The *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Iliad*

It is generally known that themes and motifs of the Near Eastern character are evenly distributed in the *Iliad*. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is here chosen among many ancient oriental literatures, because it is generally attested that the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is the most influential oriental literature on the *Iliad* as a major source of inspiration.

We will now see in two examples how oriental models affected to recreate new Greek compositions. The most remarkable are the parallels which are noticeable in these two.

The first parallel theme is the friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu and that of Achilles and Patroklos. We notice particularly Gilgamesh's reaction to Enkidu's death and that of Achilles to the death of Patroklos. This is attested as the most inescapable fact of a special relationship between the *Iliad* with the *Epic of Gilgamesh* among other uncountable parallels. [1]

The second parallel is the 'Aphrodite-episode' in Book V of the *Iliad* and its relation to the 'Ishtar-episode' in Tablet 6 in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. The theme is an immortal injury by a mortal. Burkert particularly takes up the Aphrodite episode in the *Iliad* as the closest parallel to the Ishtar episode in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. [2]

Gilgamesh and Achilles

As mentioned above, the distinguished parallel is the great friendship of Gilgamesh with Enkidu and that of Achilles with Patroklos. This is revealed particularly in Gilgamesh's lamentation on Enkidu's death in Tablets 7, 8 and 9

1 West 1997: 334-347; West also points to detailed similarities in various sources including the *Old Testment* as 'Miscellanea Orientalia': 347-401. English Translations of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*: Dalley 1989: 39-153; George 1999; Speiser 1955: in *ANET*, 72-97-99.

2 Burkert 1992: 96-98-99-100. He also generally stresses: 'The impact of written culture on Greek literature is confirmed by the extant passages of the early Greek literature that clearly echo Mesopotamian classics.'; in addition to Gilgamesh, many and various other literary sources are recognized. (Burkert:129) (It is indeed a surprise for us to encounter such a close parallel like this, when we read both stories.)

(of the Akkadian version) and that of Achilles on the death of Patroklos in Book 18. [3]

In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* this is the key directly associated to the main theme, 'the fates of humanity' (*šimatu awilutim*): death (Burkert 1992, 117). The reaction to the sudden death of their friends, and the stages of grief expressed by the two heroes are seen in very similar language, ideas and behaviours.

The stages are:

First, their initial reactions are the impulsive acts of self-mortification/ humiliation:

Gilgamesh tore out/ disfigured his well-curled hair, finding Enkidu's heart beat no more.

> **Now, what is the sleep that has taken hold of you? (*Gilgamesh* 8. 55-58)**
> **Turn to me, you!**
> **You've become unconscious, you do not hear me.**
> **But he cannot lift his head.**
> **I touch his heart, but it does not beat at all.**
> **Curly hair he tore in clumps, (*Gilgamesh* 8.63-64)**
> **He ripped off his finery/ornament, like something taboo he cast it away.**

Achilles' lamentation on the death of Patroklos is extraordinary. Achilles is thrown into paroxysm/ outburst of grief. Hearing Patroklos' death:

> τὸν δ' ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα.
>
> Ἀμφοτέρηισι δὲ χερσὶν ἑλὼν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν
>
> χεύατο κὰκ κεφαλῆς, χαρίεν δ' ἤισχυνε πρόσωπον.
>
> νεκταρέωι δὲ χιτῶνι μέλαιν' ἀμφίζανε τέφρη.
>
> Αὐτός δ' ἐν κονίηισι μέγας μεγαλωστὶ τανυσθεὶς
>
> κεῖτο, φίλησι δὲ χερσὶ κόμην ἤισχυνε δαΐζων. [4] **(*Iliad* S/ 18. 22-27)**

3 See the detailed analysis in West 1997: 336-347.

4 Typical lamentation behaviour in the Ancient Near East, as behaviour patterns seen in Ugaritic literature and the *Old Testament* (West 1997: 340, examples, n. 12), and common in Greece as well, are described in literature and (vase) paintings in the Archaic and Classical Ages. (West 1997: 341 ns. 14 & 15.) (the *Iliad* : LCL, A.T. Murray 1957)

A black cloud of grief enwrapped Achilles/
With both his hands he took the dark dust/
and strewed it over his head and defiled his fair face.
Himself in the dust lay outstretched, mighty in his mightiness,
and with his own hands he tore and marred his hair.

Secondly, overwhelming grief at Enkidu's/ Patroklos' death, then each hero is agitated straight from lamentation of his friend's death to anticipation of his own, and Fear of Death has begun. Gilgamesh mourned bitterly for Enkidu and roamed open country, searching for immortality.

Shall I die too? Am I not like Enkidu, never to rise again for all time?
Grief has entered my heart.
I am afraid of death, so I wander the wild. (*Gilgamesh* ix 1-4-5,)

ὣς καὶ ἐγών εἰ δή μοι ὁμοίη μοῖρα τέτυκται,/

κείσομ' ἐπεί κε θάνω. **(*Iliad* S/ 18. 120-121)**

So I also, indeed a similar fate is set for me,/
will be laid down when I die.

Finally, both Gilgamesh and Achilles realize the fate of human beings. They experience a very deep pathos, and their profound philosophical enlightenment with regard to life and death form similar patterns through the encounter with the humanity of older persons, Utnapishtim and Priamos. This profound experience of enlightenment regarding the inevitable destiny of the mortal was for the first time taken up and expressed in a form of a long narrative context within the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Achilles' experience in the *Iliad* is the first Greek literary expression of this profound enlightenment following that of Gilgamesh in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Gresseth sees this in these terms: 'Gilgamesh is the first tragic hero who for the first time in the history of the world has a profound experience on such a heroic

scale that it has found expression in a noble style.' [5] **Such is the case with Achilles! The strongest young warrior among the Achaeans, Achilles fiercely reacted to the fatal crucial trial/ affliction/ θλίψη, and finally reached pathetic enlightenment concerning the reality of death through his extreme experience.**
Thus it now may be certain that the story and structure of Achilles and the death of Patroklos in the *Iliad* were constructed/ composed on the model of Gilgamesh and the death of Enkidu in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. [6]

Ishtar and Aphrodite

Now we turn to another parallel in the Tablet 6 of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven* and Book V of the *Iliad*. The common theme is an injury to an immortal god by a mortal man, that is, goddess Ishtar is pitilessly insulted, a mental injury, by a mighty young king Gilgamesh and his companion Enkidu, and the goddess Aphrodite is wounded by a heroic warrior with a bronze spear, a true physical injury accompanied by a verbal insult.

The Ishtar-episode in the *Bull of Heaven*, tablet 6 of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*:

In this episode Ishtar, the goddess of love and war is the moving figure. This episode can be divided into two parts originally structured according to Ishtar's two extreme discordant natures: love and war, in order to bring in an episode about Ishtar. It is generally assumed that Homer took up only the first part of this theme and gave the role of Ishtar to Aphrodite, and that the first part of the Ishtar episode only is a remarkable parallel to the wounded Aphrodite by Diomedes in the *Iliad* Book V.
The two episodes concerning the immortal spiritual injury to the goddess Ishtar by a mortal and the physical injury to Aphrodite are briefly described:

Ishtar/ Innana, the city goddess of Uruk, Goddess of love and war, is insulted by Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk who refused her proposal to be her lover, and scorned her capricious dealings with her previous lovers. Enraged by these

5 Gresseth 1975: *CJ* 70, 1-17-18.

6 As minor parallels West (1997: 336-337) points out their parentage, goddess-mother: Ninsun and Thetis, mortal father: Lugalbanda and Peleus, and their character, even physical resemblances.

verbal attacks, Ishtar goes up to heaven and tells Anu, the king of the gods and her father and Anut her mother what Gilgamesh did to her. 'Why didn't you accuse him yourself? Anu asks Ishtar.

The Aphrodite-episode:

The *Iliad* V: 330–337, 348-351: Rescuing Aineias, who was wounded by Diomedes, Aphrodite is injured in her palm by Diomedes' spear. She retreated to Olympos, where she complains to Dione and Zeus. She is comforted by her mother, but is warned by her father not to engage in warfare. This physical injury of Aphrodite by Diomedes in the *Iliad* Book V is generally assumed to be an obvious parallel to Ishtar's injury by a human in Tablet 6 in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. First of all, because of the unusual and unthinkable theme in both episodes, and because of the remarkable resemblance of the two in detail, the episode in Tablet 6 is thought to be the model for the episode in Book V.

Among other parallels, the most significant matter is the adaptation of the theme of the episode, the divine injury by a mortal hero. Therefore, the first and main parallel is human affront to an immortal, goddess, by a mighty hero, either of mental or physical form in different contexts. In the Aphrodite episode the process occurs in the battle context. The insulted/ injured divine figure is the love goddess in both cases. In the Ishtar-episode verbal attack has the effect of a mental injury and offence; in the Aphrodite episode it is a real physical injury by a sharp bronze spear piercing the divine hand.

The immediate sequences after the insult/ injury in both episodes occur in the same procedure. The goddess goes up to Heaven, complains to the supreme god, her father, who warns her. This is a remarkable parallel, almost a copy of the original. The verbal mocking by Enkidu to Ishtar in the second part takes the form of Diomedes' mockery over the fainting Aphrodite in the Aphrodite episode. This Homeric episode of divine-injury is regarded as a kind of striking incredible human behaviour to an immortal god, and an extraordinary unthinkable event in terms of common religious sentiment. [7]

7 West 1997: 361; Burkert 1992: 96-99. The theme of the immortal physical injury/ wound by a mortal with a weapon, includes the wounding of Ares by Diomedes later in the same context in V, a repetition of the same pattern: 856-857: Diomedes wounds Ares, 871-886: Ares complains to Zeus, 887-897: Zeus to Ares.

Leaf's comment on this episode is rightly appricable. Leaf points out as follows:

First, 'the *Diomeideia* was composed in a complete independence. 'With the attack on Aphrodite herself in the *Aristeia* of Diomedes, we enter an episode which stands quite apart from the rest of the *Iliad*. Thirdly, 'with the wound of Aphrodite an entirely unknown world is introduced. We find ourselves in a world of myths of which we know nothing elsewhere.' Leaf also points out that Diomedes wounds Ares with Athena's 'command' and 'assistance'. He observes that after the divine injuries in V of the *Iliad* the un-Homeric atmosphere reigns (till line *519*), and 'divine interventions' increase prevailing the development of the narrative story. [8]

Kirk also points to this (1), but he interprets Athena's 'instruction' in V. 131-2: 'except for Aphrodite', as a rhetorical device designed to produce both emphasis and surprise (2). [9] In V. 818-821 this Athena's 'instruction' is repeated by Diomedes himself. Kirk sees that 'the physical-attack-on-a-god idea certainly lay far in the past, perhaps in a Mesopotamian rather than a Greek context.' [10] He is without doubt bearing in mind the episode of Ishtar in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Homer's Aphrodite-episode, an adaptation of the Ishtar-episode in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* ends here, but the original episode does not. Let us now turn to the second part of the Ishtar-episode in order to see what Ishtar is in the rest of the episode in Tablet 6 and in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* as a whole, and to probe how Homer made out his own armed war-goddess from the double nature of the oriental goddess of war and love.

The second part of the Ishtar-episode:

By Anu's caution "Why didn't you accuse Gilgamesh by yourself?" Ishtar's warlike nature was immediately kindled. She decided to take her revenge upon

8 Leaf 1900: The *Iliad*, Vol. I, 192-194.

9 Kirk 1990: 51, (1) 95: on V, 331-3; (2) 69-70.

10 Kirk 1990: 106. on V, 436-439.

Gilgamesh. Threatening Anu in a violent way, Ishtar got the Bull of Heaven, and went down to Uruk to punish the offender.

Here the double-natured Ishtar is well described in the clear division in the progress of the episode: her sudden change to a fierce nature. But: Alas! Gilgamesh and Enkidu killed the Bull. Furthermore hurling the haunch of the Bull into Ishtar's face, Enkidu mocked her bitterly:

'Had I caught you too, I would have treated you likewise/
I'd have draped your weapons in its guts.' [11]

In Enkidu's mockery her warrior divinity is confirmed, that is, Ishtar is wearing weapons, though she did not use them, nor was she victorious with them. Thus, in the whole episode the great goddess of love and war Ishtar is inappropriately depicted, that is, as the love-goddess her proposal was refused, and as the great war-goddess, she was miserably defeated. Gilgamesh was triumphant and admired by all the citizens of Uruk.

Here we wonder: Did Homer really take up only the half of this episode? Did Homer re-create an episode only for Aphrodite? Homer did, indeed, take up the whole episode in his version, but the double nature of Ishtar is too marvellously intricate to be easily perceived in Homer's episode. He did not build the structure by just copying that of the original episode. Let us see the episode again.

At the beginning of Book V of the *Iliad*, we see Athena first choose Diomedes in the crisis of the Achaeans as the strongest warrior left under the circumstances of Achilles' retreat from the battlefield. She encourages the hero-warrior and equips him with divine powers, and moreover Athena instructs Diomedes to wound Aphrodite:

ἀτὰρ εἴ κε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη/

ἔλθησ' ἐς πόλεμον, τήν γ' οὐτάμεν ὀξέϊ χαλκῷι. **V 131-132**

11 George 1999: 52, in the Standard Version [from Nineveh]; cf. Dalley 1989: 82.

(If Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus shall enter the battle, her you may wound with a thrust of sharp sword.) (tr. A.Murray)

Diomedes attacks and wounds Aphrodite with his sharp spear, and he is triumphant in scorning the fainting Aphrodite. Thus Homer's war-goddess Athena is victorious. Thus, we can see what Homer did, and how he recreated his episode from the original Sumerian idea.

Homer divided Ishtar's double-nature into two and gave them to two independent Greek goddesses: Athena and Aphrodite. It is to Athena that the warrior divinity of Ishtar in the second part is given, but in quite a different way, as is shown above. A common feature in both episodes is that the goddesses use an indirect agent. For Ishtar the Bull of Heaven is her agent to avenge the human offender, and for Athena Diomedes is her human agent to wound Aphrodite/ an immortal.

In the Homeric episode, ironically indeed, one of the double divinities of the original one goddess is injured by the other half of herself: that is, an independent Greek war-goddess wounds an independent Greek love-goddess indirectly through a human agent, as Ishtar tried to avenge the human offender by the Bull of Heaven.

In this way, Ishtar as the war-goddess in the second part is taken into Homer's Aphrodite episode. Thus the main points of the whole Ishtar episode are taken into the Aphrodite episode in a complex/ intricate structure, and in an ironical form. This is, therefore, not a simple reproduction of half of the original episode.

The Theme and Intention of the Ishtar Episode:

In the *Gilgamesh Epic,* the second part of the Ishtar episode seriously relates to the main theme of *the Epic*. Their affront to a divinity consequently causes the fatal death of Enkidu, as the divine punishment for their blasphemy, Gilgamesh's search for immortality and his final profound enlightenment regarding the destiny of the mortal human. It is obvious, therefore, that this whole episode is significantly associated with the development of the theme and structure in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. The interpretation of the author's intention

of the Ishtar episode in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is diverse because of its outrageous blasphemy theme.

Jacobsen regards it as sacrilege, sin, violence in old Sumerian theo-centric socio-aesthetic ideology/ belief, and their treatment of Ishtar was the height of arrogance. [12]

A. George introduces a few views in his The *Epic of Glgamesh* (166-8-9). The first is an anti-Akkadian political resistance by the Sumerians, represented by Uruk. In this case Ishtar is (the supposed-) city-goddess of Agade/ the Dynasty of Akkad since the first king Sargon, and Ishtar is the representative of the dynasty of Akkad, as the agent of Sargon's policy/ propaganda chosen in the episode as the very target of the resistance.

He, then, hesitantly proposes another factor, that is, a critical attitude to the ritual of the Sacred Marriage in the most important socio-religious event in the Old Southern Sumerian states, the New Year Festival; or anti City-Goddess/ Sacred-Marriage- Goddess Ishtar herself, (as the agent of Sargon's policy/ propaganda).

But he seems to be reluctant to hold this view, since the story develops from the king of Uruk, as if it were Gilgamesh's rejection of his city goddess Innana/ Ishtar in the specific rite of the Sacred Marriage, the Innana/ Ishtar in this episode cannot be the great City Goddess of Uruk; and George assumes that the composition seems to bear a different ideological message. This view has a good suggestion that this episode was definitely composed after Sargon's Southern Sumerian conquest; it means that the Ishtar in this episode is the assimilated Inanna/ Ishtar.

George is also very negative to author's having any particular intention for this episode saying 'simply to amuse and entertain a royal audience, not to promote political ideology', that is, the author had no political intention. [13]

Gresseth's interpretation is quite different. Gresseth sees the motive of this episode as an expression of anti-Sumerian theo-centric socio-religious ideology and system by the Akkadian author, that is, human-centric ideology and attitude (since the earliest Akkadian-conquest). He takes this immortal injury by mortals

12 Jacobsen 1976: 200-202-219, 'They treat with disdain the city-goddess of Uruk, Ishtar.' 14.

13 George 1999: 166-168-169. (cf. first marked by Fries. *Klio* 1903, 374)

as a 'heroic' deed in the new human-centric situation of the human-divine relationship, that is, a 'successful achievement of a mortal hero against an immortal', not a 'sacrilege' in the old Sumerian ideology. [14]

It now seems that without any special motive this inconceivable episode could not have been composed. An extreme human affront to the great city goddess of Uruk by the king of Uruk himself even could not have been thought of at all 'in common religious sense'. This original unthinkable episode in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, therefore, seemed to have been devised on/ against a strong socio/ political-religious background either in anti-Sumerian by an Akkadian author as Gresseth interprets it, or, as George assumes, an anti-Akkadian political attitude, symbolizing the political struggles by the old Southern Sumerian city-states, represented by Uruk, to be free of the imperial yoke of the Akkadian Empire, represented by the goddess Inanna/ Ishtar, Ishtar as the target by the Sumerians. This episode, nonetheless, seems not to have been simply composed for entertainment and amusement of the court-audience, (though this seems to be the case of the Aphrodite episode in the *Iliad* V.)

Whatever the factor of its composition was, importantly this episode was constructed in accordance with the overall structure of *the Epic* itself becoming the very key element of the death of Enkidu, and the final enlightenment of Gilgamesh himself.

Here two questions arise: first, why, then, for this purpose particularly was Ishtar/ Inanna chosen as the very target?

'Ishtar/ Inanna' here was chosen as the very subject either of the Sumerians or of the Akkadians as being the most worshipped goddess and as the city-goddess in a major Sumerian state, that is, Inanna, or as the assimilated Inanna-Ishtar of Sargon, who was employed/ used as the most predominant deity and as the ultimate agent of political propaganda of the Dynasty of Akkad over the conquered Sumerian states. The Akkadian Ishtar was the patron goddess of the Dynasty of Akkad, or the city-goddess of Agade, its capital. Her predominant divine nature was a war-goddess. 'Ishtar' in this episode, therefore, could be the

14 Gresseth 1975: 1-14-18.

assimilated Ishtar-Inanna. (If the-supposed-socio-politico- religious ideology had been the factor of this episode.) [15]

Then we wonder: why did Homer choose this theme?

Whatever the motive of this Ishtar-episode of Tablet 6 in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* was, it seems that there is no reason to doubt that Homer created his Aphrodite episode modelled on this Ishtar-episode. First the theme and so many apparent parallels even in details prove this, as we have already seen. [16] **Homer may have been shocked at the mortal's offensive violence to an immortal, a mighty heroic king to a feminine deity. However, he became very interested in this theme and was urged to create his own episode.**

How and What Homeric Poet created his own episode:

The most important point of Homer's scenario is that a human offends violence to an immortal under a divine instruction, not by his own will, that is, Homer made his story an episode of divine 'punishment', using a mortal hero as her instrument, not a mortal affront to a divinity. (Homer's own piety/ pious religious sense would not have allowed him to make a real human offence to an immortal.)

Then, Homer devised a brilliant solution. Homer created his Aphrodite-episode as a divine-myth, not a-mortal-offence episode, though superficial human-affront to an immortal was inevitable because of the adaptation of the original true human-affront episode.

For his episode Homer chose Diomedes as a divine agent of Athena, as the strongest warrior against the Trojans under the circumstances of Achilles' retreat, and many warriors had been wounded. This should be the original intention of Athena: to rescue the Achaeans in their serious situations. For this

15 Postgate 1995: 395-402. Foster 1993a: 25-38.

16 Text-problems: see George 1999: 166: some versions: The Sumerian version is regarded as an important source for the Old Babylonian (& Standard) version (18th century BC; 12-11th century BC). The story in question in both versions has the same main theme and structure, but is diverse in its details. The Ishtar episode, nonetheless, must have been known widely because of its 'shocking-blasphemy' theme, even without written texts, rather orally spread as if it had been 'sensational' news of a real historical event. It could have reached the Greek shore in the orientalizing period, or already earlier. Further problems, see George 1999: 166-69. ('The story of *Gilgamesh/ Ishtar and the Bull of Heaven* seemed not to have been as popular as the '*Humbaba*' story, judged from the numbers of manuscripts found so far.'; in the Old Sumerian version (in the 21st BC) this story is included.)

purpose Diomedes was prepared at the beginning of V: Divine power, courage, and divine flame Athena specially granted to him. (This can be Diomedes' 'arming': V. 1-7.) This is the factor of Homer's '(pseudo-) human- affront' episode. Then significant differences could be recognized between the two episodes. Here the differences are briefly reviewed.

Differences of the two episodes:

The first is the authors' motive/ intention. As mentioned already, the point is that in the *Iliad* V the mortal offensive deed to an immortal is carried out by a divine intention, not by his own mortal idea. It is the divine intention that made a mortal do such an offensive blasphemy to an immortal. It is a divine 'punishment' to an 'evil' divinity given through a human agent. For Athena's absolute intention, to rescue the Achaeans, this pattern is used again in a more serious situation: wounding another immortal, the 'formidable' war-god Ares to remove him from the battlefield, because Ares is fighting for the Trojans breaking his agreement with Athena and Hera to support the Achaeans. In this case, however, Athena more directly acts to wound Ares by managing Diomedes' spear. Here Homer equipped Athena with full arms for the fight against Ares.

The second difference is their structural/ thematic function in the Epics.

In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, as already seen, the mortal violence to an immortal is firmly associated with its overall structure of *the Epic*, becoming the leading factor to the end, that is, the fatal cause of Enkidu's death, Gilgamesh's challenge to death, his search for immortality; and his final enlightenment of human destiny is the ultimate outcome of the initial violence.

In the *Iliad*, on the other hand, this is an independent event, and does not associate itself with the subsequent development of the *Iliad* as a whole, in the way that the Ishtar-episode does.

Thus, urged by the outrageous human offensive behaviour to an immortal in the Ishtar-episode, Homer created his own episode as a divine-'punishment'. In

Homer's episode a human hero is a divine agent to carry out a divine intention: to 'punish' an 'evil' divine figure. [17]

In this way Homer avoided composing a true unthinkable human affront to an immortal. Adapting the true-human-affront episode, Homer recreated a 'pseudo-human affront episode', so to say. And Homer seemed to have been satisfied with his own creation, because he repeated this pattern even three times almost in the same manner. [18]

Let us now turn again to the second part of the Ishtar episode of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to see how Homer adapted this episode, where the goddess Ishtar is depicted as the war-goddess. This is the very point of our theme.

Ishtar's double-nature:

As noticed above the Ishtar-episode in Tablet 6 of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* can be divided into two parts, which describe Ishtar in her two natures, transforming from one nature to another.

In the first part the love-goddess' proposal is rejected and she is insulted by Gilgamesh. In the second part, enraged by Gilgamesh's rejection and scorning, Ishtar tries to avenge the offender by killing him with the Bull of Heaven in vain: the Bull is slaughtered by Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and Ishtar is now remorselessly insulted by them. The Bull's haunch is thrown to her face, and Enkidu mocks her bitterly.

In both situations in this episode the goddess is described miserably defeated by mortals, quite an extraordinary Ishtar compared to Ishtar, the Queen of goddesses, highly exalted powerful war and love goddess as seen in Mesopotamian literary sources, and in iconography as well. (This could be the very intention of the author: to utterly insult and defeat Ishtar, the patron/ city-goddess of the Dynasty of Akkad.)

17 What is Athena's intention in injuring Aphrodite? Cf. Kirk 1990: 105 on 422-3-5. Homer provides the answer: V. 422-5: Athena says: Aphrodite as the cause of the Trojan War, the very provoker of Helen; her injury is divine 'punishment' for it; cf. the true cause of the Trojan War: Zeus' plan/ βουλή in the *Cypria/ Κύπρια* 1; cf. 'punishment' to Ares as the breaker of agreement: V. 829-31-34.

18 The repetitions of the same pattern: Diomedes' attack on Ares V. 854-63-65, 871-86, 888-97; and Homer expands human-attack-on-immortal idea to a parody, the 'theomachy': Hera attacks Artemis, in XXI 471-480-489-492-513.

Here the sudden change in her attitude should be noticed from the structural development. Ishtar is challenging the offender even pursuing him, to kill him. This attitude doubtless comes from her warlike nature. The second part is composed for the war-goddess Ishtar. This is confirmed in Enkidu's scornful words to her. Ishtar is wearing her weapons in this part, as we will see immediately below. Thus in Tablet 6, the double-natured Ishtar is described in two clear-cut structures as the love-goddess and as the war-goddess. [19]

Dichotomy of Ishtar's double nature:

The Making of the War-Goddess Athena

The third is a remarkable difference. The Ishtar-episode is well-composed using Ishtar's double nature not just in a clear-cut structural division, but in a gradual development with a sudden change in her attitude.

In Book V, the Homeric poet made a complete dichotomy, that is, he divided the two natures of one deity Ishtar into two, giving them to two Greek deities independently, each nature to one deity: the love goddess became Aphrodite, and the war-goddess became Athena. Although Aphrodite is the main figure of this episode, it is not a reproduction of only the half of the original episode for the love goddess.

Homer made his war-goddess instruct a hero-warrior to wound his love goddess as 'punishment' for being the cause of the Trojan War. The warrior Diomedes is used as Athena's human agent to 'punish' the 'evil' goddess, as Ishtar used the Bull of Heaven against her human offender. Thus the Homeric poet composed his own story in Book V using his two goddesses independently in an intricate and complex structure.

With his love-goddess a very close parallel was made even in detail as we have already seen. For his war-goddess, on the other hand, Homer did not make a copy of Ishtar, the miserably defeated and insulted war-goddess in the original

19 Cf. a Neo Babylonian cylinder seal depicts this episode: British Museum WA 89435, Collon 1988: 180-1, 28. no. 858 (& no. 857), 'Inanna is trying to prevent Gilgamesh and Enkidu from killing of the Bull of Heaven'. George 1999, fig. 7; in this scene even Ishtar's shoulder-weapons are shifted to Gilgamesh; this may imply critical interpretation and attitude to this episode and to Ishtar. (Text fig. 1)

episode. He took up the essence of the war-goddess Ishtar, that is, her bellicose warlike nature, and in his episode Homer made his war-goddess command her human-agent warrior to wound his love-goddess with a bronze spear.

Thus he made his war-goddess Athena victorious. Here the dichotomy of Ishtar's double nature can be clearly recognized. The role of his war-goddess is not confined to this episode only. Homer left his war-goddess Athena free, appearing actively in the rest of Book V, and all through the *Iliad*.

Homer created his war-goddess vigorous and victorious, as an ἐπιτάρροθος/ *divine war-helper* of the Achaean hero-warriors as seen in V and many other parts in the *Iliad*. [20] Thus it is in this episode that Athena for the first time appeared as the Greek war-goddess in Greek literature and was definitely established as the everlasting *Nikephoros* Athena in the *Iliad*.

Literary evidence of the War-Goddess Ishtar in Arms:

As already pointed out, in the last part of the struggle between Gilgamesh-Enkidu and Ishtar, we find Ishtar wearing her weapons, clearly shown in Enkidu's reproach to her:

> **Had I caught you too, I'd have treated you likewise,/**
> **I'd have draped *your arms* in its (the Bull's) guts! [21]**

This expression may suggest that the author had an image of Ishtar with her weapons over her shoulders as she is represented in many cylinder seals from the time of Sargon of Akkad.

Homer no doubt marked this: Goddess Ishtar in arms! [22] Not only by her abrupt change to an aggressive revengeful attitude, but by this surprising fact, 'Goddess

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20 These remarkable features may suggest that this episode was a composition in the earliest stage of the establishment of the two independent goddesses from double-natured goddess Ishtar, appearing so closely together in one story. The existence of the armed Aphrodite is a remnant of this dichotomy, 'incomplete dichotomy', so to say.

21 Dalley 1989: 82 n. 63: This mockery of Enkidu is in the Standard Version, but not in Sumerian Version, though the killing of the Bull of Heaven is in both versions. According to Dalley (1989: 155-56) a short story of *Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven* in the Sumerian version was expanded considerably in Akkadian epic. (Standard Version: 11/12th century B. C.)

22 Couldn't this, indeed, be a happy inspiration to our Homeric poet for his description of the Arming of Athena? (Whether this scene were original, West assumes that a scene of the arming of Athena might have been originally composed by Homer, but he is not sure whether all the description in the extant text is original or not. (pers. com.) cf. Leaf 1900: I, 194, 332 & 358.) The arming scene V 733-747, (and VIII 381-396) can be evidence to prove that here in this part Athena for the first time wears

Ishtar in Arms' too Homer could have recognized the double-nature of one the same goddess in a story. As we have already seen, Homer first made a dichotomy in the double nature of Ishtar and devised his two goddesses.

armoury; practically speaking, at this time Athena did not have her own armoury, and she had to wear/ borrow her father's. This may also imply that here Athena made her very first appearance as a warrior-goddess. In this scene Athena was for the first time described as a Greek armed war-goddess in Greek literature, inspired by 'Ishtar in arms' in the Ishtar-episode in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

The first literary evidence of the armed war-goddess Athena

Then, Homer too, equipped his war-goddess Athena with weapons as his ἐπιτάρροθος to support Diomedes for his fight against the war-god Ares in another acute crisis in the same context in V.

Αὐτὰρ Ἀθηναίη πέπλον μὲν κατέχευεν ἑανὸν πατρὸς ἐπ' οὔδει,	**V 733-4**
ἡ δὲ χιτῶν' ἐνδῦσα Διὸς, ἀμφὶ δ΄ἄρ ὤμοισιν βάλετ' αἰγίδα	**736-8**
κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἀμφίφαλον κυνέην θέτο τετραφάληρον	**743**
κρυσείην, ἐς δ' ὄχεα φλόγεα ποσὶ βήσετο, λάζετο δ' ἔγχος	**745**
βριθὺ μέγα στιβαρόν	**746**

(Athena, taking off her soft robe upon the floor of her father's [room],
put on the tunic of Zeus; around her shoulders she flung the tasselled aegis,
and she set a golden helmet on her head; then she stepped on to the fiery chariot,
grasping a huge, heavy and strong spear [in her hand].) [23]

Homer's Aphrodite-episode, therefore, may prove that the double natured goddess Ishtar had been known to Homer, how an episode of the complex goddess was adapted, and what was re-created from it. This episode in the *Iliad* V can really be literary evidence of the introduction and adaptation of the armed Ishtar, the goddess of war and love, and importantly the dichotomy of her double nature into two independent Greek goddesses by Homer: the war-goddess Athena and the love goddess Aphrodite.

Thus, the Greek war-goddess was created, and for the first time she was clad with Greek armoury, that is, the Greek armed war-goddess Athena was definitely established in Book V in the *Iliad*. Her warlike nature was further characterized and developed in the rest of the *Iliad*: vigorous victorious

23 From the *Iliad* V 733-746: Goold 1999: LCL, 260/261.

Νικηφόρος Ἐπιτάρροθος Αθηναίη. Athena in the *Iliad* is the *Nikephoros*/ victorious war-goddess.

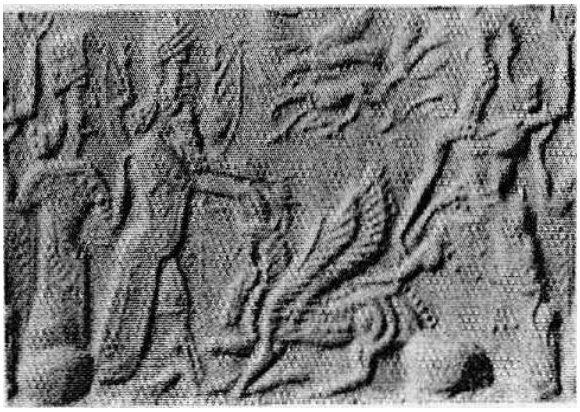
Here, therefore, Ishtar in this episode in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is assumed to be the model of the armed war-goddess Athena in Book V in the *Iliad*, and ultimately as literary evidence of the model of Greek war-goddess Athena. Homer made his war-goddess ever-victorious, *Nikephoros*, as the great Ishtar to king Sargon of Akkad, and to vigorous ambitious Neo Assyrian kings, and even to Babylonian kings. It cannot be exaggerated that the armed war-goddess Ishtar might have been the world's first armed war-goddess, the origin of other war goddesses in the other civilizations. The Greek war-goddess Athena was not an exception.

Conclusion:

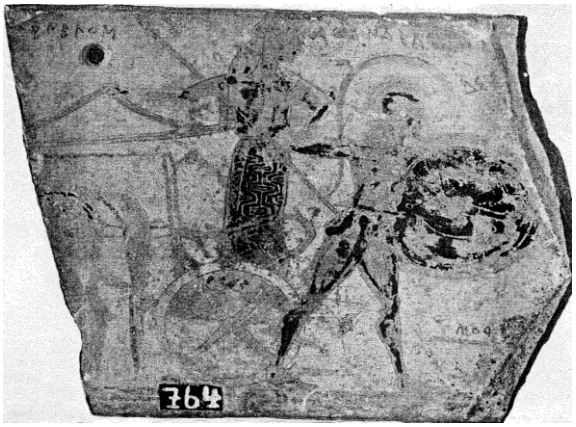
We have seen in the two remarkable cases how oriental models were adapted and how freely they were transformed into new creations according to their new structures. Oriental models were openly and positively adapted for new compositions both by Hesiod and Homer.

Already by the time of Hesiod and Homer stories about gods: *theogony*, religious and fascinating myths, and individual heroic stories, epics would have developed and been distributed in oral forms to some extent. (cf. Burgess 2001)

With the adaptation of the Phoenician alphabetical writing system (c. 750 BC), these now could have been written down. First they were collected and were arranged in good structures from what so far had been developed in oral forms. In this process at this very writing-stage, oriental literature was much more positively and abundantly adapted and in various ways, not only structures, stories, but even typical minor formulaic expressions. In this way, both Hesiod and Homer contributed to writing down the orally distributed literatures in much more diverse refined expressions, making stories more exciting in good structural development borrowing much sophisticated oriental literature.



Text figure 1. Depiction of the Bull of Heaven in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* on a NB cylinder seal.



Text fig. 2. Depiction of the Aristeia of Diomedes in the *Iliad* V, Corinthian pinax, c. 550 BC.

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