

Observations upon the Languages of the Early Inhabitants of Mesopotamia

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ART. XV.—*Observations upon the Languages of the Early Inhabitants of Mesopotamia.* By THEO. G. PINCHES, M.R.A.S.

IN the following pages I propose to go a little into a subject of great interest, whether we look at it from an antiquarian, or from a scientific point of view—namely, the question of the ancient non-Semitic languages of Mesopotamia and the people by whom they were spoken. To this subject I have given a great deal of attention, and have, by examination of the documents left to us by the Assyrians and Babylonians, their successors, found out many interesting and important facts, which will, I hope, not only prove to be of interest, but also of value to those who make comparative philology their study.

We have not, it is true, any direct evidence as to the primitive home of these ancient nations, but there are documents which allow us to infer a great deal, and with probable certainty. The most important of these documents is, perhaps, that referring to the cardinal points, which, while showing how these differ from the cardinal points of our own time, give us also an idea of the direction of the migration of this people.

The passages referring to this are as follows :

Šáru šútu mât Élamti, šáru iltanu mât Akkadi, šáru šadú mât Su-edin u mât Gutí, šáru Aharru mât Martu.

Ímni Sin mât Akkadi, šumēli Sin mât Élamti, éli Sin mât Martu, árki Sin mât Su-edin u mât Gutí.

‘The south is Elam, the north is Akkad, the east is Su-edin and Gutí, the west is Martu.

‘The right of the moon is Akkad, the left of the moon is Elam, the front of the moon is Martu, the back of the moon is Su-edin and Gutí.’

From this it is clear that all the cardinal points were (at least in early times) exactly between what they are now, the north being shifted westwards, the south eastwards, etc. But besides this, the paragraph referring to the moon speaks of the right hand as the north, the left as the south, the front as the west, and the back as the east, the names of the countries given for these corresponding with the indications given for the cardinal points. The west, or, rather, the south-west, is called the front, and the migrations of the people must therefore have been from north-east to south-west. This corresponds therefore to what we find in Gen. xi. 2, where, speaking of the Tower of Babel, it is said that as they travelled from the east, they came to a plain, and there raised the Tower, afterwards so celebrated.

Now, as I have shown elsewhere, the Cuneiform style of writing was in use in early times in Cappadocia, and the country around seems to have borne the name of Cush. This I supposed (whether rightly or wrongly time will, perhaps, show) to have been the home of the Akkadian race, who, breaking off from the main body, travelled towards the east, and became the Kassites or Cossacans of the later writers. These people, after settling there for some time, afterwards sent out colonies which settled in Southern Babylonia, to get to which country they would have to travel in a south-easterly (with them in an easterly) direction. Here they remained, and their language underwent considerable changes, and ultimately developed into the two dialects designated by many Assyriologists by the names Sumerian and Akkadian. Many of the Kassite nouns end in *aš*, and it is an interesting fact that part of Babylonia bears a name having this termination—namely Karduniaš, where *-iaš* is the Kassite word for ‘country.’ I cannot believe, in the face of these facts, that Prof. Fried. Delitzsch is right in regarding Kassite as a language totally unconnected with Sumerian and Akkadian; on the contrary, it seems to be the fact that they are closely allied, Sumerian being the direct descendant of Kassite or Cossaeon.

Besides these three tongues—Sumerian, Akkadian, and

Kassite—traces are found of other languages, distinguished by the names Su, Suġ, Mar, and Nim—Mar being probably Phœnician, and Nim Elamite. Su and Suġ were probably spoken in the north-east. There was also another tongue called Lulubite. The following are the words for ‘god,’ ‘goddess,’ ‘Rimmon,’ and ‘the Sun-god’ in these tongues :

	GOD.	GODDESS.
Sum.	<i>Dimmir.</i>	Akk. seems to have been <i>Dardu</i> ,
Akk.	<i>Dingir</i> or <i>Digir.</i> <i>Kadmu.</i> <i>Ĝilibu.</i>	<i>Kanuku</i> , <i>Iltu</i> , and <i>Ištaru</i> (same word as <i>Istar</i>).
Su	<i>Ene</i> (connected with the Akk. <i>Eni</i> ‘lord’).	
Nim or Elamite }	<i>Nab.</i>	<i>Kirir</i> and <i>Usan</i> .
Mar	<i>Malahu.</i>	<i>Aštaru</i> (clearly the same as <i>Ištaru</i>).
Lulubite	<i>Kiuru.</i>	
Kassite	<i>Mašġu</i> or <i>Bašġu</i>	

THE GOD RIMMON.

THE SUN-GOD.

Sum.	<i>Mur.</i>	
Akk.	<i>Mer.</i>	<i>Bara</i> , <i>Utu</i> , etc.
Su	<i>Teš-sub.</i>	
Nim or Elamite }	<i>Kun-zibami.</i>	
Mar	<i>Addu</i> and <i>Dadu.</i>	
Kassite	<i>Buriaš.</i>	<i>Saj</i> , <i>Suriaš.</i>
Suġ	<i>Adgi.</i>	

Of comparisons between the Kassite and the dialect of Akkadian (called Sumerian), between which Prof. Fried. Delitzsch strongly denies that there is any connection, may be quoted the words *eme*, meaning in both Sumerian and Kassite ‘to go forth’; the Sum. *mulu* and the Kassite *mali*

'man'; the Sum. *Gula* and the Kassite *Ĝali* or *Ĝala* 'the goddess Gula,' also the adjective 'great'; the Sum. *mer* and the Kassite *gamer* 'foot'; the Kassite *meriaš* 'earth,' evidently composed of *mer* 'foot' (as in Sum.) and *iaš* 'ground' (compare the German *Fussboden*), with some others. Of course it is only natural that the words for the deity in each language should differ greatly, as each nationality would regard its own patron deity as the great God, and this would become the word for the supreme deity in the tongue.

So much, at present, for the other tongues. Enough has been said to show what a deeply interesting field of research would be open to us if we had more documents to aid us in our researches, and what deeply interesting philological and ethnographical questions would be solved. Perhaps, on the resumption of excavations in Assyria and Babylonia, more documents may be found, but until then we must, I suppose, be content with such facts as have been preserved to us hitherto.

It is not my intention to discuss here the question which has been raised during the last few years, as to the name by which the two chief languages ought to be called, and I have therefore thought best to head my observations as above, rather than seem to incline to any particular view. Of course one thing is pretty certain, and that is, that the northern part of Babylonia was called Akkad, and the southern part Sumer. Whether, however, Sumerian or Akkadian was the standard language, or whether we are to understand a time-distinction rather than a place-distinction, I am unable to say with certainty. It may have been one or the other, or it may (and this is, perhaps, the most likely) have been both. At some future time, and in the light of the new texts which, it is to be hoped, future excavations in the East, on the sites of the ancient cities of Babylonia and Assyria, will bring forth to us, I hope to be able to discuss this interesting question.

The early languages or dialects of the early Babylonians were at least two, the time at which they were respectively spoken, and the place where, being, as above remarked,

unknown. With regard to the tongues themselves, this much may be said, that whilst we can, to a certain extent, understand and explain the texts in which they are used, and even make compositions in these tongues,¹ yet no one would, I think, be bold enough to translate one of those texts without an Assyrian (or Babylonian) translation—indeed the difficulty is so great, that many students are frightened by the magnitude of the task which they would have to set themselves if they studied them, whilst others (but these are in the minority indeed), not wishing to give themselves the trouble of explaining all the difficulties, boldly maintain that they are cryptographies—puzzles which the ancient Babylonians, having nothing better to do, set themselves to while away the time, and wrote long explanatory lists with distorted and unrecognizable forms of Semitic Babylonian words with dialectic variants, sound-laws, and a grammar, quite different from those of their mother-tongue.

The principal difficulties of the language are the large number of meanings which every sign or group of signs could have, and the large number of verbal prefixes (or suffixes). To this also may be added the large number of homophones, which, whilst giving difficulties to the modern student only in a limited degree (he having the characters to guide him), must often have made the spoken language difficult to understand, unless guided by some special intonation in the speaker's voice, or some faint echo of the lost consonant, which would have made the word distinguishable; for these early Mesopotamian tongues were largely affected by phonetic decay, hence the large number of homophones.

The language, as presented to us in the syllabaries, bilingual-lists, etc., consists, for the greater part, of words of one syllable, expressed by a character formed of wedges in various positions, each character having as a rule more than one meaning. These various meanings do certainly, as a rule, coincide to a great extent, but they also often widely differ. The following extracts from the syllabaries and bilingual tablets will make this clear :

¹ See the "Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung," Heft 1, Jan. 1884.

'prince,' whilst yet a third form, , expresses the meaning of 'to sit.' Are we to regard these as being all variant forms of the same character, or as different characters afterwards assimilated, in consequence of their likeness to each other? The former may, indeed, be the case, but I am inclined to regard the latter as the more likely, partly from the natural tendency of such forms to become confused, and partly from the fact, that , meaning 'to,' coincides in form with the character which, in later Assyrian, is written as , just as, in the latest Babylonian,  has to do duty for the characters written , , and  in the earlier style, and , , and  in Assyrian. Thus are we to explain what may be called the "unconnected polyphony" of the greater part of the wedge-formed characters of the Assyrians and Babylonians.

As has been already remarked, Akkadian and Sumerian were greatly affected by phonetic decay, the result being that an enormous number of homophones were developed out of roots originally quite distinct. As, however, in those grammatical forms where a vowel-ending is required, the lost consonant is restored, it was probably so in all cases, even where that consonant is not written.¹ As an example of that extensive polyphony, I give a list of words indicated, by the Assyrians and Babylonians, as having the same pronunciation :

LIST OF HOMOPHONES OF THE SYLLABLE *Gé*, WITH THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE WORD WHERE KNOWN.

<i>gê</i> 	<i>éššu</i> 'new.'
<i>gê</i> 	<i>kanû</i> 'reed' (full form <i>gên</i> , for <i>gan</i>).
<i>gê</i> 	<i>kitu ša kanî</i> 'root(?) of a reed' (full form <i>get</i>).
<i>gê</i> 	<i>mihiltu</i> 'battle.'

¹ An exception must be made, however, for the roots ending with the letter *l*, which seems to have been always either left out, or softened, as in French.

gê		magāru 'to obey' (full form <i>gen</i>).	
gê		mūšu 'night' (full form <i>gig</i>).	
gê		muršu 'sick' (full form <i>gig</i>).	
gê		kima 'like' (full form <i>geme</i> or <i>ķeme</i>).	
gê		in	<i>gē-nun, kinunu</i> 'fire.'
gê		in	<i>za-gē, ʿellu</i> 'bright' (full form <i>gin</i>).
gê		šiklu 'a shekel' (full form <i>gin</i>).	
gê		išten 'one' (full form <i>giš</i> ¹).	

Of course, in most cases, the position of the word in the sentence gave the sense plainly enough, and also in the compound words there could be no mistake as to the meaning. The words, also, having *g* or *n* as end-sound of the full form, probably retained an echo of these consonants, *g* being pronounced as in the German ending *-ig*, and *n* as a nasal.

Now we have seen, from the examples quoted above, that the method of writing used by the early inhabitants of Mesopotamia was by means of characters formed of wedges in various positions; that many of these characters got confused by carelessness of writing, thus, to a great extent, creating the polyphony which exists to so great a degree. We have seen, also, that at the time when the Babylonians wrote down the Akkadian or Sumerian pronunciation of the characters, the words had become worn down to such an extent, as to make a very large number of homophones, but that it is possible that these homophones were only alike in sound to a certain extent. As we now know, therefore, with what kind of language we have to deal, and by what means the words were expressed, with this introduction (which, though short, has, I trust, been enough to explain the nature of the case), we may go more deeply into the language itself.

As shown by the two lists of words given above, Akkadian

¹ See my paper upon the Akkadian numerals, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. iv. p. 111-116.

is essentially monosyllabic, the words having been brought to this state by phonetic decay, exactly as in English. The concrete noun is the simple root. As soon, however, as a suffix, either to express the plural, or a case, is added, the root takes the vowel *a* (𐎠𐎫 *dingir* 'god,' 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 𐎠𐎫 *dingi-ra-ni* 'his god'), and any lost consonant is, as a rule, restored (𐎠𐎺𐎠 *a*, 'father,' 𐎠𐎺𐎠 𐎠𐎺𐎠 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎫 *a-da-a-ni*, 'his father').

Even the form with the lengthening *a*, however, seems to be shortened from an original root-ending *ag*, which is still attached to a few words. This fact, indeed, is almost certain. The word 𐎠𐎺𐎠 𐎠𐎫 *û-zag* 'fever,' was borrowed by the Assyrians, and they, as was their wont, added the Assyrian case-endings, and in doing so, changed the end-sounded *g* into *k*, making the word 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎫 *asakku*, and the Akkadian 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎫 *a-sir-ra* even, becomes in Assyrian 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎫 *a-šur-rak-ku*, and in this latter word, not only is lost *g* restored as *k*, but it is even, as in the case of *asakku*, doubled. It is almost certain, from these examples, that the Assyrian words were borrowed at an exceedingly early period, before the Akkadian language had quite gained the form in which we now find it.

Akkadian (for by this term it will be well, perhaps, to distinguish the standard tongue) and its dialect were languages poor in words, but being essentially monosyllabic, it made up for this defect by compounding largely, and very many of its expressions are most interesting, as the following examples will show.

VERBAL COMPOUNDS.

𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 *igi-šum* 'to see,' 'to regard,' literally 'to give eye,' from 𐎠𐎫 *igi* 'eye,' and 𐎠𐎺𐎠 *šum* 'to give.'

𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 *gu-dé* 'to prophesy,' literally 'to pour forth words,' from 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 *gu* 'word,' and 𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 *dé* 'to pour forth.'

𐎠𐎫 𐎠𐎺𐎠 *giš-tug* 'to hear,' literally 'to make ear,' from 𐎠𐎫 *giš* 'ear,' or 'attention,' and 𐎠𐎫 *tug* 'to have' or 'make.'

𒊕 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 *šu-gar-gi* 'to revenge,' literally 'to bring back a benefit-making,' from 𒊕 *šu* 'hand' or 'benefit,' 𒄀 *gar* 'to make,' and 𒀭 𒄀 *gi* 'to return.'

𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 *gab-ri* 'to oppose,' literally 'to set the breast,' from 𒊕 *gab* 'breast,' and 𒀭 𒄀 *ri* 'to set.'

In all verbal compounds, of which there was a large number, the two parts were separated by the various prefixes. Thus 'he opposed' is 𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 *GAB-imman-ri*; 'he regarded' is 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 *IGI-imman-šum*, and so on for all the rest.

NOUN-COMPOUNDS.

These are formed in almost the same way as the verbal compounds:—

𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 𒄀 (for 𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 𒄀, transposed from 𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 𒄀) *lu-gal* 'king,' literally 'great man,' from 𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 *lu* 'man,' and 𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 *gal* 'great.'

𒄀 𒊕 𒄀 *ki-tur* 'seat,' literally 'place of sitting,' from 𒄀 𒊕 *ki* 'place,' and 𒊕 𒄀 *tur* 'to sit.'

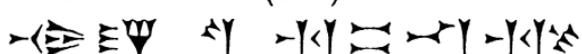
𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 𒄀 𒄀 *gubba-igi* 'attendant,' literally 'he who stands before,' from 𒀭 𒄀 *gub* 'to stand,' and 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 *igi* 'eye,' 'face.'

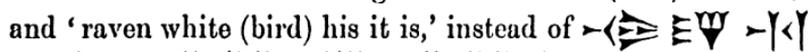
𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 𒀭 𒄀 𒄀 𒄀 *giš-uru* 'beam,' literally 'supporting (?) wood,' from 𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 *giš* 'wood,' and 𒀭 𒄀 𒄀 𒄀 *uru*.

𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 𒄀 𒄀 𒄀 *aralli* 'Hades.' This example is not quite the same as those given above, as the word *aralli* is not, strictly speaking, the pronunciation of the group. 𒊕 𒀭 𒄀 𒄀 𒄀 𒄀 is pronounced *é*, and means 'house,' 𒄀 𒄀 *kur* means 'land,' and 𒄀 𒄀 *bat* means 'to die.' The meaning of the characters is therefore 'house of the land of the dead.' *Aralli* seems to be for *uru-galli* 'the great city,'—a very significant name for Hades.

Examples of other compounds met with may also be noticed, and these last, though rather rare, are not by any means among the least interesting, as they show the extreme

flexibility of the two tongues which we are now considering. This class of compounds expresses the subject, predicate, and object, in a very curious way:—


*Bur - mi (D.S.) bi - na - nam*¹

*Bur - babbar (D.S.) bi - na - nam*²

meaning respectively 'his raven is black,' and 'his raven is white.' The literal meaning is 'raven black (bird) his it is,' and 'raven white (bird) his it is,' instead of  *burabi (D.S.) mina-nam* (*babbara-na-nam*) 'raven his black it is (white it is).'

NUMERALS.

The Numerals are formed from different roots as far as five, and after that the first series is repeated and added to the word for 5. They are as follows:

- 1 *aš* (*aša*), *gê* (for *geš*), and *deš*.
- 2 *min*.
- 3 *ešše*.
- 4 *šimu*.
- 5 *iá*.
- 6 *áš* (*ášša*) 5 + 1 *á-aša* for *iá-aša*.
- 7 *imina* 5 + 2 *í-mina* for *iá-mina*.
- 8 *ássa* 5 + 3 *í-ešše* for *iá-ešše*.
- 9 *išimu* 5 + 4 *í-šimu* for *iá-šimu*.

The tens now begin a different series, and their derivation is not easy to determine:

- 10 *gu, ga, ú, á*.
- 20 *ban, nin, nis, susana* ($\frac{2}{3}$).
- 30 *ba, úšu, éš* (for *ú-ešše* and *á-ešše* respectively, for *gu-esse* or *ga-ešše* 10 × 3).
- 40 *nimin* (20 × 2), *šanabi*.
- 50 *ninnu, kingusilla*.
- 60 *šuš* (dialectic *muš*).

¹ Assy.: *Érib-šu šalmumma* 'his raven (is) black also.'

² Assy.: *Érib-šu pišumma* 'his raven (is) white also.'

THE METHOD OF EXPRESSING THE CASES, ETC., IN
AKKADIAN AND ITS DIALECT.

Akkadian was a tongue of singular mobility. A phrase could be expressed in the shortest, tersest way, leaving out not only the verb 'to be,' the postfixes marking case, but even also the plural suffix, as in the phrase:

} 'the sons of
du - abzū imī - na - ne - ne

the abyss are seven,' where the sign of the plural is left out after , the particle 'of' after , and the verb 'to be' is understood; or it could be provided with whole rows of prefixes and suffixes, as in the following:

LU - GIŠGAL - lu DU - DINGIR - ra - na SU - ni - ta

gi - ni - ip - ta - Ê BAR - ra - ni - ta

gi - ri - ip - Ê - ne

'may it depart from the body of the man, the son of his god; may it go forth from his body.'

In the above phrase almost all the needful pronouns, suffixes, lengthenings, etc., are inserted. The first word, which is rendered in the Assyrian translation by the word *amēlu* 'man,' means here more citizen, *lu-gišgal* seeming to mean 'man of an enclosure,' 'townsman,' *lu* is the lengthening. *Du* 'son' here in the genitive of position, as in *du-abzū* above 'son of the abyss.' *Dingira-na* 'of his god.' In this group the *an* 'heaven' or *dingir* 'god,' is followed by the phonetic complement *ra* carrying the vowel-lengthening *a*, indicating that the pronunciation of is here *dingir*. *-na* is the possessive pronoun of the 3rd pers. sing. *Su-ni-ta* 'from his body'—*lit.* 'body his from,' *su* being the word for 'body,' *-ni* the 3rd pers. sing. poss. pronoun, another form

of *-na*, and *ta* the postposition 'from.' *ginipta-é* 'may it depart from it' is a verbal group, composed of *gi*, the precativative prefix, *ni*, the verbal prefix of the 3rd pers. sing.; *ip* 'it,' a pronoun in the accusative; *ta* 'from,' the postposition, and *é*, the verb 'to go forth.' *Baránita* 'from his body' the word for 'body' or 'side' with lengthening, *bara*, the possessive pronoun *-ni*, and the postposition *ta* 'from.' *girip-é-ne* 'may it go forth,' is a verbal group like the former, consisting of the precativative prefix *gi-*, the particle *-ri-*, the exact meaning of which I do not know, the accusative pronoun *-ip-* or *-ib-*, the verb *é* 'to go forth,' and the ending *-ne*.

The two examples printed above I have given in order to show the two extremes to which the Akkadian language could go in the matter of poverty or richness of those grammatical forms which we of the west consider so needful for clear expression, and also as specimens of the language. Almost every mean between these two extremes of redundancy and barrenness is to be met with, especially in the verb. I shall now try to give an explanation of several of these forms, together with an analysis of the same, but first I must say, that as the subject is, as before remarked, one of extreme difficulty, and one of which an explanation, from a scientifically analytical standpoint, is now for the first time made, although I believe that I have found out the true explanation in many points, yet there must needs be a few, which future researches will show to be wrong, but for any shortcomings in this respect I beg for that indulgence which I would readily accord to another.

THE VERBAL ROOT, WITH AND WITHOUT THE LENGTHENING.

The infinitive of the verb is the simple root, such as is found in the bilingual-lists, as \times BAD=*pētû* 'to open,' $\begin{matrix} \times & \times & \times & \times \\ \times & \times & \times & \times \\ \times & \times & \times & \times \end{matrix}$ URU=*našûru* 'to protect,' \times | \times | \times | \times SIM=*šahûhu* 'to cry out.'

The simple verb-root, however, could be used by itself, without the lengthening, in the singular, to express various forms of the finite verb.

𒌷𒌷 𒀭𒌷 𒀭𒌷 *nigin-na-meš* (*nigināmeš*) = *šaidu sunu*
 'they are caught, enclosed, hunted.'

4. Translated in Assyrian by the Imperative or Pre-
 cative :—

𒀭𒌷 𒀭𒌷𒌷𒌷 𒀭𒌷 *šu-luġ-gi* (*šuluġi*) = *mišī* 'wash!'

𒀭𒌷 𒀭𒌷𒌷𒌷 𒀭𒌷𒌷𒌷 *šu-luġ-ġa* (*šuluġa*) = *limsû* 'may they wash.'

With the negative the simple root, with lengthening,
 seems to give the idea of will or needfulness :—

𒀭𒌷 𒀭𒌷𒌷𒌷𒌷𒌷 *nu-bal-e=lâ êteki, lâ nabalkuti, or lâ*
mušpilu 'it shall not be crossed,' 'it shall not be
 trespassed upon,' 'it shall not be defiled.'

THE VERBAL PREFIXED- AND SUFFIXED-PARTICLES.

As a rule, however, Akkadian and its dialect add a large
 number of prefixes (sometimes, however, used as suffixes),
 to express the various persons and moods, often including,
 also, the relation of case.

The following is a list of the verbal prefixes, gathered
 wholly from the connected texts :

Prefixes.

ab- (ap-) ¹	
an- ²	ga-
al-	ġa-
im-	â-
um-	ġu-
i-	ġi-
u-	š u-
ba-	šâ-
mu-	šī-
na-	ġiġ-
ni-, ne-	
nam-	
na-	
nu-	
la-	
ra-	

} precative

} negative³

¹ Also *eb-* or *ep*, *ib* or *ip*, *ub* or *up*.

² Also *en-*, *in-*, and *un-*.

³ The lists give also *lu* and *ti*.

Infixes.

-ab-	-tan-
-an-	-dan-
-c-	-gan-
-ba-	-ra-
-da-	-ši-
-di-	-mi-
-ta-	-me-

Suffixes.

-ab	-meš
-ib	-ne
-am	-ene
-âmu	-enna
-ba	-da
-banib	-ia
-ncš	

Many of the above pronouns, as well as the verbal and nominal suffixes, and the separable pronouns, seem to be formed from the verb *men* 'to be.'

Akkadian possessed two of these verbs, the one (that mentioned above) used exclusively as an auxiliary, the other used almost exclusively as an independent verb. This latter was the verb *gal* (in the dialect *mal*).

Both these verbs had given to the language a noun—from *men* 'to be' comes the word *umun* (with prefixed *u*) meaning 'lord,' shortened sometimes to *ûn* (*umun*=*ucun*, *u'un*, *ûn*). From the root *gal* comes the Akkadian rarely-used *gal* 'man,' which passed over into Assyrian under the form of *kalû* (also exceedingly rare). The dialectic form of this word *gal* is *mulu*, of rather frequent occurrence.

It is from these roots that most of the verbal prefixes and particles are formed. From *men* we get the imperative prefix *umu-*, and the many forms of the other pronouns (*un-*, *in-*, *an-*, *inni-*, *ni-*, etc.). From *gal* comes evidently the prefix *al* (by loss of the initial *g*), which, prefixed to the verbs, makes those forms translated by the Assyrian participle or permanent tense; and from this *gal* comes also, perhaps, the *ga* (*ga*,

gi, *gu*, or *d*) expressing the precative (may he do . . .), and that particle *-ga-* which, inserted between the two pronouns, subject and object, of a verb, seems to express a kind of passive.

Many of these inserted particles, namely *da*, *di*, *ta*, *ra*, and *ši*, seem to be merely forms of the nominal postfixes *da* 'with,' *ta* 'in,' 'from,' *ra* 'in,' 'to,' and *šu* or *še* 'to,' and it is probable that many more of this kind exist.

These particles are of course compounded, and form the numerous and puzzling strings of prefixes of which an example has already been given.

The most commonly used is *in-* *an-* or *un-*, which is generally added to the word to express the third person singular. Examples are:—

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *in-PALPAL-e* = *ittanablakat* 'he revolts.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *in-GIGI-ene* = *išabbiṭu*, 'they herd together.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *an-LAL-e* 'he weighs.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *an-AGA-e* = *imandad* 'he measures.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *an-ša-eš* = *épša* 'they made.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *in-PA(D)*¹ 'he has invoked.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *in-DIB-ba*¹ 'he took.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *in-sā*¹ 'he proclaimed.'

ni- is probably another form of this same pronoun:—

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ni-GAL* = *ibašši* 'he is.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ni-AG-ga* } = *imdul* 'he measured.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ni-AGA-e* }

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ni-AG-ga-e* = *imaddad* 'he measures.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ni-AG-ga-e-meš* = *imaddadu* 'they measure.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ni-LAL-e-meš* = *išakkalu* 'they weigh.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ni-GAL-la* = *šaknu* 'he made.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ni-PAL-e* = *ibbalakkitu* 'he revolted.'

¹ From the case-tablets—originals written while the tongue was still living.

To *in-*, expressing the object, might be added the particle *ga* (part, evidently, of the verb 'to be'), seeming to give the verb to which it is added a passive meaning. *in* is, as before, changed into *an* :

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *ingan-zu=iltamad* 'he learnt' (= 'he was made to know').

Still more common is the compound *inda-* (*unda-*, *anda-*). The particle *da* seems to give the idea of association, and is perhaps the same as the postfix *-da* 'with.' The following are examples :

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *unda-GI=utár* 'he returns.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *inda-GAL=ibaššî* 'he is.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *GAB-inda-RI-a=imhuru* 'he opposed.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *unda-RI-a=irmû-šu* 'he set him.'

The group of prefixes *innan* is very common, and expresses, according to the lists, the subject of the verb with the accusative. This was formerly explained as the prefix *in* with the infix *nan*, but this explanation is wrong. The accusative is expressed by *inna* (a lengthened form of *in*) with *an* (for *in*), so that *innan-lal*, for instance, means 'it he weighed.' The following are examples :

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 ¹ *innan-LAL=iškušû* 'he weighed it.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 <<< *innan-LAL-eš=iškulušû* 'they weighed it.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *innan-LAL-e=išakkašû* 'he weighs it.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *innan-LAL-ene=išakkašû* 'they weigh it.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 ¹ *innan-LAL-meš* 'they weighed it.'

The case-tablets give us also forms in which the subject is not expressed :

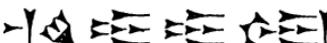
𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *inna-LAL* '(he) weighed it.'

𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 𒂗𒂗𒂗 *inna-LAL-meš* '(they) weighed it.'

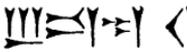
¹ From the case-tablets—originals written while the language was still living.

The prefix *in*, changed to *en*, enters largely into the formation of what is known as the Precative Mood.

The ordinary prefix expressing the Precative is *gi* or *je*, or with vowel-harmony *ga* or *ju*. The stronger form *ga-* is also found, as well as the still more weakened *û-*.

The prefix *gi* is expressed by the character  meaning 'to be.' It is found with this meaning in the phrase  * *gan-gan-dam*, in Assyrian *šibta išakkan* 'he made a profit' or 'revenue,' literally 'he caused a profit to be,' the reduplication here seeming to indicate the causative sense. The word *gan* is the fuller form of the verb 'to be.'

 is also used, with the lengthening  *a*, to express the particles 'either . . . or,' in Assyrian *lû*¹:

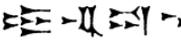
          
    , etc.

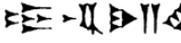
utug gul gi-a, *a-lû gul gi-a*, *gidim gul gi-a*, etc.

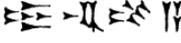
'an *utug*² evil be it, an *alû*² evil be it, a *gidim*² evil be it,' etc.

in better English 'whether it be an evil *utug*, or an evil *ald*, or an evil *gidim*,' etc. (in Assyrian: *lû utukku limnu*, *lû alû limnu*, *lû êdimmu limnu*, etc.)

As a verbal prefix  is generally followed by the syllable  *en*, which is either the same as the prefix *an-*, *in-*, or *un-*, or else a kind of phonetic complement, restoring the lost ending of the verb *gan* 'to be.' The former explanation is, however, the more probable. The following examples will illustrate this form:

 *gi-en-GUB-ba* = *lûkân* 'may it be placed.'

 *gi-en-GI-GI* = *lûtir* 'may he turn.'

 *gi-en-GAB-a* = *lûppatir* 'may it be loosened.'

¹ This word in Assyrio-Babylonian seems to be weakened from a root meaning 'to be able,' and is prefixed to verbal forms, as *lû* or *ti*.

² Names of demous.

𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 *gi-en-GUB-bu-uš* = *lúkân*¹ 'may they be placed.'

𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 *gi-en-da-an-GAL* = *lúnaš*² 'may he raise with.'²

𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 *gi-en-ši-in-GI-GI* = *litûru* 'may he turn.'³

𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 *ga-ba-an-GUB-ba* = *lúkân* 'may he fix it.'

𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠 *ga-ba-an-ZI-ZI* = *lissuḫ* (?) 'may he remove it.'

𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 *NAM-ga-ba-ra-TAR-ru-da* or
𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 *NAM-ga-ba-da-an-TAR-ru-de* = *liruru-šu* 'may he curse him.'⁴

𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 *ga-ba-ra-an-GA-GA* = *liškun* or *lupaḫid* 'may he make,' or 'may he appoint to him.'

𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 *gu-mu-ra-ab-SUM-mu*⁵ = *liddin-ka* 'may he give to thee.'

𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 *gu-mu-ra-ab-BI* = *lîḫbi-ka* 'may he speak to thee.'

The prefixes *in* and *inna* are the most common forms of the third person. The most common form of the second person is *e*, to find which we must first go to the imperative.

The imperative proper is expressed by the syllable 𒄠𒄠𒄠 *ab*, placed usually at the end. The meaning of this particle is probably 'thou,' and seems to be another form of the syllable 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 *ib*, explained in the wrongly-named "five-column syllabary," by *atta* 'thou.' It may not be amiss to reproduce here the passages containing this explanation :

¹ The plural is not expressed—perhaps more correctly—in the Assyrian translation.

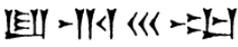
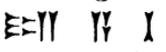
² The full phrase is *šu-na ġendangal* 'may he raise it with his hand.'

³ The verbal form here implies motion towards a given point.

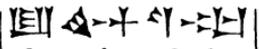
⁴ Literally, 'fate may him-to decide,' and 'fate may him-with he decide,' that is, 'may he decide the fate against him,' from 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 𒄠𒄠𒄠𒄠 *nam-tar* 'to decide fate.'

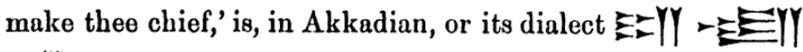
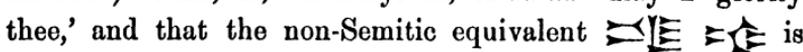
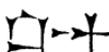
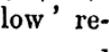
⁵ For *gu-mu-e-ra-ab-sum-mu* 'may (he) thee-to it give.'

PARAGRAPH 6.

 <i>lu - ri - ēš - ka</i>	 <i>ra</i>	 <i>ana- ku</i>
	 <i>li</i>	'I (at the beginning).'  <i>ra - a-šu</i>
	 <i>ib</i>	'to be chief (?).'  <i>at - ta</i>
		'thou (at the end).'

PARAGRAPH 8.

 <i>ib</i>	 <i>ar</i>	 <i>lu - ' - ud - ka</i>	 <i>ib</i>	 <i>at - ta</i>
			 <i>ar</i>	'Thou (at the beginning).'  <i>na - a-du</i>
				'to be glorious.'

From these we learn that the Assyrian *lūrēš-ka* 'let me make thee chief,' is, in Akkadian, or its dialect  *ra-LI-ib* 'I exalt thee,' and that the Akkadian (or dialectic) *ib-AR*, is, in Assyrian, *lū'ud-ka* 'may I glorify thee,' and that the non-Semitic equivalent  is composed of *ib* 'thou' (more properly 'thee') and *AR* 'to glorify'—literally 'thee glorifying.' The characters  and  mean 'placed above' and 'placed below' respectively, and refer to the position of the pronouns *ra* and *ib*—'above' being the beginning of the word, and 'below' the end. We see from this that the particle *ib* denotes the 2nd person, and *ab* is probably another form of this pronoun, used to express the imperative.

Literally, in Akkadian, 'I there it place' (as the line is broken, the pronoun 'thee' was probably otherwise expressed in the lost part), and 'I there it pour,' the particle *-ra-* being probably equal to the French 'y.' From the extract from the so-called five-column syllabary, given above (p. 321) *ara-* could be explained as a shorter form of *ra=anaku* 'I,' but the above explanation is preferable.

In these observations and notes upon the languages of the early inhabitants of Mesopotamia I have only been able to give the broad outlines of that part of the accidence which is not generally treated of. It was, at first, my intention to make these observations much more complete, but want of time and not over-good health have prevented this. Enough, however, has I trust been given, to enable the student of philology to see what these tongues really were like, and to prove that they were certainly not cryptographies, as some scholars maintain. Many of the explanations which I have given will probably have to be abandoned when we know more about these interesting tongues, but the study is not by any means an easy one, and I therefore beg the reader's indulgence. At some future time, after a thorough examination of all the material we have, I hope to return to the subject, and to give as full a grammar of these languages as is possible, with a critical analysis of all the grammatical forms.
