilgamesh and Eabani were instruments of the Spirit, and of Marduk-Micha-el, for the establishment of the outer culture of the third post-Atlantean age. "The exchange of knowledge possessed by these two is the root of the Chaldean-Babylonian culture." - *Occult History*.

Spiritual Scientific Interpretations of the Epic

"Moon god, accept my plea." - Sin-Liqe-Unninni

Eabani appears at a watering hole as a wild man who lives in harmony with nature and the animals. His appearance brings to mind another man of the wilderness, *John, Baptist*, in a garment of camel's hair, living on locusts and wild honey. Rudolf Steiner states that Eabani is "still covered with hair like men of primeval times," and is likely referring to the appearance of men from the late Atlantean epoch through the beginnings of the first cultural age. Eabani's ability to experience and describe the underworld, in Tablet VII, indicates an Initiate and he may have been, in a prior life, initiated into the Hibernian Mysteries or the Mysteries of the West. These mysteries originated from a center on the island that later became known as Ireland, and this establishment was a direct continuation of the great Atlantean Sun Oracle, that is, these mysteries were not established via the route

from Central Asia but came directly from the northern regions of Atlantis. - see *Mystery Streams in Europe*. This possible earlier life of Eabani is not entirely speculative because Rudolf Steiner tells us that, after Eabani's death, Gilgamesh journeyed to a Hibernian mystery center. This is described in the epic in the meeting with Uta-Napishti. See the section below, "Gilgamesh and the Mysteries of the West."

The slaying of the "Bull of Heaven" that is described in the epic connects with the principal symbol of Mithraism, the youth slaying the bull. Mithra, the Persian Sun god, has been compared to Shamash, Varuna (India) and Ra (Egypt). This of course leads back to the Indian and Persian cultural ages and to the civilization of ancient Egypt.

Eabani goes through or recapitulates his own *fall* or descent from a paradisiacal-like existence, through a seven-day, seven-night initiation in the Moon-Mercury-Venus mysteries, connected with the temple of Ishtar (Venus). Moon, Mercury and Venus are the inner planets that also function spiritually in sustaining the lower body of man, including the reproductive forces, related to speech. The forces of the moon, the animal forces, bring humanity into incarnation, as well as back to conscious life every morning. At night "Plants carry [man] up and out, the moon leads him back to the animal aspect of his nature." - *Planetary Spheres*. The moon also "endows us with individuality, the past... What comes from the moon has the character of immutable necessity. That which comes from the sun has something in which our will, our freedom can operate." - *The Gate of the Moon and the Gate of the Sun*. Eabani's fate is also soon sealed with the consumption of a "full seven goblets of ale," for, in the past, alcohol served to facilitate the descent of

man. "It is a law that the human being is closed off from the higher spiritual world through the use of alcohol." - *The Christian Mystery*.

Gilgamesh foresees the emergence of his great friend Eabani in two precognitive dreams. In the first dream he sees a meteor fall down from the sky, "a rock from the sky," and this becomes a large boulder on earth. "I tried to lift it but it proved too heavy," he tells his mother, Ninsun. In the second dream, "In the streets of strong-walled Uruk there lay an axe; the shape of it was strange... I bent down, deeply drawn towards it." The first dream alludes to Eabani's descent from the cosmos and cosmic consciousness, like a meteor, yet destined to connect firmly and solidly with the earth, like a boulder. Meteoric iron is the metal of Michael. In the second dream, the axe signifies the work that the two friends will undertake together, including the battle with Humbaba, who is wielding dark power over the forces of the *tree of life* in the Cedar Forest.

Eabani is soon established in the epic as a "counselor" and spiritual servant of Gilgamesh, with his natural and powerful clairvoyance enabling the accurate interpretation of dreams and the correct counsel and spiritual guidance for kingly behavior, decisions and deeds. From the point of view of spiritual science, both Gilgamesh and Eabani were unquestionably historic figures and lived in Uruk (Biblical Erech), but, again, the people of those times should not be understood as having the same consciousness as present-day humanity. "When we go back before the thousand years preceding the Christian era we must reckon with the fact that wherever we have to do with historical personalities, higher Individualities, higher Hierarchies stand behind and take possession of these personalities - in the best sense of the

word, of course." Individuality or the personal ego did not begin to emerge until the Greco-Roman age. "Plato, Socrates... had some resemblance to ourselves, but not further back. We must look behind the single personalities for the spiritual powers which represent the super-personal and work through the personalities as their instruments." - *Occult History*. In this same lecture series Rudolf Steiner states that Gilgamesh was an "old soul" who had been reincarnating since the time of Lemuria. Eabani was a "young soul" who returned relatively late in earth evolution. Before the separation of the moon from the earth, human souls went to other planetary spheres to avoid the dangers of the hardening forces of the moon. - see *Atlantean Cataclysms*. After the extrusion of the moon, some souls returned early to earth, some returned late. Prior to the life in Uruk, Eabani had had "few incarnations, very few." As a young soul who reincarnated late, descending to earth like a meteor from the sky, from cosmic existence, he was able to retain his great clairvoyant powers, and as a young soul he complemented Gilgamesh.

Humbaba, the Giant

Humbaba is depicted on one bas relief with markings on his face and a mouth that resemble coiled intestines. He was an ogre, a giant, and a holdover from Atlantis. The intestines indicate a certain influence within the lower body of man, and within the brain, and Humbaba's powers may have been hindering human evolution, hence the need to destroy him. During their combat with the ogre, Gilgamesh says to Eabani: "My friend, Humbaba's features have changed!" This would have been possible for a latter-day Atlantean giant. Also, Eabani had warned Gilgamesh: "Humbaba - his roaring is the Deluge" which connects Humbaba with that Atlantean

time period. Eabani had known Humbaba "...in the uplands, when I roamed here and there with the herd." And Humbaba, sounding like **Ahriman**, says to Eabani: "You are experienced in the ways of my forest...Also you know all the arts of speech. I should have picked you up and hanged you from a sapling at the way into the forest, I should have fed your flesh to the locust bird, ravening eagle and vulture." Humbaba had been assigned by Enlil (Jupiter) to be the guardian of the Cedar Forest to protect the trees. The sacred cedar tree symbolizes the tree of life. The fact that Gilgamesh and Eabani act against the will of Enlil is very significant; it indicates their roles in a time of transition, as preparation for the future.

The descriptions of the intestines in Humbaba's appearance have been connected, by scholars, with the oracular reading of intestines and other inner organs of lambs as a means of divination or perceiving an omen, and Humbaba probably practised this kind of post-Atlantean magic, which involved as well the creation of seven "dread auras" or "roars" about him.

Prior to the journey of the two friends to the Cedar Forest, Gilgamesh's mother, Ninsun, makes a special plea through a prayer to Shamash, the Sun god, to assist the two in the battle. During the long journey to the Cedar Forest Eabani interprets one of Gilgamesh's dreams: "Shamash the Protector; in our moment of peril he will take our hands." The two are likely given assistance through "Atlantean white magic," through the power of Shamash, Ninurta (god of war) and the four Archangels of the cardinal points. As noted, Marduk is one of the four Archangels and is signified by the star Aldebaran. Is the forest and the journey fictional or mythical? In this time period, the actual geographical

location was necessary on a spiritual quest or journey; thus the mountain of the Cedar Forest must be a real location. Later discovered fragments placed the Cedar Forest in Lebanon. "Journeys were required then to different regions of earth. Not so now; man sinks deeply into his inner being... By learning of these different regions, man gained insight into the spiritual world. That is why people [then] wandered far and wide." - *World History*.

Gilgamesh and Eabani destroy Humbaba with the assistance of Shamash, Ninurta, the strong winds of the four cardinal points and other winds: "South Wind, North Wind, East Wind and West Wind, Blast, Counterblast, Typhoon, Hurricane and Tempest, Devil-Wind, Frost-Wind, Gale and Tornado." The winds are summoned by Marduk. See above: "Marduk-Micha-el first smote [Tiamat] with various weapons and then drove the whole force of his storm-wind into the Dragon's entrails." Enlil, who receives Humbaba's head from Eabani, is displeased but retains Humbaba's seven exalted roars or auras and attaches them to qualities, such as barbarity; to objects in nature, a river and a mountain; and to Nungal, goddess of prisoners, stewardess of Enlil, daughter of Ereshkigal (Queen of the Underworld). These resounding "dread auras" are very significant and will be further discussed below, in the section "Bilgames and Akka."

An earlier Sumerian version of this battle, titled *Bilgames and Humwawa*, describes matters differently. Fifty men, sons of the city, accompany Bilgames and Eabani to the Cedar Forest, carrying various kinds of trees that had been felled for them: ebony, willow, apricot and box. They fulfill ritual roles in the confiscation of Humbaba's auras. These fifty warriors can be compared with the fifty Greek Argonauts and also with the fifty spiritual names or dominions of Marduk.

Another god associated with the tree of life is Ningizzida or Gizzida. N.K Sandars defines this "Lord of the Tree of Life" as a fertility god and "sometimes he is a serpent with a human head, but later he was a god of healing and magic." The Ojibwe (Native American) name for cedar trees is giizhik or giizhag, and the red cedar is considered sacred. Rudolf Steiner pointed out, in the *First Esoteric School*, that the sound of the Z which can be heard in the name Boaz, tree of life, is meaningful. It suggests the serpent.

After Gilgamesh's return to Uruk he is approached by Ishtar, but he rejects her advances, pointing out, among other reasons, her treatment of the gardener Ishullanu after she had tired of him. She had changed him into a "blind mole," according to the Sandars translation. George interprets Ishullanu as meaning "shorty," or dwarf. Rudolf Steiner's explanation of this passage is that "...Through Eabani's influence, Gilgamesh saw his past lives... and did not like what he saw, unusual friendships and human connections he would as Gilgamesh regard as shameful. He began to upbraid and reproach his own soul. He reproaches the goddess for this reason because of the goddess's previous relationship with Ishullanu... this signifies that his own friendship with a certain person who had been his master's gardener in the preceding incarnation was not pleasing to him." - *Occult History*.

In her anger with Gilgamesh, Ishtar sets the Bull of Heaven upon Uruk, but Gilgamesh and Eabani engage in battle with the Bull and defeat it. Eabani's "taking the bull by the horns" resembles the later cults of Mithraism (noted above) and the Christian stories of St. George and the Dragon. In Uruk, the Bull of Heaven was believed to be the cause of serious

droughts and scholars generally consider this Bull to be a symbol of drought. However, Rudolf Steiner stated that the "winged bull," described by the Chaldean, Ezekiel (Eze 1:8-10), was **Lucifer**. Lucifer "cannot descend altogether onto the earth: for this, his power does not suffice... He is represented as the winged form of the dragon. Ezekiel describes him as the winged bull." - *Foundations of Esotericism*. Drought may also be interpreted as spiritual and mental infertility or unfruitfulness, which can be caused by Lucifer. Not long after this time Eabani became ill, so the two may have upset a certain balance, causing the earthly forces of **Ahriman** to become strengthened, despite the victory over Humbaba. "Something that is really a higher spiritual force is working in [Uruk] as an animal power, as a terrible spectral animal power. Troubles of all kinds befell the inhabitants, physical illnesses and, more especially, diseases and disturbances of the soul. Eabani died as a consequence. But he remained spiritually with this personality of Gilgamesh, even after his death. In later years of Gilgamesh's life, he receives Intuitions and enlightenment from Eabani and acts out of the will of both, from the flowing together of the will of both. [This was] fully possible in those olden times. As a result Gilgamesh saw at what point he himself stood in the history of mankind. He realized, through Eabani's influence, the problems of immortality." - *World History*.

Gilgamesh and the Mysteries of the West

Genesis 11:9 - "Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth." But the Lord also sent Eabani, as the seed for the future redemption of speech and language.

Now Eabani counsels Gilgamesh regarding his sexual misconduct - divine consent notwithstanding - which is also sourced in the power and influence of Lucifer. The great Beings of the Sun Oracle, and all who come under their aegis, strive to turn Luciferian effects into good, effects that will otherwise be detrimental. - see *Occult Science*. In the very distant future, sexuality will also be redeemed. The Word became flesh; the flesh will again become the Word. Speech will be the reproductive force of the future; the Sound and the Word will create, as it is with the Creator. Thinking and thought processes will also be metamorphosed. Man will then become a co-creator with God. Thus the epic reveals how Eabani "slips into the skin of the dragon" and "takes the bull by the horns," perhaps for the first time, apparently for the first time known to history.

Gilgamesh is inconsolable in his grief over the loss of his great friend, nor can he come to an acceptance of his own inevitable death. He longs for immortality. Thus he sets out on a journey towards the west, in search of Uta-Napishti ("I found life"), who is the successor of the Atlantean Sun Oracle, while the Atlantean wisdom is by this time in changed form. "...This journey to the west is nothing else than the search for the secrets of ancient Atlantis, for happenings prior to the great Atlantean catastrophe." - *Occult History*. Rather than Uta-Napishti, Rudolf Steiner prefers the name Xisuthros for this Atlantean Initiate, a name which is similar to the Sumerian Ziasudra. However, Xisuthros is the same as the Uta-Napishti of the epic, the Babylonian Noah. According to Rudolf Steiner, in order to meet Xisuthros, Gilgamesh traveled westward to the nearest center of the Hibernian mysteries, then located in the "neighborhood of the modern Burgenland," in southeast Austria. He would

have been guided there by Eabani in Spirit, which leads to the probability that Eabani had been involved with these mysteries prior to his life in Uruk, or perhaps even during the time of his paradisiacal-like existence, before uniting with Uruk and Gilgamesh. Was Gilgamesh a disciple of the Initiate, Eabani, in the Hibernian mysteries? Whereas in the epic, Eabani seems to be an inferior of Gilgamesh - and Humbaba calls Eabani a "mere hireling" - the very opposite may have been the case. He may have been the *spiritual* servant of Gilgamesh, in the sense, later, of Christ's washing the disciple's feet. "Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him." - *John* 13:16.

In addition, Eabani does not seem to have been imprisoned in the underworld after his death to the extent that is Gilgamesh's fate: "Bilgames, in the form of his ghost, dead in the underworld, shall [be the governor of the Netherworld], chief of the shades! [He will pass judgement], he will render verdicts. [What he says will be weighty as the word of] Ningishzida and Dumuzzi." Ningishzida or Ningizzida: Lord of the tree of life; Dumuzi or Tammuz: dying god of vegetation - *N.K. Sandars*. The element of death indicates Dumuzi would be the Lord of the tree of knowledge.

Christ is now the Lord of the two pillars, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge.

On his long and difficult journey, Gilgamesh confronts and battles lions in the night, an essential encounter for accurate spiritual perception, then arrives at the mountains of Mashu, twin peaks that reach as high as heaven with bases that extend deeply into the underworld. A Mount Meru is connected with Maitreya Bodhisattva, and Maitreya is said to

have his head in heaven and his feet in hell. Twin peaks can signify a cooperative working together of two Beings, one in the heavenly world and one alive on earth. Either two men or a man and a woman, half human and half scorpion, guard the gate of the mountain. The scorpion figures allude to the power of the gate of the threshold, the power that draws man into life and keeps him incarnate, related to the moon and the four-petalled lotus-chakra at the base of the spine. Because Gilgamesh is "two-thirds god and one-third man," the figures allow him to pass. He then journeys through "twelve leagues of darkness," through nine levels of the underworld and three transitional levels. The darkest level is the ninth; at ten the end is near; at eleven the dawn light appears; at twelve the sun streams out: this could be Shamballa, center of the Earth, garden of the gods. Here Gilgamesh encounters Shamash, who tells him he will never find the life, the immortality that he is seeking. A veiled figure, Shiduri, woman of the vine and maker of wine, sits in a garden by the edge of the sea, and she also tells Gilgamesh he will not succeed in his quest. Gilgamesh responds with anger: "I shall smash down the door, I shall [shatter the bolts!]" Shiduri may be a form of Ishtar. The wine serves to connect the soul with earthly life, serves in the descent. Shiduri advises Gilgamesh to learn to enjoy his life on earth, but refers him to Ur-Shanabi, the ferryman, for a crossing of the waters of death toward the home of Xisuthros.

It is as though Gilgamesh is destined to fail from the beginning, as though it were the intent of God, for he lacks the soul strength and spiritual maturity to overcome his arrogance, aggression and anger. He smashes the mysterious stone men who aid Ur-Shanabi in crossing the waters, although Ur-Shanabi is able to propose another means. The figures of the half-scorpion, half-human man and woman and

the destroyed stone men allude to the Hibernian mysteries. Making their way across the waters, Ur-Shanabi and Gilgamesh at last reach the sun-filled home of Xisuthros, who tells him the story of the Great Flood and of his predecessor Noah. A famous passage from this story occurs after the rain has stopped and the ship has found its way to a mountaintop: "I heaped up wood and cane and cedar and myrtle," says Xisuthros, "When the gods smelled the sweet savour, they gathered like flies over the sacrifice." This points strongly to the fact that the gods have need of humanity, for they suffered deprivations when the flood turned all of the human beings into clay. In response to Gilgamesh's quest for immortality, Xisuthros decides upon an exercise that would make his soul capable of penetrating into spiritual regions, and he tells Gilgamesh that he must stay awake for six days and seven nights. This would not be possible for most mortals, much less a weary traveler, and Gilgamesh soon falls asleep. His failures cause him to remain "...at the portal of Initiation and gave the culture [of Babylon] no more than a glimpse into the secrets of Initiation. Hermes gazed into the very depths of the holiest secrets and became the great inaugurator of ancient Egypt, but because of Gilgamesh's failure to go through the Initiation successfully, Babylon had the external culture and the esoteric culture running parallel to one another.. Enshrined within this culture were the sacred, most hidden mysteries of the Chaldeans, but these were only able to flow through the external culture as a tiny stream." Yet Beings of the rank of the Fire-Spirits - the Archangels - particularly Marduk, were able to work through Gilgamesh.

When Gilgamesh is ready for his return journey, Xisuthros, at the suggestion of his wife, bestows a gift upon Gilgamesh for his efforts, and tells him of the location of a certain plant

that grows in the sweet waters. It has a prickle like a thorn, like a rose. If Gilgamesh can succeed in finding this plant, it will restore his lost youth. Joyfully, Gilgamesh does find the plant, but later, while he is bathing, a serpent slithers up from the deep and steals it. The plant signifies the tree of life, which is the life-elixir, the fountain of youth. To eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, however, causes the death forces of consciousness, and ultimately the death of the physical body.

"When Gilgamesh returned home he had received a high spiritual insight. He traveled along the Danube on its northern bank toward home. However, he fell into a fit of anger over the first temptation that assailed him. Thus his enlightenment was darkened and he arrived home without it. However, he still had his deceased friend [for assistance] in looking into the spiritual world..." - *World History*.

In a lecture about the **Mysteries of Hibernia**, Rudolf Steiner stated that these initiations focused on the intensification of everyday consciousness. "The pupils had to go through all that we experience as difficulties if we have really gained knowledge and then wish to put it into words... It is one thing to have attained a truth and quite another thing to express it, to formulate it." After considerable preparation the pupils were led to two colossal statues, one male, symbolizing, from a certain aspect, science, and the other female, symbolizing art. Through musical harmonics and the songs and recited verses of the initiating priests, who were seen slowly rising above the statues, the pupils gradually began to understand the distinctions and differences between truth and untruth, the illusory and the real, and to overcome all doubt in processes of acquiring spiritual knowledge within the visible, material world. Through these ceremonies the pupils experienced the approach of the Cosmic Word. "The statues

were the external letters by means of which they must begin to decipher the Cosmic Secret placed before men." True science and true art can only be attained through Christ, can only be received from Christ.

The Hibernian mysteries were also concerned with fertility and agriculture.

Bilgames and Akka

"The goddess Ishtar was stolen by a neighboring city [Kish] and Gilgamesh and Eabani together waged war against this city, vanquished its king and brought the goddess back... The temple-sanctuary served as a dwelling place for the city-ego or group soul." - *Occult History*.

The above quote serves to explain the mysterious lament that Gilgamesh repeats: "To empty the wells, to empty the wells of the land, to empty the shallow wells of the land, to empty the deep wells furnished with hoisting ropes: let us not submit to the house of Kish, let us wage war!" The wells signify both spiritual wisdom and physical health and are essential for the well-being of the city and the people. Wells were held sacred in ancient times. Without the sustaining goddess in her temple, all replenishing resources will dry up and become emptied of life. Gilgamesh cannot persuade the elders to defend the city against Akka, but the young warriors eagerly give their support. This again points to a time of transition. Gilgamesh's mood brightens and he speaks to Eabani: "Now make ready the equipment and arms of battle, let weapons of war return to your grasp! Let them create terror and a dread aura, so when he arrives fear of me overwhelms him, so his good sense is confounded and his judgement undone!" The dread aura is a surrounding

protective aura created through magical means, and it can permeate or surround a person or an object. The means of summoning the aura occurs through the use of sound, which is why it is also referred to in the epic as a roar; it can be heard as a roaring sound. Recall that Gilgamesh and Eabani came up against the seven dread auras of Humbaba and that after Humbaba's death, Enlil dispensed the seven auras elsewhere.

Eabani has the ability to create the dread aura through and around the weapons by means of speech and sound, but he does this in the service of Marduk and through the guiding hierarchies of the pre-Christian course. Humbaba had said to Eabani: "...You know the arts of speech."

Other Transitional Times

The Individualities of Eabani and Gilgamesh incarnated together again in Greece, as contemporaries of Heraclitus, c. 535-475 BC. Eabani was the priest Cratylus and Gilgamesh was a woman (by the name of Mysa or Artemusia). At this time they were both initiated into the Mysteries of Ephesus, which are connected with the age of India, the first post-Atlantean cultural age. Not long thereafter they appeared together for a third time, reincarnating in Macedonia as Aristotle and Alexander. - *Occult History; World History*.

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Note: the quotation for the Occult Science citation is: "Great cosmic beings turned Luciferian effects into good - what would otherwise have been detrimental. One such faculty is speech." The author believes Rudolf Steiner is referring especially to the Christ Initiates of the Sun Oracle.

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