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Epics of Sumerian Kings: The Matter of Aratta
by Herman Vanstiphout
Edited by Jerrold S. Cooper

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EPICS OF SUMERIAN KINGS

The Matter of Aratta

by
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Society of Biblical Literature
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³⁵ The "back (side)" seems adequate, since it can stand for belly or hindquarter. The horns (si-muš) are more difficult. Perhaps the idea is that the milk is sent back into the cow's/goat's body as far as it can go and away from udder and subsequently milk pail.

³⁶ Lines like this abound in the genre of the city laments, where the cities and the whole of Sumer are consistently presented as a byre that has been abandoned by its personnel and livestock. In fact, the whole passage might well appear in a lament—but in this instance it is to be taken literally.

³⁷ Fish spawn, Sumerian *gargara* (lit. "disseminated semen"), is used by both magicians to create a series of animals. The animals created by Sagburu are consistently bigger and stronger than those created by the sorcerer. But the real emphasis of the magical contest is that the animals created by Sagburu use the others as food. The principle of providing food, which had been put to a stop by the sorcerer's first activity, is here shown to be stronger than its opposite. In other words, white magic has conquered black magic. Note also that the text shows here a clever bilingual pun or, perhaps better, a play on signs. The cuneiform sign for the *Sumerian* word *gargara* can be read more simply and much more generally as NUN; the *Akkadian*, and almost generally Semitic, word for "fish" is *nīnu*.

³⁸ Since he had threatened the life force of Ereš/Sumer.

 II

Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta

Introduction

Most Sumerologists will agree that this relatively long composition (about 640 lines) is probably the finest piece of poetic storytelling ever produced by the Old Babylonian authors. The general theme of the cycle, namely, the rivalry between Unug/Sumer and Aratta, is presented here at first sight as a mere contest in cleverness. Yet there are several layers of meaning defining both the central narrative strategy and the obvious symbolism.

1. The story seems deceptively simple. Enmerkar, king of Unug, wants to embellish his city and the whole of Sumer with precious metals and stones, goods that are not to be found in Sumer but only in the fabulously wealthy city Aratta, which lies behind the mountains. Since trade does not as yet exist, he asks the goddess Inana what he should do: Inana is the goddess of Aratta as well. She favors Enmerkar and advises him to send a messenger with a challenge to Aratta, requisitioning what he wants and enforcing his claim by stating that she favors him. He does so, but the (unnamed) lord of Aratta refuses, claiming that Inana is his goddess as well and that anyway his mountain city is an impregnable fastness. Still, he is willing to enter into a contest with Enmerkar in order to see whose side Inana is really on. This results in a counterchallenge that takes the form of an unsolvable riddle: if Enmerkar succeeds in carting grain to Aratta in open nets instead of bags, he might reconsider. Enmerkar finds a solution: he uses sprouting barley to close the interstices of the nets so that no grain is spilled. Sending off the grain, he repeats his challenge. This time the lord of Aratta asks him to bring him a scepter made of no existing material. Enmerkar solves this riddle as well: he prepares a gluelike plastic substance that he pours into a hollow reed; after this mass has hardened,

which takes a long time, he breaks away the reed mould and sends off the scepter with a renewed challenge. Finally, the lord of Aratta requests a dog of no known color to fight his own dog. Enmerkar again finds a solution: he weaves a cloth of no known color. When this is sent off to Aratta the messenger complains that the message has become too long and difficult for him to remember and reproduce. Thereupon Enmerkar invents writing—which throws the lord of Aratta in despair. At this point Iškur, the god of storm and rain, intervenes, and the famine and drought that was scourging Aratta at the time is over. The fight between the two dogs now appears as part of a festival. Inana reappears, confirms her predilection for Enmerkar, but also tells him to institute peaceful trade with Aratta from now on.

2. Arranged according to the several episodes and subparagraphs, the story looks somewhat like this:

I. *The Argument*

- [A] General introduction, subdivided into:
- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| (1) Short hymn to Unug | 1-5 |
| (2) Unug's wealth/absence of trade | 6-27 |
| (3) Inana favors Unug. | 28-32 |
- [B] Reason for and origin of the conflict: Enmerkar's plea and Inana's answer
- | | |
|--|-----------|
| (1) Introduction to Enmerkar's plea | 33-37 |
| (2) Enmerkar's plea: have Aratta deliver its riches! | 38-64 |
| (3) Introduction to Inana's reply | 65-68 |
| (4) Inana's reply: Send a messenger! | 69-79 |
| (5) Inana's reply: Aratta shall submit! | 80-95 |
| | (= 49-64) |
| (6) Inana's reply: Praise to you, Enmerkar! | 96-104 |

II. *The Contest*

- [C] Enmerkar's first challenge
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| (1) Marching orders to the messenger | 105-113 |
| | (106-112 = 71-78) |
| (2) Enmerkar's threat | 114-133 |
| (3) The Spell of Nudimmud | 134-155 |
- [D] First voyage: Unug to Aratta
- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| (1) Go now, messenger! | 156-159 |
| (2) The voyage | 160-174 |
| | (164-169 = 73-78) |

- [E] Delivering the first challenge
- | | |
|--|-------------|
| (1) Opening formulae | 175-178 |
| (2) My king is supreme! | 179-186 |
| (3) Enmerkar's threat | 187-207 |
| | (= 115-135) |
| (4) I shall carry back your (submissive) answer! | 208-217 |
- [F] Aratta's reply; first counterchallenge
- | | |
|--|---------|
| (1) Aratta shall not submit! | 218-226 |
| (2) Messenger: Inana has taken Unug's part! | 227-235 |
| (3) Aratta and Unug shall have a contest! | 236-261 |
| (4) Beware of Aratta's forces! | 262-277 |
| (5) Counterchallenge: deliver grain in nets! | 278-293 |
- [G] Second voyage: Aratta to Unug 294-298
- [H] Solution and second challenge
- | | |
|--|---------|
| (1) Enmerkar's reaction | 299-307 |
| (2) Ritual (and prayer?) | 308-316 |
| (3) Nisaba's solution: soaking the wheat | 317-336 |
| (4) Second challenge: a scepter to match mine! | 337-346 |
- [I] Third voyage: Unug to Aratta 347-351
- [J] Delivering the second challenge
- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| (1) Arrival in Aratta | 352-375 |
| (2) Opening formulae | 376-380 |
| (3) Hand over a scepter like mine! | 381-388 |
| | (= 340-345) |
- [K] Aratta's reply: second counterchallenge
- | | |
|---|---------|
| (1) Aratta's anxiety | 389-396 |
| (2) Counterchallenge: an impossible scepter | 397-411 |
- [L] Fourth voyage: Aratta to Unug 412-416
- [M] Enmerkar's solution: a manmade substance 417-434
- [N] Fifth voyage: Unug to Aratta 435-437
- [O] Third counterchallenge
- | | |
|---|---------|
| (1) Aratta's despondence | 438-453 |
| (2) Counterchallenge: a dog of no known color | 454-461 |

- [P] Sixth voyage: Aratta to Unug 462-467
- [Q] Final challenge
 (1) Solution: a cloth of no known color 468-476
 (2) Final challenge 477-496
 (486-489 = 115-117)
 (3) Enmerkar invents writing. 497-506
- [R] Seventh voyage: Unug to Aratta 507-510
- [S] Aratta's reaction
 (1) Opening formulae 511-517
 (2) Repetition of the challenge; tablet 518-535
 (3) Aratta's reaction: he cannot read. 536-541
- III. *The Resolution*
- [T] The final confrontation
 (1) Iškur sends rain; wheat begins to grow in Aratta. 542-555
 (2) Inana has saved Aratta! 556-568
 (3) Now let the champions fight! 569-580...?1
- [U] The argument resolved
 (1) Inana pleases Dumuzid. 584-587
 (2) Inana orders Enmerkar to institute trade. 588-625
 (3) Inana's final counsel 626-636²

3. This representation is thought to show the strong sense of structure, balance, and composition pervading this poem. An analysis of the structural features cannot be undertaken here, but many of them are obvious at first reading. The poem can be neatly divided into three parts, of which the first and the last are roughly equal in size. The *argument* (lines 1-104) as a unit is balanced by the *resolution* (lines 542-636+). What is more, these are the only sections in which Inana has a major part. The *resolution* does indeed resolve the argument in that now trade is invented, and thus Enmerkar is enabled to fulfill his ambitions. The *contest* (lines 105-541) takes up most of the poem and is itself divided into twice three parts consisting of an initial challenge followed by three counterchallenges—or riddles—and their solutions. This works out as a series of seven voyages that, as the texts says, have to cross seven mountain ranges. On the other hand, this game of numbers and parallel situations is handled with consummate skill. Word-for-word repetitions do occur, but they are mostly highly functional in that they generally emphasize basic elements of the opening argument or Enmerkar's original threat

(see, e.g., 49-64//80-95; 71-78//106-112; 115-135//187-207//486-489). In a literary environment that abounds in repetitions, it is striking that here precisely those narrative situations that would easily lead to automatic repetition—that is, the messenger's seven voyages—are differentiated, even somewhat artificially.³ The text also shows a penchant for cross-reference that goes beyond the expected instances of fulfillment—or not—of earlier expectations. The most important instance of this technique is also very subtle. A major part of Enmerkar's first challenge is the famous spell of Nudimmud, which is seemingly not very much to the point in its immediate context. Indeed, when the messenger delivers this first challenge, the spell is not repeated as such; it is merely noted that it has to be spoken. Many of us now agree that the burden of this spell is that in an ideal world of peace and bliss, which Enmerkar is striving for, only Sumerian will be spoken.⁴ It often escapes attention that the episode of Enmerkar's last challenge—in fact, merely a stronger assertion of his original challenge—contains a neat parallel of sorts. Enmerkar's invention of writing seems somewhat out of place here: the message is far shorter than the first one. But on the other hand, the invention of writing—explicitly cuneiform writing—complements the notion of Sumerian as the international language, as was already put in the spell of Nudimmud. Within the cultural ambience of the group of poems edited here, the *ed uba*, it was clear to everyone that knowing and using Sumerian was equivalent to knowing how to write, and vice versa. This subtle cross-reference thus becomes yet another structural element holding the story together.

4. One of the most intriguing features of this text is partly formal and partly substantial. At first glance it seems that the rivalry for sanctioned superiority, which lies at the base of all the Aratta poems, is resolved here by the simple expedient of a well-known folktale motif: that of the riddle to which no solution seems possible. These "riddles" have a tendency to appear in threes. On a purely formal level, this does seem to be the case here, although I hasten to add that I know of no other examples from Sumerian literature. Yet the riddles themselves, and even more so their solutions, show three other levels of significance.

First, there is the matter of the materials required. In the first case, the gold and precious stones are ultimately exchanged for Unug's wealth in grain. This is indeed what both parties want: Enmerkar needs the luxury goods; Aratta, in the throes of a famine, needs food. In the second instance, the proposed exchange of scepters does not actually take place, but Enmerkar succeeds in manufacturing the required item. Third, the episode of the dogs can hardly be called an exchange, but again Enmerkar succeeds against the expectations of Aratta. Thus, the truly relevant

substances are found only in the first exchange, which is taken up again at the end of the story.

Second, there is the symbolic meaning of the required objects. For Enmerkar the precious goods are necessary because of his responsibility for his city, which he wants to embellish as it should be. For Aratta grain is absolutely crucial at this point in time, and thus it also belongs to the responsibility of the lord of Aratta.⁵ The scepter episode, on the other hand, is an overt allusion to the thorny matter of overlordship. The fight between the dogs⁶ is probably a somewhat proleptic indication of the festivities accompanying the peaceful solution of the conflict.

There is also the manner in which Enmerkar solves the riddles. His first solution is a trick, but the point is that he is so conversant with the technology of wheat production that he can come up with this solution. The second instance is again a feat of technology: the very first manmade substance in history. And the third solution comes, somewhat unfairly one may think, from textile technology. So within one story we have not only references to the three main export products of Sumer—namely, wheat, manufactures, and textile—but also and perhaps mainly to the technological superiority of Sumer over the mere owners of raw though precious materials.

Thus one can see that the reason for Enmerkar's victory in this battle of wits lies not only in Enmerkar's superior intelligence and cleverness but also in the substance of the solutions he brings to the seemingly impossible tasks. All three have to do with technology and with the three most important export articles Sumer can produce.

Finally, to cap it all, this superiority that becomes evident as the story unfolds is further enhanced by the fourth and perhaps most important feat of technology. This consists of the introduction of Sumerian and cuneiform as the necessary means of administration, bookkeeping, and, finally, trade, the lack of which stands at the origin of the conflict. The overriding importance is clearly exemplified by the ingenious trick of presenting this motif in two parts—the Spell of Nudimmud and the Invention of Writing—which elegantly encompass the doubly threefold series of impossible tasks and their solution. Thus large-scale trade is seen to depend on writing, which simply implies Sumerian. And indeed, the very first cuneiform documents, without doubt written in Sumerian, are what we now call administrative and economic in nature. The scribes who are responsible for this text not only coined a term concordant with "cuneiform" (see line 540). They also hinted at the indubitable fact that writing was invented for economic, not intellectual, reasons.

5. The composite text presented here is based upon all the twenty-seven tablets and fragments known at the present time.⁷ The material comes

predominantly from Nippur: twenty-three pieces out of twenty-seven. The Nippur material certainly shows two complete editions. One is a beautiful and well-preserved large tablet with six columns of about fifty lines per side, and another, of which we have only the right half, had sixty to sixty-five lines per column and five columns per side. There are at least nine partial editions on two-column tablets. Further study must decide whether these are parts of "complete editions" on sequences of two or three tablets, but it is striking that the first half or first third of the poem predominates on these tablets. There are seven good examples of *imgidas* (i.e., one column extracts); the rest of the fragments must remain undecided for the moment. Two largish one-column extracts were found in Ur; one *imgida* comes from Kish, and finally there is a fragment of a two-column tablet of unknown provenance⁸ in Berlin.

6. The poem was first published in its (then) entirety in Kramer 1952, which was a remarkable achievement for its time. The reworking by Jestin (1957) is still useful in places. Cohen (1973), an unpublished dissertation, added much to the material, the reading, and the interpretation. Relevant recent translations are Jacobsen 1987 and Vanstiphout 1998 (84–112).

**Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta
Composite Text**

I. THE ARGUMENT

A. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

- 1 iri gud huš AN.TEŠ₂ ni₂ gal gur₃-ru
[kull]-'ab₄^{ki} bad₃ [...]
gaba ud-da ki nam tar-[re-da]
unug^{ki} kur-gal šag₄ [...]
- 5 kiğ₂-sig unu₂ gal an-'na' [...]
- ud ri-a nam ba-[tar-ra-ba]
unug^{ki} kul-ab₄^{ki} e₂-an'-[na] [...]
sağ il₂-la nun gal-e-ne 'mi'-[ni-...]
he₂-ğal₂ a eštub ġal₂
- 10 šeg_x(IM.A) še gu-nu ġal₂
unug^{ki} kul-ab₄^{ki}-a ib-da-an-tab
kur dilmun^{ki} [(...)] X in-nu
e₂-an-na unug^{ki}-e kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ka ki us₂-sa-a
ği₆-par₄ kug^{di} inana-ke₄
- 15 sig₄ kul-ab₄^{ki}-ke₄ kug ki-in-dar-ra-gin₇ pa ed₂ ak-am₃
[...] X X X nu-il₂ bala nu-ak-e
[...] nu-il₂ naim-ga-raš nu-ak-e
[kug-sig₁₇ kug]-babbar urud nagga^{na4}lagab za-gin₃-na
[na₄ hur-sağ-ğa₂] 'kur'-bi-ta teš₂-bi nu-mu-un-ed₃-de₃
- 20 [...] 'ezen'-ma a nu-un-tu₅!
[...] nu-mu-un-dur₂-ru
[...] ud bi₂-in-[zal]
[...]
[...]
- 25 [...] gun₃-gun₃
[...] ki kug X [...] na⁴zal-gin₃ duru₅-am₃
'šag₄-[bi] ġi^{is}mes babbar-gin₇ gurun il₂-la sig₇-ga-am₃
- di^{na}na-ra en aratta^{ki}-ke₄
sağ men kug-sig₁₇-ga mu-na-ni-in-ğal₂
30 en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-gin₇ nu-mu-na-sag₉
aratta^{ki} eš₃ e₂-an-na ġi₆-par₄ ki kug-gin₇
- kug^{di} inana-ra sig₄ kul-ab₄^{ki}-gin₇ nu-mu-un-na-du₃

**Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta
Translation**

I. THE ARGUMENT

A. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

- O city, fierce bull radiating force and awe, 1
[O Kulab], *rampart* [of the Land],
Breastwork of⁹ the storm, where the destinies are ever fixed,
O Unug, great mountain in the heart of...
There the evening meal of An's abode [*is ever set*]. 5
- In days of yore, when the destinies were fixed,
The Great Princes¹⁰ granted Unug-Kulab's Eana
Head-lifting pride:
Opulence, carp floods¹¹
And rains that bring forth dappled wheat 10
Abounded in Unug-Kulab.
The land Dilmun¹² did not yet exist,
When the Eana of Unug-Kulab was already well-founded,
And the Gipar of Holy Inana
And Kulab, the Brickwork, glinted like silver in the lode. 15
[...] was not yet *imported*; there was no trading;
[...] was not *exported*; there was no commerce.
[Gold], silver, copper, tin, blocks of lapis lazuli,
[The mountain ores,] were not yet brought down from the highlands.
[...] there was no bathing for the festivals; 20
[...] were not sitting
[...] time passed
[...]
[...]
[...]
[...] was brightly colored; 25
[...] the holy place was [*replete with*] polished lapis lazuli;
Its interior was beautiful like the silvery MES-tree in fruit.
- For Inana did the lord of Aratta
Don his golden crown and diadem,
But he did not please her as well as did the lord of Kulab, 30
For nothing even resembling the shrine Eana, or the Gipar, the holy
place,¹³
Did Aratta ever build for Holy Inana, unlike brickwork Kulab!

B. REASON FOR AND ORIGIN OF THE CONFLICT: ENMERKAR'S PLEA AND INANA'S ANSWER

- ud-ba en šag₄-ge pad₃-da ^dinana-ke₄
 kur šuba-ta šag₄ kug-ge pad₃-da ^dinana-ke₄
 35 en-me-er-kar₂ dumu ^dutu-ke₄
 nin₉-a-ni nin kurku₂ dug₃-ga
 kug ^dinana-ra u₃-gul mu-un-na-ğa₂-ğa₂
- nin₉-mu aratta^{ki} unug^{ki}-še₃
 kug-sig₁₇ kug-babbar ha-ma-an-galam-e
 40 na⁴za-gin₃ duru₅ lagab-ta [...] X
 sud-ra₂-ağ₂ na⁴za-gin₃ 'duru₅' [...] X
 unug^{ki}-ga kur kug [...] X X du₃
 e₂ an-ta [ed₃-da kil]-gub-ba-za
 [aratta^{ki} eš₃] e₂-an-na he₂-en-du₃
 45 [ği₆]-par₄ kug-ga [dur₂] ġar-ra-za
 šag₄-bi aratta^{ki} ha-ma-an-galam-e
 ġa₂-e šag₄-ba amar za-gin₃-na gu₂' ga-mu-ni-[...]la₂
 aratta^{ki} 'unug¹-[ki-še₃] ġiš ha-ma-[ğa₂-ğa₂]
 nam-lu₂-u₁₈-lu aratta^{ki}-[ke₄]
 50 na₄ hur-sağ-ğa₂ 'kur¹-[bi] ha-ma-ab-ed₃
 eš₃ gal ha-ma-du₃-e unu₂ gal ha-ma-ğa₂-ğa₂
 unu₂ gal 'unu₂' [diğir-re-e-ne-ke₄ pa] ed₂ [ha]-ma-ab-ak-e
- me-mu kul-ab₄^{ki}-[a] si ha-ma-ni-ib-sa₂-e
 abzu kur kug-gin₇ ha-ma-ab-mu₂-mu₂
 55 eridug^{ki} hur-sağ-gin₇ ha-ma-ab-sikil-e
 eš₃ abzu kug ki-in-dar-ra-gin₇ pa ed₂ ha-ma-ab-ak-e
- ğa₂-e abzu-ta zag-mi₂ dug₄-ga-mu-ne
 eridug^{ki}-ta me de₆-a-mu-ne
 nam-en-na men eš₃ bar-gin₇ sig₇-ga-mu-ne
- 60 unug^{ki} kul-ab₄^{ki}-a sağ men kug ġal₂-la-mu-ne
 [P.A.] eš₃ gal-la-ke₄ ġi₆-par₄-ra hu-mu-un-tum₂-mu
 [P.A.] ġi₆-par₄-ra-ke₄ eš₃ gal-la hu-mu-un-tum₂-mu
 [nam]- 'lu₂¹-ulu₃ u₆ dug₃-ge-eš hu-mu-un-e
 [d]'utu¹ igi hul₂-la he₂-em-ši-bar-bar-re
- 65 [ud-bi]-a giri₁₇-zal an kug-ga nin kur-ra igi ġal₂
 in-nin₉ ^dama-ušumgal-an-na šim-zid-da-ni

B. REASON FOR AND ORIGIN OF THE CONFLICT: ENMERKAR'S PLEA AND INANA'S ANSWER

- In those days did the lord, whom Inana chose in her heart,
 Whom Inana from her shining mountain chose in her holy heart,
 Enmerkar, son of the Sun,
 Address a plea to his sister, the Lady who grants wishes;
 He addressed a loud plea to Holy Inana:
- "My sister, let Aratta for Unug
 "Artfully work gold and silver for my sake!
 "[Let them cut for my sake] polished lapis lazuli from its block;
 40 "[Let them *work* for my sake] the translucent smooth lapis lazuli;
 "[Let them] build [for my sake] the holy mountain in Unug!
 "A temple [descended] from heaven—your place of worship,
 "The shrine Eana—let [Aratta] build that!
 "The holy Gipar, your dwelling,
 45 "Let Aratta artfully adorn its inner chamber for my sake
 "So that I, the beaming youth, may embrace you therein!
 "Let Aratta submit to Unug!
 "Let the people of Aratta
 "Bring down for me the stones of their hills and mountains
 50 "And build for me the great shrine, erect for me the great abode!
 "For my sake, let them make illustrious the great abode, the abode of
 the gods!
 "Let thus my power¹⁴ become evident in Kulab;
 "Let the Abzu flourish like the holy mountain,
 "Let Eridug scintillate like the hill ranges,
 55 "For my sake, let them make shrine Abzu illustrious like silver in the
 lode!
 "When I then sing in praise from the Abzu,
 "When I then bring back the power from Eridug,
 "When I am then dressed with the crown of lordship like a *pure*
 shrine,
 "When I then don the holy crown of Unug-Kulab,
 60 "May then the [*mace-bearers*?]¹⁵ of the great shrine escort me to the
 Gipar,
 "And may the [*mace-bearers*?] of the Gipar escort me to the great shrine.
 "The people will applaud and admire me,
 "And the Sun will behold me with benevolence!"
 Thereupon the splendor in the sacred sky, the Lady who watches
 65 over the highland,
 The divine Lady who embellishes herself for Ama-ušumgalana,¹⁶

ḏinana nin kur-kur-ra-ke₄
en-me-er-kar₂ dumu ḏutu-ra gu₃ mu-na-de₂-e

70 en-me-er-kar₂ ḡa₂-nu na ga-e-ri na-ri-mu he₂-e-dab₃
inim ga-ra-ab-dug₄ ḡizzal he₂-ši-ak
kiḡ₂-gi₄-a inim zu zag-še tuku erin₂-ta u₃-ba-e-re-pad₃

inim gal ḏinana gal zu inim-ma-ke₄ me-a hu-mu-na-ab-tumu₃
hur-saḡ zubi-še₃ he₂-bi₂-in-ed₃-de₃
hur-saḡ zubi-ta he₂-em-ma-da-ra-ed₃-de₃
75 šušin^{kl}-e kur an-ša₄-an^{kl}-a-še₃
peš₂ tur-gin₇ kiri₃ šu hu-mu-na-ab-ḡal₂
hur-saḡ gal-gal ni₂-ba lu-a
sahar-ra hu-mu-na-da-gur₄-gur₄-e
aratta^{kl} unug^{kl}-še₃ gu₂ ḡiš <ha>-ma-ḡa₂-ḡa₂

80 nam-lu₂-ulu₃ aratta^{kl}-ke₄
na₄ hur-saḡ-ḡa₂ kur-bi um-ta-ab-ed₃
eš₃ gal ha-ra-du₃-e unu₂ gal ha-ra-ḡa₂-ḡa₂
unu₂ gal unu₂ diḡir-re-e-ne-ke₄ pa ed₂ ha-ra-ab-ak-e

85 me-zu kul-ab₄^{kl}-a si ha-ra-ni-ib₂-sa₂-e
abzu kur kug-gin₇ ha-ra-ab-mu₂-mu₂
eridug^{kl} hur-saḡ-gin₇ ha-ra-ab-sikil-e
eš₃ abzu kug ki-<in>-dar-ra-gin₇ pa ed₂ ha-ra-ab-ak-e

90 za-e abzu-ta zag-mi₂ dug₄-ga-zu-ne
eridug^{kl}-ta me de₆-a-[zu-ne]
nam-en men-na eš₃ bar-[gin₇ sig₇-gal]-zu-ne

unug^{kl}-e kul-ab₄^{kl}-a saḡ 'men' [kug ḡal₂-la]-zu-ne
PA.A eš₃ gal-la-ke₄ ḡi₆-par₄-ra hu-mu-e-tum₂-mu
[PA.A] ḡi₆-par₄-ra-ke₄ eš₃ gal-la hu-mu-e-tum₂-mu
[nam-lu₂-ulu₃] u₆ dug₃-ge-eš he₂-mu-e-e
95 ḏutu igi hul₂-la he₂-mu-e-ši-bar-bar-re

[nam]-lu₂-ulu₃ aratta^{kl}-ke₄
[X] NE ud šu₂-uš-ta um-[ta]-ab-il₂-ke₄-eš
[X] NE ud te-en-e um-ma-[teḡ₃]-e-ta
ki ḏdumu-zid-da u₈ maš₂ sila₄[?]-ni lu-a
100 a kalag-ga a-šaḡ₄ ḏdumu-zid-da-ka
udu kur-ra-gin₇ dug₃ ha-ra-ni-ib-ḡar
gaba kug-ḡa₂-a ud-gin₇ ed₂-i₃

Inana, mistress of all the lands,
Thus spoke to Enmerkar, son of the Sun:

"Come Enmerkar, I shall advise you—let my advice be heeded!—

"I shall speak a word—let it be heard!

"Having chosen among the troops a messenger, clever of speech and
hardy,

"Where and to whom shall he carry the grave word of word-wise Inana?

"He shall carry it up into the Zubi range;

"He shall carry it down from the Zubi range.

"Šušin and the land of Anšan

"Will salute her¹⁷ humbly, like small mice.

"In the great mountain ranges the teeming multitudes

"Will grovel in the dust before her.

"Aratta shall submit to Unug!

"When the people of Aratta

"Have brought down the stones of their hills and mountains

"And built for you the great shrine, erected for you the great abode,

"For your sake, let them make illustrious the great abode, the abode
of the gods!

"Let thus your power become evident in Kulab;

"Let the Abzu flourish for you like the holy mountain,

"Let Eridug scintillate for you like the hill ranges,

"For your sake, let them make shrine Abzu illustrious like silver in the
lode!

"When you then sing in praise from the Abzu,

"When you then bring back the power from Eridug,

"When you are then dressed with the crown of lordship like a *pure*
shrine,

"When you then don the holy crown of Unug-Kulab,

"May then the *mace-bearers*? of the great shrine escort you to the Gipar,

"And may the *mace-bearers*? of the Gipar escort you to the great shrine.

"The people will applaud and admire you,

"And the Sun will behold you with benevolence!"

"The people of Aratta

"Having carried [*their burdens*?] all day,

"[...] when the cool of the evening has come,

"At the place of Dumuzid, where teem the ewes and kids and lambs,

"Yea, in the Akalag meadows, those of Dumuzid,

"They will come flocking to you like so many mountain sheep!

"Now, rise like the Sun over my holy bosom,

zi-pa-ağ₂-ğ₂a₂ niğ₂-muš₃-bi he₂-me-en
za-ra en-me-er-kar₂ dumu dutu zag-mi₂

II. THE CONTEST

C. ENMERKAR'S FIRST CHALLENGE

- 105 en-e inim kug ^dinana-ka-še₃ sağ-KEŠ₂ ba-ši-in-ak
kiğ₂-gi₄-a inim zu zag-še [tuku erin₂-ta] ba-ra-an-pad₃
- inim gal ^dinana gal zu inim-ma-ke₄ me-a mu-na-ab-tum₃
hur-sağ zubi-ka he₂-bi₂-in-ed₃-de₃-en
hur-sağ zubi-ta he₂-em-ma-da-ra-an-ed₃-de₃-en
- 110 šušin^{ki}-e [kur] [an]-ša₄-an^{ki}-a-ke₄
peš₂ tur-gin₇ kiri₃ šu hu-mu-na-ab-ğal₂
hur-sağ gal-gal ni₂-ba lu-a
sahar-ra hu-mu-na-da-gur₄-gur₄-e
- kiğ₂-gi₄-a en aratta^{ki}-ra u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
115 iri-bi ir₇-sağ^{mušen}-gin₇ ġiš-bi-ta na-an-na-ra-ab-dal-en
- mušen-gin₇ gud₃ us₂-sa-bi-a nam-bi₂-ib-dal-en
ganba ġal₂-la-gin₇ na-an-si-ig-en
iri gul-gul-lu-gin₇ sahar nam-bi₂-ib-ha-za-en
aratta^{ki} a₂-dam ^den-ki-ke₄ nam ba-an-kud
- 120 'ki bi₂¹-in-gul-lā-gin₇ ki nam-ga-bi₂-ib-gul-en
eğir-bi ^dinana ba-ši-in-zig₃
gu₃ im-[mi-in-ra šeg₁₁ im]-mi-in-gi₄
kuš₇ bi₂-[in-su-a-gin₇] kuš₇ nam-ga-bi₂-ib-su-su
kug-sig₁₇ [u₃-tud-dal]-ba ^{kuš}LU.UB₂+LU.UB₂-šir a-ba-ni-in-ak
- 125 kug me-a sahar-ba zag u₃-ba-ni-in-us₂
kug sağ-PA-[še₃] u₃-mu-un-dim₂-dim₂
anše kur-kur-ra-ke₄ barag um-mi-in-la₂-la₂
ğ₂a₂-e-še₃-am₃ ^den-lil₂ ban₃-da ki-en-gi-ra-ke₄
en ^dnu-dim₂-mud šağ₄ kug-ge pad₃-da
- 130 kur me sikil-la-ke₄ ha-ma-du₃-e
ğiš^{taskarin}-gin₇ hi-li ha-ma-ab-ak-e
dutu e₂-nun-ta ed₂-a-gin₇ si-muš₂ ha-ma-ab-gun₃-gun₃
zag-du₈-zag-du₈-bi uri₃ ha-ma-mul-e
e₂-nun- e₂-nun-ba šir₃ kug nam-šub tuku-a-ba

"For you are the jewel on my chest!
"Praise to you, O Enmerkar, son of the Sun!"

II. THE CONTEST

C. ENMERKAR'S FIRST CHALLENGE

- The lord gave heed to the word of Inana; 105
He chose [among the troops] a messenger, clever of speech and hardy;
[Enmerkar spoke] to his messenger [...]: 106a
"Where and to whom shall you carry the grave word of word-wise Inana?
"You shall carry it up into the Zubi range;
"You shall carry it down from the Zubi range. 110
"Šušin and the land of Anšan
"Will salute her humbly, like small mice.
"In the great mountain ranges the teeming multitudes
"Will grovel in the dust before her.
- "Messenger, speak to the lord of Aratta, and say to him:
"Beware lest I make (the people of Aratta) flee from their city like a 115
dove from its tree,
"Lest I make them fly away like a bird from its permanent nest,
"Lest I put a price on them as on mere merchandise,
"Lest I make Aratta gather dust as does a devastated city,
"Lest, like as when Enki has cursed a settlement
"And utterly destroyed it, I too destroy Aratta, 120
"Lest like the sweeping devastation, in whose wake Inana rose
"Shrieking and yelling aloud,
"I too make a sweeping devastation there!
"Therefore,¹⁸ Aratta, having packed gold nuggets in leather sacks,
"And packed them tight with *gold dust*, 125
"And wrapped the precious metals in bales,
"And loaded mountain asses with the crates,
"Must build for me, the young Enlil of Sumer,
"Chosen by Nudimmud in his sacred heart,
"A mountain of lustrous powers! 130
"Let them make it sumptuous with boxwood!
"Let them make its horns shine like the Sun coming forth from its
chamber!
"Let them make its doorposts sparkle brightly!"
- "In its (Aratta's) chambers you must also chant to him this holy
song, this spell:

135 nam-šub 4nu-dim₂-mud-da-kam e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab
 ud-ba muš nu-ğal₂-am₃ ġiri₂ nu-ğal₂-am₃
 kir₄ nu-ğal₂-am₃ ur-mah nu-ğal₂-am₃
 ur-gir₁₅ ur-bar-ra nu-ğal₂-am₃
 ni₂ teğ₃-ğ₂a su zi-zi-i nu-ğal₂-am₃
 140 lu₂-ulu₃^{lu} gaba šu ġar nu-tuku
 ud-ba kur šubur^{ki} ha-ma-zi^{ki}
 eme ha-mun ki-en-gi kur gal me nam-nun-na-ka

ki-uri kur me-te ġal₂-la
 kur mar-tu u₂-sal-la nu₂-a
 145 an-ki niġin₂-na un saġ sig₁₀-ga
 4en-lil₂-ra eme 1-am₃ he₂-en-na-da-ab-dug₄
 ud-ba a-da en a-da nun a-da lugal-la

4en-ki a-da en a-da nun a-da lugal-la
 a-da en-e a-da nun-e a-da lugal-la
 150 4en-ki en he₂-ğal₂-la en dug₄-ga zid-da
 en ġeštug₂-ga igi ġal₂ kalam-ma-ke₄
 mas-su diġir-re-e-ne-ke₄
 ġeštug₂-ge pad₃-da en eridug^{ki}-ga-ke₄
 ka-ba eme i₃-kur₂ en-na mi-ni-in-ğar-ra
 155 eme nam-lu₂-ulu₃ 1 i₃-me-[am₂]

D. FIRST VOYAGE: UNUG TO ARATTA

2-kam-ma-še₃ en-e kiğ₂-gi₄-a kur-še₃ du-ur₂
 aratta^{ki}-aš inim mu-na-ab-tah-e
 kiğ₂-gi₄-a gi₆-u₃-na-ka im 1-gin₇ šeg₃-ğ₂a
 an-bar₇-gan₂-ka im-du₈-gin₇ zig₃-ga
 160 kiğ₂-gi₄-a inim lugal-la-na-ke₄ saġ-KEŠ₂ ba-ši-in-ak
 gi₆-u₃-na-ka mul-am₃ im-ġin
 an-bar₇-gan₂-ka 4utu an-na-ta mu-un-de₃-ġin
 inim gal 4inana gi zu₂-lum-ma DU me-a mu-na-ab-tumu₃

hur-saġ zubi-še₃ bi₂-in-ed₃-de₃
 165 hur-saġ zubi-ta im-ma-da-ra-ab-ed₃-de₃
 šušin^{ki}-e kur an-ša₄-an^{ki}-a-še₃
 peš₂ tur-¹gin₇ kiri₃ šu mu-na-ab-ğal₂
 hur-saġ gal-gal ni₂-ba lu-a
 sahar-ra mu-na-da-gur₄-gur₄

170 hur-saġ 5 hur-saġ 6 hur-saġ 7-e im-me-re-bal-bal

"It is the spell of Nudimmud!¹⁹ 135
 "One day there will be no snake, no scorpion,
 "There will be no hyena, nor lion,
 "There will be neither (wild) dog nor wolf,
 "And thus there will be neither fear nor trembling,
 "For man will then have no enemy. 140
 "On that day the lands of Šubur and Hamazi,
 "As well as twin-tongued Sumer—great mound of the power of lord-
 ship—
 "Together with Akkad—the mound that has all that is befitting—
 "And even the land Martu, resting in green pastures,
 "Yea, the whole world of well-ruled people,²⁰ 145
 "Will be able to speak to Enlil in one language!
 "For on that day, for the debates²¹ between lords and princes and
 kings
 "Shall Enki, for the debates between lords and princes and kings,
 "For the debates between lords and princes and kings,
 "Shall Enki, Lord of abundance, Lord of steadfast decisions, 150
 "Lord of wisdom and knowledge in the Land,
 "Expert of the gods,
 "Chosen for wisdom, Lord of Eridug,
 "Change the tongues in their mouth, as many as he once placed there,
 "And the speech of mankind shall be truly one!" 155

D. FIRST VOYAGE: UNUG TO ARATTA

Furthermore, the lord gave these instructions to the messenger
 Who was to go to the highlands, to Aratta:
 "Messenger, at night, run swiftly as the south wind;
 "At daybreak, rise like the dew!"

The messenger heeded the words of his king. 160
 At night he journeyed by starlight;
 By day he traveled with the sun in the sky.
 Whither and to whom should he carry the grave word of word-wise
 Inana?
 He carried it up into the Zubi range;
 He carried it down from the Zubi range. 165
 Šušin and the land of Anšan
 Saluted her humbly, like small mice.
 In the great mountain ranges the teeming multitudes
 Groveled in the dust before her.
 Five, six, seven mountain ranges he crossed,²² 170

[igi mu-un]- 'il₂' aratta^{ki}-aš ba-teğ₃
 [kisal] 'aratta^{ki}-ka ġiri₃ hul₂-la mi-ni-in-gub
 nam-nir-ğal₂ lugal-a-na mu-un-zu
 bur₂-ra-bi inim šag₄-ga-na bi₂-ib₂-be₂

E. DELIVERING THE FIRST CHALLENGE

175 kiğ₂-gi₄-a en aratta^{ki}-ra mu-na-ab-bal-e
 a-a-zu lugal-mu mu-e-ši-in-gi₄-in-nam
 en unug^{ki}-ga en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ke₄ mu-e-ši-in-gi₄-nam

Lord of Aratta

lugal-za dug₄-ga-ni nam-mu tah-a-ni nam-mu

Messenger

180 lugal-mu a-na bi₂-in-dug₄ a-na bi₂-in-tah-am₃
 lugal-mu u₃-tud-da-ni-ta nam-en-na tum₂-ma
 en unug^{ki}-ga muš sağ-kal ki-en-gi-ra til₃-la kur zid₂-gin₇ ma₅-ma₅

tarah-maš kur bad₃-da a₂ nun ġal₂
 šilam-za maš nağa kug-ga umbin sud₂-sud₂-e
 ab₂ zid-da kur šag₄-ga tud-da
 185 en-me-er-kar₂ dumu ^dutu-ke₄ mu-e-ši-in-gi₄-nam
 lugal-mu na-ab-be₂-a

iri-ni ir₇-sağ^{mušen}-gin₇ ġiš-bi-ta na-na²-¹ra-ab¹-dag-e

mušen-gin₇ gud₃ us₂-sa-bi-a nam-bi₂-ib₂-hu-luh-e
 ganba ġal₂-la-gin₇ na-an-si-ge-en
 190 iri gul-gul-la-gin₇ sahar na-an-bi₂-[ib-ha-zal]-en
 aratta^{ki} a₂-dam ^den-ki-ke₄ nam ba-an-kud
 ki bi₂-in-gul-la-gin₇ ki nam-ga-bi₂-ib-gul-en
 eğir-bi ^dinana ba-ši-in-zig₃
 gu₃ im-mi-in-ra šeg₁₁ im-mi-in-gi₄
 195 kuš₇ bi₂-in-su-a-gin₇ kuš₇ na-an-ga-bi₂-ib-su-su-un
 kug-sig₁₇ u₃-tud-da-ba ^{kuš}LU.UB+LU.UB₂-šir a-ba-ni-in-ak
 kug me-a sahar-ba zag u₃-ba-ni-in- us₂
 kug sağ-PA-še₃ u₃-mu-un-dim₂-dim₂
 anše kur-kur-ra-ke₄ barag um-mi-in-la₂-la₂
 200 ġa₂-e-še₃-am₃ ^den-lil₂ ban₃-da ki-en-gi-ra-ke₄
 en ^dnu-dim₂-mud-e šag₄ kug-ge pad₃-da
 kur me sikil-la-ke₄ ha-ma-du₃-e
 ġiš^{taskarin}-gin₇ hi-li ha-ma-ab-ak
^dutu e₂-nun-ta ed₂-a-gin₇ si-muš₂ ha-ma-ab-gun₃-gun₃

And when he lifted his eyes, he had arrived in Aratta.
 Overjoyed he stepped into the courtyard of Aratta
 And proclaimed the glory of his king.
 Openly he spoke the words (that he had remembered) in his heart.²³

E. DELIVERING THE FIRST CHALLENGE

The messenger spoke thus to the lord of Aratta: 175
 "Your father, my king, has sent me to you;
 "The lord of Unug and Kulab has sent me to you!"

Lord of Aratta

"What is it to me what your king spoke, what he said?"

Messenger

"This is what my king spoke, what he said:
 "My king was destined for overlordship since his birth; 180
 "He is lord of Unug, the sağkal-snake living in Sumer yet grinding
 the highland to flour;
 "He is the stag of the highlands, with great antlers;
 "He is the buffalo, the deer trampling with its hooves the holy soapwort;
 "He is the one the true cow bore in the heart of the highlands.
 "He is Enmerkar, son of the Sun, and has sent me to you. 185
 "This is what my king has spoken:

"Beware lest I make (the people/Aratta) flee from their city like
 a dove from its tree,

"Lest I make them fly away like a bird from its permanent nest,
 "Lest I put a price on them as on mere merchandise,
 "Lest I make Aratta gather dust as does a devastated city, 190
 "Lest, like when Enki has cursed a settlement
 "And utterly destroyed it, I too destroy Aratta,
 "Lest like the sweeping devastation, in whose wake Inana rose
 "Shrieking and yelling aloud,
 "I too make a sweeping devastation there! 195
 "Therefore, Aratta, having packed gold nuggets in leather sacks,
 "And packed them tight with *gold dust*,
 "And wrapped the precious metals in bales,
 "And loaded mountain asses with the crates,
 "Must build for me, the young Enlil of Sumer, 200
 "Chosen by Nudimmud in his sacred heart,
 "A mountain of lustrous powers!
 "Let them make it sumptuous with boxwood!
 "Let them make its horns shine like the Sun coming forth from its
 chamber!

205 zag-du₈-zag-du₈-ba uri₃ ha-ma-mul-e
e₂-nun-e₂-nun-ba šir₃ kug nam-šub tuku-a-ba
[nam-šub] ^dnu-dim₂-mud-ke₄ ġa₂-ra dug₄-^rmu¹-[na-ab]

a-na ma-ab-be₂-en-na-bi u₃-mu-[e-dug₄]
a ru-a su₆ ^{na}4za-gin₃ [KEŠ₂]-da-[ar]
210 ab₂ kal-la-ga-ni kur me sikil-la-ka [tud-da-ar]
sahar aratta^{ki}-ka a₂ ed₂-[a-ar]
ubur ab₂ zid-da ga gu₇-[a-ar]
kul-ab₄^{ki} kur me gal-gal-la-ka nam-nun-na tum₂-ma
en-me-er-kar₂ dumu ^dutu-ra
215 inim-bi eš₃ e₂-an-na-ka inim dug₃ ga-na-ab-dug₄
ġi₆-par₄ ^šis mes gibil-gin₇ gurun il₂-la-na
lugal-mu en kul-ab₄^{ki}-ra šu-a ga-mu-na-ab-gi₄

F. ARATTA'S REPLY; FIRST COUNTERCHALLENGE

ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-ka
kiġ₂-gi₄-a lugal-zu en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ra u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
220 ġa₂-e-me-en en šu sikil-la tum₂-ma
^šisrab mah an-na nin an-ki-ke₄

in-nin₉ me šar₂-ra kug ^dinana-ke₄
aratta^{ki} kur me sikil-la-še₃ hu-mu-un-de₆-en
kur-ra ^šisig gal-gin₇ igi-ba bi₂-in-tab-en
225 aratta^{ki} unug^{ki}-še₃ gu₂ a-gin₇ i₃-ġa₂-ġa₂
aratta^{ki} unug^{ki} še₃ gu₂ ġa₂-ġa₂ nu-ġal₂ e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab

ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-ka
kiġ₂-gi₄-a en aratta^{ki}-ra mu-na-ni-ib-gi₄-gi₄
nin gal an-na me huš-a u₅-a
230 hur-saġ kur šuba-ka dur₂ ġar-ra
barag kur šuba-ka še-er-ka-an dug₄-ga
en lugal-mu šubur-a-ni-im
diġir nin e₂-an-na-ka mu-un-di-ni-ib-kur₉-re-eš
en aratta^{ki} gu₂ ki-še₃ ba-ni-in-ġal₂
235 sig₄ kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ka ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂

ud-bi-a en-e šag₄ mu-un-sig₃ zi mu-un-ir-ir
gaba-ri nu-mu-da-ġal₂ gaba-ri i₃-kin-kin
ġiri₃ ni₂-te-a-na-ka igi lib-ba bi₂-in-du₈-ru gaba-ri i₃-pad₃-de₃
gaba-ri in-pad₃ gu₃ im-ta-an-ed₂
240 kiġ₂-gi₄-a inim-ma gaba-ri-bi

"Let them make its doorposts sparkle brightly!" 205
"In its chambers, the holy song, the spell,
"Chant to him for me the spell of Nudimmud!"²⁴

"Now, when you will have replied to me whatever you want,
"To the scion of the one with the gleaming beard,
"To him whom his mighty cow bore on the hill of the lustrous power, 210
"To him who grew up on the soil of Aratta,²⁵
"To him who was suckled by the teat of the true cow,
"To him, suited for office in Kulab, mountain of the great powers,
"To Enmerkar, son of the Sun,
"I will speak that word as glad tidings in the shrine Eana. 215
"In his Gipar, bearing fruit like a young MES-tree,
"I shall repeat it to my king, the lord of Kulab."

F. ARATTA'S REPLY; FIRST COUNTERCHALLENGE

When he had spoken in this vein <the lord of Aratta replied:>
"Messenger, address your king, the lord of Kulab, and say to him:
"It is I, being the lord proper for the lustrations, 220
"I, whom the great neck-stock of heaven, the Queen of Heaven and
Earth,
"The goddess of the myriad powers, Holy Inana
"Brought to Aratta, the mountain of the inviolate powers;
"I whom she made block the entrance to the highlands as a great door!
"Why then should Aratta submit to Unug? 225
"There can be no submission of Aratta to Unug! Tell him that!"²⁶

When he had spoken in this vein
The messenger replied to the lord of Aratta:
"This great Queen of Heaven who drives the fearsome powers,
"Who dwells on the peaks of the bright mountains, 230
"Who thus embellishes the bright mountain dais²⁷—
"It was my lord and king, her servant,
"Who had her installed as the divine Queen of the Eana!
"O lord, Aratta shall bow in deep submission!"
"This she has promised in brick-built Kulab!" 235

Thereupon the lord's mood became dark and troubled.
He had no rejoinder; he kept searching for a rejoinder,
Staring at his feet with sad eyes, seeking a rejoinder.
Finally he found a rejoinder and cried out.
The rejoinder to the message 240

- gud-gin₇ gu₃-nun mu-un-di-ni-ib-be₂
 kiğ₂-'gi₄-a' lugal-zu en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ra u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
 hur-sağ gal ǵišmes an-da mu₂-a
 ur₂-bi-še₃ sa-par₄-am₃ pa-bi ǵiš-bur₂-am₃
 245 buru₅ umbin-bi anzud^{mušen} hu-ri₂-in^{mušen}-na
 KEŠ₂-da [d]inana-'ka' šar₂ dug₄-ge gilim-ma
 umbin hu-ri₂-in^{mušen}-bi u₃-mun kur₂-ra kur šuba-da ed₃-da
 aratta^{ki} er₂ [še₈-še₈ ...]
 a bal-bal-am₃ zid₂ dub-dub-ba-am₃
 250 kur-ra siskur a-ra-zu-a kiri₃ šu ǵal₂-la-am₃
 lu₂ 5 nu-me-a lu₂ 10 nu-me-a
 unug^{ki} zig₃-ga hur-sağ zubi-še₃ sağ a-gin₇ i₃-ǵa₂-ǵa₂
 lugal-zu ǵištukul-ǵa₂ sağ ha-ba-an-šum₂
 ǵa₂-e a-da-min₃-na sağ 'ga-ba'-an-šum₂
 255 a-da-min₃ nu-um-zu teš₂ [nu]-'um'-gu₇
 gud-de₃ 'gud' a₂-ǵal₂-bi [nu-um]-zu
 [a-da]-'min₃' um-zu teš₂ um-[gu₇]
 [gud]-'de₃' gud a₂-ǵal₂-bi um-'zu'
 [e]-'ne' a-da-min₃ mi-ni-in-tak₄-tak₄-an
 260 [...]-'gin₇' niğ₂ lu₂ nu-sig₁₀-ge
 [e]-ne in-ga-mu-ni-in-tak₄-tak₄-an
- [2-kam]-ma-še₃ kiğ₂-gi₄-a inim mu-ra-be₂-en
 [...] de₂-a ša-ra-ab-galam-e-en DU-a he₂-mu-e-ši-dib
 [e₂]-an-na piriğ šu-ba nu₂-a
 265 šağ₄-bi-ta gud gu₃ nun di-dam
 ǵi₆-par₄ ǵišmes gibil-gin₇ gurun il₂-la-na
 lugal-zu en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ra šu-a gi₄-mu-na-ab
 hur-sağ ur-sağ sukud si-ga-am₃
 an-usan-na ^dutu e₂-bi-še₃ du-gin₇
 270 igi-bi-ta uš₂ la₂-la₂-e-gin₇
^dnanna si-un₃-na mah-a-gin₇
 sağ-ki-bi me-lam₂ ǵal₂-la-gin₇
 ǵiš-gin₇ kur-kur-ra gilim-ba-gin₇
 sağ muš₃ aratta^{ki}-ke₄
 275 ^dlama sağ₉-ga kur me sikil-la-še₃
 ud-da aratta^{ki} aga kug an-na-gin₇ si mu-na-an-sa₂
 ǵa₂-e ud-ba nam-mah-mu ga-an-zu
 še barag-ga nam-mu-un-si-si-ig-ge mar-e nam-me-e
 še-bi kur-kur-ra nam-il₂-e
 280 erin₂-na mu-un-kud nam-mu-un-ǵa₂-ǵa₂
 še sa-al-kad₅-e u₃-mu-ni-in-si-si
 anše barag la₂-e um-mi-in-la₂

- He bellowed it loudly like a bull to the messenger:
 "Messenger, to your king, lord of Kulab, speak and say:
 "This great mountain range is a MES-tree grown high into the skies;
 "Its roots are a net, its branches a snare;
 "It is a bird whose talons are like those of the Anzud-eagle! 245
 "This barrier of Inana is perfectly impenetrable;
 "Its eagle talons make the bright mountains run with enemy blood.
 "In Aratta there may be weeping [*and hunger* ...],
 "But water is being poured, flour is being sprinkled;²⁸
 "In the highlands sacrifices and prayers are reverently offered. 250
 "With only five or ten men,²⁹
 "How could the levy of Unug march against the Zubi mountain?
 "Your king may be eager to confront me with arms,
 "But I am eager for another kind of contest.
 "He who does not understand this contest *shall not prevail*,³⁰ 255
 "Just like a bull that does not know the strength of the other bull;
 "But he who understands this contest *shall prevail*,
 "Just like a bull that perceives the strength of the other bull.
 "Dare he refuse this contest
 "Like [...], something no one can match? 260
 "Dare he refuse this contest?"
- "Another thing I will tell you, O messenger;
 "[I will] *spell it out* in careful terms ... so that you can grasp it.³¹
 "In the Eana, to the lion crouching there on its paws,
 "To the bull bellowing there, 265
 "In his Gipar, bearing fruit like a young MES-tree,
 "To your king, the lord of Kulab, repeat this:
 "This mountain range is a warrior, tall and fierce:
 "Like Utu wending his way home in the evening,
 "It is as if blood is dripping from his face. 270
 "Like Nanna, majestic in the high heaven,
 "It is as if his brow carries a terrible sheen!³²
 "It is like an impenetrable wood in the mountains.
 "Since she of the *crown* of Aratta,³³
 "The benevolent guardian of the mountain of the inviolate powers, 275
 "Will warrant Aratta the holy crown of heaven,
 "I shall surely proclaim my preeminence!
 "Now, he may not pour grain into bags, nor into carts;
 "He may not have that grain portaged over the mountains;
 "He may not *have it collected by work parties*.³⁴ 280
 "If he were able to pour grain into nets
 "And load these nets on pack-asses

- anše bala-e da-bi-a a-ba-an-sig₁₀
 tukum-bi kisal aratta^{ki}-ka gur₇-še₃ mu-dub-be₂
 285 i₃-ge-en am₃-dub-be₂ gur₇-a hi-li-bi
- kur-kur-ra izi ġar-ra-bi a₂-dam me-te-bi
 bad₃ 7-e še-er-ka-an dug₄-ga
 nin ur-saġ me₃-a tum₂-ma
 dⁱⁿana ur-saġ me₃ sahar-ra-ke₄ saġ ešemen dⁱⁿana di-dam
- 290 i₃-ge-en aratta^{ki} ur adda sar-gin₇ šu-ta im-ta-ri
 ġa₂-e ud-ba ša-ba-na-gam-e-de₃-en
 e-ne nam-mah-a-ni ši-im-ma-an-zu-zu-un
 iri-gin₇ nam-tur-ġa₂ gu₂ ši-im-ma-ġa₂-ġa₂-an e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab

G. SECOND VOYAGE: ARATTA TO UNUG

- ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-ka
 295 kiġ₂-gi₄-a en aratta^{ki}-ke₄
 ka-ni-gin₇ inim ka-na ba-an-sig₁₀
 sun₂-gin₇ haš₂-a-na mu-un-gur
 nim sahar-ra-gin₇ tir ud zal-le-na mu-un-ġin

H. SOLUTION AND SECOND CHALLENGE

- sig₄ kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ka ġiri₃ hul₂-la mu-ni-in-gub
 300 kisal mah-e kisal gu₂-en-na-ka kiġ₂-gi₄-a i-ib₂-bur₂

- lugal-a-ni-ir en kul-aba₄^{ki}-[ra]
 ka-ni-gin₇ šu mu-na-an-gi₄
 gud-gin₇ gu₃ mu-na-an-sig₁₀
 gud ri-ri-gin₇ ġeštug₂ mu-na-an-[ġa₂-ġa₂]
 305 lugal-e zag zid-da-ni NE im-mi-in-^{tuš}
 zag gub₃-bu-ni im-ma-ni-in-gi₄
 i₃-ge-en aratta^{ki} ġalga šum₂-ma im-ma-zu im-me

- ud im-zal d^{utu} im-ta-ed₂-a-ra
 d^{utu} kalam-ma-ka saġ bi₂-ib-il₂
 310 lugal-e id²idigna id²buranun-bi-da im-ma-da-an-tab
 id²buranun-na id²idigna-da im-ma-da-an-tab
 bur gal-gal an-ne₂ ba-su₈-su₈-ug
 bur tur-tur sila₄ u₂-šim dur₂-gin₇ zag-bi-a im-ma-an-us₂

- “With remounts at their side,
 “And if he were able to pile it up in the courtyard of Aratta—
 “Truly, if he were able to pile it up in this manner, then the joy of 285
 the grain-pile,
 “The torch of the mountains, the emblem of the settlements,
 “The ornament of the seven walls,
 “The heroic mistress fit for battle,
 “Inana, the heroine of the battleground who makes the troop dance
 her dance,³⁵
 “Will then truly have cast out Aratta as a carrion-eating dog! 290
 “Only then shall I kneel before him,
 “Since only then will he have proven his preeminence,
 “And, like the city, only then shall I concede my inferiority! Tell him
 that!”

G. SECOND VOYAGE: ARATTA TO UNUG

- When he had spoken to him in this vein,
 The lord of Aratta made the messenger 295
 Repeat the message as he himself had spoken it.³⁶
 The messenger turned, as the wild cow does on its haunches;
 Like the sandfly he sped forward in the cool of the morning.

H. SOLUTION AND SECOND CHALLENGE

- Joyfully he stepped into Kulab, the Brickwork.
 The messenger sped to the great courtyard, the courtyard of the 300
 throne-room.
 To his king, the lord of Kulab,
 He repeated (the message) *word for word*.
 He bellowed like a bull,
 And Enmerkar listened to him like the ox-driver.
 The king bade him sit at his right side ... 305
 And turned his left side to him.
 “Does Aratta truly understand this proposal it made?” he said.

- When day broke, to the rising Sun,
 The Sun of the Land³⁷ raised his head.
 The king joined Tigris with Euphrates 310
 And Euphrates with Tigris.³⁸
 Large jars were put out in the open,
 And small vases were placed against their sides, like lambs lying in
 the grass;

- bur i-gi₈ an-na da-bi-a ba-su₈-ug
 315 lugal-e eš-da kug-sig₁₇-ga-ke₄
 en-me-er-kar₂ dumu^dutu-ke₄ dug₃ mu-un-ba₉-ba₉-re₇
 ud-bi-a dub i-gi₈ IM me-a gi-gag unkin-na
- alan kug-sig₁₇-ga ud dug₃-ga tud-da
^dnanibgal sig₇-ga KAXLI sikil mu₂'-da
 320 ^dnisaba nin ġeštug₂ daġal-la-ke₄
 e₂ ĞEŠTUG₂.^dNISABA kug-ga-ni ġal₂ mu-na-an-tak₄
 e₂-gal an-na-ka kur₉-ra-ni ġeštug₂ mu-un-ġa₂-ġa₂
 en-e e₂-nun mah-a-ni ġal₂ ba-an-tak₄
 š^{li}li₂-id-ga mah-a-ni ki 'ba'-[an]-us₂
 325 lugal-e še-ta še libir-ra-ni šu ba-ra-an-'bal'
 munu₄ ki-šar₂-ra a ba-ni-in-[sil]
 nundum-bi u²hirin^{hu-ri2-in} AN [X]-su₃-ge
 sa-al-kad₅-e igi im-mi-in-tur-tur
 še gur₇ ka i-ni-in-si zu₂ buru₃^{mušen}-e bi₂-in-tah
- 330 anše barag la₂-e um-mi-in-la₂
 anše bala-e da-bi-a ba-an-sig₁₀
 lugal en ġeštug₂ daġal-la-ke₄
 en unug^{ki}-ga en kul-ab₄^{ki}-ke₄
 har-ra-an aratta^{ki}-ke₄ si bi₂-in-sa₂
 335 nam-lu₂-ulu₃ kiš₆ ki-in-dar-ra-gin₇
 aratta^{ki}-aš ni₂-ba mu-un-sub₂-be₂-eš
- en-e kiġ₂-gi₄-a kur-še₃ du-ur₂
 aratta^{ki}-aš inim mu-na-ab-tah-e
 kiġ₂-gi₄-a en aratta^{ki}-ra u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
 340 ġidru-ġa₂ ur₂-bi me nam-nun-na-ka
 pa-bi kul-ab₄^{ki}-a an-dul₃-eš i₃-ak
 pa mul-mul-la-bi eš₃ e₂-an-na-ke₄
 kug^dinana-ke₄ ni₂ im-ši-ib-te-en-te
 ġidru um-ta-an-kid₇ hu-mu-un-da-ġal₂
 345 na⁴gug ġiš dili na⁴za-gin₃ ġiš dili-gin₇ šu-ni-a hu-mu-un-ġal₂
- en aratta^{ki}-ke₄ igi-mu-še₃ hu-mu-un-tum₂ e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab

I. THIRD VOYAGE: UNUG TO ARATTA

ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-ka
 kiġ₂-gi₄-a aratta^{ki}-aš du-ni
 sahar kaskal-la ġiri₃-ni mu-un-si

- Shining* jars were stood in the open next to them.
 The king himself placed the golden eš da-vessels; 315
 Enmerkar himself, the son of the Sun, placed them wide apart.
 Thereupon the *shining* tablet of clay, the sharpened reed of the
 assembly,³⁹
 The golden statue fashioned on a blissful day,
 Fair Nanibgal, grown up to lustrous luxuriance,
 Nisaba, the Lady of broad understanding,⁴⁰ 320
 Opened for him her holy house of wisdom.
 Entering the heavenly palace, he paid attention;
 The lord opened up his lofty storehouse
 And fixed his lid ga-measure in the earth.
 The king separated the old grain from the (other) grain; 325
 Greenmalt he soaked all through;
 Its *sprouts* ... grew long like the *hirin*-plant,
 And so he reduced the meshes of the nets.
 He filled the nets with grain for the piles, and added some for the
 locust's tooth;
 He loaded it on pack-asses, 330
 And placed remounts at their side.
 The king, the lord of broad understanding,
 The lord of Unug, the lord of Kulab,
 Set them on the road to Aratta.
 The people, (numerous) like ants from their crevices, 335
 He made go to Aratta by themselves.

To the messenger who was to go to the highlands,
 To Aratta, the lord added these instructions:
 "Messenger, speak to the lord of Aratta and say:
 "My scepter's base is the power of overlordship; 340
 "Its crown provides a protective shadow for Kulab;
 "Under its starlike branches in the shrine Eana
 "Holy Inana finds her cool refreshment.
 "If he *can cut a scepter from it*, let him hold it in his hand;⁴¹
 "Let him hold it in his hand like a string of carnelian and lapis lazuli 345
 beads;
 "Let the lord of Aratta bring that to me! Tell him that!"

I. THIRD VOYAGE: UNUG TO ARATTA

After Enmerkar had spoken to him in this vein,
 The messenger, on his way to Aratta,
 Plunged his feet in the dust of the road.

350 na₄ tur-tur hur-saĝ-ĝa₂-ke₄ suh₃-sah₄ mu-un-da-ab-za
ušumgal edin-na-ba kiĝ₂-ĝa₂-gin₇ gaba-ri nu-mu-ni-in-tuku

J. DELIVERING THE SECOND CHALLENGE

kiĝ₂-gi₄-a aratta^{ki}-aš um-ma-teĝ₃-a-ra
nam-lu₂-ulu₃ aratta^{ki}-ke₄
anše barag la₂-e u₆ di-de₃ im-ma-su₈-su₈-ge-eš
355 kiĝ₂-gi₄-a kisal aratta^{ki}-ka
še gur₇ ka bi₂-in-si zu₂ buru₃-mušen-e bi₂-in-tah

šeg_x (IM.A) an-na ud ĝal₂-la-gin₇
aratta^{ki} he₂-ĝal₂-la i₃-du₃
diĝir dur₂-bi-a ba-da-ab-gi₄-a-^{gin}₇
360 aratta^{ki} ša₃-ĝar-ra-ni am₃-la₂-[la₂]
nam-lu₂-ulu₃ aratta^{ki}-[ke₄]
munu₄ a si-ga-na a-šag₄ mu-ni-[ib-X]
^{egir} 'ba ra₂-gaba ša₃-tam [...]
[X] ki a tak₄-ba [...]

365 X [X] X [...]
dumu-[dumu] aratta^{ki} 'ĝeštug₂' [...]
aratta^{ki}-aš inim mu-un-bur₂
ur₅-da aratta^{ki}-a šu-'ta' [...]

370 en unug^{ki}-ga-ra šu-ni i-im-[-...]

Citizens of Aratta?

mé-en-de₃ su₃-ga lul-la-'bi'-[še₃]
en kul-ab^{ki}₄-a-ra na⁴gug 'lul'-[la-me-a] ga-mu-na-dur₂-ru-ne-en-de₃-en
ab-ba-ab-ba inim zu-ne
šu teš₂-a bi₂-ib-ri-'eš' zag e₂-gar₈-e bi₂-ib-us₂-[eš]
375 en-ra e₂-sikal-bi hu-mu-un-ĝa₂-ĝa₂-[e-ne]

[(X) X] 'kin' ĝidru -ni DU.DU šag₄ e₂-^{gal}-[la ...]
[bur₂-ra-bi inim šag₄-ga]-na bi₂-[ib-be₂]
[a-a-zu lugal- mu] mu-e-ši-'in'-[gi₄-in-nam]
[en-me-er]-'kar₂' dumu 'utu-[ke₄] mu-e-ši-in-gi₄-in-nam

Lord of Aratta

380 lugal-zu dug₄-ga-ni nam-mu tah-[a]-ni [nam]-mu

Messenger

lugal- mu a-na 'bi₂-in'-dug₄ a-na [bi₂-in-tah]-'am₃
ĝidru-ĝa₂ ur₂-bi me 'nam'-nun-'na-ka'
pa-bi kul-ab^{ki}₄-a 'an-dul₃-eš i₃-ak
pa mul-mul-[la-bi] eš₃ e₂-an-na-'ke₄
385 kug 'inana-ke₄ ni₂ im-ši-ib-te-en-te

He made the pebbles rattle down the hills;
As if he were a dragon prowling the desert, there was no stopping him. 350

J. DELIVERING THE SECOND CHALLENGE

When the messenger had reached Aratta,
The people of Aratta
Came running to wonder at the pack-asses.
In the courtyard of Aratta 355
The messenger piled up the heaps of wheat, adding some for the
tooth of the locust.

As if caused by rain and sun from heaven,⁴²
Aratta was now full of wealth.
As gods returning to their dwellings⁴³
Aratta's hunger was stilled. 360

The people of Aratta
[Covered] the fields with his water-soaked greenmalt.
After that, couriers and merchants [...]
[...] ... [...]
... [...]

The citizens of Aratta *paid attention* [...]
He revealed the matter to Aratta.
Thus, in Aratta, from his hand [...]
To the lord of Unug⁴⁴ he [...] his hand. 370

Citizens of Aratta?

"As for us, in our sharpest hunger,
In our dire famine, let us prostrate ourselves to the lord of Kulab!"
The word-wise elders
Were wringing their hands, leaning against the wall.
To the lord they proffered their *treasure chests*.⁴⁵ 375

[...] ... his scepter ... in the midst of the palace [...]
[Openly] he spoke [the words he had learnt by heart]:
"Your father, my king, sent me to you;
"Enmerkar, son of the Sun, sent me to you!"

Lord of Aratta

"What is it to me what your king spoke, what he said?" 380

Messenger

"This is what my king spoke, what he said:
"My scepter's base is the power of overlordship;
"Its crown provides a protective shadow for Kulab;
"Under its starlike branches in the shrine Eana
"Holy Inana finds her cool refreshment. 385

gidru um-ta-an-kid₇ hu-mu-'un-da¹-gal₂
 na⁴gug ġiš dili na⁴za-gin₃ ġiš dili-gin₇ šu-ni-a hu-mu-un-ġal₂
 en aratta^{ki}-ke₄ igi-mu-še₃ hu-mu-un-tum₂ ġa₂-a-ra ha-ma-an- dug₄

K. ARATTA'S REPLY: SECOND COUNTERCHALLENGE

ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-ka
 390 nam-bi-še₃ itima¹-a KA ba-an-kur₉ šag₄ ka-tab-ba ba-an-nu₂

ud im-zal inim im-šar₂-šar₂
 inim ka-še₃ nu-ġar-ra im-me
 inim-ma še anše gu₇-a-gin₇ ġir₃ mi-ni-ib-niġin-e
 i₃-ne-še₃ lu₂ lu₂-u₃-ra a-na na-an-dug₄
 395 lu₂ lu₂-ra AŠ a-na na-an-tah
 lu₂ lu₂-ra in-na-ab-be₂-a ur₅ he₂-en-na-nam-ma-am₃

kiġ₂-gi₄-a lugal-zu en kul-ab₄^{ki}-ra [u₃]-na-a-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
 gidru ġiš nam-me mu ġiš na-an-še₂₁-še₂₁
 X [X] šu -na um-ma-ni-in-ġar igi um-ši-bar-bar
 400 ġišildag₂ nam-me ġišim-gig nam-me
 ġišerin nam-me ġišu-ur₂-me nam-me
 ġišha-šu-ur₂ [nam-me ġišnimbar] 'nam¹-me
 ġišesi nam-me [ġišza-ba-lum nam-me]
 ġišasal-lam ġišgigir-ra nam-me
 405 ġiškid-da ġiškuš-usan₃-na nam-me
 kug-sig₁₇ nam-me urud nam-me
 kug me-a zid kug-babbar nam-me
 na⁴gug nam-me na⁴za-gin₃ nam-me
 gidru um-ta-an-kid₇ hu-mu-un-da-ġal₂
 410 na⁴gug ġiš dili na⁴za-gin₃ ġiš dili-gin₇ šu-ni-a hu-mu-un-ġal₂
 en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ke₄ igi-mu še₃ hu-mu-un-tum₂ e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab

L. FOURTH VOYAGE: ARATTA TO UNUG

ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-ka
 kiġ₂-gi₄-a dur₂^{ur3} si gigir ku₅-ra₂-gin₇ ka si-il-la mu-un-ġin
 anše edin-na par₂-rim₄-ma kaš₄ di-gin₇ kušu i₃-tag-tag-ge
 415 ka-ni im-a bi₂-ib-zi-zi-zi
 udu suluhu udu 'šur₂¹-ba du₇-du₇-gin₇ dug₃ us₂ 1 mu-un-dab₃

"If he *can cut a scepter from it*, let him hold it in his hand;⁴⁶
 "Let him hold it in his hand like a string of carnelian and lapis lazuli
 beads;
 "Let the lord of Aratta bring that to me! Tell him that!"

K. ARATTA'S REPLY: SECOND COUNTERCHALLENGE

This having been said,
 (The lord of Aratta), because of this, entered his cella and lay there 390
 fasting.

When day broke he was *raving*;
 He spoke *gibberish*;
 He was stumbling around in words like a feeding donkey in wheat.⁴⁷
 Now, what could the one say to the other?
 What could the one say in addition to the other? 395
 What the one said to the other, it was thus:

"Messenger, speak to your king and tell him:
 "A scepter, not of wood, nor with the name of wood⁴⁸
 "When ... it is taken in hand and inspected,
 "Not ildag-wood, nor šimgig-wood, 400
 "Nor cedar, nor cypress,
 "Nor hašur, nor palm,
 "Nor hardwood, nor zabalum,
 "Nor poplar as in a chariot,
 "Nor worked reed as in whip handles, 405
 "Nor gold, nor copper,
 "Nor genuine refined silver, nor silver,
 "Nor carnelian, nor lapis lazuli—
 "If he can cut a scepter from such a substance, let him show it;
 "Let him hold it in his hand like a string of carnelian and lapis lazuli 410
 beads;
 "Let the lord of Kulab bring that to me! Tell him that!"

L. FOURTH VOYAGE: ARATTA TO UNUG

When he had spoken in this vein
 The messenger rushed off braying like a colt cut loose from the chariot's
 harness;
 He raced like an onager running on dried-out soil,
 Filling his mouth with wind; 415
 He made a straight track, like the long-tufted sheep furiously butting
 (other) sheep.

I. ENMERKAR'S SOLUTION: A MANMADE SUBSTANCE

sig₄ kul-ab₄^{kl}-a-ka ġir₃ hul₂ mi-ni-in-gub
 lugal-a-ni en kul-ab₄^{kl}-a-ra
 inim-inim-ma mu-na-ra-si-si
 120 en-me-er-kar₂-ra ^den-ki-ke₄ ġeštug₂ mu-na-'an¹-šum₂
 en-e agrig mah-a-[ni] a₂ ba-da-'an¹-aġ₂
 e₂-ni² [...]
 lugal-e 'munsub¹ [...]šu ba-ra-an-ti
 mu-un-dul-gin₇ 'šu¹ bi₂-lin-gur-gur] igi bi₂-in¹-ġa₂¹-ġa₂¹
 125 na⁴na KA.KA šim-gin₇ 'zu₂¹ [ba-ni]-in¹-ra
 gi su-lim-ma-ka i₃-gin₇ mu-ni-in-de₂
 ud-ta ġissu-še₃ am₃-ed₂-e
 ġissu-ta ud-še₃ am₃-ed₂-e
 mu 5-am₃ mu 10-am₃ ba-zal-[la]-ri
 430 gi su-lim-ma giġ₄-gin₇ bi₂-in-gaz
 en-e igi hul₂-la im-ši-in-bar
 i₃-li i₃-li kur šuba-a-ka sig₃-ga i-ni-in-de₂
 en-e kiġ₂-gi₄-a kur-še₃ du-ur₂
 ġidru šu-na mu-un-na-ġa₂-ġa₂

N. FIFTH VOYAGE: UNUG TO ARATTA

435 kiġ₂-gi₄-a aratta^{kl}-aš du-a-ni
 u₅^{mušen}-gin₇ hur-saġ-ġa₂ nim-gin₇ sahar 'niġin¹-a
 HI.SUHUR^{ku6}-gin₇ kur ur₃-ur₃-ru-[da]-ni aratta^{kl}-aš 'ba¹-teġ₃

O. THIRD COUNTERCHALLENGE

kisal aratta^{kl}-ka ġiri₃ hul₂-la mi-ni-in-gub
 ġidru TE SI NA mu-un-gub
 440 šu kiġ₂ si bi₂-in-sa₂ a kiġ₂ 'bi₂-ib¹-ak-e
 en aratta^{kl}-ke₄ ġidru-ta igi tab-ba
 itima-ka ki-tuš kug-ga-ni-a ni₂ im-kar₂-kar₂-ka
 en-e ša₃-tam-a-ni-ir gu₃ mu-na-de₂-e
 aratta^{kl} u₈ 'saġ₂¹-[gin₇] he₂-em kaskal-bi [kur] 'ki¹-bal he₂-em
 445 mah aratta^{kl} kug ^dinana-ke₄
 en kul-ab₄^{kl}-ra mu-na-an-šum₂-ma-ta
 lu₂ kiġ₂-gi₄-a mu-un-gi₄-a-ni
^dutu ed₂-de₃ inim dugud pa ed₂-de₃
 a-da-al kug ^dinana-ke₄ igi me-ši-kar₂-kar₂

M. ENMERKAR'S SOLUTION: A MANMADE SUBSTANCE

Joyfully he stepped into Kulab, the Brickwork.
 To his king, the lord of Kulab,
 He repeated the message word for word.
 Enki now granted insight to Enmerkar.⁴⁹ 420
 The lord gave orders to his chief steward.
 [In] his house [...]
 The king took a *hairy hide* [...]
 As if wrapping (something in it), he rolled it up and looked at it.
 With a pestle he pounded it like a herb 425
 And poured (the mass) into a *gleaming* reed.
 From the sunlight he brought it into the shadow,
 And from the shadow he brought it into the sunlight.
 Five, maybe ten years⁵⁰ passed,
 And then he split the gleaming reed with an axe. 430
 The lord looked at it with pleasure
 And poured on *its mass* fine oil, oil from the bright mountains.
 In the hands of the messenger who was to travel to the mountains
 The lord then placed the scepter.

N. FIFTH VOYAGE: UNUG TO ARATTA

The messenger's race to Aratta 435
 Was like the U-bird('s flight) over the hills, like a fly('s dashing) over
 the dust.
 He darted over the highland like a swimming carp and reached Aratta.

O. THIRĀ COUNTERCHALLENGE

Joyfully he stepped into the courtyard of Aratta
 And put the scepter in his ... 440
 He polished the scepter and washed it.
 The lord of Aratta *was blinded* by the scepter;
 In his cella, his sacred room, undone by fear
 The lord cried out to his ša¹ tam-official:
 "Verily, Aratta is like *scattered* ewes: its road is now that of the rebel
 lands!⁵¹
 "Holy Inana now has given over 445
 "Mighty Aratta to the lord of Kulab,
 "Since upon this man, who sent his messenger
 "To make the grave message as clear as sunlight,
 "Holy Inana now seems to be looking with favor!

- 450 aratta^{ki}-a lul-e me-a he₂-en-de₃-dib-e
al me-da-aš šu al-zil₂-zil₂-i-a
me-en-de₃ su₃-ga lul-la-bi-še₃
en kul-ab₄^{ki}-ra ^{na}4gug lul-la-me-a mu-na-dur₂-ru-ne-en-de₃-en
- en aratta^{ki}-ke₄ kiğ₂-gi₄-a-ar
- 455 inim-ma dub mah-gin₇ šu mu-na-an-sig₁₀
kiğ₂-gi₄-a lugal-zu en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ra u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
ur na-an-gig₂-ge ur na-an-babbar-re
ur na-an-si₄-e ur na-an-dara₄-e
ur na-an-sig₇-sig₇-ge ur na-an-gun₃-gun₃^{gu}2 ur hu-mu-ra-ab-šum₂-mu
- 460 ur-mu ur-ra-ni a-da-min₃ he₂-em-da-e
a₂-ğal₂ he₂-zu e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab

P. SIXTH VOYAGE: ARATTA TO UNUG

- ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-ka
kiğ₂-gi₄-a u₂-lum-a-lam mu-un-ğin
sig₄ kul-ab₄^{ki}-ke₄ eğir sig₁₀-ga-gin₇ inim 'mu'-un-gi₄
- 465 ud₅^l-gin₇ ka gaba kur-ra-ka igi mi-ni-ib-il₂-il₂-i
mir^l mah ul₄-ul₄-ta zig₃-ga-gin₇ e₂ me MIN₃ mu-un-ta-la₂-la₂
[X X X X]-ka sağ mi-ni-in-il₂

Q. FINAL CHALLENGE

- [...]aratta^{ki} -a-ke₄ [...]
- ki-tuš-a-ni-ta a mah [ed₂-a-gin₇ mu-un-na-ab]-be₂
- 470 kiğ₂-gi₄-a en 'aratta^{ki}-ra u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
tug₂ na-an-gig₂-ge tug₂ na-an-babbar-re
tug₂ na-an-si₄-e tug₂ na-an-dara₄-e
tug₂ na-an-sig₇-sig₇-ge tug₂ na-an-gun₃-gun₃^{gu}2 tug₂ ga-mu-na-ab-
šum₂-<<mu>>
- ur-mu gu₂-da ġal₂ den-lil₂- la₂ ur šu ga-mu-na-tak₄
- 475 ur-mu ur-ra-ni a-da-min₃ he₂-em-di-e
a₂-ğal₂ he₂-zu-zu e-ne-ra dug₄-mu-na-ab
2-kam-ma-še₃ u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
en₃-tukum-še₃ lul-da LI-a he₂-ni-ib-dib-e
iri-na udu-gin₇ igi-ni hu-mu-un-su₈-ub
- 480 e-ne sipad-bi-gin₇ eğir-bi he₂-em-us₂-e
du-a-ni kur kug ^{na}4za-gin₃-na
gi niğ₂-dub-ba-gin₇ gu₂ hu-mu-na-ab-ğar
kug-sig₁₇ kug-babbar sud-ra₂-ağ₂-bi

- "This misery of Aratta, where shall it lead us?
"For how long shall the yoke-rope have to be our *lot*?
"Must we, because of this dire famine,
"crawl before the lord of Kulab in our stark hunger?"

- The lord of Aratta then entrusted to the messenger
A message, important like a tablet.⁵²
- 455 "Messenger, speak to your king, lord of Kulab, and say:
"A dog that is not black, a dog that is not white,
"A dog that is not brown, a dog that is not red,
"A dog that is not yellow, a dog that is not pied—such a dog he must
give you!
"My dog will wrangle with his dog,
"So that the stronger one be known! Tell him that!"⁵³

P. SIXTH VOYAGE: ARATTA TO UNUG

- (The lord) having spoken to him in this vein,
The messenger set off *in all haste*.
Brickwork Kulab *answered like a . . .*
- 465 Like a goat on the mountain slopes he lifted his eyes;
like a huge MIR snake coming out of the fields he . . . ;
In . . . he lifted his head.

Q. FINAL CHALLENGE

- [The lord of] of Aratta⁵⁴ . . . ;
From his throne he spoke to him [like a raging torrent:]
"Messenger, when you speak to the lord of Aratta, say this:
- 470 "A cloth that is not black, a cloth that is not white,
"A cloth that is not brown, a cloth that is not red,
"A cloth that is not yellow, a cloth that is not pied—such a cloth I will
give him!
"My dog is embraced by Enlil; this dog I will send to him.
"My dog will wrangle with his dog
- 475 "So that the stronger one be known. Tell him that!
"Second, when you speak to him, say also this:
"He must now stop prevaricating⁵⁵ and come to *a decision*.
"Those of his city shall walk before him like sheep,
"And he, like a shepherd, shall follow them.
- 480 "At his coming, the holy mound of lapis lazuli
"Shall humble itself before him like a crushed reed.
"They shall amass shining gold and silver

- ^dinana nin e₂-an-na-ra
 485 kisal aratta^{ki}- 'ka' gur₇-še₃ hu-mu-un-dub-dub-bu
 3-kam-ma-[še₃] u₃-na-dug₄ u₃-na-de₃-tah
 iri-ni ir₇-sağ^{mušen}-gin₇ ġiš-bi-ta na-an-tar-ta-ta-an

 [...]-'gin₇' na-an-dub₂-be₂-en
 [ganba ġal₂-la]-'gin₇' na-an-si-ig-en
 490 [...] lil₂-e nam-mi-ni-in-dib-be₂-en
 du-a-ni na₄ hur-sağ-ğā₂ šu u₃-mu-ni-in-ti
 eš₃ gal eridug^{ki} abzu e₂-nun ha-ma-du₃-e
 a-sal-bar-bi im-šu₂-ra-ke₄ šu 'ha'¹[ma-ni]-ib-tag-ge
 ġissu-bi kalam-[ma ha-ma]-ni-ib-la₂-la₂-e
 495 inim dug₄-ga-ni [...]-'šar₂'-a-ka
 ġiškim-a-ni [e-ne-ra] dug₄-mu-na-ab

 ud-ba en? [...]-'ka'¹-am₃
 [...] barag-ga dur₂ ġar-ra numun nun-na-ke₄-ne
 [X X] diš-a mu₂-a
 500 dug₄-ga-ni [mah]-am₃ šag₄-bi su-su-a-am₃
 kiğ₂-gi₄-a ka-ni dugud šu nu-mu-un-da-an-gi₄-gi₄
 bar kiğ₂-gi₄-a ka-ni dugud šu nu-mu-un-da-an-gi₄-gi₄-da-ka

 en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ke₄ im-e šu bi₂-in-ra inim dub-gin₇ 'bi₂-in'¹-gub

 ud-bi-ta inim im-ma gub-bu nu-ub-ta-ğal₂-la
 505 i₃-ne-še₃ ^dutu ud ne-a ur₅ he₂-en-na-nam-ma-am₃
 en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ke₄ 'inim' [dub-gin₇] 'bi₂-in-gub ur₅ 'he₂'-[en-na]-nam-ma

R. SEVENTH VOYAGE: UNUG TO ARATTA

- kiğ₂-gi₄-a mušen-gin₇ a₂ dub₂ i₃-ak-e
 ur-bar-ra maš₂-e us₂-sa-gin₇ guru₅-uš i₃-bur₂-bur₂-re
 hur-sağ 5 hur-sağ 6 hur-sağ 7-e im-me-re-bal-bal
 510 igi mu-un-il₂ aratta^{ki}-aš ba-teğ₃

S. ARATTA'S REACTION

- kisal aratta^{ki}-ka ġiri₃ hul₂-la mi-ni-in-gub
 nam-nir-ğal₂ lugal-a-na mu-un-zu
 bur₂-ra-bi inim šag₄-ga-na bi₂-ib₂-be₂
 kiğ₂-gi₄-a en aratta^{ki}-ra mu-na-ab-bal-e
 515 a-a-zu lugal-'mu' mu-e-ši-in-gi₄-in-nam
 en unug^{ki}-ga en¹ kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ke₄ mu-[e-ši]-in-gi₄-in-nam

- "For Inana of the Eana
 "In the courtyard of Aratta in great piles. 485
 "Third, when you speak to him, say also this:
 "Beware lest I make (the people/Aratta) flee from their city like a
 dove from its tree,
 "Lest I make them fly away like [a bird from its permanent nest],
 "Lest I put a price on them [as on mere merchandise],
 490 "[Lest I *make*] the wind *carry them away*!
 "At his coming, when he holds the precious stones of the hills,
 "He must build for me the shrines of Eridug, Abzu, and Enun;
 "He must adorn for me its architrave with a *slip of clay*;
 "He must make it spread its shadow over the Land for me!
 495 "When he speaks ...
 "Tell him this as a sign for him!"

- Thereupon the lord ...
 ... on the throne dais, on the throne, the noble seed of princes,
 ... grown all alone.
 500 His speech was very grand, its meaning very deep;
 The messenger's mouth was too *heavy*; he could not repeat it.
 Because the messenger's mouth was too *heavy*, and he could not
 repeat it,
 The lord of Kulab patted some clay and put the words on it as on a
 tablet.
 Before that day, there had been no putting words on clay;
 But now, when the sun rose on that day—so it was: 505
 The lord of Kulab had put words as on a tablet—so it was!

R. SEVENTH VOYAGE: UNUG TO ARATTA

- The messenger was like a bird flapping its wings.
 Raging like a wolf chasing a kid
 He crossed five, six, seven mountain ranges.
 Lifting his head, he had reached Aratta. 510

S. ARATTA'S REACTION

- Joyfully he stepped into the courtyard of Aratta
 And proclaimed the preeminence of his king.
 He spoke out what was in his heart
 And transmitted it to the lord of Aratta:
 "Your father, my king, has sent me;
 515 "The lord of Unug and Kulab has sent me."

Lord of Aratta

lugal-zu 'dug₄¹-[ga-ni] nam-mu tah-a-ni nam-mu

Messenger

lugal-mu [a-na bi₂]-in¹-dug₄ a-na bi₂-in-tah-am₃lugal-mu [š^{is}mes] gal dumu den-lil₂-la₂-ke₄520 šiš-bi [an-ki]-da mu₂-a'pa¹-[bi an]-ne₂ us₂-sa-am₃[ur₂-bi ki-a] gub-ba-binam-en nam-lugal-la pa ed₂ ak-aen-me-er-kar₂ dumu d^utu-ke₄ im ma-an-šum₂525 en aratta^{ki} ke₄ im igi u₃-ni-bar šag₄ inim-ma u₃-bi₂-zua-na ma-ab-be₂-en-na-bi u₃-mu-e-dug₄a ru-a su₆ na⁴za-gin₃ KEŠ₂-da-arab₂ kal-la-ga-ni kur me sikil-la-ka tud-da-arsahar unug^{ki}-ka[sic]⁵⁶ a₂ ed₂-a-ar530 ubur ab₂ zid-da-ka ga gu₇-a-arkul-ab₄^{ki} kur me gal-gal-la-ka nam-en-na tum₂-ma-aren-me-er-kar₂ dumu d^utu-rainim-bi eš₃ e₂-an-na-ka inim dug₃ ga-mu-na-ab-dug₄gi₆-par₄ š^{is}mes gibil-gin₇-gin₇ gurun il₂-la-na535 lugal-mu en kul-ab₄^{ki}-ra šu-a ga-mu-na-ab-gi₄ur₅-gin₇ hu-mu-na-ab-be₂-a-kaen aratta^{ki}-ke₄ kiš₂-gi₄-a-ar

imŠU.RIN.NA-ni šu ba-ši-in-ti

en aratta^{ki}-ke₄ im-ma igi i-ni-in-bar540 inim dug₄-ga gag-am₃ saġ-ki mi-re₂-da-am₃en aratta^{ki}-ke₄ imŠU.RIN.NA-ni igi im-bar-bar-re

III. THE RESOLUTION

T. THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

ud-ba en men nam-en-na tum₂-ma dumu den-lil₂-la₂-ke₄diškur an-ki-a gu₃ nun-bi di-damud du₇-du₇ ug gal-la ki-[X X]-ka nam-mi-ni-in-gub545 kur-kur [...] 'mu-un¹-tuk₄-tuk₄-ehur-saġ [...] mu]- 'un¹-da-peš₁₁-peš₁₁-eni₂ [me]-lam₂' [X X] gaba-na ġal₂-la-bihur-saġ giri₁₇-zal-la gu₃ mi-ni-in-il₂aratta^{ki} bar ud-bi šag₄ hur-saġ-ġa₂-ka550 gig ni₂-bi mu₂-a gu₂ ni₂-bi an-ga-mu₂-a

Lord of Aratta

"What is it to me what your king spoke, what he said?"

Messenger

"This is what my king spoke, what he said:

"My King is a tall MES-tree, the son of Enlil.

"This tree has grown so tall that it links heaven and earth; 520

"Its crown reaches heaven;

"Its roots are set fast in the earth.

"He who has manifested lordship and kingship,

"Enmerkar, son of the Sun, gave me this tablet.

"O lord of Aratta, when you have read this tablet, learned the gist of 525
the message,

"When you will have replied to me whatever you want,

"To the scion of the one with the gleaming beard,

"To him whom the mighty cow bore on the hill of the lustrous power,

"To him who grew up on the soil of Aratta,

"To him who was suckled by the teat of the true cow, 530

"To him, suited for office in Kulab, mountain of the great powers,

"To Enmerkar, son of the Sun,

"I will speak that word as glad tidings in the shrine Eana.

"In his Gipar, bearing fruit like a young MES-tree,

"I shall repeat it to my king, the lord of Kulab." 535

This having been said,

The lord of Arratta took from the messenger

The tablet (and held it) next to a brazier.

The lord of Aratta inspected the tablet.

The spoken words were mere wedges⁵⁷—his brow darkened. 540

The lord of Aratta kept looking at the tablet (in the light of) the brazier.

III. THE RESOLUTION

T. THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

At that moment the lord worthy of the holy crown, the son of Enlil
iškur thundered in heaven and on earth.

A storm he caused, raging like a great lion.

He made the highlands quake, 545

He shook the hillsides.

The awesome radiance ... of his breast ...

He made the highland,

Aratta's parched flank in the midst of the mountains, raise its voice in joy.

Wheat began growing of its own accord, and so did chickpeas; 550

- gig ni₂-bi mu₂-a gur₇ [X (X)]-ka
 en aratta^{ki}-ra mu-na-ni-in-'ku₄¹[ku₄]
 kisal aratta^{ki}-a-ka igi-ni-še₃ i-im-dub[?]
 en aratta^{ki}-ke₄ gig-e igi bi₂-in-du₈
 555 kiğ₂-gi₄-a igi sig₃-sig₃-a-ni mu-un-ši-ib-UR₂xTAK₄.UR₂xTAK₄-e
- en aratta^{ki}-ke₄ kiğ₂-gi₄-a-ar gu₃ mu-un-na-de₂-e
 mah-bi ^dinana nin kur-kur-ra-ke₄
 iri-ni aratta^{ki} šu li-bi₂-in-dag unug^{ki}-e la-ba-an-KA
 e₂-za-gin₃-na-ka-ni šu li-bi₂-in-dag eš₃ e₂-an-na-ka la-ba-an-dug₄
 560 kur me sikil-la-ka šu li-bi₂-in-dag sig₄ kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ke₄ la-ba-an-dug₄
- šⁱnu₂ še-er-kan₂ dug₄ šu li-bi₂-in-dag šⁱnu₂ gi-rin-na la-ba-an-dug₄
 en-ra šu sikil-la-ka-ni šu li-bi₂-in-dag en unug^{ki}-ga en kul-ab₄^{ki}-a-ra
 la-ba-an-dug₄
 aratta^{ki} zid-da gub₃-bu-ba
^dinana nin kur-kur-ra-ke₄
 565 a mah ed₂-a-gin₇ mu-un-na-niğin
 lu₂-bi-ne lu₂ lu₂-ta dar-a
 lu₂ ^ddumu-zid-de₃ lu₂-ta ed₂-a-me-eš
 inim kug ^dinana ki-bi-še₃ ġar-ġar-me-eš
 ur igi-ğal₂-la 'DA'.A.SAR ^ddumu-zid-da he₂-ši-im-niğin
 570 'ul₄ ġa₂-nam-ma' dumu ur₄-[...]
 [igi] a-ma-ru-ka gub-ba-me-eš
 eğir a-ma-ru ba-ur₃-ra-ta
^dinana nin kur-kur-ra-ke₄
 nam-gal ki-ağ₂ ^ddumu-zid-da-ke₄
 575 a nam-til₃-la-ka mu-un-ne-sud-sud
 gu₂ kalam-ma-ka ġiš mu-un-ne-en-ğal₂
- ur igi-ğal₂-la du-a-ni
 tug²sağš^u gun₃-a ugu-na i-im-šu₂
 tug₂ piriğ-piriğ-'ga₂¹ zag mu-ni-in-KEŠ₂
 580 [X] il₂-la' X šu? mi-ni-in-du₈-[X]- 'am₃¹
 [...]-te-na mi-ni-in-du₄
 [...] nin [...] 'ba¹-an-PA^{di}
 [...] -a-ni

U. THE ARGUMENT RESOLVED

- [...] ^dinana
 585 en₃-du-ni ^dama-ušumgal-an-na nitalam-a-na ba-dug₃
 ud-bi-ta ġeštug₂ kug 'ġeštug₂¹ [kug] ^ddumu-zid-da-ke₄

The wheat grown of its own accord, into the granary of ...
 They brought for the lord of Aratta,
 And before him they heaped it up in the courtyard of Aratta.
 The lord of Aratta looked at the wheat;
 The messenger looked *amazed*, he ...

555

The lord of Aratta cried to the messenger:
 "In her majesty has Inana, Lady of all the countries,
 "Not yet abandoned Aratta to surrender it to Unug!
 "Nor did she abandon her Ezagina to surrender it to the Eana;
 "Nor did she abandon the mountain of the shining powers to surren- 560
 der it to Kulab, the Brickwork;
 "Nor did she abandon her sweet bed to surrender it to the flowery bed;⁵⁸
 "Nor did she abandon the purity of her lord to surrender it to the lord
 of Unug and Kulab!
 "(On the contrary), the right and left flanks of Aratta—
 "Inana, Lady of all the countries,
 "Protects them when the mighty flood is rising! 565
 "Its people are distinct from other people;
 "They are a nation Dumuzid selected among the other nations,
 "One that firmly establishes the holy word of Inana!
 "So let now the Wise Dog and the ... of Dumuzid lock on to each other.
 "Quick, come, [my] young ...!" 570
 "They were steadfast before the flood.
 "After the flood had swept over,
 "Inana, Lady of all the countries,
 "Out of her great love for Dumuzid,
 "Sprinkled the water of life over them, 575
 "And subjected the Land to them!"⁵⁹

The Wise Dog, when he came,
 Had covered his head with a pied head cloth
 And wrapped his body in a lion skin

580

...
 ...
 ...
 ...

U. THE ARGUMENT RESOLVED

Inana ...
 Her song pleased Ama-ušumgalana, her husband,
 And since that day, for the holy ear, the ear of Dumuzid,

585

šu mu-ni-in-du₇ šir₃ mu-'ni'-[in]-dug₄ inim mu-ni-in-zu

um-ma kur me sikil-še₃ du-a-ni

ki-sikil ud-da-na til-la-gin₇ im-ma-na-ta-ed₂

590 šim-zid-da igi-na mu-un-gun₃

[tug₂] habbar-ra zag mu-ni-in-KEŠ₂

[aga] zid-da iti₆-gin₇ mu-un-ed₂

[X] X X sağ si ba-ni-in-sa₂

[nitalam]-a-ni en-me-er-kar₂ barag-ge₄ mu-un-da-ab-si

595 [...] um-mi-in-zi-zi

[ga-nam] im-da-lu-lu aratta^{ki}-aš u₈-da sila₄-bi

[ga-nam im]-da-lu-lu aratta^{ki}-aš ud₅-da maš₂-bi

[ga-nam im]-da-lu-lu aratta^{ki}-aš ab₂-da amar-bi

[ga-nam] 'im'-da-lu-lu aratta^{ki}-aš eme₅ dur₃^{ur2} im₂ gig₂-ga-<bi>

600 aratta^{ki}-a na-an-da-be₂-a

[gur₇-še₃] he₂-em-dub-gu₂ he₂-em-ğar-ğar

[he₂]-ğal₂¹ za-a he₂-ğal₂-zu

[...] en aratta^{ki}-ra u₃-mu-ni-in-ak

[...] X X X-ra he₂-en-[X (X)]

605 [...] mu-un-di-ni-ib-X-e

[...] mu-un-ta-ed₂

[...] si mu-un-na-ab-sa₂

Three lines missing.

[...] me-te-aš [...] -ğal₂

[...] X SI i-lu šag₄-[ga ...] X

[...] -ni-a he₂-ğal₂-zu nagga [...]

[...] den-lil₂-le sağ-eš mu-ri-in-rig₇ [X]-'la'-la-ğa₂ he₂-zu-zu

615 [...] kar₂ a-a-ni nu-lam-lam a nu-un-de₂

den-[lil₂] [lugal] 'kur'-kur-ra-ke₄ hu-mu-un-kar₂²-re ni₂-ba

eš₂-gar₃ 'im'-ma-an-du₃-a-gin₇

nam-lu₂-u₁₈-[lu] aratta^{ki}-a-ke₄

kug-sig₁₇ kug na⁴[za]-gin₃ bala ak-de₃ eš₂-gar₃ X (X) X

620 lu₂ gurun kug-sig₁₇ gurun ġiš gub-bu-de₃

šipeš₃ ġeštin-ba niğ₂-ta ub₄-ba-gin₇ gur₇ gal-še₃ [u₃]-mu-un-dub

na⁴za-gin₃ duru₅ ur₂-ba mu-un-bur₂-re-ne

šušub pa-ba mu-un-ta-bal-e-ne

inana nin e₂-an-na-ra

625 kisal e₂-an-na^{ki}-ka gur₇-še₃ mu-un-dub-bu-ne

She perfects it, singing the song and teaching the words.⁶⁰

The Wise Woman,⁶¹ when she came to the mountain of the shining Powers,

Went up to him like a maiden whose period is at an end;

She painted her eyes with kohl,

590

She donned a dazzling white robe,

She made the true crown sparkle like moonlight,

She arranged [*her tresses*?] on her head;

She sat her [spouse] Enmerkar on the throne with her (and spoke):

"When you have raised ...

595

"[Verily,] for Aratta ewes and their lambs shall multiply;

"[Verily,] for Aratta goats and their kids shall multiply;

"[Verily, for Aratta] cows and their calves shall multiply;

"[Verily, for Aratta] donkey mares and their swift foals shall multiply!

"Since in Aratta they will now agree,

600

"They will heap up ... in piles

"The abundance that is truly yours.

"When you have instituted [*trade*] with the lord of Aratta,

"He will [...]

"He did [...]

605

"He came forth [...]

"He set right [...]

"[...]

"[...]

"[...]

610

"[...] what is fitting [...]

"[...] the ilu-song of the heart [...]

"[...] your abundance in his [...] is *tin* [...]

"[...] Enlil has granted you; my [luxuriousness] be known!

"[...] his father was not fertile, produced no semen.⁶²

615

"Enlil, King of all countries,

"Has now established this execution of the tasks:

"The people of Aratta

"Have as their task the trading of gold and lapis lazuli

"And the fashioning of golden fruits and fruity bushes

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"Laden with figs and grapes...; they shall heap up these fruits in great piles;

"They shall dig out flawless lapis lazuli in lumps;

"They shall remove the crowns of the sweet reeds,

"And for Inana, Lady of the Eana,

"They shall heap them up in piles in the courtyard of the Eana.

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Grammar and philology could bear such a reading. Yet the style of the episode and certainly its meaning and function in the story argue strongly for my interpretation. Putting it in the past cannot be of any use in the development of the narrative. Reference to the future—as one expects from a spell—can and does, since it makes a very neat and sophisticated pendant to Enmerkar's invention of cuneiform, which accompanies the last challenge.

²⁰ "The whole world of well-ruled people" refers to the imagined or ideological state of Ur III Sumer, described in its different provinces, to wit Šubur and Hamazi (north and east), Sumer and Akkad (center), and Martu (west).

²¹ The Sumerian word for debate, *a da man du ga*, is also the term for formal school disputations. It also occurs as a qualification in the last lines of Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana. This has led some scholars to classify both that poem and Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta as disputations. I do not think that there are sufficient grounds for this.

²² The threefold series of challenges and replies going to and fro between Unug and Aratta works out naturally at a total of seven journeys, since the series starts at Unug but ends in Aratta and is not merely a sequence of challenge-and-response: the responses carry their own challenges. The messenger also has to travel over seven mountain ranges. This is a fine instance of the very sophisticated interpretation or reuse of a common folktale technique.

²³ The messenger has had to learn the message by heart. At the occasion of the ultimate message from Enmerkar this will cause a problem. Enmerkar will find a highly appropriate solution.

²⁴ Presumably the messenger now recites the spell of Nudimmud, but somewhat unexpectedly the spell itself is not repeated.

²⁵ Unclear. Why should Enmerkar have been born on the soil of Aratta?

²⁶ Note that the lord of Aratta's answer does not reply to the challenge as such, nor does the spell of Nudimmud seem to have had any effect.

²⁷ The mountains are here represented as a throne, which is "embellished" by Inana when she sits on it.

²⁸ Traditional "sacrifices" accompanying an entreaty or appeal to the gods.

²⁹ This traditional way of expressing a small number or a short time always puts the smaller number before the larger one, somewhat against our expectation.

³⁰ That is, the lord of Aratta is willing to join battle only in a new kind of contest: a contest of cleverness. In doing so, he is laying down the rules (the negative conditions in lines 279–280). If his antagonist is unable to fulfill these conditions—"or cannot fathom the meaning of the contest"—he will lose, just like a fighting bull that does not reckon with the strength of its opponent.

³¹ The second time the oral means of communication is highlighted.

³² Both similes are about the aspect of the mountains' bare flanks reflecting the blood-red light of the westering sun and the pale sheen of the moon.

³³ I.e., Inana.

³⁴ I.e., he may not collect the wheat en route from Unug to Aratta.

³⁵ Battle is called "the dance of Inana."

³⁶ Here and in line 302 we find again an insistence on the spoken word as the only means of communication.

³⁷ Enmerkar, who elsewhere is called "son of the Sun."

³⁸ This is, of course, a stupendous operation. Is Enmerkar collecting a vast amount of water? If so, to what purpose? The passage remains unclear and physically impossible: it is very hard to connect the Euphrates to the Tigris when based in Uruk.

³⁹ For the first time the notion of a tablet is introduced. This will finally lead up to the solution of the communication problem much later on. Here the tablet only figures as a rather involved epithet of Nisaba, goddess of both wheat and writing. The reader is warned.

⁴⁰ Nisaba is identical to Nanibgal.

⁴¹ The meaning is not altogether clear. Does it mean: "if he can make a scepter like this"? The broader meaning, however, is clear: if the Lord of Aratta should surrender his scepter—however he came by it—to Enmerkar, he would thereby accept Enmerkar's superiority! It is quite possible that Enmerkar's "scepter" is in fact the holy MES-tree of Unug. Enmerkar then seems to offer a small piece of the tree to the lord of Aratta so that he may share in its authority under the superior rule of Unug. The lord of Aratta counters this by agreeing to accept Unug's overlordship only if an impossible scepter is given to him.

⁴² I.e., by the normal succession of the seasons, implying sowing and reaping.

⁴³ After having been feasted?

⁴⁴ Thus the text. A mistake for Aratta? Owing to the state of preservation (broken passage; only one manuscript), the matter cannot as yet be decided.

⁴⁵ Perhaps an indication of the outcome of the whole story, which is the institution of trade. Do the elders offer their treasure hoards in return for Enmerkar's unexpected supply of wheat?

⁴⁶ See above, note 39.

⁴⁷ A fine simile, making clever use of the fact that grain has just arrived in Aratta.

⁴⁸ The section ĜIŠ (wood) of the great lexical list *ur₅-ra bubullu* contains a number of entries beginning with the ĜIŠ sign but that designate objects that are strictly speaking not made out of wood. It is probable that the meaning here is that a clever use of the lexical lists as a solution to the riddle is not allowed.

⁴⁹ Enki appears here in his customary role as the helper of heroes—and in this case as the god of technique as well as understanding.

⁵⁰ It is uncertain but not impossible that a period of ten years is really intended. The Sumerian word *mu* can also mean "time(s)." The process apparently involves braying and macerating hides and pouring the bone-glue into a hollow reed to let it set and harden. This may have taken considerable time, but ten years seems excessive. Still, this is undoubtedly the first instance of a manmade substance in human history.

⁵¹ The image is that of a city vanquished and destroyed by barbarians. Its populace is then taken away to the foreign countries.

⁵² As the text unfolds, the references to Enmerkar's great invention become clearer and clearer.

⁵³ There is much literature about these lines but little doubt that *ur* here does indeed mean "dog." An almost identical passage occurs in the animal section of the lexical list *ur₅-ra bubullu*.

⁵⁴ This is certainly a mistake for Unug.

⁵⁵ The text has a term that implies subterfuge.

⁵⁶ Scribal mistake. Must be a ratta^{ki}-ka.

⁵⁷ This reading has been challenged on the grounds that Sumerian gag "nail, wedge" is not the technical term for cuneiform signs or their elements. But that is just the point. How is the lord of Aratta supposed to have known this?

⁵⁸ An allusion to the opening challenge of the poem Enmerkar and Ensuhgirana.

⁵⁹ The "them" is very ambiguous, as is much of this passage.

⁶⁰ Could this be a reference to the poem itself? The colophon is missing, so we do not know to which divine patron it was dedicated.

⁶¹ Although the term used here (um-ma) means "mother" or "old woman," the reference is in all probability to Inana herself. The function of a mother/old woman as a wise woman is well nigh universal.

⁶² The passage remains frustratingly unclear. Does line 615 refer to the lord of Aratta (being, of course, the father in question)? In that case, is then the "man from a foreign country" Enmerkar, who is now elected by the people of Aratta as their own "man" ("the man from X" can mean "the king of X")?

The Lugalbanda Poems

Introduction

There can be but little doubt that the two poems that have Lugalbanda as their hero belong together. Neither of them is a complete story without the other. In the broadest outline the complete story runs somewhat like this.

I. Lugalbanda in the Wilderness

Enmerkar of Unug wants to conquer Aratta. During the march, Lugalbanda (his son?¹) falls mortally ill and is abandoned in a cave in the mountains. He prays to the great luminaries, who save his life. Being all alone, he reinvents fire, cooking, and baking. He captures a wild bull and a wild goat. Acting on a portentous dream, he sacrifices these animals to the great gods. A band of spirits² arrives. The hero masters them with the help of Utu. There seems to follow a battle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. The former seem to win this battle.

II. The Return of Lugalbanda

Lugalbanda is now stranded in the highlands. He decides to go and look for the Anzud bird, who rules over that region. He feasts Anzud's chick so well that it is stuffed with food and probably asleep when its parents return from foraging; therefore, it does not answer their call. The frightened parents are very happy when Lugalbanda appears and tells them what has happened. Anzud rewards him with the gift of superhuman speed. He returns to his companions, who are laying siege to Aratta. To force a decision, Enmerkar sends Lugalbanda back to Unug in order to ask for Inana's advice. In a single day Lugalbanda reaches Unug, and Inana gives her advice. Aratta seemingly submits peacefully.