History of the Akkadian Language

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BRILL

Contents

Research on the Akkadian Language

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1 History of Research

1.1 An Unknown Language in an Unknown Script: The Decipherment of Akkadian Cuneiform Texts

After Georg Friedrich Grotefend[1] had started to decipher Old Persian Cuneiform in 1802, several decades passed before this extraordinary achievement of human mind was finished and crowned by the much more difficult decipherment of Akkadian Cuneiform. This latter decipherment had been prepared by the "Conquest of Assyria".[2] In the 1840ies, Paul Emile Botta and Austen Henry Layard had excavated three capitals of the Neo-Assyrian empire, Nineveh, Kalḫu and Dūr-Šarrukīn. Thousands of cuneiform texts, written in Assyrian and Babylonian, had been found during these excavations. These cuneiform texts and the trilingual (Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian) inscriptions of the Achaemenid empire enabled scholars to successfully tackle Akkadian cuneiform. The greatest credit for this achievement is due to Edward Hincks.[3]

Hincks, an Irish Pastor, dedicated himself to the study of ancient languages. He wrote a Hebrew grammar, spent time on the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, did research on Etruscan and learned Sanskrit. In 1846, he published a paper[4] in which he finished the decipherment of Old Persian, made an

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1   On Grotefend and his decipherment of Old Persian see Rykle Borger, "Grotefend, Georg Friedrich," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 3, ed. Ernst Weidner and Wolfram von Soden (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1957–1971), 655.

2   Mogens Trolle Larsen, *The Conquest of Assyria. Excavations in an Antique Land* (London-New York: Routledge, 1994).

3   The following remarks on Hincks are based on Peter T. Daniels, "Edward Hinck's Decipherment of Mesopotamian Cuneiform," in *The Edward Hinck's Bicentenary Lectures*, ed. Kevin J. Cathcart (Dublin: University College Dublin, 1994), 30–57. Cf. also Kevin. J. Cathcart, "The Earliest Contributions to the Decipherment of Sumerian and Akkadian," *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal* 1 (2011): 1–12.

4   Edward Hincks, "On the First and Second Kinds of Persepolitan Writing," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 21 (1846): 114–31.

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important contribution to Elamite cuneiform and noticed some basic principles of Akkadian cuneiform. In connection with the latter, he recognized that "both the Assyrian and Babylonian languages appear to have much in common with the Semitic languages".[5]

During the next years Hincks published many papers on Akkadian cuneiform.[6] In each of them he reached substantial progress. He compiled sign lists, recognized the polyphony of cuneiform writing, and translated the first longer Akkadian text. The highlight of this series of articles is Hincks contribution from 1852.[7] Based on the insight of the Semitic character of Akkadian and the fact that Semitic words are composed by root consonants and inflectional morphemes consisting of vowels or syllables, Hincks was not only able to decipher 252 Akkadian cuneiform signs, but also to decode the grammatical structure of the language.

Besides Hincks, also Henry C. Rawlinson,[8] William Fox Talbot[9] and Julius Oppert[10] contributed to the decipherment of Akkadian cuneiform. The phase of decipherment was concluded by the famous test of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1857: the four scholars translated, independently from each other but on the whole consistently, an inscription of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I.[11]

1.2   *Putting the Threads Together: The First Handbooks*

The first full grammar of Akkadian was published by Oppert.[12] 95 pages long, it presents a survey of the Akkadian language based on sources from the first millennium BCE. Oppert sometimes distinguishes between Assyrian and Babylonian: thus Oppert states[13] that /š/ was pronounced [s] in Nineveh but [š] in

5   Hincks, "Persepolitan Writing," 131.
6   A bibliography of Hincks was compiled by Kevin J. Cathcart and Patricia Donlon, "Edward Hincks (1792–1866): A Bibliography of his Publications," *Orientalia* 52 (1983): 325–56.
7   Edward Hincks, "On the Assyrio-Babylonian Phonetic Characters," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 22 (1852): 293–370.
8   On Rawlinson see Michael P. Streck, "Rawlinson," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 11, ed. Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006–2008), 277.
9   On Talbot see Béatrice André-Salvini, "Talbot," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 13, ed. Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011–2013), 419–20.
10 On Oppert see Béatrice André-Salvini, "Oppert," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 10, ed. Dietz Otto Edzard and Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003–2005), 117–18.
11 Edward Hincks, Henry C. Rawlinson, William Fox Talbot, and Julius Oppert, *Inscription of Tiglath Pileser I, King of Assyria, B.C. 1150* (London, 1957).
12 Jules Oppert, *Éléments de la Grammaire Assyrienne* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1860).
13 Oppert, *Éléments*, 9.

Babylon, whereas with /s/ it was just the opposite. Akkadian is presented in Hebrew letters throughout the book. Basic facts of Akkadian grammar were still unknown: Oppert's verbal system only consists of a single tense, the preterite (Oppert's "aoriste"), whereas he neither recognized the Akkadian present tense nor the stative.[14]

In reaction to Oppert's grammar, Hincks, the most important decipherer of Akkadian cuneiform (see above), published his "Specimen Chapters of an Assyrian Grammar",[15] in which he clarified certain points misunderstood by Oppert. Differently from Oppert, Hincks presents Akkadian in Latin characters, as is still usual today. Hincks was the first to recognize the Akkadian stative,[16] called "permansive present" and historically connected by him with the perfect of Hebrew. Hinck's paradigm of the Akkadian verb[17] correctly lists the stative, the preterite ("aorist") and the present (with doubled second radical!).

A new level of Akkadian studies was reached by Friedrich Delitzsch, who taught Ancient Near Eastern studies in Leipzig from 1874–1893.[18] Already two years after his habilitation on Akkadian animal names—a lexical study drawing heavily on comparative Semitics—[19] he published an Assyrian text book,[20] which was reprinted with additions and corrections four times until 1912 and for decades remained the standard tool for teaching cuneiform.

The grammar of Assyrian by Delitzsch was published in 1889.[21] This book of more than 400 pages was a full and systematic grammar of Akkadian and formed the model for many subsequent Akkadian grammars especially of the German academic tradition.[22] However, compared to Hinck's "Specimen Chap-

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14   See, e.g., the survey of the Akkadian verb on Oppert, *Éléments*, 36. Oppert (ibid.) mentions two examples for the stative in Achaemenid royal inscriptions which he dubs "anomalies".

15   Edward Hincks, "Specimen Chapters of an Assyrian Grammar," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1866): 480–519.

16   Hincks, "Specimen Chapters," 484–97.

17   Hincks, "Specimen Chapters," 487.

18   On Delitzsch see the summary of Michael P. Streck, "Altorientalistik," in *Geschichte der Universität Leipzig 1409–2009*, Band 4, ed. Ulrich von Hehl, Uwe John, and Manfred Rudersdorf (Leipzig: Fakultäten, Institute, Zentrale Einrichtungen, 2009), 345–49.

19   Friedrich Delitzsch, *Assyrische Studien. Heft 1: Assyrische Thiernamen, mit vielen Excursen und einem assyrischen und akkadischen Glossar* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1874).

20   Friedrich Delitzsch, *Assyrische Lesestücke. Nach den Originalen theils revidirt theils zum ersten Male herausgegeben und durch Schrifttafeln eingeleitet* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1876).

21   Friedrich Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik. Mit Paradigmen, Übungsstücken, Glossar, und Literatur* (Berlin: Reuther, 1889).

22   Note that Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik*, 67*–70*, gives a useful list of earlier grammatical studies.

ters of an Assyrian Grammar", his analysis of the present tense was a step backwards, because it appears as *ikášad* with single second radical.[23] On the other hand, Delitzsch's description of circumstantial clauses[24] was superior even to von Soden's grammar 63 years later.[25]

The first attempts to cover the Akkadian lexicon had appeared already soon after the decipherment of cuneiform.[26] They "represented not real dictionaries but glossaries of occurrences".[27] Thus it was Delitzsch who became the actual founder of Akkadian lexicography. But every beginning is hard, and Delitzsch underestimated the enormous task: he started to work on an *Assyrisches Wörterbuch* of which only three fascicles, totaling 488 pages, were published.[28] They only contained the first half of the letter aleph. Delitzsch then gave up this unrealistic project and wrote a concise *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch* on the basis of his unpublished manuscript.[29] This dictionary was 730 pages long and contained approximately 6,000 lemmata and between 30,000 and 35,000 references.[30] Rykle Borger characterized it as follows: "Es ist—trotz gewisser Mängel—ein Meisterwerk. Delitzsch hatte hiermit die assyrische Lexikographie praktisch aus dem Nichts geschaffen. Das HWB bedeutete das Ende der assyriologischen Pionierzeit, mit ihm wurde die Assyriologie eine vollwertige Disziplin. Das Buch wurde … erst nach 85 Jahren voll ersetzt".[31] Wolfram von Soden later referred to the title of Delitzsch's dictionary when he published his own *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*.[32]

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23   Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik*, 237 f. Delitzsch assumed that a permansive base *kašid* with suffixes stands in opposition to a preterite/present base *kašad* with prefixes.

24   Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik*, 362–64.

25   Wolfram von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik* (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1952), 211.

26   Rykle Borger, *Altorientalische Lexikographie. Geschichte und Probleme* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 79.

27   CAD A/1, ix.

28   Friedrich Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Wörterbuch zur gesamten bisher veröffentlichten Keilschriftliteratur, unter Berücksichtigung zahlreicher unveröffentlichter Texte* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1887–1890).

29   Friedrich Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1894–1896).

30   Borger, *Lexikographie*, 82.

31   Borger, *Lexikographie*, 82: "It is—in spite of certain shortcomings—a masterpiece. Delitzsch had thus built Assyrian lexicography from the ground up. HWB marked the end of the pioneering days of Assyriology, and Assyriology became a full-fledged discipline. The book was only fully replaced after 85 years".

32   Wolfram von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch. Unter Benutzung des lexikalischen Nachlasses von Bruno Meissner (1868–1947)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1959–1981).

1.3 Pushing Back Akkadian for One Thousand Years: The Discovery of the Code of Hammurapi

The Code of Hammurapi had been recovered during the excavations in Susa during the season 1901/2. The incredibly quick publication of this monument by Vincent Scheil[33] in 1902 not only had an immediate and enormous impact on the legal history of Mesopotamia, but also on the study of the Akkadian language. This long document from the Old Babylonian period pushed back the history of the Akkadian language for ca. 1000 years.

However, the second edition of Delitzsch's grammar, although finished three years after Scheil's publication,[34] barely took notice of the Code of Hammurapi and other contemporaneous texts. The introduction and bibliography do not mention the code at all,[35] and also elsewhere Delitzsch almost exclusively sticks to examples from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian period, including literary texts from the first millennium.[36] The only occasion on which Delitzsch refers to the Code of Hammurapi is in his chapter on the Akkadian case system:[37] after his discussion of the Neo-Assyrian evidence, there is an addition to the text of the first edition that in the Code of Hammurapi and letters from the same period the case endings -(t)um, -(t)im and -(t)am are consistently used for nominative, genitive and accusative. Thus Delitzsch's second edition of his grammar was already outdated at the moment it appeared.[38]

The first scholar to recognize the necessary revolution of Akkadian grammar as a result of the publication of the Code of Hammurapi was Arthur Ungnad.

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33 On Scheil see Béatrice André-Salvini, "Scheil," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 12, ed. Michael P. Streck, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009–2001), 136–37.

34 Friedrich Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik* (1906²). The book was finished in 1905 on a ship steaming from Marseille to Basra (see the preface Delitzsch, ibid., i). Almost certainly this means that Delitzsch did not have any secondary literature at hand.

35 Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik* (1906²), 4 notes the discovery of cuneiform tablets in Amarna. He also mentions the first Old Assyrian tablets ("kappadokische Täfelchen") though without mentioning the Code of Hammurapi! The same is true of pp. 8–9, where Delitzsch gives a survey over the Babylonian-Assyrian literature. The bibliography on p. 45* lists the volume MDP 4 by Scheil under the title "Textes Élamites Sémitiques".

36 One would expect, for example, that the paragraph on conditional *šumma* clauses (Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik*, 1906², 368–369) would note some examples from the Code of Hammurapi.

37 Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik*, 1906², 189.

38 Therefore, the favorable judgment on Delitzsch's second edition of his grammar by Rykle Borger, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke*. 2., neubearbeitete Auflage (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1979), x ("ist noch immer wertvoll"; id. 2006³, x) must be assessed in a differentiated manner.

In a long article, the first part of which appeared only one year after Scheil's publication,[39] he stated:[40] "Die ... Gesetze Hammurabis sind ... von grundlegender Bedeutung für die Geschichte der babylonisch-assyrischen Sprache. Keine grammatikalische Untersuchung wird künftighin diesen grössten zusammenhängenden Text der altbabylonischen Zeit ausser Acht lassen dürfen, der manches interessante Problem der Sprachwissenschaft völlig enträtselt".[41] For Ungnad the stative was not a tense but a modification of the verb expressing the duration.[42] Ungnad analyzed the present and preterite tenses as old, original Akkadian tenses.[43] He presented paradigms of the status rectus and status constructus of the noun,[44] and he extensively analyzed the function of cases and prepositions.[45] Ungnad also made many observations on the syntax of main and subordinate clauses in the Code of Hammurapi.[46]

The same year when Delitzsch's grammar appeared in a second edition, Ungnad presented his insights in a very short but systematic textbook.[47] He mentions the Code of Hammurapi as the most important source of the Old Babylonian period.[48] The second edition from 1926 was expanded and revised to a certain extent.[49] Although the lengthy designation "Babylonisch-Assyrisch" still appears in the title, Ungnad uses the shorter and more convenient name

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39   Arthur Ungnad, "Zur Syntax der Gesetze Hammurabis," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 17 (1903): 353–78; id., "Zur Syntax der Gesetze Hammurabis," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 18 (1905): 1–67.

40   Ungnad, "Zur Syntax," (1903), 353.

41   "The Code of Hammurapi is of fundamental importance for the history of the Babylonian-Assyrian language. No future grammatical analysis of Akkadian can neglect this longest continuous Old Babylonian text, which entirely solves some interesting linguistic problems."

42   Ungnad, "Zur Syntax," (1903), 365–70.

43   Ungnad, "Zur Syntax," (1903), 370–71.

44   Ungnad, "Zur Syntax," (1905), 1–9.

45   Ungnad, "Zur Syntax," (1905), 19–37.

46   Ungnad, "Zur Syntax," (1905), 50–67.

47   Arthur Ungnad, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Grammatik. Mit Übungsbuch* (*in Transkription*) (München: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1906¹). The grammar only covers 86 pages. It is followed by exercises (Ungnad, ibid., 89–134) and a glossary (ibid. 135–63). Obviously the layout of the exercises influenced the exercises in Borger's textbook ("Übungsbeispiele", in id., *Lesestücke*, 1979 [2016³], 198–202).

48   Ungnad, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Grammatik*, 2.

49   The grammar of the second edition covers 102 pages. When von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952), 5, regrets that the second and third edition of Ungnad's textbook only displayed smaller changes vis-à-vis the first edition he, *inter alia,* refers to Old Assyrian, which had become known much better in the meantime.

"Akkadisch" in the book itself.[50] Now he saw the language of the Code of Hammurapi as the classical expression of Babylonian,[51] a notion which survived somehow until von Soden's grammar from 1952.[52] The third edition from 1949 was again moderately revised and expanded.[53] For the 1964 edition Lubor Matouš reworked the grammar along the lines of the Akkadian grammar by von Soden.[54]

1.4   *Akkadian and the Semitic Languages: Early Comparisons*

The detailed comparative grammar of the Semitic languages by Carl Brockelmann[55] made full use of the knowledge of Akkadian, as described in Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik* (1906), and Ungnad, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Grammatik* (1906).[56] Since Brockelmann considered Arabic as the Semitic language which had preserved Proto-Semitic morphology best,[57] his reconstructions are, however, in several cases wrong. Thus Brockelmann,[58] following Barth,[59] explains the Akkadian present "*ikašad*"[60] as West Semitic perfect *QaTaL*, remodeled

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50   Ungnad, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Grammatik*, e.g., §§1 and 2.

51   Arthur Ungnad, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Grammatik. Mit Übungsbuch* (*in Transkription*) (München: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926², 2): "seinen klassischen Ausdruck findet das erstere (scil., Babylonian) in dem Altbabylonischen (aB) der Zeit des Königs Ḫammurapi (um 2050), besonders in dessen Gesetzesstele". See also the third edition (Ungnad, *Grammatik des Akkadischen*, 1949³, VII): "Die Gesetze Ḫammurapis, die die Grundlage des klassischen Babylonisch bilden".

52   von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952), 5 admits that Akkadian, differently from Arabic, did not develop a classical literary language, but he still thinks that the Old Babylonian language of Hammurapis "chancellery" comes closest to the ideal of such a classical model.

53   The grammar now covers 116 pages.

54   von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952).

55   Carl Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen* Sprachen. I. Band: Laut- und Formenlehre (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther & Reichard, 1908); id., *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen* Sprachen. II. Band: Syntax (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther & Reichard, 1913).

56   See the literature in Brockelmann, *Grundriss* I. Band, 8.

57   Brockelmann, *Grundriss* I. Band, 8: "Das ursemitische Formensystem liegt hier [scil. in Arabic, MPS] in seiner reichsten, fast alle Möglichkeiten der ursprünglichen Anlage erschöpfenden Ausbildung vor".

58   Brockelmann, *Grundriss* I. Band, 569.

59   Jacob Barth, "Das semitische Perfect im Assyrischen," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 2 (1887): 375–86.

60   Barth's and Brockelmann's wrong reconstruction was also inspired by the fact that the decisive morphological feature of the Akkadian present, the length of the second radical (*iKaŠŠaD*), had not been recognized.

under the influence of the common Semitic imperfect/preterite *yaQTuL/iKŠuD*—although the functions of West Semitic perfect and Akkadian present are just the opposite![61]

In 1915, Heinrich Zimmern, a student of Delitzsch, and his successor as professor of Ancient Near Eastern studies at the university of Leipzig, an excellent Semitist, wrote a book on Akkadian loanwords in other Semitic languages, in Indo-European languages and in Ancient Egyptian.[62] The subtitle of the book, "als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluß", underlines Zimmern's purpose: He wanted to prove the immense Babylonian cultural influence on neighbouring cultures on a philological, methodologically sound foundation, an alternative program to the ideology of Pan-Babylonism[63] and the Babel-Bible controversy[64] of the preceding years. Although outdated today, so far Zimmern's book has never been equalled.

1.5   *Akkadian Lexicography after Delitzsch' Handwörterbuch*
As a result of the continuing quick publication of thousands of new Akkadian cuneiform texts, Delitzsch' *Handwörterbuch* became outdated soon. Thus new attempts were made to lexicographically digest the textual material. The first of these attempts was William Muss-Arnolt's "A Concise Assyrian Dictionary of the Assyrian Language".[65] Its 1202 pages relied on Delitzsch's *Handwörterbuch*, but offered more material than the latter.

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61   Brockelmann, *Grundriss* I. Band, 569 notes the opposite functions, but strangely does not ascribe importance to that fact: "Die speziell präsentische und futurische Bedeutung der ass. Form [scil. Akkadian present, MPS] kann gegen diese Annahme nicht ins Feld geführt werden, da der Sprachgebrauch in der Verwendung der beiden sogenannten Tempora … in den einzelnen Sprachen sehr verschiedene Wege gegangen ist" ("The special present and future meaning of the Ass. form does not contradict this assumption, because the different languages show different usages of the two tenses").

62   Heinrich Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluss* (Leipzig, 1915).

63   Pan-Babylonism claimed to find essential Mesopotamian influence in cultures and religions all over the world. On Pan-Babylonism see Michael Weichenhan, *Der Panbabylonismus. Die Faszination des himmlischen Buches im Zeitalter der Zivilisation* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016).

64   In the Babel-Bible controversy, Zimmern's teacher Delitzsch and others had suggested that the Bible and Judaism were directly derived from Mesopotamian culture. On the Babel-Bible controversy see Klaus Johanning, *Der Bibel-Babel-Streit. Eine forschungsgeschichtliche Studie* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1988) and Reinhard. G. Lehmann, *Friedrich Delitzsch und der Babel-Bibel-Streit* (Freiburg [CH]-Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz-Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).

65   William Muss-Arnolt, *A Concise Dictionary of the Assyrian Language* (Berlin: Reuther &

In 1912, Carl Bezold decided to write an Assyrian thesaurus. Bezold produced 200,000 file cards, but later realized that he would not live to publish his extensive collections. So he prepared a glossary, which contained 12,000 lemmata, twice as much as Delitzsch' *Handwörterbuch*, but without references.[66]

In the nineteen-twenties, Bruno Meissner in Berlin began to prepare a new Akkadian dictionary, using an unpublished supplement to the Akkadian dictionaries compiled by Delitzsch. At the time of Meissner's death in 1947, the manuscript contained only the letters *b, g, d, w, z, ḫ, ṭ, j*, and *k*, as well as half of the letter *l*. This manuscript was transferred to W. von Soden in 1949, who mentions it on the title page of his *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*.[67]

1.6   *Akkadian Grammar in the View of Landsberger and Von Soden*

Benno Landsberger, a student of Zimmern and later professor at the university of Leipzig,[68] developed many new ideas about the grammar of Akkadian. Some of them were published in an influential paper entitled "Die Eigenbegrifflichkeit der babylonischen Welt".[69] In this paper, Landsberger suggested that the Akkadian preterite and present describe the *aktionsarten* punctuality and durativity.[70] Moreover, Landsberger[71] assumed a basic difference between a subjective Hebrew and an objective Akkadian verbal system: in Akkadian, the choice of tenses would be independent from the reference point of the speaker,

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Reichard, 1894–1905). On Muss-Arnolt's dictionary cf. CAD A/1, x; Borger, *Lexikographie*, 85–9.

66   Carl Bezold, *Babylonisch-assyrisches Glossar* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1926). On Bezold's glossary cf. CAD A/1, x; Borger, *Lexikographie*, 90–3.

67   "Unter Benutzung des lexikalischen Nachlasses von Bruno Meissner (1868–1947)". On Meissner's manuscript see CAD A/1, x–xi; Borger, *Lexikographie*, 100 f. For Meissner's file cards see Michael P. Streck, *Supplement to the Akkadian Dictionaries. Volume B, P* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), viii with fig. 1 on p. xvii.

68   On Landsberger see Streck, "Altorientalistik," 356–58, and especially Ludek Vacín, *The Unknown Benno Landsberger. A Biographical Sketch of an Assyriological* Altmeister's *Development, Exile, and Personal Life* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018).

69   Benno Landsberger, "Die Eigenbegrifflichkeit der babylonischen Welt," *Islamica* 2 (1926): 355–72.

70   Landsberger, "Eigenbegrifflichkeit", 359–361. Criticized by the present author in Michael P. Streck, "Sprache und Denken im Alten Mesopotamien am Beispiel des Zeitausdrucks," in *Studia Semitica. Orientalia: Papers of the Oriental Institute* 3 (Festschrift Alexander Militarev), ed. Leonid Kogan (Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities, 2003), 427: Streck refers to durative preterites like *ubaʾʾī* "he searched", *ukīl* "he held" and punctual presents like *išebbir* "he will break" and *ibarriq* "it will flash".

71   Landsberger, "Eigenbegrifflichkeit", 360 and 367.

a view which has been proven wrong.[72] He also states[73] that certain root types, especially of weak roots, are connected with semantic classes.[74] He labels the verbal ending -*am* as the "ventive" and describes its function as designation of a movement originally in the direction of the speaker,[75] a description basically still valid today. Only mentioned *en passant* but most important, Landsberger introduces a third Akkadian tense, called by him the punctual present, formed by means of a *t*-infix.[76]

Landsberger's views on Akkadian and Semitic grammar are also reflected in Gotthelf Bergsträsser's short comparative grammar of the Semitic languages.[77] In Bergsträsser's introductory chapter on Proto-Semitic, Landsberger's semantic classes[78] and the *aktionsarten*[79] reappear. In the chapter on Akkadian, the alleged difference between a dead, objective and frozen Akkadian and a vivid, subjective and flexible Hebrew is invoked again.[80] The description of the tense with *t*-infix is slightly more elaborated than in Landsberger's article from 1926.[81]

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72 See Streck, "Sprache und Denken," 425–28: Akkadian tenses are not absolute but always refer to a moment in time, which is in many cases, but not always the present moment of the speaker. Moreover, the speaker frequently has the choice between different tenses according to the reference point he wants to stress. Thus in terms of subjectivity, the Akkadian verbal system is not different from Hebrew or the other Semitic languages.

73 Landsberger, "Eigenbegrifflichkeit", 361–62.

74 "Bedeutungsklassen". For example, Landsberger describes the semantic class connected with roots secundae *ū* like *mūt* "to die", *nūḫ* "to become quiet", *nūš* "to quake" etc. as "plötzlichen Übergang von einem normalen Seinszustand in den gegensätzlichen" ("a sudden transition from a normal state of being to the opposite one"). However, according to N.J.C. Kouwenberg, *The Akkadian Verb and Its Semitic Background* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 476, the verbs secundae vocalis "do not constitute a well-defined class", and the semantic classes defined by von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952), 143, based on Landsberger, are "so vague that almost every verb could be assigned to one of them". On the other hand, many verbs secundae geminatae clearly belong to the semantic class of "Kettendurative" (von Soden, *Grundriss*, 1952, 135) or "activities consisting of a repetition of short homogenous movements" (Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 494).

75 Landsberger, "Eigenbegrifflichkeit", 361: "eine die Richtung ursprünglich auf den Sprechenden hin bezeichnende Endung".

76 Landsberger, "Eigenbegrifflichkeit", 361 with n. 2.

77 Gotthelf Bergsträsser, *Einführung in die semitischen Sprachen* (München: Hueber, 1928). For Landsberger's input see the preface p. x. Decades later, the book was translated into English (Gotthelf Bergsträsser, *Introduction to the Semitic Languages*. Translated with Notes and Bibliography and an Appendix on the Scripts by P.T. Daniels, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983).

78 Bergsträsser, *Einführung*, 11.

79 Bergsträsser, *Einführung*, 11 and 17.

80 Bergsträsser, *Einführung*, 20: "im Akkadischen tote objektive Starrheit, im Westsemitischen, am deutlichsten im Hebräischen, lebendige subjektive Beweglichkeit".

81 Bergsträsser, *Einführung*, 23. Its general function is again described as punctual present

Landsberger never elaborated his ideas in writing,[82] but they found their way in the grammar of his student von Soden.[83] Already in his dissertation on the Akkadian literary language,[84] von Soden had shown a considerable grammatical interest. Von Soden's grammar from 1952 was, as Ignace J. Gelb stated in his review,[85] "bound to eclipse all its predecessors". Although a historical grammar of Akkadian, covering the entire range from the third to the first millennium and both the Babylonian and Assyrian dialects, von Soden laid his focus on Old and Standard Babylonian and sometimes tended to assess developments and facts from other periods and dialects from the standpoint of Old and Standard

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("Gegenwart (punktuell)") in opposition to the present tense as future and durative present ("Zukunft (und durative Gegenwart)"). Whereas this analysis is problematic, Bergsträsser's (Landsberger's) description of the sequence preterite-perfect to denote the temporal progress is basically correct: "Die punktuelle Erzählung verwendet nur íprus als frühere, íptaras als spätere Stufe".

82 Landsberger's discovery of the *t*-tense inspired articles by A. Leo Oppenheim, "Die mittels *T*-Infixes gebildeten Aktionsarten des Altbabylonischen," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 42 (1935): 1–30, Albrecht Goetze, "The *t*-form of the Old Babylonian Verb," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 56 (1936): 297–334, and Mariano San Nicolò, "Juristische Bemerkungen zur Bedeutung der *t*-Formen des akkadischen Zeitwortes," *Orientalia* 7 (1938): 309–18. The most influential of these article was Goetze's, whose analysis—the *t*-tense is a perfect (in the sense of the English present perfect) in main clauses and a future perfect in subordinate clauses—was widely accepted by von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952), and thus has continuing effects until today. Whereas the analysis of the *t*-tense in subordinate clauses as a "future perfect"—or better a past in the future—is correct, its analysis as perfect in main clauses is highly problematic (see Michael P. Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch. Dritte, überarbeitete Auflage*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, §§ 179–180). In this connection, it is worth quoting Ungnad, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Grammatik*, 30, who already correctly noticed that the function of the Akkadian preterite corresponds to the German imperfect, perfect, and plusquamperfect. In other words: Akkadian does not have a form which specifically corresponds to the perfect of High German or the present perfect of English, and the latter's function may be expressed by both Akkadian preterite (*iPRuS*) and perfect (*iPtaRaS*).

83 von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952). The preface states (p. viii): "Wichtige Grunderkenntnisse, die hier erstmalig im Einzelnen ausgeführt sind, wie die Erkenntnis der semitischen Wortklasseneinteilung, der Bedeutungsklassen beim Verbum, des hier Perfekt genannten Tempus und vieles andere gehen auf ihn [scil. Landsberger, MPS] zurück" ("Important basic insights that have been detailed here for the first time, like the Semitic word classes, the semantic classes of the verb, the tense here called 'perfect', and many more, go back to him").

84 Wolfram von Soden, "Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt des Akkadischen, Teil I," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 40 (1931): 163–227; id., "Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt des Akkadischen, Teil II," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 41 (1933): 90–183, 236.

85 Ignace J. Gelb, "Notes on von Soden's Grammar of Akkadian," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 12 (1955): 93.

Babylonian. In the eyes of Gelb, "the first comprehensive presentation of Akkadian syntax"[86] was especially welcome. The strength of von Soden's grammar lies in his comprehensive collection of references rather than a linguistically oriented description of facts. It has been used, with reprints from 1969 and 1995, for decades in Ancient Near Eastern and Semitic studies without any serious rival.

1.7   *Dialects and Periods: The Historical Description of Akkadian*

Although the grammar of von Soden aimed to cover the essential facts of the entire range of the Akkadian text corpus, it called to mind[87] the need for more detailed special grammars of individual dialects and periods. For Middle Babylonian, Jussi Aro, *Studien* (1955), was published,[88] for Susa Akkadian Erkki Salonen, *Untersuchungen* (1962), and Leon de Meyer, *L'Accadien* (1962), for Old Assyrian Karl Hecker, *Grammatik* (1968), for Nuzi Akkadian Gernot Wilhelm, *Untersuchungen* (1970), and for Middle Assyrian Walter Mayer, *Untersuchungen* (1971). Useful as these monographs were, they have also been criticized because "they not describe the dialect itself, but only the specifically dialect features, i.e., those which differ from the standard language, for which as a rule von Soden's *GAG* serves as the standard".[89]

Both Gelb's grammar and his glossary of Old Akkadian were unique.[90] They paved the way to the understanding of the earliest Akkadian texts. In another work,[91] Gelb attempted to reconstruct an even older stage of Akkadian, called Proto-Akkadian, which Gelb thought to be mainly identical with Proto-Semitic;

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86   Gelb, "Notes," 95.

87   von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952), 5.

88   Aro is also the author of a glossary of the Middle Babylonian letters (Jussi Aro, *Glossar der mittelbabylonische Briefe*, Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Kirjapaino, 1957) and of a monograph on the Akkadian infinitive constructions (Jussi Aro, *Die akkadischen Infinitivkonstruktionen*, Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Kirjapaino, 1961).

89   Erica Reiner, "Akkadian," in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, vol. 6, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 280. See also id., *A Linguistic Analysis of Akkadian* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), 16: most dialect grammars "note what is divergent from an ideal dialect— Old Babylonian is usually arbitrarily selected to serve—and fail to give a complete list of occurring forms".

90   Ignace J. Gelb, *Old Akkadian Writing and Grammar* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1952; 1961²) ("the best dialect study" according to Reiner, *Linguistic Analysis*, 16) and Ignace J. Gelb, *Glossary of Old Akkadian* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957; reprinted without changes 1973).

91   Ignace J. Gelb, *Sequential Reconstruction of Proto-Akkadian* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969).

because of many unfounded reconstructions,[92] the reaction of the scientific community was rather negative,[93] and the book has barely attracted attention in further research on Akkadian grammar.[94]

The Old Babylonian texts discovered in Mari prompted a grammar by André Finet.[95] His description followed the model of von Soden's grammar from 1952 in many respects.[96]

1.8 *Akkadian and the Semitic Languages: Later Comparisons*

The description of von Soden[97] was the base of the Akkadian part of a reliable, concise comparative grammar (phonology and morphology) of the Semitic languages edited by Sabatino Moscati.[98]

The comparative Semitic grammar by Burkhart Kienast[99] is based on the methodologically questionable assumption that Semitic languages occurred in waves.[100] For Kienast, Akkadian is the (best attested) representative of the oldest of these waves and therefore must be the starting-point of a comparative description of the Semitic languages, whereas the other Semitic languages, as representatives of younger waves, can be more or less deduced from Akkadian.[101] Kienast rejects the current family tree models[102] because they use a

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92 E.g., Gelb's analysis of /t/ in the feminine ending -(*a*)*t*- as glide (Gelb, *Sequential Reconstruction*, 34–5).

93 See the review of Wolfram von Soden, review of *Sequential Reconstruction of Proto-Akkadian*, by Ignace J. Gelb, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 29 (1970): 202–7.

94 Nevertheless, the book offers some fruitful insights. For example, Gelb, *Sequential Reconstruction*, 95–8, presents valid arguments for a distinction of the case endings /um/ (nominative) with short /u/ and /ūm/ (locative) with long /ū/.

95 André Finet, *L'accadien des lettres de Mari* (Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1956).

96 See Finet, *L'accadien*, vii: "la terminologie que nous avons adoptée est conforme en général à celle du *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik* de W. von Soden".

97 von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952).

98 Sabatino Moscati, Anton Spitaler, Edward Ullendorff and Wolfram von Soden, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages. Phonology and Morphology* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964).

99 Burkhart Kienast, *Historische Semitische Sprachwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001).

100 Kienast, *Sprachwissenschaft*, 15 f.

101 Kienast, *Sprachwissenschaft*, 20: "Wir wollen dabei jeweils von den Verhältnissen im Akkadischen … ausgehen und dann daraus die Verhältnisse in den anderen Semitischen Idiomen abzuleiten versuchen".

102 For the family tree models used in the classification of the Semitic languages see John Huehnergard, "Phyla and Waves: Models of Classification of the Semitic Languages," in *The Semitic Languages. An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger et al. (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 260–64.

geographical terminology which, according to him, would not be consistent in all cases with the historical facts.[103] But Kienast overlooked that terms like "East Semitic", "West Semitic" etc. are not primarily meant to geographically locate members of the Semitic language family. Rather, they are mere labels used in genetic subgrouping based on shared innovations.[104] Therefore, the family tree model has not been disproved by Kienast; it is still useful for the classification of the Semitic languages, especially if combined with the wave model "which accounts for similarities due to the spreading of features across languages".[105]

1.9   *Structural Descriptions of Akkadian*

The first linguistically oriented Akkadian grammar was published by Erica Reiner.[106] It addressed both scholars of Ancient Near Eastern studies and general linguists. Its main purpose was to describe the structure of Akkadian without dealing with "a tangle of exceptions, diachronic considerations, and descriptions of graphic or phonetic alternations unjustifiedly raised to a phonological level".[107] The present writer cannot assess whether this book had an impact on linguistic studies. Scholars of Ancient Near Eastern studies, if they do not have specific linguistic interests, only rarely quote it because it was not made to be used in daily philological work.[108]

Reiner's grammar had a successor in a book of Giorgio Buccellati.[109] Whereas Reiner confined herself to phonology and morphology, Buccellati also described Akkadian syntax in structural terms.

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103   Kienast, *Sprachwissenschaft*, 12 f.
104   It is important to stress that subgrouping based on shared innovations naturally includes the notion of different stages in the development of the individual branches. Therefore, pace Kienast, *Sprachwissenschaft*, 13, the family tree models do not project the Semitic languages on a single level ("werden die Semitischen Sprachen gleichsam auf eine Fläche projiziert").
105   Huehnergard, "Phyla and Waves," 265. Note that this "wave model" has nothing to do with Kienast's "Wellen".
106   Reiner, *Linguistic Analysis*.
107   Reiner, *Linguistic Analysis*, 15.
108   Wolfram von Soden, review of *A Linguistic Analysis of Akkadian*, The Hague: Mouton, 1966, by Erica Reiner, *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 63 (1968): 350, is right that students of Akkadian will not be able to understand an Akkadian text with Reiner's grammar alone. However, this is not the aim of the book.
109   Giorgio Buccellati, *A Structural Grammar of Babylonian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996).

In an article, Dietz Otto Edzard[110] used a key term of structuralist grammar and described the Akkadian verbal stems as a system of oppositions.

1.10 *Adventures of Great Dimension: The Dictionary Projects*[111]

The 1950's saw the start of the publication of two Akkadian dictionaries that revolutionized the work with cuneiform texts and are still in use today.

Based on the manuscript of Meissner mentioned above, the first fascicle of von Soden's *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*[112] appeared in 1959, the final fascicle was published in 1981. The 16 fascicles in three volumes contain more than 1,600 pages and 14,611 lemmata.[113] Like Delitzsch's *Handwörterbuch*,[114] but differently from Bezold's glossary,[115] the *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* also quotes references.[116] Differently from Delitzsch's *Handwörterbuch*, each reference is classified according to period and dialect. For each lemma von Soden gives a short note on the etymology. An abridged English translation of the *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* was published under the name *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*.[117]

110　Dietz Otto Edzard, "Die Stämme des altbabylonischen Verbums in ihrem Oppositionssystem," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his Seventy-fifth Birthday, April 21, 1963*, ed. Hans G. Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965), 111–20.

111　On the great dictionary projects see Borger, *Lexikographie*; Erica Reiner, *An Adventure of Great Dimension. The Launching of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2002), which inspired the title of this sub-chapter; Martha T. Roth, "How We Wrote the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (2010) 69: 1–21; Streck, *Supplement*, viii–x.

112　von Soden, *Handwörterbuch*.

113　For the number of lemmata for each letter see Streck, *Supplement*, x.

114　Delitzsch, *Wörterbuch*.

115　Bezold, *Glossar*.

116　The total number of references was estimated by Borger, *Lexikographie*, 107, as 300,000.

117　Jeremy Black, Andrew George and Nicholas Postgate, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999). The *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* omits the references but is updated by information in the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (A. Leo Oppenheim, Erica Reiner and Martha T. Roth, ed., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Glückstadt-Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2010) and in some other secondary literature. Under certain conditions, the *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* is an excellent tool for the mature scholar, but unfortunately it seems to be much more used by beginners of Akkadian especially in the English speaking world; see the discomfort with this fact expressed by Michael P. Streck, review of *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, by Jeremy Black, Andrew George and Nicholas Postgate, *Archiv für Orientforschung* 48–9 (2001–2002), 182, and the general warning of Borger, *Lexikographie*, 92: "Es ist natürlich klar, daß ein akkadisches Wörterbuch ohne Belegstellen ein gefährliches Instrument ist".

Following the example of the *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*,[118] the project of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* had already been initiated in 1921 by the Egyptologist James H. Breasted. But it took 35 years before the first volume of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*[119] was actually published in 1956, and the last volume appeared another 54 years later in 2010.[120] Thus the entire project lasted 89 years. Whereas the *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* is the monument of a single scholar, the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* is the result of teamwork—although the team consisted of "highly individualistic"[121] members: we may single out the three editors-in-charge over the course of the years, A. Leo Oppenheim,[122] Erica Reiner[123] and Martha T. Roth,[124] especially for the initial stages Gelb,[125] and as member of the editorial board and authority behind the scene, Landsberger.[126] The 21 volumes of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* contain 9,164 pages and 16,526 lemmata[127]—nearly 2000 more than the *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. The most visible difference between both dictionaries is the presentation of the context of a word: whereas the *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* gives references in most cases without any or only very limited context, the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* frequently provides the reader with larger quotations. Many other differences, like the interpretation of a word in a given context, only become apparent at a second glance and are an important stimulus for the interpretation of Akkadian texts.

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118   Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1926–1931).
119   Oppenheim, Reiner and Roth, *Dictionary*.
120   See Streck, *Supplement*, ix, for the publication dates of the individual volumes in between.
121   Reiner, *Adventure*, 16.
122   Editor-in-charge for the volumes Ḫ (1956), G (1956), E (1958), I/J (1959), D (1959), Z (1961), Ṣ (1962), A/1 (1964), B (1965), A/2 (1968), K (1971), L (1973) and M (1977) (the last volume together with Reiner).
123   Editor-in-charge for the volumes M (1977, together with Oppenheim), N (1980), Q (1982), S (1984), Š/1 (1989), Š/2–3 (1992), R (1999, together with Roth) and T (2006).
124   Editor-in-charge for the volumes R (1999, together with Reiner), Ṭ (2006) and U/W (2010).
125   On Gelb's role in the project after World War II see Reiner, *An Adventure*, 15–7, 21–6 and 63 f. Gelb is listed in all volumes of the CAD among the editorial board.
126   On Landsberger's role in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* see Reiner 2002, 5–9; 19 f.; 33–5. Landsberger is listed among the editorial board for the volumes Ḫ (1956), G (1956), E (1958), I/J (1959), D (1959), Z (1961), Ṣ (1962), A/1 (1964), B (1965) and A/2 (1968).
127   For the number of lemmata for each letter see Michael P. Streck, review of CAD U/W, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 104 (2014): 105, and Streck, *Supplement*, x.

1.11   *Akkadian and Eblaite*

The discovery of the Ebla archive in 1975 opened up a new field within Akkadian studies. For the first time, cuneiform texts from northern Syria dating to shortly after 2500 BC were available. The classification of the Semitic, heavily logographically written language of these texts, was soon much disputed.

Giovanni Pettinato, the first decipherer of the texts, thought that the language of the Ebla texts is North-West Semitic, more exactly "Old Canaanite".[128] Four extensive studies by Gelb[129] reached an almost opposite conclusion: for Gelb, the closest relatives of Eblaite were—in descending order—Old Akkadian, Amorite, Ugaritic and Hebrew.[130] Whereas Gelb in his first two studies preferred to see in Eblaite a close relative of a language separate from (Old) Akkadian,[131] he seemed to be rather undecided on this point in his third study.[132] In his fourth study,[133] he saw the language of the Pre-Sargonic Mari texts and the language of Ebla as identical. Von Soden[134] was of the opinion that Eblaite is neither North-West Semitic nor Akkadian, but a representative of another Semitic branch called by him "Nordsemitisch".

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128 For example, see Giovanni Pettinato, "Ibla. A. Philologisch," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 5, ed. Dietz Otto Edzard (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976–1980), 12 § 7: "eine eigene Sprache, die sicher der Gruppe der nordwestsemitischen Sprachen angehört und die man wegen ihrer frappierenden Anklänge an die kanaanäischen Dialekte—hebräisch, phönikisch— gern als 'altkanaanäisch' bezeichnen darf. Andererseits unterscheidet sich diese sehr alte, bis jetzt unbekannte Sprache eindeutig sowohl vom Altakkadischen als auch vom Amurritischen."

129 Ignace J. Gelb, *Thoughts about Ibla: a Preliminary Evaluation* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1977); id., "Ebla and the Kish Civilization," in *La Lingua di Ebla. Atti del convegno internazionale* (*Napoli, 21–23 aprile 1980*), ed. Luigi Cagni (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1981), 9–73; id., "The Language of Ebla in the Light of the Sources From Ebla, Mari, and Babylonia," in *Ebla 1975–1985. Dieci anni di studi linguistici e filologici. Atti del convegno internazionale* (*Napoli, 9–11 ottobre 1985*), ed. Luigi Cagni (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1987), 49–74; id., "Mari and the Kish Civilization," in *Mari in Retrospect*, ed. Gordon D. Young (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 121–202.

130 Gelb, *Thoughts about Ibla*, 25; Gelb, "Ebla and the Kish Civilization," 52; Gelb, "Language of Ebla," 73.

131 Gelb, *Thoughts about Ibla*, 26: "Iblaic cannot be considered an Akkadian dialect, simply because an Ibla text reads like nothing comparable in the vast areas of the Ancient Near East where Akkadian writing and language were used", repeated verbatim in Gelb, "Ebla and the Kish Civilization," 52. The methodical weakness of such a statement is obvious.

132 Gelb, "Language of Ebla," 73.

133 Gelb, "Mari and the Kish Civilization".

134 Wolfram von Soden, "Das Nordsemitische in Babylonien und in Syrien," in *La Lingua di Ebla. Atti del convegno internazionale* (*Napoli, 21–23 aprile 1980*), ed. Luigi Cagni (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1981), 355–61.

Based on his studies of the Eblaite lexical lists[135] and personal names,[136] Manfred Krebernik[137] 1996, 249, classified Eblaite "as an early Akkadian dialect", the probably most wide-spread and certainly most reliable view today.[138]

2 Research Tools

The following survey on research tools for the study of the Akkadian language is strictly confined to monographs. Most of these monographs also contain extensive bibliographies, which lead the interested reader to further literature. Some of the monographs listed in the following are partly outdated today, but they are nevertheless mentioned because they are still not fully replaced by up-to-date studies. Entirely outdated studies are not mentioned.

2.1 *Akkadian Cuneiform*

Syllabary of Akkadian texts: von Soden and Röllig, *Syllabar* (1991[4]). Sign list including syllabary, logograms and paleography: Borger, *Zeichenlexikon* (2010). Labat, *Manuel* (1988[6]), is still used for its paleographic parts.

2.2 *Akkadian Lexicon*

The two comprehensive dictionaries are von Soden, *Handwörterbuch* (1959–1981, three volumes) and Oppenheim, Reiner, and Roth, *Dictionary* (1956–2010,

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135   Manfred Krebernik, "Zu Syllabar und Orthographie der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla. Teil 1," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 72 (1982): 178–236; id., "Zu Syllabar und Orthographie der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla. Teil 2." *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 73 (1983): 1–47.

136   Manfred Krebernik, *Die Personennamen der Ebla-Texte. Eine Zwischenbilanz* (Berlin: Reimer, 1988).

137   Manfred Krebernik, "The Linguistic Classification of Eblaite: Methods, Problems, and Results," in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 249.

138   For a summary of more recent attempts to classify Eblaite see Michael P. Streck, "Eblaite and Old Akkadian," in *The Semitic Languages. An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger et al. (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 340–59. Note that noun patterns with double *ta*, formerly thought to be one of the most important morphological features distinguishing Eblaite and Akkadian, have been proved to be an archaic feature in literary Akkadian as well (Michael P. Streck, "*tartāmū* "mutual love", the noun pattern *taPtaRS* in Akkadian and the classification of Eblaite," in *Altorientalische Studien zu Ehren von Pascal Attinger*, ed. Catherine Mittermayer and Sabine Ecklin, Fribourg and Göttingen: Academic Press Fribourg, and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012, 353–57). The most extensive description of Eblaite grammar today is Amalia Catagnoti, *La grammatica della lingua di Ebla* (Firenze: Università di Firenze, 2012), but see now also chapter 12 of this volume.

21 volumes).[139] Both dictionaries present Akkadian words in context with references from cuneiform texts. Black, George, and Postgate, *Dictionary* (1999), is a concise dictionary translated from von Soden, *Handwörterbuch*, with some updates, but without references. Two volumes (letters B, P, D, T and Ṭ) of a supplement to von Soden, *Handwörterbuch*, and Oppenheim, Reiner, and Roth, *Dictionary*, are Streck *Supplement* (2018 and 2019).

There are a few monographs on the Akkadian lexicon which cover certain dialects/periods: Sargonic and Ur III Akkadian: Gelb, *Glossary* (1957, partly outdated). Glossary of Old Akkadian inscriptions: Kienast and Sommerfeld, *Glossar* (1994). Middle Babylonian: Aro, *Glossar* (1957, partly outdated). Neo-Assyrian: Parpola, *Dictionary* (2007, without references, also contains words "that can be assumed to have existed in Neo-Assyrian but are not actually attested in our sources"[140]).

Loanwords in Akkadian or Akkadian loanwords in other languages: Sumerian loanwords in Old Babylonian Akkadian: Lieberman, *Sumerian Loanwords* (1977, partly outdated). North-West Semitic vocabulary in Middle Babylonian texts: Sivan, *Grammatical analysis* (1984). North-West Semitic vocabulary in the Middle Babylonian texts from Emar in Syria: Pentiuc, *West Semitic* (2001). Aramaic loanwords in Neo-Assyrian: Cherry, *Aramaic Loanwords* (2017). Akkadian loanwords in Biblical Hebrew: Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords* (2000).

Some monographs deal with specific groups of realia mainly from a lexical standpoint:
– Animals: Landsberger, *Die Fauna* (1934, partly outdated) and Salonen, *Jagd und Jagdtiere* (1976, partly outdated). Equids: Salonen, *Hippologica* (1955, partly outdated).
– Fish and fishing: Salonen, *Fischerei* (1970, partly outdated).
– Birds: Salonen, *Vögel und Vogelfang* (1973, partly outdated).
– Plants: Thompson, *Botany* (1949).
– Date-palm: Landsberger, *Date-Palm* (1967).
– Agriculture: Salonen, *Agricultura Mesopotamica* (1968, partly outdated).
– Containers and household utensils: Salonen, *Hausgeräte* (1965 and 1966, partly outdated), Sallaberger, *Der babylonische Töpfer* (1996).
– Furniture: Salonen, *Die Möbel* (1963, partly outdated).
– Doors: Salonen, *Die Türen* (1961, partly outdated).
– Chariots and carts: Salonen, *Landfahrzeuge* (1951, partly outdated).
– Bricks and brick-making: Salonen, *Ziegeleien* (1972, partly outdated).

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139   Cf. Reiner, *Adventure*.
140   Parpola, *Dictionary*, xiii.

– Footwear: Salonen, *Fussbekleidung* (1969, partly outdated).
– Weapons: Salonen (E.), *Die Waffen* (1965, partly outdated).

2.3   *Akkadian Grammar*

Still much in use is von Soden, *Grundriss* (1995[3]), based primarily on Old and Standard Babylonian, but encompassing also all other Akkadian dialects and periods (partly outdated).

Monographic descriptions of different scope exist for most dialects and periods of Akkadian:[141]

– Eblaite: Catagnoti, *Lingua di Ebla* (2012).
– Sargonic and Ur III Akkadian: Gelb, *Old Akkadian* (1961[2], partly outdated), Hasselbach, *Sargonic Akkadian* (2005).
– Ur III Akkadian: Hilgert, *Akkadisch in der Ur III-Zeit* (2002).
– Old Babylonian: Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch* (2018).
– Old Babylonian Mari: Finet, *L'accadien* (1956, partly outdated).
– Middle Babylonian: Aro, *Studien* (1955, partly outdated).
– Middle and Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions: Stein, *Mittel- und neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (2000).
– Akkadian of Egypt: Müller, *Akkadisch* (2010).
– Akkadian of Canaan: Rainey, *Canaanite* (1996); Izre'el, *Canaano-Akkadian* (2005); Tropper and Vita, *Kanaano-Akkadische* (2010).
– Akkadian of Ugarit: Huehnergard, *Akkadian of Ugarit* (1989), van Soldt, *Studies* (1991).
– Akkadian of Amurru: Izre'el, *Amurru Akkadian* (1991).
– Akkadian of Tušratta: Adler, *Das Akkadische* (1976).
– Akkadian of Emar: Seminara, *L'accadico* (1998).
– Akkadian of Nuzi: Wilhelm, *Untersuchungen* (1970, partly outdated).
– Akkadian of Susa: Salonen (E.), *Untersuchungen* (1962, partly outdated), de Meyer, *L'Accadien* (1962, partly outdated).
– Neo-Babylonian: Woodington, "A Grammar", (1982, partly outdated).
– Late Babylonian royal inscriptions: Schaudig, *Die Inschriften* (2001, in German).
– Akkadian of the Bisutun-inscription: Malbran-Labat, *La version akkadienne* (1994).
– Old Assyrian: Hecker, *Grammatik* (1968, partly outdated), Kouwenberg, *A Grammar* (2017).
– Middle Assyrian: de Ridder, *Descriptive Grammar* (2018).

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141   Cf. also *Dialects and periods*, 1.8, above.

- Neo-Assyrian: Hämeen-Anttila, *A Sketch* (2000), Luukko, *Grammatical Variation* (2004).
- Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions: Madvig, "A Grammar" (1967, partly outdated).
- Akkadian hymns: Groneberg, *Syntax* (1987).

There also exist some monographs on individual subjects of Akkadian grammar, almost all of them on the verb or on syntax, some of them confined to specific dialects/periods:

- Numerals: Streck, *Zahl und Zeit* (1995; Late Babylonian).
- Verb: Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb* (2010).
- Tenses: Streck *Zahl und Zeit* (1995; Late Babylonian), Metzler, *Tempora* (2000; literary Old Babylonian).
- Ventive: Hirsch, *Gilgamesch-Epos* (2002; Gilgameš and Erra epics).
- Modal system: Cohen, *Modal System* (2005; Old Babylonian), Wasserman, *Most Probably* (2012; Old Babylonian).
- *tan*-stems: Edzard, *Die Iterativstämme* (1996).
- Gt-stem: Streck, *Akkadischen Verbalstämme* (2003).
- D-stem: Kouwenberg, *Gemination* (1997).
- Infinitive constructions: Aro, *Infinitivkonstruktionen* (1961; partly outdated).
- Non-verbal sentences: Kraus, *Nominalsätze* (1984; Old Babylonian).
- Parataxis: Patterson, "Old Babylonian" (1970; Old Babylonian, partly outdated).
- Koppelungen:[142] Kraus, *Sonderformen* (1987; Old Babylonian).
- Subordinate clauses: Hackl, *Subordinierte Satz* (2007; Late Babylonian).
- Conditional clauses: Cohen, *Conditional Structures* (2012; Old Babylonian).
- Sentential complementation: Deutscher, *Syntactic Change* (2000).
- Word order: Gianto, *Word Order* (1990; Akkadian of Byblos).

2.4   *Akkadian Textbooks*

The most elaborate textbook in English language is Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (2011). This textbook is not regularly based on original references, but extensively uses artificial examples usually modeled after Old Babylonian.[143] Much shorter, but exclusively based on original examples, is Caplice, *Introduction to Akkadian* (2002). Worthington, *Complete Babylonian* (2018) also addresses the non-academic reader.

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142   Usually—but wrongly—called "hendiadys".
143   Cf. the review by Michael P. Streck, review of *A Grammar of Akkadian*, by John Huehnergard, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 89 (1999): 282–86, on an earlier edition of the book (i.e. John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997).

A textbook in German language is Borger, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke* (2006). Its grammatical part is based on von Soden, *Grundriss* (1952, 1995³). It contains editions of the Code of Hammurapi, of the eleventh tablet of the Gilgameš epic and of Old Babylonian as well as Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. Riemschneider, *Lehrbuch des Akkadischen* (1978³) uses Old Babylonian references from omen texts. The book does not deal with cuneiform but also offers introductions into the younger Babylonian periods and the Assyrian dialect. An up-to-date introduction into Old Babylonian and into cuneiform (both Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian ductus) is Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch* (2018).

3   Perspectives of Research

Among the ancient languages, the Akkadian text corpus is one of the largest in the world: with more than ten million words, it almost matches the text corpus of ancient Latin and is surpassed only by ancient Greek.[144] However, although the results of more than 150 years of research on the Akkadian language are impressive, Akkadian is still far from being understood as well as the venerated languages of the intellectual history of Europe, that had never been forgotten, that had never needed to be deciphered again, and which enjoy a much longer tradition of research. Moreover, whereas the text corpora of ancient Greek and Latin are more or less static, the steady publication of new cuneiform texts implicates a quick influx of new data on the Akkadian language, with the result that existing descriptions of the language may become outdated soon.

Although the ongoing digitalization of larger Akkadian text corpora will increasingly facilitate the research on the Akkadian lexicon and grammar in the future, traditional philological methods of research will continue to form the base for the interpretation and evaluation of Akkadian cuneiform texts. Input from linguistics (terminology, methods of analysis) will help to analyze and describe the Akkadian language more exactly.

As of 2020, we still lack comprehensive and up-to-date grammatical descriptions of three Akkadian core dialects/periods: Old Babylonian, Late Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian. Within Old Babylonian, a separate study for Early Old Baby-

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144   For an evaluation of the size of the Akkadian text corpus see Michael P. Streck, "Großes Fach Altorientalistik. Der Umfang des keilschriftlichen Textkorpus," in *Altorientalistik im 21. Jahrhundert: Selbstverständnis, Herausforderungen, Ziele*, Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 142, ed. Markus Hilgert (Berlin: Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 2011), 35–58.

lonian from the Ur III period until Sîn-muballiṭ will be rewarding. From the peripheral dialects, one may single out the need for a new study of Nuzi Akkadian. The many varieties of Akkadian literary language from the Old Babylonian periods onwards deserve closer examination.

Coming to individual grammatical subjects, one of the most interesting topics will be a comprehensive study of Akkadian noun patterns. Also numerals and their syntax are still not well understood. Akkadian tenses and their functions will remain a matter of debate.

The Akkadian dictionaries need to be supplemented regularly in order to digest the data in numerous new published texts.[145] Dictionaries for Akkadian sub-corpora, e.g., a dictionary of the Akkadian literary language, are not available at all. A new study on Sumerian loanwords in Akkadian is necessary. Since the lion's share of Akkadian texts are everyday texts, the Akkadian lexicon is characterized by many words for realia: further research on individual semantic fields will help to clarify the meaning of many words.

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145 As stated above, supplements to the Akkadian dictionaries, covering letters B, P, D, T and Ṭ, have been published as Streck, *Supplement to the Akkadian Dictionaries. Volume B, P*, and Michael P. Streck, *Supplement to the Akkadian Dictionaries. Volume D, T, Ṭ* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2019).

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