NOTES ON TWO GRAMMARS OF SUSA OLD BABYLONIAN

A REVIEW ARTICLE

BY

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L. de Meyer, *L'accadien des contrats de Suse. = Suppléments à Iranica Antiqua*, volumen I. E. J. Brill, Leiden 1962. Price: Hfl. 25.—

Erkki Salonen, *Untersuchungen zur Schrift und Sprache des Altbabylonischen von Susa, mit Berücksichtigung der Mâlamir-Texte. = Studia Orientalia XXVII: 1. Societas Orientalis Fennica*, Helsinki 1962. Price: Fmk. 14.—

The two books under review deal with the grammar of the Old Babylonian texts from Susa, the ancient capital of Elam. Although situated outside of Mesopotamia, east of Babylonia from the Persian Gulf in the south to the modern city of Hamadân in the north¹, Elam was an important factor in the interstate politics in the first centuries of the second millennium B. C. Elam was one of the Great Powers. Particularly in the region around Susa the country was under strong Akkadian influence. In the texts that have come down to us, written in Akkadian, even the personal names appear in Akkadian form. Exceptions to this are only names of the relatives of princes and names of gods². According

¹ König, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 2:324 (article Elam).

² Cf. P. Koschaker, Randnotizen zu neuere keilschriftlichen Rechtsurkunden, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 43 NF 9:222 (1936) as quoted by J. Klîma, *Archiv Orientalni* 31:289¹⁸ (1963). As stated by Klîma, Elamite personal names occur in the Mâlamir texts, cf. also V. Scheil, *Actes juridiques susiens, Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique de Perse* 22 (1930), p. v.

to Salonen (p. 7f.) this state of evidence shows that the texts came from an Akkadian colony and that the scribes were Babylonians. The reviewer would rather favour the view most recently expressed by J. Klíma that this situation is due to a strong Akkadization of Elam³.

For once the universal This-is-my-period policy so jealously guarded by Assyriologists has failed. So we now have two mutually independent descriptions of Susa Old Babylonian. L. de Meyer and E. Salonen continue a series of studies on different Akkadian dialects and periods (cf. the titles listed by de Meyer p. viif.). Even if they duplicate each other on several points, the two descriptions are very useful, and Assyriologists will be grateful to the authors, especially since till now we have had no treatments of this variety of Akkadian.

The two books under review are no full grammars, rather outline grammars. Salonen's grammar is more so than de Meyer's, a fact that has been correctly stressed by Salonen in the title "Untersuchungen . . .". The way of presentation is quite traditional which means that phonology and syntax are much less completely covered than morphology proper. There is nothing new about this. However, it is due to Salonen that we now have an outline of the Susa syllabary. This outline is very useful, also as a supplement to von Soden's collections⁴, but unfortunately a number of disturbing omissions occur. Some inconsistency is found in the rendering of the Akkadian expression for 'he took' quoted as *ilqi* or *ilqe* by both authors. Of course *ilqe* is the correct form⁵, also in Susa. In consequence of the outline character of his book Salonen has added a list of the standard syllabic values and a list of the grammatical features of the dialect according to the following subsections: 1. Lautlehre, 2. Die Mimation, 3. Pronomina, 4. Die Partikeln. Salonen includes in his corpus 16 texts said to have come from Malamir about 180 km south of Susa.

³ Klíma p. 289, following Koschaker.

⁴ W. von Soden, Das akkadische Syllabar, *Analecta Orientalia* 27 (1948).

⁵ Cf. *il-qé-e* G. Dossin, Autres textes sumériens et accadiens, *Mémoires* . . . 18 (1927), No 228,4 transliterated and translated by Scheil as No 37. To the best of my knowledge a writing **il-qi-i* does not occur.

In a recent article Erica Reiner has pointed out that the ultimate provenience of these texts is unknown⁶. Their only connection with Malamir seems to be that these texts "dites de Mâlamir" were purchased from a "notable persan originaire du pays de Mâlamir"⁷. De Meyer does not treat these texts.

De Meyer's treatment of orthography and phonology (termed "phonétique") is very brief (pp. 3-11) and accordingly inadequate. Not even a list of the phonemes is given. The morphology is more fully described (pp. 15-150). The description runs through the following main sections: 1. Le pronom et l'adjectif pronominal, 2. Les substantifs, 3. Les noms propres, 4. Les adjectifs, 5. Les noms de nombre, 6. Les prépositions, 7. Les adverbes, 8. Les verbes. At the end an outline of the syntax is given (pp. 153-186).

In the section "Zur Datierung der Texte", Salonen establishes the relative chronology of the texts. This is important since it shows that the Susa dialect of Old Babylonian is not uniform (cf. also de Meyer p. v f.). Chronologically the texts can be grouped as follows: 1. Die Texte der älteren Periode (ä), 2. Die Texte der Übergangszeit (ü), 3. Die Texte der jüngeren Sprachperiode (j), 4. Die sog. Mâlamir-Texte (M) (pp. 9-30). In his description of the orthography Salonen treats the general features of the system and adds, and this is most important, a list of the syllabic values of signs (graphs) (pp. 31-77). What was said above of de Meyer's treatment of "phonétique" is true also of Salonen's "Lautlehre". The description is very brief (pp. 78-91) and no list of the phonemes is given. The author treats the morphology according to the following main sections: A. Die Mimation, B. Die Pronomina, C. Die Substantive und die Deklination der Nomina, D. Die Zahlwörter, E. Die Verben, F. Die Partikeln (pp. 92-145). Then follows an outline of the syntax (pp. 146-163). At the end Salonen adds in the form of a list a survey of what is termed "das normale Syllabar" of Susa Old Babylonian together with a list of the main linguistic features of the dialect as compared with Old Akkadian, Old and Middle Babylonian, and Old Assyrian.

⁶ Mâlamir, *Revue d'assyriologie* 57:169-174 (1963).

⁷ Quotations from Scheil p. v.

In conclusion follow some additional remarks on the books under review. It is inevitable that these remarks have a largely negative tone since they reflect the main points of non-agreement between authors and reviewer. In the following, M = de Meyer and S = Salonen.

The syllabary. Salonen's treatment of the syllabary is a most valuable contribution. Unfortunately a number of omissions occur especially in the section on the sibilants. On p. 59 the syllabic value *qé* is not listed although it is said to occur passim in *il-qé* (p. 60). The *vc* values *aq, eq, iq, uq* have also dropped out. Among the standard *s*-values only *sà, sí, sú* are listed on p. 62f. No mention is made of *sé, as, es, is, us*. I have noted occurrences of all except *es*. Similarly with *ṣ*-values (p. 64f.), *aṣ, eṣ, iṣ, uṣ* are not listed. I cannot show evidence for *eṣ* and *uṣ*. Both authors accept a value *ṣu* of the graph *zum* although it only occurs in the word written *i-zum* (M 11, S 65). Since the use of mimation is optional in these texts and since a writing **i-ṣu-um* is nowhere found, *i-ṣum* appears to be the methodologically better reading. Among the *š*-values (p. 66ff.), *aš, eš, iš, uš* are not listed although all of them occur. The same is true of *az, ez, iz, uz* (p. 74). The author does not list *ze* and I have found no occurrence of this value.

The use of plene writing of vowels. It appears that plene writing is not used according to any fixed rules. It is stated by S 88 that "die Schreiber haben der traditionellen amtlichen Sprache zu folgen versucht, und unnormale Verlängerungen [i.e. abnormal plene writing of vowels] kommen gewöhnlich nur in einem Worte in demselben Texte und ziemlich selten vor". Nevertheless there is sufficient evidence from the Susa texts to show that plene writing did not have any distinctive value as it had in other varieties of Old Babylonian. It also seems very doubtful whether plene writing was used specifically to indicate long vowels as opposed to short vowels. Long as well as short vowels may be written plene. The non-distinctive value of plene writing in Susa Old Babylonian may be illustrated by comparing its largely distinctive value in Standard Old Babylonian (St. OB) defined as, say, the language of the letters of Hammurabi. A few examples will suffice:

it-mu, *it-mu-ú* S 41 = *itmû* (plural),
i-šu, *i-šu-ú* S 41 = *išû* (singular subjunctive).

In this position plene writing is obligatory and distinctive in St. OB, compare *išu* '(he, she, it) has' written *i-šu* VAB 6 : 14,4, 49,9 with *išû* (plural) written *i-šu-ú* 50,19.

ma-du, *ma-a-du* S 41 = *mādum*,

ú-la-ar, *ú-la-a-ar* S 41 = *utār*.

This use of plene writing is optional and non-distinctive in St. OB.

il-li-i-ma, *i-il-li-i-ma* M 147,

ik-kal-ma, M 129, *i-ik-ka-al* S 44.

In St. OB initial plene writing is obligatory and distinctive. In verbs of this type (verbs with first radical zero) plene writing is part of the expression of the morphologic entity 'present tense/aspect'.

iš-qu-ú-ul M 4, S 90 = *išqul*,

i-na-ki-i-sú-ú, *i-na-ki-i-[s]ú* S 90 = *inakkisû*.

Plene writings of this type never occur in St. OB. It is possible that in Susa abnormal plene writings (unnormale Verlängerungen) are met with more often in younger (ü, j) than in older texts (ä).

Word initial plene writing is said to have had the value of "la plosive glottale" and "der Stimmabsatz" (M 3, S 43). According to Salonen the Code of Hammurabi often expresses the initial glottal stop by plene writing. Since initial plene writing is written in the Code only in words of a specific morphologic structure, this statement would imply that the opposition initial zero : initial glottal stop was phonemic in the language of the Code. Compare the following forms of verbs with first radical zero as written in the Code: *i-il-la-ak*, *i-il-la-ku* (present) vs. *il-li-ik*, *il-li-ku* (preterite). Plene writing in this position is clearly distinctive. However, it is methodologically dangerous to take this kind of plene writing as representing a glottal stop, since the opposition initial zero : initial glottal stop is unknown elsewhere in Semitic.

*The suppletion of medial vowels for Proto-Semitic *-ww- and *-w-. According to M 4² and 6 the broken writings (graphies rompues) occurring in the verb zázum 'to divide' may reflect Proto-Semitic *-ww- and *-w-. The forms in question are:*

1. *i-zu-ù-az-zu* M 4, S 43, *i-zu-az-[zu]* M 6, S 43 and
2. *i-zu-iz-zu* M 6, S 43 for *izuzzū* (present plural),
3. *zu-i-zu* M 6, S 43 for *zīzū* (stative plural).

These forms are taken by de Meyer to be reflexes of 1. **izaw-wazū*, 2. **izawwizū* (same meaning as 1), 3. **zawizū*. The proposed reconstructions are unacceptable since they fail to explain the following facts: *a.* A number of other broken writings occur which cannot be explained in this way (M 6, S 43). *b.* The reconstructions fail to account for the doubling of prevocalic *z* (*izáz* vs. *izuzzū*). *c.* The development of the groups **-awwa-*, **-awwi-*, and **-awi-* is irregular and limited to a specific morphologic environment. It occurs only in so-called hollow verbs (*mediae infirmae* verbs). Accordingly the alleged development is no phonologic development at all but a suppletion in a stated morphologic environment. This is the reason why W. von Soden treats this type of verbs as having a medial vocalic radical⁸. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that already the Jewish grammarians of the Middle Ages took the so-called weak medial radicals of Hebrew verbs to be vocalic in nature⁹.

Outside the stated morphologic environment Proto-Semitic or rather Pre-Akkadian **-ww-* and **-w-* are retained in Old Babylonian. Compare the expression 'children as many as *waldū u iwalladū* (*i-wa-la-du*) were born and will be born' VAB 5 : 5,11 f., 16,17 f. In his grammar § 103 x, von Soden mentions a form *iwwalid* 'er wurde geboren'¹⁰. For the element **-w-* one may quote *nawrum*, later *namru* 'excellent, first class'¹¹ from Pre-Akkadian **nawirum*.

The morphophonemic treatment of š + š. If a pronominal suffix with initial *š* (i.e. *š-* < Old Akkadian *š-*) is joined to a morpheme with final *š*, the result may be either *-šš-* or the morphophonemic

⁸ Cf. Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik, *Analecta Orientalia* 33 (1952), § 21 g.

⁹ See for example S. T. H. Hurwitz, Root-determinatives in Semitic speech, *Contributions to Oriental History and Philology* No. 6 (New York 1913), p. 7 and *Gesenius' Hebrew grammar* (ed. A. E. Cowley, 1910), § 72.1 note 1.

¹⁰ Cf. also the forms with medial *-ww-* from the Mari texts as quoted by A. Finet in Répertoire analytique, *Archives royales de Mari* 15 (1954), p. 237 s.v. *nawrum*.

¹¹ For the meaning, see J. J. Finkelstein, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 21 : 76 (1962) with references to earlier literature. For the value *aw* of the graph *𐎶/𐎵*, see I. J. Gelb, *wa = aw, iw, uw* in cuneiform writing, *ibid.* 20 : 194-196 (1961).

variant -ss-. Part of the rule is stated by von Soden § 30 f as follows: "Ist š als letzter Radikal oder Endung aber ebenso wie das š der Suffixe aus aAK š entstanden, finden wir . . . die Folge šš". This passage has been misunderstood by M 20¹ where it is stated that "l'infinitif [viz. *erēš-* < Old Akkadian *erāš-* 'to plough, to cultivate'] envisagé a comme troisième radicale un š, qui ne correspond pas dans le cas présent à un š vieil-accadien". Since in the case in question the form of the suffixed pronoun is -šu, de Meyer concludes that the rule as given by von Soden is not observed in Susa! It should be added that there are also cases of the opposite, -šu 'him' written zu and -ši 'her' written zi occurring in the same environment after -š < -š. These are, however, taken by S 68 to be examples of the values šu_z and ši_z respectively. These writings might as well have been taken as evidence for the well attested values sū and śī. In this connection it may be added that von Soden's rule has no universal value in Old Babylonian. Exceptions to the rule may possibly be explained as due to differences of dialect. Among the derivations of *erēšum* one may quote *errēšum* 'tenant farmer': *er-re-es-su-nu* 'their e.' OEC 3 : 17,18¹² (letter of Hammurabi), and from the Code *er-re-su-ma* 'his e.' obv. xiii 66, *er-re-sà* 'her e.' rev. xv 7. A most interesting example is furnished by a contract in which two forms of the verb *qāšum* < Old Akkadian *qiāšum* 'to donate, to present', as they stand in the text, form a kind of grammatical paradigm: *i-qi-si* / *i-qi-ša-a-ši* VAB 5 : 25,5 f.¹³, i.e. preterite singular *iqiš-* + -ši 'her' vs. preterite feminine plural *iqišā-* + -ši 'her'.

¹² For a translation and analysis of the whole passage, see F. R. Kraus, Ein Edikt des Königs Ammi-šaduqa von Babylon, *Studia et documenta ad iura orientis antiqui pertinentia* 5 (1958), p. 134f.

¹³ The two forms were quoted already by O. E. Ravn, The substitution of -ss- for -šš- in Babylonian, *Acta Orientalia* 17 : 319 (1939), cf. also A. Goetze, The sibilants of Old Babylonian, *Revue d'assyriologie* 52 (1958), especially p. 142f.