

# History of the Akkadian Language

*Volume 2*  
*The Second and First Millennia BCE*  
*Afterlife*

*Edited by*

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# Contents

## VOLUME 1

Preface	IX
List of Figures and Tables	IX
Abbreviations: Bibliographical	XIV
Other Abbreviations and Conventions	XXXVI
Notes on Contributors	XLII

### PART 1

#### *Introduction*

- 1 Research on the Akkadian Language 3  
*Michael P. Streck*

### PART 2

#### *Teaching and Writing Akkadian in the Ancient Near East*

- 2 Teaching Akkadian in the Ancient Near East 37  
*Alexandra Kleinerman*
- 3 Akkadian and Cuneiform 66  
*Michael P. Streck*
- 4 Akkadian and Alphabetic Cuneiform 75  
*Carole Roche-Hawley and Robert Hawley*
- 5 Akkadian and the Greek Alphabet (Graeco-Babyloniaca) 102  
*Martin Lang*

### PART 3

#### *Akkadian: Some General Trends of Its Development*

- 6 Classification of Akkadian within the Semitic Family 129  
*Rebecca Hasselbach-Andee*

- 7 Historical Morphology of Akkadian 147  
*N.J.C. Kouwenberg*
- 8 A Historical Overview of Akkadian Morphosyntax 228  
*Ilya Arkhipov, Maksim Kalinin and Sergey Loesov*
- 9 A History of the Akkadian Lexicon 366  
*Leonid Kogan and Manfred Krebernik*
- 10 A History of Akkadian Onomastics 477  
*Regine Pruzsinszky*

**PART 4*****Akkadian in the Fourth and Third Millennium BCE***

- 11 Old Akkadian 513  
*Walter Sommerfeld*
- 12 Eblaite 664  
*Leonid Kogan and Manfred Krebernik*

**VOLUME 2****PART 5*****Akkadian in the Second Millennium BCE: Akkadian in Mesopotamia***

- 13 Old Babylonian 993  
*Michael P. Streck*
- 14 Middle Babylonian 1039  
*Wilfred H. van Soldt*
- 15 Old Assyrian 1103  
*N.J.C. Kouwenberg*

- 16 Middle Assyrian 1137  
*Stefan Jakob*

**PART 6**

***Akkadian in the Second Millennium BCE: Peripheral Akkadian***

- 17 Akkadian and the Amorites 1177  
*Dominique Charpin*
- 18 Akkadian in Syria and Canaan 1213  
*Juan-Pablo Vita*
- 19 Akkadian and the Hittites 1266  
*Gary Beckman*
- 20 Akkadian in Egypt 1293  
*Matthias Müller*
- 21 Akkadian in Elam 1316  
*Florence Malbran-Labat*

**PART 7**

***Akkadian in the First Millennium BCE***

- 22 Neo-Assyrian 1347  
*Frederick M. Fales*
- 23 (Early) Neo-Babylonian 1396  
*Christian W. Hess*
- 24 Late Babylonian 1431  
*Johannes Hackl*
- 25 The Death of Akkadian as a Written and Spoken Language 1459  
*Johannes Hackl*

## PART 8

*Afterlife: Akkadian after Akkadian*

- 26 The Legacy of Akkadian 1481  
*John Huehnergard*

- Index of Personal Names 1533  
Index of Divine Names 1541  
Index of Geographical Names 1543  
Index of Subjects 1549  
Index of Texts Cited 1568

# Old Babylonian

*Michael P. Streck*

## 1 Introduction\*

This chapter describes the history of the Akkadian (Akk) language between the fall of the Ur III dynasty and the end of the first dynasty of Babylon, i.e., between 2003 and 1595 according to the middle chronology, as far as it does not concern the (Old) Assyrian dialect. This period and dialect is traditionally called Old Babylonian (OB). Regarding the number of texts and the variety of text genres, OB is the best attested period/dialect of Akk. Its long chronological range is only matched by Late Babylonian, and its wide geographical distribution is only superseded by Middle Babylonian. Therefore, OB can be described in great detail. This, in combination with its relatively high age, is the reason why OB normally serves as reference language for Akk as a whole in introductory textbooks and in comparative Semitic studies.

Section 2 deals with the size of the OB text corpus. Section 3 gives a survey of the geographical distribution of OB texts. Section 4 is dedicated to the chronological development and the dialects of OB. Different text genres and their language(s) are described in section 5. Section 6 summarizes the differences between OB and OA. The influences of other Ancient Near Eastern languages on OB are the subject of section 7.

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\* The manuscript was finished in 2016 and was later updated only to a limited extent. Therefore, some passages, especially in section 2, may be already outdated in part. Abbreviations of text publications follow the list of abbreviations published in each volume of the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* and online under <http://www.keilschrift.badw.de/Reallexikon>. I thank Janine Wende for reading the manuscript and additions especially concerning early OB.

## 2 The Text Corpus

In the following section<sup>1</sup> an attempt is made to estimate the size of this corpus in number of texts and words of text.<sup>2</sup> For this purpose we divide the OB text corpus in three big genres: administrative texts (letters and documents), monumental texts (royal inscriptions), and canonical texts (scientific and literary texts).

### 2.1 *Administrative Texts*

OB administrative texts were found in many sites listed alphabetically:<sup>3</sup>

*Adab*: AbB 5, 1–57; AbB 11, 135–150: 73 texts.

*Alalah*: ALT p. 2: 175 texts from level VII. The figures in Zeeb, *Die Palastwirtschaft*, 686 f. and 688–90, add up to 288 texts.

*Babylon*: Pedersén, *Archive und Bibliotheken*, 17: 965 texts. The archive and library of Marduk-nāšir contains 156 literary texts (*ibid.*, 22). Some literary texts are also found in other archives. This means that the total of administrative texts amounts to ca. 800 texts. For many further texts in Yale (800 of them dated) see below under *Yale*.

*Dilbat*: Klengel, “Untersuchungen”, 66: 400 texts. Pientka, *Spätaltbabylonische Zeit*, 277: 362 late OB tablets. Texts said from Dilbat and its vicinity not counted in Pientka: VS 7, 1–42; TJDB pp. vii–viii (6 texts dated to Samsuiluna); Gautier, *Dilbat*: 67 texts. Altogether: 477 texts.

*Diyala region*, exact provenance unclear: TIM 3: 157 texts. Fs. Saporetti (2009), 387 f. no. 8, 9: 2 texts. Together: 159 texts.

*Ebla*: Kupper, “Un contrat paléo-syrien”, 45: 8 texts.

*Emar*: Emar 6/3 no. 536: 1 text.

*Ešnunna*: AS 22: 55 texts. According to AS 22 p. 1, ca. 1.400 texts found in Ešnunna date to the Ur III and OB periods; it remains unclear how many of them are OB.

1 This section is an updated version of Michael P. Streck, “Großes Fach Altorientalistik: Der Umfang des keilschriftlichen Textkorpus,” *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 142 (2010): 44–47, 49–53 with postscriptum on p. 58.

2 The reader should not expect entirely exact numbers here. Rather, the numbers of texts is based on a rough count, and the estimation of words of text cannot, by definition, be exact; for methodological questions and caveats connected with such an estimate see Streck, “Großes Fach,” 37 f.

3 The most convenient starting point to count OB administrative texts is the bibliography given in Dominique Charpin, “Histoire Politique du Proche-Orient Amorrite (2002–1595),” in *Mesopotamien. Die altbabylonische Zeit*, ed. Dominique Charpin et al. (Fribourg-Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 407–80, supplemented and updated by other literature.

*Harrādum*: Joannès, *Haradum I*: 116 texts.

*Ḥašor*: Horowitz and Oshima, *Cuneiform in Canaan*, Hazor 1, 4, 5, 8 and 12: 5 texts.

*Hebron*: Horowitz and Oshima, *Cuneiform in Canaan*, Hebron 1: 1 text.

*Horn Archaeological Museum*: AUCT 5: 215 texts of various proveniences (see AfO 52, 654).

*Isin*: Isin I–IV: 923 texts. For further Isin texts (more than 700 dated) see *Yale*, below.

*Kazane Höyük*: JCS 50, 53–58: 2 texts.

*Kisurra*: FAOS 2: 215 texts. Goddeeris, “An Adoption Document”, 93: over 200 texts in the British Museum and ca. 30 texts dispersed over different collections. Together: 445 texts.

*Kiš* and *Ḥursagkalama*: de Genouillac, *Premières recherches*, 29: 1.400 texts, most of which date to the OB period (Donbaz and Yoffee, *Old Sumerian*, 1). OECT 13, 15–75; 76–142 (OECT 13 p. 2: many but not all texts from Kiš); 143–214; together max. 200 texts in Oxford. Together from Kiš ca. 1.600 texts.

*Kutalla*: TSifr: 98 texts.

*Lagaba*: AbB 3; AbB 10, 74, 101, 121, 123, 124, 128; SLB 1/1; SLB 1/3: together 334 texts.

*Lagaš*: Charpin, “Histoire politique”, 417: 33 texts.

*Larsa*: AbB 2; AbB 4; AbB 11, 165–194; AUCT 4 (not all texts from Larsa); Banca d’Italia 2; BBVOT 3; Boyer, *Contribution*; DCEPHE; Marchant, “Old Babylonian Tablets”; NABU 1989/118; RA 69, 109–36 no. 8–12; RA 72, 113–38; RA 85, 13–48; RA 102, 50–58 no. 1–10. SLB 1/2; Syria 48, 289–93; Syria 53, 47–81; Syria 55, 225–32; TCL 7; TCL 10–11; VS 13; VS 18; a total of 1.780 texts (letters). For texts from Larsa kept in Yale (at least 2.000 dated texts) see below under *Yale*.

*Mananāya*-dynasty: Charpin, “Recherches”, 14 n. 5: 163 texts, 36 of which are kept in Yale (see below), the latter not counted here, i.e., 127 texts. Further 44 texts outside of Yale (Goddeeris, *Economy and Society*, 259–83). Together: 171 texts.

*Marad*: de Boer, “Marad”, 24: 18 texts belonging to the Ilum-bānī archive + 17 other texts. Not counting the 9 texts of Yale (see below), this amounts to 26 texts.

*Mari*: Charpin, “Archives babyloniennes”, mentions the number of 8.666 published texts from Mari. The total of texts (and fragments) excavated in Mari is difficult to determine; the lowest number mentioned in the literature is 15.000 complete or fragmentary tablets (Margueron, *Métropole de l’Euphrate*, 432), the highest 20.000 found by A. Parrot + “fragments of a few thousands documents ... discovered during the excavations of J. Margueron” (Durand, “Mari (Texts)”, 529).



*Mê-Turran*: Edubba 1: 24 texts.

*Nērebtum*: Miglus, “Nērebtum”, 212: 280 tablets + perhaps the 290 tablets published in UCP 10/1: 570 texts.

*Nineveh*: Iraq 63, 155–67: 3 texts (the others are literary).

*Nippur*: AbB 5; AbB 11; AoF 17, 355–59; ARN; BE 6/2; *Babyloniaca* 7, 67–80; Belleten 26, 20–44; JCS 18, 102–13; MesCiv. 3; OECT 8; PBS 8; PBS 13; SAOC 44; Stone and Zimansky, *Old Babylonian Contracts*; TIM 4, 1–30; 150 tablets from Jena are unpublished (Hüttner and Olsner, “Verwaltungsurkunden”, 355): altogether 1.826 texts.

*Nusaybin*: NABU 1999/58: 1 text.

*Qal’at al-Hadi*: PIHANS 58, 44f.: 1 text.

*Qatna*: QS 3 p. 169f. TT 61: 1 text.

*Rimāḥ*: OBTR: 335 texts, among them 203 letters.

*Sealand dynasty*: CUSAS 9: 463 texts.

*Shechem*: Horowitz and Oshima, *Cuneiform in Canaan*, Shechem 1: 1 text.

*Sippar*: Dekiere, *Old Babylonian Real Estate*, 3: 6.000 texts from the Sippar region.

*Susa*: Salonen, *Untersuchungen*, 30 lists 401 texts. In addition ca. 100 texts from Level XII, see M.-J. Stève, Fs. J. De Meyer 23. Together: ca. 500 texts.

*Šaduppum*: van Koppen, “Šaduppûm”, 488 § 2: ca. 3.000 tablets found in regular excavations + 122 known texts from illegal excavations + probably many more unknown: together at least more than 3.100 texts.

*Chagar Bazar*: The numbers given in Talon, “Šāḡir Bāzār”, 525 add up to 354 tablets.

*Šubat-Enlil*: Eidem, “Šubat-Enlil”, 228 §§ 2 and 3: Altogether more than 1.020 tablets and fragments, among them ca. 200 letters.

*Šušarrā*: Eidem, “Šušarrā”, 360f.: 248 texts, among them 102 letters.

*Tell Dhiba’i*: Sumer 34, 130–38: 5 texts. Abdullah Ahmad, “Old Babylonian Loan Contracts”: 28 texts. Harris, “The Archive of the Sin temple”, 35 mentions 100 texts dated to the OB period.<sup>4</sup>

*Tell Egraineh*: AfO 44/45, 131–33: 65 texts from the Late OB period.

*Tell Hawa*: Iraq 52, 41f.: 1 text.

*Tell Muḥammad*: Karg, “Muḥammad, Tall”: 32 texts.<sup>5</sup>

4 According to Muhamed 1992, 14, about 300 texts were found in Tell Dhiba’i. How many of these date to the OB period remains unknown.

5 Other texts probably date to the earliest phase of the Kassite period, see Leonhard Sassmannshausen, “The Adaptation of the Kassites to the Babylonian Civilization,” in *Languages and Cultures in Contact. At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm*, ed. Karel van Lerberghe and Gabriella Voet (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters and Departement Oosterse Studies Leuven, 2000), 413f.

*Tell Seb'e*: Fs. Saporetti, 385 f. 12 texts (among them 1 letter).

*Tell Šišin*: A. Khalil Muhammed, *Akkadika* 123, 1: 14 texts.

*Tell Tāya*: Iraq 35, 173–75: 2 texts.

*Tell Yelhi*: Mesopotamia 20, 33–36, and Mesopotamia 30, 7–9: 83 texts.

*Terqa*: 30 texts from the *šakkanakku* period (Rouault and Masetti-Rouault, “Terqa”, 599 §3); almost 200 texts from the period Terqa II, i.e., the middle OB period (ibid. 600 §4; not all of them administrative texts); ca. 88 texts from the late OB period (BiMes. 16: 58 texts; Rouault, “Les fouilles de Terqa”: 30 texts). Newest publication: BiMes. 29. Altogether: ca. 318 texts.

*Tulūl Khattab*: Edubba 9 p. 7: 359 OB texts, of which 36 are published in the volume.

*Tuttul*: Krebernik, *Tall Bi'a/Tuttul II*: 382 texts.

*Tutub*: Harris, “The Archive of the Sin temple”, 35: 111 texts. OBTI no. 305–325: 26 texts. Fs. Saporetti, 379–85: 6 texts. Together: 143 texts.

*Umma*(?): Possibly a couple of early OB letters, see section 4.2.3, below.

*Ur*: Archives Familiales; Fs. Å.W. Sjöberg 367–70; Iraq 15, 88–122 and 171–92; JCS 24, 89–99; JCS 28, 233–42; UET 5. Together: 935 texts.

*Uruk*: AUWE 23: 605 texts; Falkenstein, “Zu den Inschriftenfunden”, 4: 305 texts; Nisaba 4: 154 texts; RA 85, 13–48 no. 19–20: 2 texts; together 1.066 texts.

*Yale*: The OB texts in the collections in Yale were listed in two catalogues: Beckman, *Old Babylonian Archival Texts in the Nies Babylonian Collection*: 3.334 texts, as far as they are dated chiefly from Isin (ca. 680 texts), Larsa (ca. 560 texts), and Babylon (ca. 360 texts), and smaller text groups from several cities in Babylonia and the Diyala region. Beckman, *Old Babylonian Archival Texts in the Yale Babylonian Collection*: 5.504 texts, as far as they are dated mainly from Larsa (ca. 1.440 texts) and Babylon (ca. 440 texts), and again smaller text groups from Babylonia and the Diyala region. Together 8.838 texts. Texts kept in Yale are not counted with the individual cities.

The figures given above add up to ca. 35.377 (published and unpublished) texts<sup>6</sup> without Mari, including the published texts from Mari to ca. 44.042 texts, including the lowest figure of texts excavated in Mari given in the secondary literature to slightly more than 50.000 OB administrative texts.<sup>7</sup>

6 In Streck, “Großes Fach,” 46 I counted 30.473 texts.

7 Dominique Charpin, “Archives babyloniennes (xx<sup>e</sup>–xvii<sup>e</sup> siècles av. J.-C.),” 2012 onwards, mentions 34.9300 published texts in May 2020. Antoine Jacquet, “Family Archives in Mesopotamia during the Old Babylonian Period,” in *Archives and archival documents in ancient societies*, ed. Michele Faraguna (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2013), 65: 32.092 archival texts, among them 19.585 “with a well established origin thanks to regular excavations” (see

Of these texts, AbB 1–14 contain 2.727 letters mainly from southern and northern Babylonia.<sup>8</sup> Letters from Mari translated by Durand, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari* (3 vols.), add up to 1.288 texts; including ARM 26 (550), 27 (177) and 28 (181) 2.196 letters from Mari. The number of letters from Rimāḥ, Šubat-Enlil and Šušarrā mentioned above add up to more than 500 texts. Altogether the OB letter corpus consists of 5.400 letters at least.

The word count is based on the following figures: Letters (mainly) from Babylonia: AbB 1, 1–25: 1.618 words, i.e., 66 words per letter on average. Letters from Mari: ARM 1, 1–25: 2.472 words, i.e., 99 words on average. Documents from Sippar: MHET 2/1, 1–25: 1.756 words. Documents from Larsa: AUCT 4, 1; 2; 5; 8; 10–14; 18–21; 23–25; 29; 37; 39–45: 933 words, i.e., 53,78 words on average. This yields the following estimation: Letters from Babylonia (+ the smaller letter corpora mentioned above): ca. 212.982 words. Letters from Mari: 217.404 words. Documents: 2.669.000 words. Altogether the size of the OB administrative text corpus amounts to more than 3.100.000 words of text.

## 2.2 Monumental Texts

The royal inscriptions of the OB kings are largely composed in Sumerian; only a smaller part is written in Akkadian (see section 7.1.d, below). The edition in RIME 4 contains ca. 6.900 words of Akk text. The Code of Hammurapi has some 7.000 words of text. Including other law codes and royal edicts the size of the corpus of OB monumental inscriptions comes to more than 16.000 words of text.

## 2.3 Canonical Texts

According to Streck and Wasserman, “Sources of Early Akkadian Literature”, the following compositions belong to the OB literary text corpus:

- Epics: 41 compositions
- Hymns and prayers: 51 compositions
- Lamentations: 18 compositions
- Love literature: 18 compositions

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Jacquet’s table on *ibid.*, 65 “distribution of archival documents”; Dominique Charpin, “The Historian and the Old Babylonian Archives,” in *Documentary Sources in Ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman Economic History: Methodology and Practice*, ed. Heather D. Baker and Michael Jursa, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014, 24: 29,228 texts; distribution of texts from controlled excavations *ibid.* 50–52).

8 Some texts come from the Diyala region, see, e.g., Joan Goodnick Westenholz, review of AbB 8 and 9, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 48 (1989), 154, for texts in AbB 8 and 9. Letters published in articles (e.g. Niek Veldhuis, “Old Babylonian Documents in the Hearst Museum of Anthropology, Berkeley,” *Revue d’assyriologie* 102, 2008: 49–70) are not counted.

- Incantations: 173 compositions
- Literary letters: 9 compositions
- Wisdom Literature: 27 compositions
- Funeral texts: 7 compositions
- Miscellaneous: 52 compositions
- Catalogues: 2 compositions

For the OB scientific text corpus a similar and up-to-date survey is missing. Lieberman, *Sumerian Loanwords*, 11f. mentions the following figures:

- Omen texts: 200
- Lexical texts: 150 bilingual
- Mathematical: 200

Today, the numbers are higher. It is difficult to estimate the size of this text corpus in words of text: probably between 100.000 and 200.000 words of text.

### 3 Geographical Distribution

OB texts come from at least nine different regions.<sup>9</sup>

#### 3.1 *Southern Babylonia*

Babylonia from the gulf up to the latitude of Nippur: texts from Ur, Uruk, Umma(?),<sup>10</sup> Larsa, Lagaš, Kutalla, Kisurra, Adab, Maškan-šāpir, Isin, Nippur and the Sealand Dynasty.<sup>11</sup> This region comprises ancient Sumer, an area where Sumerian was spoken in the third millennium.<sup>12</sup> For early OB texts see section 4.2.1, below, for middle OB section 4.3.1, below.

#### 3.2 *Northern Babylonia*

Already in the third millennium. an Akk speaking area: texts from Marad, Babylon, Kiš, Dilbat, Lagaba, Tell Egraineh, Sippar. For middle OB texts see section 4.3.1, below.

9 See in general Charpin, "Histoire politique," 407–80, and section 2, above.

10 For letters possibly from Umma see section 4.2.1, below.

11 The exact provenance of the Sealand Dynasty texts from southern Babylonia is unclear: see the discussion in Stephanie Dalley, *Babylonian Tablets from the First Sealand Dynasty in the Schøyen Collection* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2009), 4f.

12 See section 7.1, below.

### 3.3 *The Diyala Region*

Uzarlulu (Tell Dhiba'i), Tell Muḥammad,<sup>13</sup> Tulūl Khattab, Šaduppum, Nērebutum, Tutub, Tell Seb'e, Ešnunna, Mê-Turran, Tell Yelḫi. The boundary between the OB and OA speaking areas was somewhere south of Aššur. For early OB texts from Ešnunna see section 4.2.2, below, for middle OB texts from Tell Ḥarmal section 4.3.2, below.

### 3.4 *Middle Euphrates and Lower Ḥābūr Area*

Texts found in Tell Šišin, Harrādum, Mari, Terqa, Tuttul and Emar. Akk is used in an area where, according to the testimony of the personal names, the majority of the population was Amorite.<sup>14</sup> For early OB texts from Mari see section 4.2.3, below, for early OB texts from Tuttul see section 4.2.4, below, for middle OB texts see section 4.3.3, below.

### 3.5 *Upper Mesopotamia*

Texts from Kazane Höyük, Chagar Bazar, Nusaybin, Šubat-Enlil (Tell Leilān), Rimāḫ, Tell Tāya,<sup>15</sup> Tell Hawa, Qal'at al-Hadi, Nineveh. Šubat-Enlil was the capital of Samsi-Addu, who sent many letters to his son Yasmaḫ-Addu in Mari. Samsi-Addu also sent 25 letters to Šušarrā at the Lower Zāb.<sup>16</sup> Yasmaḫ-Addu's brother, Išmē-Dagan, who also sent letters to Yasmaḫ-Addu and 10 letters to Šušarrā,<sup>17</sup> resided in Ekallātum in the Tigris region. Letters sent from many different kingdoms in Upper Mesopotamia to the court in Mari also belong here: letters of the kings of Zalmaqum,<sup>18</sup> Talḫayum,<sup>19</sup> Burundum,<sup>20</sup> Urkeš,<sup>21</sup> Ašlak-

13 See Norbert Karg, "Muḥammad, Tall," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 8, ed. Dietz O. Edzard (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993–1997), 407: south of Šaduppum on the southeastern outskirts of Bagdad.

14 See section 9.

15 See Julian E. Reade, "Tāya, Tall," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 13, ed. Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011–2013), 493: "on the lower slope of limestone hills overlooking the north-eastern corner of the Sinḡar-Tall 'Afar plain and the upper reaches of the Wadi Tārṭar".

16 See Jesper Eidem, "Šušarrā," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 13, ed. Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011–2013), 360.

17 See Eidem, "Šušarrā," 360.

18 ARM 28, 26-38.

19 ARM 13, 139-50; ARM 28, 39-42.

20 ARM 28, 43.

21 ARM 28, 44-46.

ka,<sup>22</sup> Zalluḫān,<sup>23</sup> Ilanšura,<sup>24</sup> Susa,<sup>25</sup> Ašnakkum,<sup>26</sup> Šuduḫum,<sup>27</sup> Ida-Maraš,<sup>28</sup> letters of Yakūn-Dīr,<sup>29</sup> letters from Kaḫat,<sup>30</sup> Qa'a and Isqā,<sup>31</sup> Tarmanni,<sup>32</sup> Šunā,<sup>33</sup> the letters of Abī-Samar,<sup>34</sup> letters from Apum,<sup>35</sup> the letters of Arriyuk,<sup>36</sup> letters from Razamā,<sup>37</sup> a letter of Šeparu,<sup>38</sup> letters from Kurdā,<sup>39</sup> Andarig,<sup>40</sup> Karanā and Qaṭṭarā.<sup>41</sup>

Akk is used in an area in which, according to the testimony of the personal names, a large percentage of the population was Amorite and a smaller percentage Hurrian.<sup>43</sup> For middle OB texts see section 4.3.4, below.

### 3.6 *Eastern Tigris*

Šušarrā lies at the Lower Zāb in the Western Zagros. The local population was a mix of different groups such as Lullubeans and Hurrians.<sup>44</sup> The letters written by Zaziya, king of the Turukkeans, found in Mari, also come from the region east of the Tigris.<sup>45</sup> For middle OB texts see section 4.3.5, below.

22 ARM 28, 48-78.

23 ARM 28, 79.

24 ARM 28, 80-90bis.

25 ARM 28, 91-97.

26 ARM 28, 97bis-109.

27 ARM 28, 110-113.

28 The exact location of the kingdom of Yapḫur-lim, author of ARM 28, 114-20, is unknown.

29 ARM 28, 121-22. The name of his kingdom is unknown but was probably located near Naḫur (Jean-Robert Kupper, *Lettres royales du temps de Zimri-Lim*, Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1998, 179).

30 ARM 28, 123-130, 132-133.

31 ARM 2, 57; ARM 28, 134-144.

32 ARM 28, 145-146.

33 ARM 28, 147.

34 ARM 1, 1-2. His kingdom, whose exact location is unknown, laid in the west of Upper Mesopotamia, see Durand 1997, 482.

35 ARM 28, 150-152.

36 ARM 28, 153-157. The name of his kingdom is unknown but was probably located in the eastern part of Upper Mesopotamia (Kupper, *Lettres royales*, 221).

37 ARM 28, 158-160.

38 ARM 28, 161. The name of his kingdom is unknown but was probably located on the Upper Ḫābūr (Cinzia Pappi, "Šeparu," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 12, ed. Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009-2011), 393.

39 ARM 28, 162-166.

40 ARM 28, 167-172.

41 ARM 28, 173-176.

42 See section 7.2, below.

43 See section 7.3, below.

44 See Eidem, "Šušarrā," 360.

45 ARM 28, 177-180.

### 3.7 *Northern Syria*

The region west of the Euphrates: texts from Ebla, Qaṭna and Alalakh. Here also belong letters from Karkemiš,<sup>46</sup> Aleppo<sup>47</sup> and Qaṭna<sup>48</sup> sent to the court in Mari. The local population probably spoke Amorite and other Northwest Semitic dialects or Hurrian. For middle OB in Karkemiš, Aleppo and Qaṭna see section 4.3.6, below.

### 3.8 *Israel/Palestine*

Texts from Ḥaṣor,<sup>49</sup> Shechem and Hebron. For middle OB texts from this region see section 4.3.7, below.

### 3.9 *Elam*

Texts from Susa. A fragmentary letter sent by a ruler from Elam to the court in Mari also belongs here.<sup>50</sup> The local language was Elamite. For middle OB texts from Susa see section 4.3.8, below, for late OB texts 4.4.2, below.

## 4 **The Chronological Development and the Dialects of Old Babylonian**

OB in the traditional sense developed over a period of ca. 400 years. If the Akk language in the Ur III period is subsumed under the term OB (see section 4.1, below), the time span covered by OB is more than 500 years long. The language continuously changed during this long period. Since the textual documentation more or less covers the entire OB period, with some gaps and a clear concentration on the middle part of it, the language change can be followed relatively well. Based on dated administrative texts, it would even be possible to describe the development of the OB language year by year in many cases. However, Akkadian philology is still far away from such detailed studies. For the moment, we have to confine ourselves to distinguish three sub-periods within OB:

46 ARM 5, 5-13; ARM 28, 18-25; LAPO 16, 252.

47 LAPO 16, 249 and 251; ARM 10, 151; ARM 16/1, 100 Hammurapi 2 (Ugar.).

48 ARM 2, 51; 5, 15-17 and 20; 28, 14-15.

49 The letter Hazor 12 (Wayne Horowitz and Takayoshi Oshima, *Cuneiform in Canaan. Cuneiform Sources from the Land of Israel in Ancient Times*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2006, 83-85) might have been written by Šamši-Addu I., see Nele Ziegler, "Šamši-Adad I," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 11, ed. Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006-2008), 633 § 3.

50 ARM 28, 181.

- Early OB: the period between the end of the Ur III-dynasty and Sîn-muballit of Babylon (ca. 2003–1813 according to the middle chronology).
- Middle OB: the period which begins with Sîn-muballit of Babylon (1812–1793), the predecessor of Hammurapi, and ends with Samsu-iluna (1749–1712), the successor of Hammurapi.
- Late OB: the period which begins with Abī-ešuḫ, the second successor of Hammurapi (ca. 1711–1684 according to the middle chronology) and ends around the sack of Babylon by the Hittites in 1595 before the rise of the Kassite dynasty.

The wide geographical distribution of OB texts (see section 3, above), especially of the middle OB period (see section 4.3, below) leads to dialectal<sup>51</sup> differences. However, research in this direction is still in its infancy. Moreover, some of the nine regions distinguished above are only sparsely attested, which does not allow a comprehensive description. Finally, the written language tends to conceal spoken dialects to a large degree in favor of a koine. In spite of these constraints, OB offers more material on dialects within Babylonian than any other period of Akk.

#### 4.1 *Ur III Akkadian*

Hilgert, *Akkadisch in der Ur III-Zeit* (esp. the summary on pp. 163–67) has shown that Ur III Akk shares several OB innovations: no subjunctive ending *-ni*; umlaut *a > e* is regularly observed: *epēšum* against Sargonic *epāšum*; the Š-stem of verbs I-ʾ has the form *ušaššab/ušāšib* against normal Sargonic *ušeššeb/ušūšib*; Verbs II-ʾ inflect analogous to verbs II-vocalis: D-stem *urīq* against Sargonic *uraʾiq*; Verbs III-ʾ inflect analogous to verbs III-vocalis, with ʾ<sub>3-5</sub> causing umlaut *a > e*: *išmē* against Sargonic *išmaʾ*; Verbs III-vocalis apparently do not have ablaut: *aqabbī/aqbī* against Sargonic *aqabbē/aqbē*.

Features which distinguish Ur III Akk from (Old) Assyrian: the precativ has the Babylonian forms *luprus* (G 1s), *liparris* (D 3s) and *lišapris* (Š 3s).<sup>52</sup> D- and Š-stem have forms with *u* instead of (Old) Assyrian *a*: *purrusum*, *šuprusum* etc. (Hilgert, *Akkadisch in der Ur III-Zeit*, 165; cf. for the OA forms section 6.2.b, below).

Hilgert also mentions two features in which the early OB dialect of Ešnunna (see section 4.2.2, below) is more archaic than Ur III Akk: the form *ebābi* in

51 It must be stressed that the term “dialect” is used here in its proper linguistic sense and denotes geographically based language varieties. In traditional Akkadian studies the term has also often been applied for the different periods of Akkadian.

52 Markus Hilgert, *Akkadisch in der Ur III-Zeit* (Münster: Rhema, 2002), 162 f.; cf. for the corresponding (Old) Assyrian forms 6.2.c, below.



early OB Ešnunna against *epēšu* in Ur III;<sup>53</sup> the form of the independent personal pronoun 3sm *šūt* in early OB Ešnunna against *šū* in Ur III.<sup>54</sup>

Ur III Akk only has one instance of the subordinative morpheme *-na* (Hilgert, *Akkadisch in der Ur III-Zeit*, 164), which is known from early OB of Ešnunna (see section 4.2.2.d, below).

From all this follows that Ur III Akk does not belong to the Assyrian dialect of Akk but to the Babylonian one. Moreover, Ur III Akk could well be designated as a form of early OB, but there is no linear sequence Ur III Akk—early OB Ešnunna—middle OB. However, this does not prove that Sargonic Akk represents a dialect different from Ur III Akk and from OB;<sup>55</sup> also Sargonic Akk shares many Babylonian innovations, and features which distinguish Sargonic Akk from Ur III Akk and features shared between Sargonic Akk and Assyrian are shared retentions not diagnostic for the establishment of a separate dialect. This means that also Sargonic Akk shares a common ancestor with later (Old) Babylonian or even is an early stage of Babylonian. Therefore, our use of the term OB for the Babylonian dialect only after the Ur III period is, to a certain degree, arbitrary and pragmatically defined.

#### 4.2 *Early Old Babylonian*

As early Old Babylonian we designate the period between the end of the Ur III-dynasty and *Sîn-muballiṭ* from Babylon (ca. 2003–1813 according to the middle chronology). Early OB texts come from four different regions:

- Southern Babylonia (e.g., Lagaš, Isin and Larsa; see section 3.1, above).
- Northern Babylonia (e.g., Sippar, Babylon, Dilbat, Kiš; see Goddeeris, *Economy and Society*; see section 3.2, above).
- The Diyala region (Ešnunna, Tutub, Nērebtum; see section 3.3, above).
- The middle Euphrates area (Mari, Terqa and Tuttul; see Durand, “Šakkanaku”, 562 f. for a bibliography; see section 3.4, above).

##### 4.2.1 Early Old Babylonian in Southern Babylonia

A comprehensive description of the language of the early OB texts from Babylonia is a desideratum.<sup>56</sup> We take as a sample some early OB letters published in

53 Hilgert, *Akkadisch*, 166; see section 4.2.2.a, below.

54 Hilgert, *Akkadisch*, 164 n. 167; see section 4.2.2.b, below.

55 Thus Hilgert, *Akkadisch*, 168. See Rebecca Hasselbach, “The Affiliation of Sargonic Akkadian to Babylonian and Assyrian—New Insights Concerning the Subgrouping of Akkadian,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 52 (2007): 21–43, followed by 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), 352–57.

56 Preliminary remarks are found in Aage Westenholz, “Some Notes on the Orthography and

the series AbB (Sallaberger, “*Wenn du mein Bruder bist*”, 34): letters from Lagaš in southern Babylonia (see section 3.1, above) from the time of Sumu-el of Larsa (1894–1866)<sup>57</sup> and letters from Umma or Kisurra (likewise southern Babylonia) roughly dating to the period of Sumu-abum of Babylon (1894–1881).<sup>58</sup>

#### 4.2.1.1 *Phonology*

Vowel sequences are normally treated as in later OB texts, i.e., *i-a/ā* is preserved but other sequences are contracted. There are, however, exceptions: Uncontracted sequences *ū-ā* and *ī-ū*: *nī-pu-a-at* PN AbB 9, 238: 4 f., 7 f. “distrainees of PN” and *li-ip-pi-ū* ibid. 9 “let them distrain”. *ti-qà-bi-ū* ibid. 253: 9 “you say”. But see *nī-pa-tu-um*/[*i-i*]m ibid. 5.

The form *dīnam li-ša-ḫi-iz-ne-ti* AbB 9, 214: 22 < *nī-āti* “may he arrange a trial between us” shows a remarkable contraction of *i-ā* to *ē*, mainly but not exclusively known from the later texts from the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr area (see section 4.3.3.a, below). But see *ta-ša-al-ni-a-ti* ibid. 218: 20 “you question us”.

A very early example for the dissimilation of long voiced consonants, known from MB, is *i-na-an-dī-nu-kum* AbB 9, 251: 6 < *inaddinū*- “they will give to you”.

#### 4.2.1.2 *Pronouns*

The pronominal suffix gen. 1s after the *ū* of the pl. is written *-a* and not *-ia* as in the later Code of Hammurapi (Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch*, 35 § 95a): *wa-ar-du-ū-a* à *al-pu-ū-a* AbB 9, 236: 9 f. “my slaves and my oxen”.

The pronominal suffixes acc. pl. can be shortened in the pausa: *a-ša-al-ku-nu-ut* AbB 2, 122: 22 “I will question you”. *ū-ša-am-da-ad-ku-nu-ut* ibid. 236: 19 “I will make you measure out”. *lā ta-na-ki-š[a]-šī-na-a*[*t*] ibid. 241: 11 “do not neglect them!” But see *a-ša-al-ku-nu-ti* ibid. 16 “I will ask you”.

#### 4.2.1.3 *Verbs*

A single letter has two verbal forms 2sm with prefix *ti-* instead of *ta-*: *ša ti-qà-bi-ū* AbB 9, 253: 9 “which you say” and [*lā t*] *i-ḫa-da-ar* ibid. 19 “do not worry!”<sup>59</sup>

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Grammar of the Recently Published Texts from Mari,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 35 (1978): 163 n. 25 (bibliography of texts up to the time of Sumu-abum from Babylon, ca. 1894–1881), 164 n. 29 (vowel contraction the norm from Sumu-abum onwards), 165 n. 48 (status constructus without ending).

57 AbB 9, 201-222; 226-227; 229; 232-236; 238; 241-242; 246; 250-267.

58 AbB 2, 117-129; 13, 54-59.

59 N.J.C. Kouwenberg, *The Akkadian Verb and Its Semitic Background* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 51, also quotes *ti-iq-bi-a-am* AbB 14, 82: 6. The text has many mistakes, see Klaas R. Veenhof, *Letters in the Louvre* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2005), 75, and belongs to the

The stative 2sm with ending *-āti*, also known from early OB texts from Ešnunna (see section 4.2.2.d, below), is attested once: *ḫa-aš-ḫa-ti* AbB 9, 213: 10 “you need”.

#### 4.2.1.3 *Lexicon*

Negation *ú-la* or *ù-la* instead of later *ul* is attested *passim*, e.g., AbB 9, 206: 6, 9; 209: 9; 210: 7; 215: 18. But see *ú-ul* in *ibid.* 256: 7.

#### 4.2.2 Early Old Babylonian in Ešnunna

The letters from Ešnunna in the Diyala area (see section 3.3, above) date to the beginning of the early OB period. According to Whiting, *Old Babylonian*, 8–22, especially the older of these letters show several archaic features which distinguish them from the later middle OB period.<sup>60</sup> Many of these features are also found in OAKk and in OA. However, typically Assyrian features such as the vowel harmony are missing, and typical OB innovations such as the forms *PuRRuS* and *šUPRuS* of the D- and Š-stems are present, so that the language clearly belongs to the Babyl. branch of Akk.

##### 4.2.2.1 *Phonology*

No vowel contraction: *zu-a-zi-im* AS 22, 25: 6 “to divide”, *ta-qá-bi-ú* *ibid.* 30: 34 “you are talking” (later *zázim* and *taqabbû*).

Missing umlaut *a > e* as in OA and OAKk: *e-ba-bi* AS 22, 21: 8 “my being clean” (later<sup>61</sup> *ebēbum*).

##### 4.2.2.2 *Pronouns*

Independent personal pronoun nom. 3sm *šu-ut* AS 22, 23: 22 (as in OA), see Whiting, *Old Babylonian*, 75 f., also with ex. from Babylonia.<sup>62</sup> The later form<sup>63</sup> is *šū*.

period of Samsu-iluna (1749–1712), see Veenhof, *Letters*, xxf. for the letters to Nūr-Šamaš. The form read *tī-ša-pī-ar* by Marten Stol, review of *Water for Larsa*, by S.D. Walters, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 28 (1971): 366 is now read *tī-ta-wa-ar* in AbB 14, 152: 7 and left untranslated. Cf. prefix *tī-* for the 3pm in early OB texts from Mari, probably due to Amorite influence, see section 4.2.3.c, below.

60 Robert M. Whiting, *Old Babylonian Letters from Tell Asmar* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1987), 17, designates the language of the earlier group of texts among the Ešnunna letters as “archaic OB” and distinguishes it from the later, the “early OB” texts, a terminological distinction not followed here.

61 For Ur III Akk see section 4.1, above.

62 Or to be read (in part) *šu-u<sub>4</sub>* (suggestion Janine Wende)? See *šu-UD* AbB 5, 141: 13 and *ba-ri-u<sub>4</sub>* *ibid.* 16. In Ešnunna, *u<sub>4</sub>* is, however, not used, see AS 22, 125 no. 221.

63 For Ur III Akk *šū* see section 4.1, above.

Independent personal pronoun gen./acc. 3. dual *šunīti* AS 22, 30: 13. Later replaced by pl. forms.

Determinative pronoun pl. *šūt* AS 22, 26: 6; 28: 4 (as in OAkk). Later replaced by the sg. form *ša*.

#### 4.2.2.3 Nouns

The ending of the terminative is used more freely than in later non-literary texts: *at-wu-<sup>r</sup>iš<sup>r</sup>* AS 22, 6: 10 “to discuss”.

#### 4.2.2.4 Verbs

Verbal prefix 3sf *ta-*: *awātu ta-am-qú-tám* AS 22, 27: 8 “a word reached (lit. fell on) me”. Normal in OAkk and in OA, but in later OB replaced by the masc. prefix *i-*.

Dual of the finite verb: PN PN<sub>2</sub> *ša ... i-ša-pá-ra-n[i-im]* AS 22, 13: 10’–12’ “PN (and) PN<sub>2</sub> who write to [me]”.

Stative 2sm with ending *-āti* (also known from early OB in Babylonia, see section 4.2.1.c, above): *ba-al-ṭá-ti* AS 22, 34: 29 “you are alive”. This is the normal form in OA; in later OB it only occurs sporadically and is replaced by *-āta*.<sup>64</sup>

Stative 3. dual with ending *-ā*: PN and PN<sub>2</sub> ... *wa-áš-ba* AS 22, 30: 10–12 “PN and PN<sub>2</sub> sit”. Later replaced by pl. forms.

Subordinative in *-na*, also common in early OB royal inscriptions:<sup>65</sup> *ú-da-<sup>r</sup>ni<sup>r</sup>-nu-<sup>r</sup>na<sup>r</sup>* AS 22, 6: 12 “(if I had not) strengthened”. *it-ta-na-la-ku-ni-in-na* AS 22, 30: 6 “they constantly come to me”.

#### 4.2.2.5 Lexicon

Negation *ulā* as in OA and OAkk, corresponding to later *ul*, see Whiting, *Old Babylonian*, 170 f. for references. *i-ni* AS 22, 25: 1, 9; 35: 8 “now, indeed” like *enni* in OAkk, corresponding to younger *anna*.

Other peculiarities, not necessarily archaic, include the forms *ú-nu-um-ma* AS 22, 15: 4 “now”, corresponding to later *annúmma*, and *ú-nu-mi-im* ibid. 12: 11 “this”, corresponding to later *annummûm*.

#### 4.2.3 Early Old Babylonian in Mari

The date of the early OB texts from Mari (middle Euphrates/lower Hābūr area, see section 3.4, above) is disputed; Durand, “Šakkanakku”, 562, places them

64 See Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 2010, 180; Michael P. Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch. 3rd, revised and enlarged edition* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), 93 § 201c.

65 Whiting, *Old Babylonian*, 43; Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 226 f. Outside Ešnunna, *-na* is only rarely attested in letters.

immediately before Yaḥdun-Lim (1810–1794) whereas Limet, *Textes administratifs*, 10, and Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 161 date them to the early Isin period (ca. 2000–1900). For their language see the preliminary remarks by Westenholz, “Some Notes”.

#### 4.2.3.1 *Archaisms*

Archaisms which distinguish early OB from Mari from middle OB are:

No vowel contraction: *Gār-ga-me-si-u-um* ARM 19, 299 “man from Karkemiš”.

The consonants /h/, /ḥ/ and /ʿ/ are still preserved like in OAKk: *é-wa-at* RA 65, 50 no. 31 *hawāt* (status constructus) “word”. *lá-É-me-* ARM 19, 496 *lahāmi-* “consumption”. *il-qá-é* RA 35, 42 no. 3 *yilqaḥ* “he has taken”. *iš-má-* (in PN) ARM 19, 377 *yišmaʿ* “he heard”.

Syllable closing /ʾ/ is still preserved (Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 162): *wa-ší-ì* RA 35, 46 no. 18 *wašiʾ* “he has gone out”. *ú-ší-ì* RA 35, 49 no. 30 *uššiʾ* “he goes out”.

Dual possessive pronoun *-šuni*: *ra-é-te-šu-ni* ARM 19, 460 r. 8 *raḥtēšuni* “their handles”.

Free use of the nominal dual: 1 *maš-a-na-an ra-bu-a-an* ARM 19, 299 *mašʾa-nān rabūʾān* “1 pair of big shoes”.

The prefixless forms of the D-stem have /a/ in the first syllable: *kà-šur* ARM 19, 64 *kaššur* “for repairing”. In this respect, early OB Mari is more archaic than OAKk which already has the Babylonian innovative form *PuRRuS*. However, *PaRRuS* also occurs in (Old) Ass. which preserves the older form.<sup>66</sup>

The preposition *iš* instead of younger *ana* might also belong here, e.g., *iš kaš-šur* ARM 19, 324 “for repairing”. The preposition “in” is *in* as in OAKk and not *ina* as in the contemporaneous dialects (Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 166).

#### 4.2.3.2 *Innovations*

Innovations shared with middle OB are:

The merger of \*/t/, \*/š/ and \*/s/ into one phoneme. However, differently from middle OB, this phoneme is partly spelled with S-signs, which in OAKk stand for \*/š/ and \*/s/ (SÁ, S1) and partly with Š-signs which in OAKk stand for \*/t/ (šÈ, šU). This phoneme is spelled with Š-signs in middle OB.

The status constructus genitive sg. has lost the ending /i/ still present in OAKk: [*i*]š *kà-šur sapparī* ARM 19, 64 “for repairing the chariots”.

66 There is probably no need to explain this by a contact between early OB Mari and OA as Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 166, does. More simply, both early OB Mari and OA show archaic features. Note, however, that *a* does not occur in early OB from Babylonia. See also section 6.2.b, below for other residual forms with *a* in OB.

#### 4.2.3.3 Amorite Interferences

Other characteristics of the early OB Mari texts are probably interferences from Amorite:<sup>67</sup>

Initial \*w > y: *a-ak-lu-tum* ARM 19, 351 *yaklūtum* or *waklūtum*(?) “overseers”. 3pm of the verb has *ti*-prefix: *ti-ku-lu* ARM 19, 352 *tikulū* “they have eaten”.<sup>68</sup>

The forms of the determinative pronoun (Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 164) apparently do not have any parallel in Akk: *šu* for masc. sg. and pl., *sá* for fem. sg. and pl. and *sá* for dual masc. and fem. Perhaps the writing covers different forms:<sup>69</sup> /*šu*/ for masc. sg., /*šū*/ for masc. pl., /*šā*/ for fem. sg., /*šâ*/ for fem. pl. and dual. If correct, both /*šū*/ and /*šā*/ developed from /*šūt*/ and /*šât*/, with /*t*/ dropped as does the /*t*/ of the fem. ending in Amorite; see, e.g., the PN *Eš<sub>4</sub>-tár-dam-qá* ARM 19, 303 “Eštar is good” with *damqa* corresponding to the Akk stative *damqat*.

The subordinative is not consistently used: *sá* GN *il-qá-é* RA 35, 42 no. 3 *yilqaḥ* “who has taken GN”. *sá ... ú-ma-an* PN *i-la-qí-i* RA 35, 44 no. 11 (*y*)*illaqih* “that the army of PN was taken”.<sup>70</sup> See section 4.3.3.d, below, for the same phenomenon in the texts from the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr region of the middle OB period. The subordinative does occur in other examples, see Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 165 and add *sá na-ak-ru-um ma-tám i-ku-lu-ma* RA 35, 46 no. 17 “that the enemy has devoured the land”.<sup>71</sup>

#### 4.2.4 Early Old Babylonian in Tuttul

The so-called *šakkanakku*-texts from Tuttul fall into two groups, an older group with a more archaic orthography and a younger group with “normal” OB orthography. The younger group probably dates to the time of Yaḥdun-Lim from Mari, ca. 1810–1794. The date of the older group cannot be established with certainty but is probably not far away from the younger group (Krebernik, *Tall Bi'a/Tuttul II*, 189).

67 On Amorite see chapter 17, this volume.

68 For further examples and secondary literature see Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 51. See prefix *ti*- for the 2sm in an early OB text from Babylonia, 4.2.1.c, above.

69 However, according to Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 165, sg. and pl. forms are “apparently not distinguished”.

70 See Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 165, who adds further examples.

71 Westenholz, “Some Notes”, 165, thinks that the forms without subordinative represent the early OB dialect of Mari and the forms with subordinative are “due to Babylonian influence”. I think it is rather the other way round: the subordinative is a genuine feature also of the early OB dialect of Mari, and forms without subordinative are due to Amorite influence.

#### 4.2.4.1 *Archaisms*

Apart from the orthography, also the language of the older group among the “šakkanakku-texts” shows several archaic features which distinguish them from middle OB.<sup>72</sup>

Vowel sequences are still uncontracted: *A-am-a-di-u-um* KTT 31: 7 “Yamhadaean”, *Si-im-ḫa-li-u-um* KTT 41: 3 “Sim’alaeen” (both perhaps PNN).

The dual is freely used: 1 UDU *a-za-tan* PN PN<sub>2</sub> KTT 36: 1–3 (‘)azzatān “two goats, PN, PN<sub>2</sub>”. *in 2 u-me-ḫen* KTT 35: 3 *ūmēn* “in 2 days”.

Preposition *iš*: 1 UDU *iš* PN KTT 29: 7 “1 sheep for PN”.

#### 4.2.4.2 *Innovations*

On the other hand, differently from OAkK, the determinative pronoun is already indeclinable: 1 UDU *sá* PN KTT 27: 2 “1 sheep of PN”.

#### 4.2.4.3 *Amorite Interferences*

Interestingly, the older group shows more Amorite loans than the younger group (Krebernik, *Tall Bi’a/Tuttul II*, 164), e.g., *ru-um-u-um* KTT 53: 1, 6 *rum’um* < \**rumḫum* “lance”, *a-za-tum* KTT 31: 1 (‘)azzatum “goat”.

#### 4.2.4.4 *Other Characteristics*

A peculiar form is the frequently attested word *nē-er-bu-um*, e.g., KTT 36: 6 *nērbum* “income” which developed from \**nērebum* (Krebernik, *Tall Bi’a/Tuttul II*, 164).

### 4.3 *Middle Old Babylonian*

As middle OB we designate the period which begins with Sîn-muballit (1812–1793), the predecessor of Hammurapi, and ends with Samsu-iluna (1749–1712), the successor of Hammurapi. During these 100 years the great majority of OB texts was written; the number of administrative texts alone certainly exceeds 30.000. All regions distinguished in section 3, above, are represented. For a description of the various dialects see section 6, below.

#### 4.3.1 Middle Old Babylonian in Southern and Northern Babylonia

Dialectal differences between southern and northern Babylonia are difficult to establish in the written language.

<sup>72</sup> This is apparently meant by Manfred Krebernik, *Tall Bi’a/Tuttul II: Die altorientalischen Schriftfunde* (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei, 2001), 164, when he speaks of “keine bedeutenden Unterschiede zum Altbabylonischen”.

#### 4.3.1.1 *Orthography*

Only the orthographic differences are well known (see von Soden and Röellig, *Das akkadische Syllabar*, xxxi): the south tends to write /t/ and /q/ with D- and G-signs, e.g., DA and GI, the north with T- and K-signs, e.g., TA and KI. 𒄀I for /ṭa/ is only used in the north and PI for /pi/ only in the south (the north writes BI).

#### 4.3.1.2 *Phonology*

According to Veenhof, *Letters in the Louvre*, xiii, contraction of the vowel sequence *i-a/ā* to *â* is a sign of the north whereas the sequence remains in the south.<sup>73</sup> Examples for this contraction are *i-na-tim* AbB 14, 141: 29 “ox teams” and *ú-za-ba-lu-na-ti* ibid. 13 “they keep us waiting”. If this turns out to be correct, this contraction started in the north and from there spread to the south in the course of the time since in later Babylonian we only find contraction (see section 4.4.1.a, below).

#### 4.3.1.3 *Lexicon*

The Sumerian loan word *unneḍukkum* “letter” is only used in the south whereas in the north we find *tuppum*, lit. “tablet”, see Kraus 1973, 33.

According to Westenholz, “Review of AbB 5”, 412, southern Babylonia (Larsa, Adab) uses the word *ukullû* “food provisions, sustenance” and northern Babylonia (e.g., Sippar) *ukultum* instead.

### 4.3.2 Middle Old Babylonian in the Diyala Region

We take as a sample for the Diyala region (see section 3.3, above) the letters from Šaduppum/Tell Ḥarmal published in Sumer 14, 3–78 and pl. 1–24.

#### 4.3.2.1 *Orthography and Phonology*

Like the middle Euphrates/Ḥābūr area (see section 4.3.3.a, below), the letters from Šaduppum use the sign QA to express /qa/: *pa-qa-di-im* Sumer 14 no. 1: 4 “to assign”. *qa-ti* ibid. 7 “hand”.

The vowel sequence *ī/ē-a/ā* remains uncontracted in the majority of cases, as in Babylonia (see section 4.3.3.a, below), e.g.: *il-qé-a-am* Sumer 14 no. 7: 11 “he took”. *iq-bi-am-ma* ibid. no. 20: 18. In some cases contraction to /ê/ occurs as in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area: *šu-bi-la-né-ši* ibid. no. 17: 22 *-niāši* “send to us!” *iq-bu-né-ši* ibid. 20 “they spoke to us”. *kīma tuppī ta-aš-ta-me* ibid. no. 45: 17 (see also l. 8) < \**taštamēā* “when you (pl.) have heard my tablet”. In one case this contraction occurs side-by-side with non-contraction: *ki-a-am ta-aq-*

<sup>73</sup> Also occurring in the Diyala area, see section 4.3.2.a, below.



*bé-nim* *ibid.* no. 3: 4 < \**taqbī-ānim* “you (pl.) spoke to me as follows”. Contraction to /â/, known from Babylonia (see section 4.3.1.b, above), is attested once: *te-ri-qa-na-ti-ma* *ibid.* no. 37: 14 “you are going to avoid as”.

#### 4.3.2.2 Pronouns

A remarkable feature of the letters from Šaduppum is the form *šâtun* of the independent personal pronoun 3pm: [šu]hārū [5 GUR] *ša-tu-un* ... *liššûnim* Sumer 14 no. 23: 16–18. See Goetze, “Fifty Old Babylonian Letters”, 48 note ad l. 17, where he also mentions *kullizī ša-tu-un* IM 52566 “those ox drivers”. The form is similar to the MB form *šâtunu*. Elsewhere in the OB period the independent personal pronoun 3pm has the entirely different form *šunūti*.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4.3.3 Middle Old Babylonian in Babylonia and the Middle Euphrates/Lower Ḫābūr Area

Dialectal differences between Babylonia (region a and b, see section 3, above) and the middle Euphrates and lower Ḫābūr area (region d) can be described best for OB. See for the latter region the description of Finet, *L'accadien des lettres de Mari*.

##### 4.3.3.1 Orthography and Phonology

For /ṭa/ Babylonia predominantly uses DA or TA whereas the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region predominantly uses ḪI: *ú-ṭa(DA)-ab-bu-ú* YOS 10, 43: 3 “they make good”. *nu-ṭá(TA)-ab* AbB 10, 114: 12 “we make good”. *ṭà(ḪI)-[a]b* ARM 10, 92: 14 “is good”.

For /ṭi/ Babylonia predominantly uses DI and TI whereas the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region also uses TE: *ṭi(DI)-i-ib* AbB 4, 134: 22 “make good!”. *ṭi(TI)-ib* AbB 7, 123: 20 “make good!”. *ša-ḫa-ṭi<sub>4</sub>(TE)-im* ARM 2, 43: 8 “to raid”.

For /qa/ Babylonia uses GA whereas the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region uses QA:<sup>75</sup> *qá(GA)-ti-šu* YOS 10, 24: 37 “of his hand”. ARM 18, 10: 9 *qa-ti-ka* “of your hand”.

In Babylonia the vowel sequence *ī-a/ā* is normally either preserved or contracts to /â/ (see section 4.3.1.b, above), but in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region it frequently becomes /ê/, /î/ (or perhaps /īyi/): *li-ir-bi-a* AbB 9, 228: 28 “let him be grown up”. *ir-ta-bé-e* < *irtabī-ā* ARM 1, 64: 9 “they (fem.) have grown up”. The contraction to /ê/ is, however, no exclusive feature of the mid-

74 CAD Š/2, 218, questioned this interpretation and suggested the independent possessive pronoun. For Sumer 14 no. 23 this is quite improbable because a form *šattun* would require a fem. antecedent, which is, however, not available in the text.

75 Also used in Šaduppum/Tell Ḫarmal in the Diyala area, see section 4.3.2.a, above.

dle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region but sometimes also occurs in Babylonia (see Westenholz, “Review of AbB 5”, 411)<sup>76</sup> and in the Diyala area (see section 4.3.2.a, above).

In the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region, rarely elsewhere, /š/ before a dental is frequently written with Áš, and Uš instead of Aš, Iš/Ēš and Úš, i.e., with signs representing [s] (Streck, “Sibilants in the Old Babylonian Texts”, 233–37, with the disputed conclusion that /š/ was an affricate which became deaffricated before dentals): *áš-ta-ap-ra-am* ARM 27, 148: 27 “I have sent”, but *wa-aš-bu* ibid. 11 “(who) sits”. *uš-te-le-me-en<sub>6</sub>* ARM 27, 151: 28 “I will become bad”, but *nu-úš-bu* ibid. 75 “we sat”. Also the inconsistent use of Iš<sub>7</sub>/Ēš (AB) in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region mostly occurs before a dental (see ARM 15, 61f.): *iš<sub>7</sub>-te<sub>9</sub>-ni-iš* ARM 2, 109: 17 “together”. *me-re-èš-tum* ARM 1, 18: 15 “cultivated field”, but *eš-me* RA 64, 103: 7 “I heard”.

#### 4.3.3.2 *Pronouns*

The pronominal suffix genitive 1p rarely occurs in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region as *-ne* instead of normal *-ni* as in Babylonia: *be-lí-ne* ARM 26/1, 169: 16 “our lord”.

#### 4.3.3.3 *Nouns*

In the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region, the masc. oblique case of the noun rarely ends in /ē/ instead of /ī/ as in Babylonia:<sup>77</sup> *ki-na-te-e* ARM 4, 10 r. 15’ “servants”. Syria 19, 109: 21, 28 *ab-bé-e* “fathers”.

#### 4.3.3.4 *Verbs*

In the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region an epistolary preterite instead of the epistolary perfect sometimes occurs: *annûmma* PN *ṭēmam gamram ú-wa-e-ra-ku[m]* ARM 28, 75: 4–6 “now I have sent you PN (and) the entire report”. In Babylonia the epistolary perfect is much more common: *annûmma* n *kaspam* ... *uš-ta-bi-la-ki-im*<sup>1</sup> AbB 7, 15: 6–13 “now I have sent you n silver”.

In the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region, we find scattered instances of the *tan*-infix of Gtn in the precativ (Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 418 n. 202): *li-ta-na-al-la-a-ak* ARM 10, 54: 15 “may he constantly go”.

In the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region, the subordinative is sometimes missing (Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch*, 89 §194): *kīma ištēn awilum pī māđūtīm ú-sa-ás-ḫa-ar* (< \**ušashar*) ARM 2, 31: 6’f. “that a single man can

76 Westenholz mentions examples from southern (Ur, Larsa) and northern Babylonia. For an early OB example from southern Babylonia (Lagaš) see section 4.2.1.a, above.

77 But in early OB of Kiszurra we sometimes also find /ē/, e.g., *ki-na-te-e* FAOS 2, 153: 14.

change the meaning of many”. The same phenomenon already occurs in the archaic Mari texts (see section 4.2.3.c, above) and can probably be explained as Amorite interference.

#### 4.3.3.5 *Particles*

Subjunctions especially known from the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region are *ša kīma* for relative clauses (Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch*, 122 § 272), *appiš* for causal clauses (ibid. 126 § 283c) and *kīma/akkīma* for final clauses (ibid. 126 f. § 285).

In the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region the negation *ul* is sometimes used in questions introduced by *ammīnim* “why”, conditional clauses and subordinative clauses (Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch*, 132 § 298c–e), e.g. *aššum šapti šu[hār] bēliya ú-ul eš[mû]* ARM 2, 138: 12 f. “since I did not hear a word (lit.: lip) from the servant of my lord” Babylonia uses *lā* in these cases. The broader range of *ul* in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region is probably due to Amorite interference because Amorite, like Ugaritic, perhaps had only one non-volitive negation (ibid. 129 § 292).

In the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region the enclitic particle *-mi* is attached to *umma* in order to introduce quoted direct speech: *tēmam ištū GN kīam ublūnim um-ma-mi* ARM 5, 59: 5 f. “they brought me thus a report from GN as follows:” Babylonia has simple *umma* instead.

#### 4.3.3.6 *Lexicon*

Loan words from Amorite are more frequent in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr region than in Babylonia. See Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon*, 82–128; 2011, 366 f. See sections 4.3.3.d and 4.3.3.e, above, for probable grammatical interferences from Amorite.

#### 4.3.4 Middle Old Babylonian in Upper Mesopotamia

For texts from upper Mesopotamia see section 3.5, above. The language of the letters from Ilanšura has been studied by Charpin, “L’Akkadien”. We take as a sample the letters from Zalmaqum (ARM 28, 26–38).

##### 4.3.4.1 *Phonology*

The vowel sequence *ī-a/ā* contracts to *é* as in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr area (see section 4.3.3.a, above): *lū ḫa-de-et* ARM 28, 27: 11 < \**ḫadīāt* “may you be happy!” *ta-aq-bé-[e]m* ibid. 31: 20 < \**taqbīam* “you said to me”.

As in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr area (see section 4.3.3.a, above), *š* before dentals is written differently from *š* in other environments. Thus we find *Áš* and *Èš* (AB) before a dental but *Aš* and *Eš* elsewhere: *á[š]-ta-p[a-ra]-*

*am* ARM 28, 31: 11 “I constantly sent”, but *ta-aš-pu-r[a-am]* *ibid.* 5 “you sent me”, *ḫa-aš-ḫa-at* *ibid.* 16 “you need” and *wa-aš-ba-ku* *ibid.* 29 “I sit”. *èš-te-me* *ibid.* 35: 20 “I heard”, but *i-pé-eš* *ibid.* 36: 16 “he does”.

*z* before *k* behaves similar to *š* before dentals and is written *áz* (ÁŠ), *iz* (AB) and *úz* (UŠ): [*li-š*] *a-áz-ki-ru* ARM 28, 29: 4’ “let them make take an oath”. [*ú-ša-á*] *z-ki-ru[-ma]* *ibid.* 6 “they made them take an oath”. *iz-ku-ur* *ibid.* 28: 6 “he took an oath”. [*lu-ú*] *z-ku-ra-kum* *ibid.* 29: 6’ “let me take an oath for you”. For *iz* see the *iz-zi-i[z]* *ibid.* 27: 9, a form of *izuzzum* “to stand”.<sup>78</sup> This probably means that the affricate *z* ([dz]) is deaffricated before *k*.

#### 4.3.4.2 Verbs

Prefixless forms of the D-stem of Verbs I-w sometimes have *a* instead of *u* in the first syllable. The same can be observed in texts from the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr area and from Šušarrā (see Finet, *L'accadien des lettres de Mari*, 146, and Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 269f.): *wa-aš-še-ra-am* ARM 28, 26: 6’ “release!” But see *wu-úš-še-er-ši* *ibid.* 36: 7, 18 “release her!” The form *PaRRvS* is typical for Assyrian and older than normal Babylonian *PuRRvS*. However, since *PaRRvS* is confined to verbs I-w it is hardly an Assyrianism. It rather seems that *w* prevented *a* from becoming *u* (Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, *ibid.*).

#### 4.3.5 Middle Old Babylonian in the Eastern Tigris Region

Only the “local” texts preserve the dialect of Šušarrā at the lower Zāb (see section 3.6, above).<sup>79</sup> The letters of Samsi-Addu I. and Išmē-Dagan belong to the dialect of Upper Mesopotamia (see section 3.5, above).

#### 4.3.5.1 Phonology

Differently from the texts of the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr area (see 4.3.3.a, above), the vowel sequence *ī-a/ā* is preserved in the majority of cases: *a-ni-a-šum* ShA 1, 55: 19 “for us”. *še-a-am* *ibid.* 53: 28 “grain”. *ki-a-am* *ibid.* 53: 21 “thus”. *šu-ul-qí-a-am* *ibid.* 63: 68 “get me”.

Some texts contract this sequence to */ê/*, as do the texts from the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr area (see section 4.3.3.a, above): *iq-bé-em-ma* ShA 1, 70: 18 “he said to me”. *tuppī an-né-em ina šemê* *ibid.* 29: 24; 30: 12 “on hearing this tablet of mine”.

78 The form is, however, difficult. We expect a Š-stem *ušzīz*; Kupper, *Lettres royales*, 37, reads *uš<sub>x</sub>-zi-i[z]*.

79 For the alleged Gt-stem *ši-īp-pa-at* < \**šitpat* (Jesper Eidem and Jørgen Læssøe. *The Shemshara Archives. Vol. 1: The Letters*, Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2001, 113 note ad no. 42) see Michael P. Streck, *Die akkadischen Verbalstämme mit ta-Infix* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003), 70 no. 186, where I argue for an interpretation as a D-stem.

Note the spelling *ta-aq-bi-a-im* ShA 1, 60: 13 “you said to me”, which looks like a mix of uncontracted and contracted forms.

#### 4.3.5.2 Pronouns

Noticeable are dative pronouns ending in *-šum* instead of *-šim*: *ta-ad-di-ni-šu-nu-šum* ShA 1, 63: 27 “you have given them”, *a-ni-a-šum* ibid. 55: 19 “for us”. But also forms with final *-šim* are attested: *i-ta-ap-la-sa-an-ni-a-ši-im* ibid. 69: 37’ “he looked at us”, *an-ni-a-ši-im* ibid. 64: 19 “for us”.

Accusative pronominal suffixes are frequently shortened: *i-ri-šu-úš* ShA 1, 55: 8 “they want him”. *aṭ-ṭà-ar-da-ak-ku-úš* ibid. 11 “I have sent him to you”.

#### 4.3.6 Middle Old Babylonian in Northern Syria: Texts from Karkemiš, Aleppo and Qaṭna

The biggest lot of texts from northern Syria (region g, see section 3, above) is the texts from Alalaḥ which shall not be investigated here. Smaller dossiers are the letters written from Karkemiš, Aleppo and Qaṭna to the court in Mari. As far as the limited material allows to recognize, their language only shows minor differences from the language written in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area (see section 4.3.3, above) and Babylonia. In the framework of this section only the following three diagnostic features can be presented in greater detail:

##### 4.3.6.1 The Vowel Sequence *ī-a/ā*

Whereas in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area the vowel sequence *ī-a/ā* in most cases contracts to *ê* (see section 4.3.3.a, above), in Karkemiš and Qaṭna it sometimes remains uncontracted as in Babylonia (also in Ḥaṣor, see section 4.3.7, below); but contraction to *ê* also occurs. For Aleppo only one contracted form is attested:

Karkemiš: *an-ni-ki-a-am* ARM 28, 20: 25 “here”, but *an-ni-ke-em* ibid. 16. *ni-qi-a-am* ARM 28, 21: 5 “offering”, but *it-ta-ab-še-ṛ e*’ ibid. 13. “they (fem. pl.) became”. *iq-bé-em* ARM 28, 19: 8’ “he said to me”.

Aleppo: *iq-bé-em-ma* ARM 10, 151: 12 “he said to me”

Qaṭna: *i-il-li-a-am* ARM 2, 51: 7 “he comes up”. *a-qi-a-ap* ibid. 15 “I trust”. *ú-ša-ri-a-kum* ARM 5, 20: 9 “I have led to you”, but *i-ta-pa-la-né-ti-i* ibid. 24 “can he not satisfy us?”. *ma-aḥ-re-em* ARM 28, 14: 9 “first”. *an-né-em* ibid. 11 “this”. *e-li-im(-ma)* ARM 5, 16: 18 “come up to me!”

##### 4.3.6.2 /š/ before Dentals

As in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area *š* is sometimes written with *áš* and *uš* before dentals and *aš* and *úš* in other environments. However, many counterexamples exist both in Karkemiš and Qaṭna (but the same is also true for the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area):

Karkemiš: *ta-áš-ta-na-pa-ra-am* ARM 28, 18: 9, 13 “you constantly send to me”, but *aš-šum* ibid. 4 “because of”, *aš-ḥu-[ut]* ibid. 21 “I feared”. *lu-bu-uš-tam* ARM 28, 21: 24 “cloth”, but *lu-bu-úš-tim* ibid. 26 and *lu-úš-ta-ap-pa-ra-am* ibid. 27 “let me constantly send”. *uš-ta-ri-šu-nu-ti* ARM 28, 20: 14 “I led them”. *mu-uš-ke-nu-um* ARM 28, 19: 10 “(normal) citizen”. *lu-pu-úš* ibid. 6', 9' “let me do”.

Aleppo: *aš-šum* ARM 10, 15: 4 “because of”. *ta-aš-pu-ri-(im)* ibid. 5, 9 “you sent (me)”. *i-ba-aš-ši* ibid. 20 “he exists”. *aš-pu-ur* ibid. 23 “I sent”. *mu-úš-ke-nim* ibid. 19, 25 “(normal) citizen”.

Qatna: *áš-t[a]-al-ma* ARM 28, 14: 19 “I deliberated”, but *aš-pu-ru* ibid. 6 “I sent”, *ta-aš-pu-ra-am* ibid. 13 “you sent me”. *aš-ta-na-pa-ar-ma* ARM 2, 5: 5 “I constantly send”. *e-pu-uš* ARM 28, 14: 14 “I did”. *te-pu-uš* ARM 5, 20: 34 “you did”. *ub-t[a-al-l]i-ṭú-uš* ARM 28, 14: 22 “(if) they keep him alive”. *uš-ta-mi-tu-uš* ibid. 24 “(if) they let them die”.

#### 4.3.6.3 Pronouns

The older forms *šu'ātu* and *š'āti*, attested sometimes in Babylonia, do not occur. The same is true for the form *šētu/i* known from the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area. The only forms attested are *šātu* for masc. and *šāti* for fem., both known from Babylonia and the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area:

Karkemiš: *awātam [š]a-a-ti* ARM 28, 18: 30 “this word”.

Aleppo: *eqlam/eqlim ša-a-tu* ARM 10, 15: 8, 10, 17, 20 “this field”.

#### 4.3.7 Middle Old Babylonian in Israel/Palestine

The few texts offer only little and contradictory evidence. Differently from the texts in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area but similarly to Karkemiš and Qatna (see section 4.6.a, above), the vowel sequence *-ā* doesn't contract to *ê* but remains uncontracted in *iq-bi-am* Horowitz and Oshima, *Cuneiform in Canaan*, Hazor 8: 8. The *i*-class of the verb *īribū* ibid. Hazor 5: 7 “they entered” is understood by Horowitz and Oshima, *Cuneiform in Canaan*, 70, as a “peripheral verbal form”. The verb *artub* ibid. Shechem 1: 3 “I proceeded to do” is well attested in the middle Euphrates/upper Ḥābūr region and in upper Mesopotamia but never in Babylonia.

#### 4.3.8 Middle Old Babylonian in Susa

An extensive description of the OB language written in Susa (see section 3.9, above) is presented by Salonen, *Untersuchungen*. The OB Susa texts roughly date from the time of Hammurapi (1792–1750) up to the beginning of the MB period (Salonen, *Untersuchungen*, 9). Salonen distinguishes texts of older, intermediate or recent date. Here we only deal with the older texts; for the texts of the intermediate and recent periods see section 4.4.2, below. On the whole,

apart from orthography, the older Susa texts show hardly any deviances from middle OB texts of other regions.

#### 4.3.8.1 Orthography

The older Susa texts use some archaic signs atypical for middle OB elsewhere:

ší: *ana ší-mi-šú* MDP 24, 346: 2 “for his price”.

šà: only used as determinative pronoun: MDP 24, 349: 21.

kà and tù: *i-ba-<sup>r</sup>la<sup>r</sup>-kà-tù* MDP 24, 349: 21 “(who) transgresses”.

gi<sub>5</sub>: *a-ru-gi<sub>5</sub>-ma-ni* MDP 24, 351: 14 “for claims”.

ù: *ù<sup>r</sup>-ul* MDP 22, 63 r. 13, 14 “not”.

#### 4.3.8.2 Phonology

The vowel sequence *ī/i-a* is contracted to *â* in *an-na-am* MDP 24, 331: 9; 358: 22 “this”, but to *ê* in *um-me-nu-um* MDP 22, 22: 9 < \**ummi<sup>r</sup>ānum* “craftsman”. The contraction to *â* is also rarely attested in (northern) Babylonia (see section 4.3.1.a, above) and in the Diyala area (see section 4.3.2.a, above) whereas the contraction to *ê* is frequently attested in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥabūr region (see section 4.3.3.a, above), but also sometimes occurs in the Diyala region (see section 4.3.2.a, above) and in early OB from Babylonia (see section 4.2.1.a, above).

### 4.4 Late Old Babylonian

As late OB we designate the period which begins with Abī-ešuh, the second successor of Hammurapi (ca. 1711–1684 according to the middle chronology) and ends around the sack of Babylon by the Hittites in 1595 before the rise of the Kassite dynasty.

Pientka, *Spätaltbabylonische Zeit*, 277, counts 1719 texts from southern and northern Babylonia which date to the late OB period. Together with the Sealand Dynasty Texts, some texts from Harrādum (105 texts out of 116) and Terqa in the middle Euphrates area, and texts from Alalaḥ in northern Syria, the total of administrative texts from the late OB period probably amounts to 2600 texts at least.

#### 4.4.1 Late Old Babylonian in Texts from the Sealand Dynasty

Presumably the texts from the Sealand Dynasty (CUSAS 9) are among the latest OB texts. They can serve as an illustration for the late OB language in southern Babylonia (see section 3.1, above). According to Dalley, *Babylonian Tablets*, 4, the Sealand Dynasty texts date at the earliest to the end of the First Dynasty of Babylon and at the latest before the Amarna period. Dalley, *Babylonian Tablets*, 4 and 13 f., sees links of the writing habits and language of these texts with OB

rather than MB. However, a closer look at the texts reveals that their language shows, not surprisingly, many MB features, although not always consistently, and only few and weak links with OB.

#### 4.4.1.1 *Middle Babylonian Features*

MB features in the Sealand Dynasty texts are:

Contraction of the vowel sequence *i-a/ā* to *â*: *šu-bi-la-na-ši* CUSAS 9, 11: 9 “send us!”

Mimiation is used only rarely: *e-ša-a* CUSAS 9, 3: 9 “where”.

Initial *w* drops: *aš-ba-(a-)ta* CUSAS 9, 4: 8; 5: 6; 11: 14 “you sit”.

Intervocalic *w* is written *m*: *lu-ma-aš-še-er* CUSAS 9, 3: 20 “let me release”.

*št* becomes *lt*: *ul-ta-bi-la-aš-šu* CUSAS 9, 5: 5 “I have him brought”. But *uš-ta-bi-la/il* *ibid.* 4: 18, 7: 29', 8: 8.

Lexicon: *ul-tu* CUSAS 9, 5: 13 “from”. The subjunction *kī* in *ki ašālušunūši* *ibid.* 3: 7 “when I asked them”. The idiom *ana dināni alāku: ana di-na-ni bēliya anāku lu-ul-lik*, e.g., *ibid.* 3: 1f. “may I serve as my lord’s substitute”.

#### 4.4.1.2 *Old Babylonian Features*

OB features in the Sealand Dynasty texts are:

The verbs I-*w* in the Š-stem have *ā* and not *ē* as in MB (see GAG §103v; Dalley, *Babylonian Tablets*, 13): *li-ša-bi-la* CUSAS 9, 9: 15 “may he send me”; for further references of the same verb see above. Since *ā* and *ē* in these verbs fluctuates during the history of Akk (Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 455–57) this link is, however, rather weak.

The tense sequence preterite-perfect is attested once: *ana āli il-li-ik-ma ultu āli is-sa-aḥ-ra* CUSAS 9, 5: 12f. “he went to the city and returned from the city”.

The word *pīḫu* “beer jar”, e.g., 19 KAŠ *pi-ḫu* CUSAS 9, 247: 1 and *passim* in CUSAS 9, 142–160 (see Dalley, *Babylonian Tablets*, 13).

#### 4.4.2 *Late Old Babylonian in Susa*

The Susa texts have been described by Salonen, *Untersuchungen*.

##### 4.4.2.1 *Orthography*

Especially the following two orthographic peculiarities of the middle OB texts from Susa (4.3.8.a) have survived in the late OB texts from Susa:

*šā*: *i-šā-am* MDP 23, 206: 7 “he bought”.

*šī*: *ana šī-mi-šu* MDP 23, 206: 7 “for its price”.



#### 4.4.2.2 *Phonology*

The vowel sequence  $\bar{i}\bar{a}$  is normally contracted to  $\hat{a}$ : *ana da-ra-ti* MDP 22, 45: 21 < \**dārīrāti* “forever”.

Initial *w* frequently drops: *ar-ki* MDP 23, 206: 26 “according to”.

Dissimilation of long voiced consonants frequently occurs: *i-ma-an-da-ad* MDP 22, 36: 12 < \**imaddad* “he will measure”.

#### 4.4.2.3 *Lexicon*

Typical for OB in Susa is the word *kubussû* “regulation”.

Some loans from Elamite are also attested in the Susa texts, e.g., *teppir* “scribe, chancellor”.<sup>80</sup>

## 5 Text Genres and Their Language

Almost all text genres known in Mesopotamia are attested in the OB period. Whereas the differences between the various OB dialects seem to be rather small (see section 4, above) the differences between the languages of different text genres can be considerable. In the following not every text genre can be mentioned separately.

### 5.1 *Letters*

Most letters serve the communication between different authorities of the administration of the palace or temple. Some letters are exchanged between private persons. The language of letters can be characterized as written everyday language. The description of the various dialects of middle OB in section 4.3 is mainly based on letters, without any attempt to distinguish between different groups of senders. It remains to be investigated whether the language of, e.g., royal letters is distinct from letters between more or less high officials, or the language of women's letters different from letters of men.

Written everyday language is not identical with spoken everyday language.<sup>81</sup> The latter is, of course, not attested. However, written everyday language of letters, especially of private letters, probably comes closer to spoken everyday language than the language of any other text genre.

80 For Elamite loans in Akk see Manfred Krebernik, “Philologische Aspekte elamisch-mesopotamischer Beziehungen im Überblick,” *Babel und Bibel* 3 (2006): 83–91.

81 See Walther Sallaberger, “Wenn du mein Bruder bist, ...?” *Interaktion und Textgestaltung in altbabylonischen Alltagsbriefen*, Groningen: Styx, 1999, 10, for the difference between written and spoken language.

Letters sometimes quote speech or oral communication. In this case some groups of letters apparently require that the reported speech is stylized in a language closer to the spoken language than the rest of the letter. See, e.g., the following letter written by Hammurapi, king of Babylon:

PN *kizû kīam iqbīam umma šūma* KA.ZÍD<sup>meš</sup> *ša qātiya ...* PN<sub>2</sub> ... *um-ta-al-li-šu-nu-ti kīam iqbīam* AbB 2, 26: 4–12 “PN the attendant told me thus. He said: ‘PN<sub>2</sub> assigned the flour grinders under my authority.’ Thus he told me.”

Before and after the reported speech the letter uses the preterite *iqbīam* to express a past situation (“he told me”). The speech itself, however, expresses another past situation with the perfect *umtallī-* “he assigned”. We know that in later Akkadian, from the MB period onwards, past situations (positive and in main clauses) are only rendered by the perfect and therefore this usage must have started in the spoken language of the OB period at latest. The scribe apparently felt that it would be inappropriate to quote the speech using the preterite which probably was confined (in this function) to the written language already in the OB period. Instead he chose with the perfect the form of the spoken language.<sup>82</sup> Whether also other parts of quoted speech are stylized differently from the other parts of letters remains to be investigated.

## 5.2 *Administrative Documents*

Administrative documents including contracts consist of formulaic and more free elements. Whereas the latter are couched in written everyday language the former often seem to use a more archaic language; we still lack, however, detailed studies on these matters. Formulaic elements in OB documents as well as items of commodities are frequently written with sumerograms which are of very limited use for a study of the Akkadian language, e.g.:

82 Michael P. Streck, “Das ‘Perfekt’ *iptaras* im Altbabylonischen der Hammurapi-Briefe,” in *Tempus und Aspekt in den semitischen Sprachen*, ed. Norbert Nebes (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 113 f. and explained *ibid.* 117 f. See also Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch*, 83 f. § 80j. Sallaberger, “*Wenn du mein Bruder bist!*”, 145, attempts to explain this use of the perfect by an ellipsis of preterites denoting earlier situations in an alleged chain of preterites and perfects but this cannot be proven. The proof that the explanation given above is correct is given by legal documents from the MB and LB periods in which quotations of witnesses or contracting parties likewise use perfects whereas the rest of the document uses preterites (Jussi Aro, *Studien zur mittelbabylonischen Grammatik*, Helsinki: Societas Orientalis Fennica, 1955, 83; Michael P. Streck, *Zahl und Zeit. Grammatik der Numeralia und des Verbalsystems im Spätbabylonischen*, Groningen: Styx Publications, 1995, 152–55): since chains of preterites and perfects are not in use any more in these periods outside literary texts the change between preterites and perfects cannot be explained by an ellipsis of foregoing preterites but only by the wish to stylize the quotation closer to the spoken language.

1 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR *ana* PN ZI.GA *ina* GN ITI *Kinūnim* UD 23<sup>kam</sup> *limu* PN<sub>2</sub>  
 OBTR 197 “1 shekel of silver to PN, outgoing from GN. Month of Kinūnum, 23rd  
 day, eponymate PN<sub>2</sub>”.

The advantage of administrative documents lies in the fact that they can often be dated and located more precisely than letters.<sup>83</sup> They are also the main source for personal names (see section 5.8, below).

### 5.3 *Law Codes and Royal Edicts*

One of the most important sources for the OB language is the Code of Hammurapi. There also exist the laws of Ešnunna and edicts of the kings Samsu-iluna and Ammišaduqa. Whereas the language of the prologue and epilogue of the Code of Hammurapi is close to the language of hymns (see section 5.7, below) the language of the laws themselves is in many respects similar to the language of letters (section 5.1, above), probably especially of royal letters, and of administrative documents (section 5.2, above), especially of the non-formulaic elements.

Only a few differences occur between the language of the law section of the Code of Hammurapi and the language of OB letters. A syntactic difference concerns the use of tenses in conditional clauses. Whereas the letters can use the present tense instead of the perfect and the preterite (although both, especially the perfect, do occur) to refer to a future condition the law section of the Code of Hammurapi only uses the perfect or, more rarely, the preterite for the same kind of conditions.<sup>84</sup> See for the perfect in the Code of Hammurapi e.g.: *šumma*

83 See Aage Westenholz, “Do Not Trust the Assyriologists!” in *The Akkadian Language in its Semitic Context. Studies in the Akkadian of the Third and Second Millennium BC.*, ed. G. Deutscher and N.J.C. Kouwenberg (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2006), 256 f. I do not agree, however, with Westenholz conclusion that a “good dialect grammar of Old Babylonian” should “primarily” be “based on legal and administrative texts”. On the one hand the formulaic nature of administrative and legal documents probably tends to obscure chronological developments and regional variation. On the other hand letters with their large freely formulated parts offer many insights in Akkadian grammar that cannot be gained through the analysis of administrative and legal documents. Moreover, in most cases letters can be dated at least roughly, almost always to time-spans lasting only one or two decades, and in many cases also located in at least certain regions, if not precisely to certain cities. Therefore, to my mind, a dialect grammar of OB should primarily be based on letters, supplemented by information gained from administrative and legal documents, where available.

84 See for further references and secondary literature as well as an analysis Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch*, 73 § 177n; 78 § 78l; 81 § 180b; 130 § 294. Note that the few instances of the present tense in conditional clauses in the Code of Hammurapi are probably all conditioned by modal or pluralic nuances. Also the negation plays a certain role for the choice

*awilum in mār awilim uḫtappid inšu uḫappadū* CH §196 “If a man blinds the eye of another man they will blind his eye”. Cf. the present tense in a letter: [*šu*]mma *taqabbī ašša[s]su [lu]šārākum* AbB 10, 9: 24 f. “If you give order I will have his wife brought to you”.

#### 5.4 *Royal Inscriptions*

Besides the law codes and royal edicts, which had an administrative purpose, the kings had composed inscriptions recording their pious and military deeds. To a certain extent, these inscriptions are composed in a literary diction with archaisms and some other features that cannot be found in letters and administrative documents. See, e.g., the inscription RIME 4.3.7.3 of Samsu-iluna, the successor of Hammurapi:

##### 5.4.1 Orthography

ù in *iq-bi-ù* l. 24 and *ib-ba-ni-ù* l. 57.

##### 5.4.2 Phonology

The vowel sequences *-i-u* and *-ā-i* remain uncontracted: *ra-bi-um* l. 3 “great”, *ib-ba-ni-ù* l. 57 “was built”. *ar-ba-im* ll. 67, 120 “four”.

##### 5.4.3 Morphology

Use of the locative: in *libbū šattim išteʾat/šūʾāti* ll. 43 f., 76 f. “within a single year/that year”. Use of shortened *in* “in”: ll. 43, 46, 51 etc.

##### 5.4.4 Syntax

Word order Indirect object–predicate–direct object: *ana Samsu-iluna išrukšum mētellūtam dunnam u balāṭam* ll. 103–106 “He has presented to Samsu-iluna lordship, might and life”.

##### 5.4.5 Lexicon and Phraseology

*inū* l. 1 “when”. *būnišu* l. 5 “his face”. *inūšu* ll. 25, 39 “at that time”. *zāʾirīya* l. 47 “my enemies”. *mētellūtam* l. 105 “lordship”. Use of affirmative *lū*: *lū adūk* l. 46 “I defeated”, *lū utēr* l. 49 “I brought back”, *lū assuḫ* “I tore out” etc.

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of perfect or preterite but does not affect the choice of the present tense. However, pace Eran Cohen, *Conditional Structures in Mesopotamian Old Babylonian* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 128, the use of the tenses in the law codes has nothing to do with an alleged “generic nature of laws”: the difference between “if a man blinds” and “if you order” is not a temporal one but between an indefinite (“a man”) and a definite (“you”) subject. Furthermore, logic requires that the conditional clauses in the law codes always refer to a future situation: a penalty or another consequence only makes sense for something which will happen in the future and not for something which has already happened in the past.

### 5.5 *Scientific Literature*

OB scientific literature comprises, above all, lexical lists, omen texts and mathematical texts. Whether and how their language differs from letters and administrative documents remains to be investigated on a larger scale.

The dual, which in administrative texts of the OB period is almost restricted to body parts occurring in pairs, is used in omen texts to a greater extent, probably an archaism: *qarrādān šenā* YOS 10, 31 ix25 f. “two heros”, *tikiptān šittāma* ibid. 22 f. “two dots”. Mathematical texts sometimes show syllabic spellings of numerals only written logographically elsewhere. See *se-di-iš* “six” in Sumer 43, 194: 32, 38, the only instance of a syllabic spelling of the masc. number six in Akk (Streck, “Die Kardinalzahl ‘sechs’”); the same text also has the only syllabically spelled reference for “thirteen”: *ša-la-aš-ši-ri-iš* ibid. 190 ii 3 (Streck, “Die Kardinalzahl ‘sechs’”, 246 n. 2).

### 5.6 *Epics*

OB epical texts, together with hymns, have been said to be couched in a “hymnisch-epischer Dialekt” (von Soden, “Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt”, Teil 1 and 2). However, we do not deal with a geographical dialect in the sense of section 3, above. Hess, “Towards the Origins”, 113–15, rather describes archaic, foreign and artificial features as characteristics of literary language; the different origins of these features are, however, sometimes difficult to disentangle. Moreover, the language of epics is clearly nearer to the language of letters than is the language of hymns (section 5.7, below) so that it seems better to describe both genres separately. We take as an example the text Gilg. OB II.<sup>85</sup>

#### 5.6.1 Phonology

Uncontracted vowels (archaic): *šamāṭi* l. 6 “sky”.

#### 5.6.2 Morphology

Long form of the fem. ending (artificial): *šunatam* “dream” l. 1.

Construct state ending in *-u* (artificial): *alāku mānaht[i]ka* l. 146 “going of toil”.

Productive use of the terminative case: *bītiš* l. 149 “to the house”.

Stative 2sm with ending *-āti* (archaic): *alkātima* l. 64 “you are familiar (lit. have gone)”.

85 Only one example for each feature is given.

## 5.6.3 Syntax

Present tense used to express circumstantial clauses (artificial): *Enki[du w]ašib maḥar ḥarimtim urta[ʾ]amū kilallūn* ll. 45 f. “Enkidu sat before the harlot, the two of them making love together”.

Word order predicate-subject (archaic): *urabbīšu šadū* l. 19 “the mountain reared him”.

Word order predicate-object (archaic): *ummidma pūti imidū yāti* ll. 12 f. “I braced my forehead and they leaned against me”.

## 5.7 Hymns

Hymns are the text genre whose language is farthest away from the written every day language as represented by letters (section 5.1, above). For the terms archaic, foreign and artificial see section 5.6, above. The following examples are taken from the Ištar hymn of Ammiditana (RA 22 [1925] 179–77).<sup>86</sup>

## 5.7.1 Phonology

Uncontracted vowels (archaic): *namrāī* l. 44 “fattened”.

## 5.7.2 Morphology

Shortened independent pronouns: *šâš* l. 30 “before her”.

Shortened pronominal suffix (artificial): *narbīšaš* l. 21 “her greatness”.

Determinative pronoun inflected (archaic): *šāt mēlešim* l. 5 “she of joy”.

Accusative ending *-em* (artificial?): *nēmeqem* l. 35.

Productive use of locative case (archaic): *rēšūšša* l. 11 “on her head”.

Productive use of terminativ case (archaic): *simtišša* l. 10 “on her features”.

Construct state with suffixed helping vowel (artificial): *migrašun* l. 41 “their favorite”.

3sf has prefix *ta-* (archaic): *tebél* l. 18 “she controls”.

Shortened *tan-*stem form (artificial): *itnaqqišunūt* l. 42 “he constantly offers”.

Stative of *izuzzu* (artificial): *nazuzzū* l. 39 “they stand”.

Shortened prepositions *ina* and *ana* (archaic): *in-ilī* l. 25 “among the gods”. *an-nirišu* l. 52 “to his yoke”.

## 5.7.3 Syntax

Word order predicate-subject (archaic): *litta'id bēlet nišī* l. 2 “Let the mistress of people be praised”.

Word order predicate-object (archaic): *tēteršaššum dārīam balāṭam arkam* ll. 45 f. “she has requested for him a life long and everlasting”.

<sup>86</sup> Only one example for each feature is given.

#### 5.7.4 Lexicon

*rašubti* l. 1 (archaic?) “awe-inspiring”. *iššī* l. 4 (foreign, Amorite loanword) “women”. *tartāmī* l. 17 (archaic) “mutual love”. *muttiššun* l. 39 (archaic?) “before them”. *ištī* l. 45 (archaic) “from”.

#### 5.8 *Personal Names*

We know thousands of personal names from the OB period. Their language shows archaisms in the fields of morphology, syntax and lexicon (Streck, “Sprachliche Innovationen”, for OB names see *ibid.* 112f.): *Šāt-Nanāya* UET 5, 281: 6 “She of Nanāya” (inflected determinative pronoun). *Ibnī-Ea* *ibid.* 16: 3 “Ea has created” (word order predicate-subject). *Ipiq-Ištar* *ibid.* 521: 10 “(In the embrace of Ištar” (*ipqu* only used onomastically).

On the other hand, phonological innovations of the written everyday language are also reflected in personal names: *Išmē-Addu* UET 5, 537: 14 “Adad has heard” with *išmē* < \**išma*ʿ.

## 6 Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian

Although OB shows many minor differences between several sub-dialects (see section 4, above), and differences between various text genres can be even greater (see section 5, above), the varieties of OB on the whole are nevertheless closer to each other than to OA. OA shows several phonological, morphological and lexical features either not shared by any OB variety or present in OB only in residual forms.<sup>87</sup>

### 6.1 *Phonology*

No OB variety shows the so-called Assyrian vowel harmony: short /a/ in an open unaccented syllable following an accented syllable assimilates to the vowel in the following syllable, e.g., in the declension of nouns: *šárratam* “queen”, (accusative), *šárrutum* (nominative), *šárritim* (genitive); in the conjugation of verbs: *íllak* “he goes” (present tense of *alākum*), *íllukū* “they (m.) go”, *tállikī* “you (f.) go” etc.

### 6.2 *Morphology*

#### 6.2.1 Subordinative

OA has a subordinative ending *-ni* either additionally attached to the pan-Akk *-u* or present instead of *-u* where the latter cannot be used, e.g., *ša iprus-u-ni*

<sup>87</sup> A summary of the most important differences between OB and OA can also be found in

(3sm, OB *iprus-u*), *ša iprusū-ni* (3pm, OB *iprus-ū* without subordinative ending). There are only a handful of instances of *-ni* in OB royal inscriptions and literary texts (Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 225).

### 6.2.2 D- and Š-stem Forms

In OA, infinitive, imperative, verbal adjective and stative of the D- and Š-stems have archaic *a* in the first syllable, where OB has innovative *u*, e.g., infinitive *parrusum* and *šaprusum* (OB *purrusum* and *šuprusum*), imperative *parris* and *šapris* (OB *purris* and *šupris*). *a* also occurs as an archaism in the early OB texts from Mari (see section 4.2.3.a, above), in D-stem forms of verbs I-*w* (*waššur* etc.), in middle OB texts from the middle Euphrates/upper Ḫābūr area, in upper Mesopotamia and in Šušarrā (Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 269 f.), and in some adjectives and nouns derived from the Š-stem (e.g., *šalbabu* “furious”, *šaklulutu* “perfection”; *ibid.* 325 f.).

### 6.2.3 Precative

OA has precative G 1s *laprus* and D/Š 3s *luparris*/*lušapris* against OB G 1s *luprus* and D/Š *liparris*.

### 6.2.4 Prefix ta-

OA has prefix *ta-* for the 3sf (*taprus* etc.) against *i-* in most OB varieties (*iprus*). However, *ta-* survives as an archaism in early OB dialects (section 4.2.2.d, above: Ešnunna) and in literary text genres (section 5.6.b, above: epics; section 5.7.b: hymns).

### 6.2.5 Stative

OA has suffix *-ti* in the stative 2sm (*parsāti*) against OB *-ta* (*parsāta*). However, *-ta* survives as an archaism mainly in early OB dialects (see section 4.2.1.c, above: Babylonia; section 4.2.2.d: Ešnunna) and in literary text genres (section 5.6.b, above: epics).<sup>88</sup>

## 6.3 Lexicon

There are also some characteristic lexical differences between OB and OA. See for an extensive discussion Kogan, “Old Assyrian vs. Old Babylonian”; e.g., OA has *ammīru* “that” against OB *ullū*, or *aršātu* “wheat” against OB *kibtu*.

Michael P. Streck, “Babylonian and Assyrian” in *The Semitic Languages. An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger et al. (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 368–70.

88 Rare instances from middle OB letters, e.g., mentioned in Streck, *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch*, 93 § 201c.



## 7 Old Babylonian and Other Ancient Near Eastern Languages

### 7.1 *Old Babylonian and Sumerian*

Sumerian was gradually superseded by Akk and eventually died out, probably at the beginning of the second millennium.<sup>89</sup> The long contact between Sumerian and Akk during the third and the beginning of the second millennium is most visibly reflected in the lexicon of both languages. Akk has more than 1150 Sumerian loanwords, which is ca. 7% of the entire lexicon.<sup>90</sup> The opposite direction, from Akk to Sumerian, is more difficult to assess, but no doubt Sumerian loaned many words from Akk.<sup>91</sup> Both languages also influenced each other in the realm of grammar, and this to a degree that it is perhaps justified to speak of a Sumerian–Akk language area. For the use of both languages in different text genres see the following remarks:

#### 7.1.1 Letters

Almost all letters were written in OB. Letters written in Sumerian are only attested from Isin and perhaps Nippur until the time of Lipiteštar (1934–1924).<sup>92</sup>

#### 7.1.2 Administrative Documents

Due to their formulaic nature, administrative documents more widely use Sumerian than do letters. Akk administrative documents occur from the 19th c. onwards, especially in northern Babylonia.<sup>93</sup>

#### 7.1.3 Law Codes

The Code of Lipiteštar is written in Sumerian, but the Code of Hammurapi and the Laws of Ešnunna use the OB language.

89 The details of the process are still being discussed. An account of the death of Sumerian based on onomastic evidence and on the distribution of letters can be found in Walther Sallaberger, “Das Ende des Sumerischen. Tod und Nachleben einer altmesopotamischen Sprache,” in *Sprachtod und Sprachgeburt*, ed. Peter Schrijver and Peter-Arnold Mumm (Bremen: Hempen, 2004), 108–40.

90 Michael P. Streck, review of CAD U/W, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 104 (2014): 105.

91 Miguel Civil, “Early Semitic Loanwords in Sumerian,” in *Studies Presented to Robert D. Biggs*, ed. Martha T. Roth et al. (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007), 11–33.

92 Sallaberger 2004, 129.

93 For details see Sallaberger, “Das Ende”, 129–32.

#### 7.1.4 Royal Inscriptions

The kings of the dynasties of Isin and Larsa followed a venerable tradition in Mesopotamia and therefore wrote almost all inscriptions in Sumerian.<sup>94</sup> Exceptions are the inscription Lipiteštar (1934–1924) 3, Zabaya (1941–1933) 1, Abī-sare (1905–1895) 2 and Kudurmabuk (19th c.) 2.

Also the kings of Babylon used Sumerian in many of their inscriptions; monolingual OB inscriptions are Hammurapi 3, 7, 17, 19, Samsu-iluna 1, 2, 9, 1002 and Ammišaduqa 2. A new development is the appearance of bilingual royal inscriptions:<sup>95</sup> Hammurapi 2, 12, 14, Samsu-iluna 3, 5, 7, 8, Abiešuḥ 1, Ammiditana 2, Ammišaduqa 1, altogether 10 inscriptions.

Sumerian is only rarely used for royal inscriptions outside of Babylonia. The rulers, e.g., of Ešnunna almost always (exception: Bilalama 4) and of Mari without any exception write in OB.

#### 7.1.5 Scientific Texts

Omen texts are written exclusively in OB. Lexical texts are either monolingual Sumerian or bilingual.

#### 7.1.6 Literary Texts

The OB period witnesses the emergence of a wide array of different literary genres in Akk language. At the same time Sumerian literature was written down on a large scale for the first time. Bilingual literary texts served the education of scribes.<sup>96</sup> They include the following 49 compositions:<sup>97</sup>

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- 94 See Sallaberger, “Das Ende”, 126f. The numbering of the inscriptions follows Douglas R. Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1990.
- 95 For a summary of Sumerian-Akk bilingual texts in the OB period see Joachim Krecher, “Interlinearbilinguen und sonstige Bilinguentypen,” in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 5, ed. Dietz O. Edzard (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976–1980), 126f. § 4. For royal inscriptions see also Johannes Renger, “Königsinschriften. B. Akkadisch,” in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 6, ed. Dietz O. Edzard (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980–1983), 67f. § 4A.
- 96 For the bilingual scribal education in the OB period see the recent summaries by Hartmut Waetzoldt, “Schule,” in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 12, ed. Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009–2011), 299–305 § 11, and Jerrold S. Cooper, “Sumer, Sumerisch,” in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 13, ed. Michael P. Streck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011–2013), 293. For an earlier survey of bilingual literary texts see Jerrold S. Cooper, “Sumero-Akkadian Literary Bilingualism” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1969), esp. 16–31. Cf. also Nathan Wasserman and Uri Gabbay, “Literatures in Contact: The Balaḡ Ūru Ām-mair-ra-bi and its Akkadian Translation UET 6/2, 404,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 57 (2005): 69–84.
- 97 See the catalogue published by Streck and Wasserman, “Sources of Early Akkadian Literature”.

*Epics*: 2 compositions: Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdana (ASJ 18, 51). Sargon (VS 24, 75).

*Hymns and prayers*: 16 compositions: Amurru (AUWE 23, 106). Hammurapi (CT 21, 40 ff.). Hammurapi (OrS 23, 178). Hammurapi (UET 1, 146 // VS 24, 41). Iddin-Dagan (UET 6/1, 84). Inanna/Ištar, TIM 9, 20 ff. // CT 58, 53). Lamasaga/Baba (JCS 26, 174 f.). Nidaba and Enki (UET 6/3, 579–584). Ninurta (PBS 1/1, 11). Nunnamir (VS 2, 89). Šin (AUWE 23, 113). Temple (UET 6/1, 117). Utu/Šamaš (ASJ 19, 265 f.). Utu/Šamaš (CT 58, 28.). Miscellaneous: Nouvelles Fouilles de Telloh 212a. VS 24, 39.

*Lamentations*: 7 compositions: AUWE 23, 129. AUWE 23, 130. AUWE 23, 136. CT 44, 24. PBS 1/2, 135. VS 10, 179. VS 17, 35.

*Incantations*: 9 compositions: PBS 1/2, 122. PRAK 2 C 1. RA 70, 129 ff. UET 6/2, 399. VS 17, 34. YOS 11, 35. YOS 11, 67. YOS 11, 74. ZA 75 (IB 1554)a.

*Literary letters*: 1 composition: To Zimri-Lim (FM 3, 81f.).

*Wisdom literature*: 8 compositions: BWL pl. 68 (proverb). CBS 1354 (Farmer's Instructions). Alster, Proverbs of Ancient Sumer 2 pl. 117 (proverb). RA 60, 5 (proverb). TIM 9, 27 (riddle?). UET 6/2, 380 (proverb). UET 6/2, 385 (proverb). UET 6/2, 386 (proverb).

*Miscellaneous texts*: 6 compositions: BE 31, 53. Iraq 63, 158. UET 6/3, 916. UET 6/3, 917. UET 6/3, 918. VS 17, 46 + 49.

## 7.2 *Old Babylonian and Amorite*

Whereas Sumerian influence on OB is strong (see section 7.1, above), the contact between Amorite and OB has left much less traces. Amorite loanwords do not exceed the number of 100 and are mainly attested in the middle Euphrates/lower Hābūr area (see section 3.4, above), and grammatical influences are very few.<sup>98</sup>

Amorite never served as a written language. Personal names are almost the sole source for an evaluation of the relationship between both languages in the different regions where OB was written (cf. section 3, above).<sup>99</sup>

98 See Michael P. Streck, *Das amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000), 76–130; id. "Babylonian and Assyrian," in *The Semitic Languages. An International Handbook*, ed. Stefan Weninger et al. (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 366 f.; id., *Altbabylonisches Lehrbuch*, 6f. § 6b.

99 The following section is a summary of Michael P. Streck, "Die Amurriter der altbabylonischen Zeit im Spiegel des Onomastikons. Eine ethno-linguistische Evaluierung," in *2000 v. Chr. Politische, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklung im Zeichen einer Jahrtausendwende*, ed. Jan-Waalke Meyer and Walter Sommerfeld (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 2004), 313–55. This study and the figures given here is based on the assumption that a) The language of personal names in the Ancient Near East is an impor-

### 7.2.1 Southern Babylonia

In the early OB period we find between 5–27% Amorite names in Lagaš, Kisurra and Isin, with the exception of Nippur, where, due to strong Sumerian traditions, Amorite presence is hardly visible (0–1,7%). In the middle and late OB period 2–8% Amorite names occur in Ur, Larsa, and Isin. Already in the early OB period Amorites constitute a minority, who becomes even less visible in the later periods. Ethno-linguistically, the Amorites were absorbed by the dominant (Sumero-)Babylonian culture.

### 7.2.2 Northern Babylonia

In the early OB period we find between 11–33% Amorite names (Dilbat, Kiš, Sippar, Tell ed-Dēr). In the middle and late OB period 1–14% Amorite names occur (Dilbat, Kiš, Sippar, Tell ed-Dēr). Already in the early OB period Amorites constitute a minority, who becomes even less visible in the later periods. Ethno-linguistically, the Amorites were absorbed by the dominant (Sumero-)Babylonian culture.

### 7.2.3 The Diyala region

In the Diyala region (Šaduppum, Nērebtum, Ešnunna, Tell Yelḫi) the Amorites constitute a minority in the early and middle OB period. However, compared to southern and northern Babylonia, their relative proportion is significantly higher (10–27%) in the middle OB period.

### 7.2.4 Middle Euphrates and Lower Ḫābūr Area

On average, 81% of the persons who are explicitly designated as members of Amorite tribes bear an Amorite name in the middle OB period. On average, 78% of the persons who are designated as inhabitants of cities or regions in the area (Suḫi, Anat, Ḫanû from Mari, Terqa, Saggarātum, Emar), or are mentioned in the middle OB texts from Tuttul bear an Amorite name. This means that the middle Euphrates/lower Ḫābūr area is the core area of the Amorite speaking population. Although the written language is OB, the king of Mari, Yašmaḫ-Addu, is expected to speak Amorite for an effective administration of his kingdom (see Streck, “Remarks on Two Recent Studies”, 319). Even in the late OB period, 38% Amorite names occur in Ḫana.

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tant ethno-linguistic mark, b) Notwithstanding exceptions with single names, there is a general correlation between the language of a name and the language of the name-bearer, c) Therefore chronological developments and geographical distributions of languages can be analysed on the base of statistically significant onomastic samples.

### 7.2.5 Upper Mesopotamia

23% of the names in the texts from Chagar Bazar and 36% of the names in the texts from Rimāḥ, both from the middle OB period, are Amorite. Amorite presence is higher than in Babylonia but lower than in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area.

### 7.2.6 Šušarrā

Only 6% of the names are Amorite.

### 7.2.7 Northern Syria

62% of the persons from Karkemiš, 74% of the persons from Aleppo and 86% of the persons from Qaṭna bear Amorite names. Thus Amorite presence is as high as in the middle Euphrates/lower Ḥābūr area.

### 7.2.8 Israel/Palestine

69% of the persons from Ḥaṣor bear Amorite names.

### 7.2.9 Elam

Amorites are practically not present.

## 7.3 *Old Babylonian and Other Languages*

Besides Sumerian and Amorite, OB had contact with several other languages. This contact, however, hardly affected the OB language. In Šāḡir Bāzar and in Rimāḥ, both in upper Mesopotamia, Hurrian presence is clearly visible in the onomasticon (29% of all names are Hurrian).<sup>100</sup> OB texts mention dragomans (*turgumannu*) for Ḥabingalbateans (probably Hurrians) and Kassites.<sup>101</sup> An OB letter mentions Subarean (Hurrian) besides Akkadian and Amorite.<sup>102</sup> OB lexical texts list Sumerian, Akkadian, Elamite, Amorite, Sutean, Subarean and Gutian.<sup>103</sup>

100 Streck, "Die Amurriter", 335.

101 CAD T, 229, *targumannu* a 3'.

102 See Streck, "Remarks on Two Recent Studies", 319, with previous literature.

103 Streck, "Remarks on Two Recent Studies", 318, with previous literature.

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