

LEONID KOGAN and MANFRED KREBERNIK:

Etymological Dictionary of Akkadian, Volume 1: Roots Beginning with P and B.

v, 537 pp., vii, 539–767 pp. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020.

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The *Etymological Dictionary of Akkadian (EDA)* provides the first fruits of a long-term project conducted since June 2013 at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena and the National Research University – Higher School of Economics, Moscow. Its usefulness is self-evident. Of the two major Akkadian dictionaries, only von Soden's *Handwörterbuch*, completed in 1984, includes consistent etymologies. Both new texts and the re-reading of old have produced a great deal of new material. The reasons for the lack of such studies are equally evident: the work demands a mass of philological minutiae and languages rarely of interest to most Semiticists, while Assyriology's long-term divorce from *Philologia sacra* has made the prerequisite knowledge of Semitic languages increasingly rare. It need hardly be mentioned that the authors are uniquely positioned to address these issues.

The volume begins with a general overview of Akkadian, its relationship to Semitic, and remarks on organization and use, including a methodological discussion of the thorny distinction between *Fremdwörter* and *Lehnwörter* (p. 21). The literature cited is minimal: newer references are generally missing, e.g. V. Meyer-Laurin, "Zur phonologischen Rekonstruktion von 'Schin' <š>", *Altorientalische Forschungen* 43, 2016, 77–146. The influence of A. Militarev and L. Kogan's earlier *Semitic Etymological Dictionary* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005) can be seen throughout. The dictionary's most important feature is the use of "cover symbols" for the root consonants in the headwords: ʿ for ' or y; H for ' or h; K for k, g, or q; L for l or r; M for m or n; P for p or b; S for š, s, z, or š; T for t, d, or ṭ; X for an unclear consonant; and ° for "a consonant whose presence is not certain" (p. 22). Suggested (phonemic) roots are separated by a dot: a relatively straightforward root such as *balātu* "to live" thus appears under the headword P-L-T.b-l-ṭ (P0596, pp. 336–8). The need for constant recourse to the indices to discover where a particular Akkadian word is sorted into this system makes the volume as a whole frustratingly cumbersome to use.

Each numbered headword (P0001–P1001) is followed by an indication of etymological background: 1. Inherited Semitic; 2. Internal development; 3. Foreign or loanword; 4. Unknown, all with various subgroups (p. 26). A list of derivatives, distribution, and references to the dictionary meanings in their respective sub-entries follow. The task of updating the lemmata was assigned to an unfortunately acronymed parallel project; see M.P. Streck, *Supplement to the Akkadian Dictionaries, Vol. 1: B, P* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), 48. Each entry concludes with notes and an etymological discussion. Particularly noteworthy is the attempt to include Ethiopian and Modern South Arabian languages (pp. 621–35 in the index).

It is easy to quibble with many details. The distribution given for individual entries often requires revision, affecting any assessments of long-term lexical trends. Against the definition "V lex." (first millennium lexical) assigned to *napsurtu* (P0828), see *ina guḥaṣṣe ša lā napsurti* "with the cord which cannot be released" in the bilingual van Dijk, *Lugal*, pl. 64 ff. iv 9', discussed in S. Seminara, *La versione accadica del Lugal-e* (Rome: Dipartimento di Studi Orientali, 2001), 371. The bibliography is often spotty. Sabaic is usually referenced through A.F.L. Beeston *et al.*, *Sabaic Dictionary/Dictionnaire sabéen* (Louvain: Peeters, 1982), with

additions from A. Sima, *Tiere, Pflanzen, Steine und Metalle* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000). No reference is made to the updated material of the online *Sabäisches Wörterbuch* (<http://sabaweb.uni-jena.de/>).

The principle “separate until proven equal” leads to a separation of the entries *bukru* “son, child” (P0255) and the Early North Arabian loanword *bakru* “young camel” (P0256), both from the same root, even if they entered the lexicon through different paths. There is no reason why reference to David Cohen’s entry in *Dictionnaire des racines sémitiques 2* (Paris: Mouton, 1976), 64 should have been omitted; this work had already collected most of the material. Conversely, the entry on *binu* “son” and related lexemes (P0639: P-M.b-n.1) lists the root as either common Semitic or as a West Semitic loanword and suggests that its use may have been bolstered by “speakers’/writers’ knowledge of a highly prominent cognate”, since “the great majority of the attested examples are found in the first millennium literary compositions and in the Malku-type lexical works” (p. 357). But both *binu* and *bintu* are already found in earlier texts for which no West Semitic influence can be argued: see N. Wasserman, *Akkadian Love Literature* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 210 and 227 on KAR 158 rev. v 11’. Like *bukru*, *binu* belongs to the common literary language. The same cannot be said of *bunu* or *bunatu*: it may have been judicious to separate the entries more cleanly along the same lines.

The separate entries for *būšu* “a bird” (P0744, P-S-ᵛ.b-š-’ .1) and *būšu* “hyaena” (P0745, P-S-ᵛ.b-š-’ .2) highlight the authors’ erudition as a whole, connected with Modern South Arabian/Mehri *bčā’yōn* “Tristram’s grackle(?)” and Proto-West Semitic **šabu*’ “hyaena”, respectively, the latter by way of hypothetical **šabu*’- > **bu’as-* (or **buša*’) > **bu’š-* (or **buš’-*) > *būš-*. Such a metathesis is certainly possible – the doublet Akkadian *lahru* and Hebrew Rāḥēl/Rachel “ewe” comes to mind. The suspicion remains, however, that the word is simply *pūšu* and refers to both animals due to their white markings, as suggested by M. Stol in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 77, 2020, 106.

Some entries explicitly reject the results of its sister *Supplement*. Based on the Neo-Assyrian writing BUR-DIŠ (Studien zu den Assur-Texten 2, 10: 4), M.P. Streck, *Supplement* 1, 48 had pointed to the need for revising the entry ***burhiš* to *burtiš*. The *EDA*’s rejection of the reading based on a “rather uncertain” (p. 242) identification of the Neo-Assyrian attestation is needlessly contrarian: the context of the administrative text favours reading a designation of a natural animal, the *burtiš* is also attested in other Middle Assyrian administrative texts: D. Kertai, “The creatures that protected the doors of Nineveh”, *Mesopotamia* 50, 2015, 151.

What picture of the lexicon emerges? D.O. Edzard (*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 60, 1970, 159) and M.P. Streck (*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 97, 2007, 149–52) had provided earlier statistics for CAD B and P, respectively. A simplified summary of the 1,001 headwords of the *EDA* yields 249 entries (or c. 25%) with no certain etymology, 426 entries either common Semitic (320) or internal developments (106) (together c. 42%), and 326 foreign or loanwords (c. 33%). The most common sources are West Semitic (114, or c. 11%), Hurrian (86, or c. 8.5%), and Sumerian (81, or c. 8%). Fewer derive from Indo-European (22), Elamite (10), Kassite (6), or Egyptian (8). Around 58 entries are hitherto attested only in Eblaite.

The first volume of any major dictionary usually serves as a test case to flush out any unforeseen gremlins in the system. As the volume demonstrates, these are mercifully few. Any disagreements on interpretation are compensated by the straightforward presentation of the evidence and ample indices. Nine additional

volumes are planned. We can only wish the authors continued success and timely publication.

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JACOB JAN DE RIDDER:

Descriptive Grammar of Middle Assyrian.

(Leipziger Altorientalische Studien 8.) xviii, 628 pp. Wiesbaden:

Harrassowitz, 2018. €98. ISBN 978 3 447 10979 6.

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The writing of grammars holds an uneasy place in the Assyriological curriculum. Particularly in the German tradition, they are often assigned as dissertation topics to students too busy with the grammatical forms within the time allotted to gain a firm grasp of the historical and social contexts. By the time most Assyriologists reach scholarly maturity, they tend to find countless other interesting things to say about the texts, so that the slog back to reconstructing paradigms becomes understandably unappealing. The *Descriptive Grammar*, originally submitted as a PhD dissertation at Universität Leipzig, certainly belongs to the same tradition. The grammar of Middle Assyrian has long wanted revision, as the field has until now made do with W. Mayer's *Untersuchungen zur Grammatik des Mittelassyrischen* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1971); see, for example, the reviews by H. Freydanck in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 70, 1975, 142–4 and by J.N. Postgate in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 31, 1974, 273–4 on its shortcomings, particularly its treatment of “anomalies”. We can emphasize that de Ridder's *Grammar* offers a substantial advance, and will doubtless serve as a reference for the foreseeable future.

In form and structure the work closely follows N.J.C. Kouwenberg's *Grammar of Old Assyrian* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), the debt to which is acknowledged in the foreword (p. xix). The core of the *Grammar* follows a traditional chapter division covering orthography and phonology (chapters 2–4; a syllabary is given on pp. 549–70); nouns (chapters 5–7), adjectives and participles (chapter 8); numbers (chapter 9); pronouns (chapters 10–11); particles (chapter 12); prepositions (chapter 13); adverbs (chapter 14); and verbs (chapters 15–17). Syntax is treated in the last five, brief chapters (18–22). The book concludes with summary paradigms (chapter 23) and concordances (chapter 25).

As becomes clear from the introduction (pp. 1–35), the “descriptive” portion of the title should be taken seriously. The presentation of historical context or Middle Assyrian as “dialect” (what is “Standard Akkadian” on p. 4 supposed to mean?) and the noncommittal references to the Middle Assyrian literary corpus, explicitly outside the scope of the grammar, all remain superficial and largely irrelevant. Gaps in secondary literature can be overlooked. More serious omissions include W. van Soldt's *Studies in the Akkadian of Ugarit* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1991), cited on p. 15 but missing from the bibliography, where comparative discussions of many of the grammatical issues treated here can already be found; the site of Satu Qala is mentioned repeatedly in the introduction without any reference to its publication in W. van Soldt *et al.*, *Anatolica* 39, 2013, 197–239, or to numerous subsequent treatments. The “map of the linguistic landscape” (p. 3), which assigns