

On the origins and continuity of the term ✨ AN/diġir - god

Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale - The 60-th RAI Meeting - Warsaw, Poland

ANASTAS SHUKE

Alb-Science Institute, Tirana, ALBANIA
anastas.shuke@gmail.com

Introduction

Sumer was the Land of so many Firsts for us, and certainly, a civilization like that must have had very clear Philosophical concepts too. One of the most important group of terms in the human culture, are those representing the concept of God.

The God in our religious monotheistic philosophy is the heavenly, highest, all-knowing, omnipotent, limitless, omnipresent, the creator and head of the universe. The fundamental qualities of God would be: He is: 1- the Heavenly or Stellar; 2- the Creator; 3- the All-knowing.

In a primeval (or primitive if you want) language like Sumerian, the concept of God, seems to be clearly related with the first quality - heavenly or stellar because the sign for God ✨ AN, is also equated with *sky, heaven, star*, all of the idea *be high*. At first view, it doesn't seem to reflect any meaning connected to the other two qualities, so it would be of interest a further analysis.

Abstract

The present study is an effort to analyze etymologically, how the terms for God may express such fundamental qualities, which might also reflect the high level of Sumerian civilization.

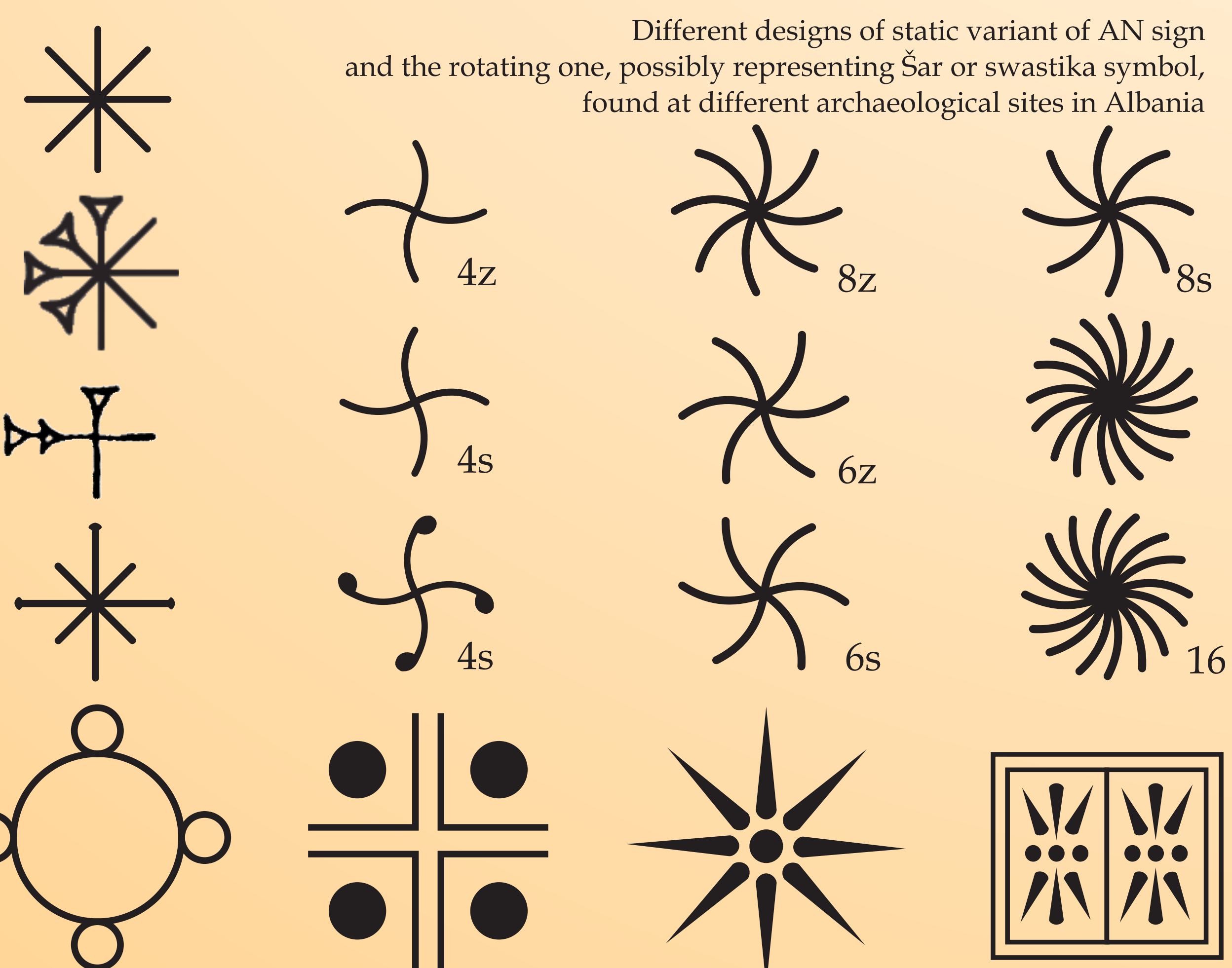
We might think that, in Sumerian, the above three qualities of God are not a concept expressed through one cuneiform sign only. But, Sumerians had fulfilled that difficult task, through assigning different phonetic values to the same sign, as we all know about. However, the Beginners, creators of the cuneiform script, did not simply add arbitrary values to the sign for god. They did it in a godly manner, by assigning such values as a coherent, integrated structure of high abstraction, just as their godly language deserved.

The three qualities may be shown through etymological analysis of the Sumerian terms for God, including AN, diġir/dingir, dim₃-me-er, šar/šaru, il/ilu, where most of them are expressed by the ✨ AN sign only.

Regarding the possible presence and continuity of such terms and symbols in later cultures, there are also studied the respective terms in IE languages such as in Sanskrit Vedas, Pelasgian term for god, Greek and Latin terms for god. Traces of Sumerian symbol for God in Illyria and Epirus (even in Arber) are evident, also their mythology with the divine brothers Polidiak and Kastor shows possible parallelism in the names, their associations with zodiac signs, etc. These facts have been a further inducement and support to this study cause, in the same time, they bespeak the possible relationship with Albanian language, which has also given its help in analysing the Sumerian terms for god, and especially to understand the coherent, clearly related structure of terms behind.

Method

Etymological division derivation, which is semantically correct. Division of agglutinated terms within Sumerian and by the help of Albanian.



Discussion & Results

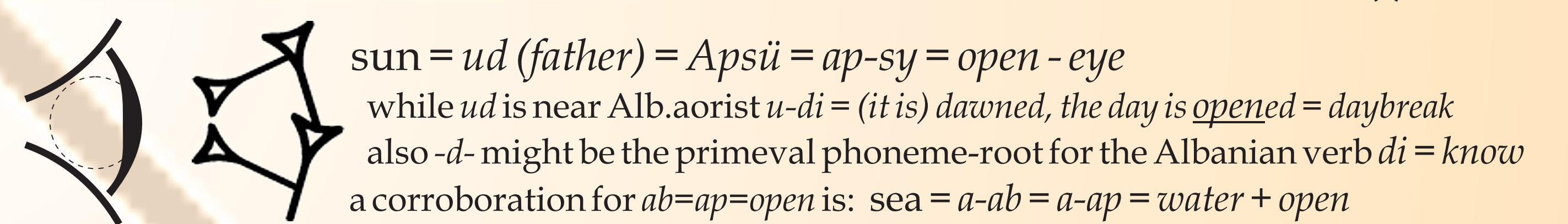
✨ AN sign value origin is *an-na (a-na)*. It means *sky, star, heaven, god*, all of the idea *be high*, (Prince,32). In lexical lists, it is equated with Akk. *šamu*, and through it, with *me=divine powers* (Horowitz,229; Halloran,171). The *me* might express the idea *be high*, also because its graphic etymology is "sth. *upon* sth." if seen in its original position rotated for 90°. So, AN sign is clearly related to the first quality of God, *heavenly or stellar*, because of its adverbial meanings *high, above, over, upon*. Such meanings may be derived with etymological division *a-na = a+na = is+high/above*. The value *a=is* might be derived from the nominalizing function of *a* understood as "the noun that verbs" = "*is* *verbing*" (Halloran,1), also supported from the same meaning of *a=is*, and the same nominalizing function of the verb *a/aš=is* in Albanian. The equation *a-na = me(mi) = over, upon* cognate with *high, above*, is again corroborated through Albanian, where *mi = over, upon* and *na/nalt/la/lart = above, high*. The other value AN = *il/ilu* is present in Albanian with the meaning *il/ilu > ill/yll = star*.

The highest objects we can see are the stars, and so, *il/ilu=star* can better express the idea *high*. It is so in Albanian, where the adverb *above/high = la/lat/lart (na/nalt)* and the noun *star*, may derive from each other: *il = i+l = high (adj.)*, we might consider the amisable *-a* in *la* as *a=is* and the indefinite pronoun *i=ni=one/it/any* as in the equation: *ni+l+a > i+l+a > il*. Thus, values *an, ilu, me* of the AN sign may express the first quality of God through adverbial meanings *high, above, over, upon*.

In lexical lists *an* is also equated with *šamu=mu (=my)*, from which might have been derived the value for OS copula *am₆ (a+mu=am)*, phonetically similar to the word *ama=mother* in both Sumerian and Albanian. The value *am (am-a)* might express the second quality of God, that of creating > Creator, the mother creates new lives. A corroboration would be the homonym word *an=womb* in Albanian. Another corroboration might be the masculine function of initiator, beginner, in the process of creating (also present in the Creation Epic with *Apsü* and *Tiamat*): *a+n = a + nis/niš*, cause the *n/ni* can also bear in Alb. the meanings *begin* or *one*, as in equation: *n = ni = ni+is = nis/niš = begin /one = Initiate* or number *One, initiator*.

So AN sign expresses the second quality, that of being Creator, in both ways, as Initiator *an=a+n/nis/niš* or Father = *ada/ad = at* in Alb., while *ada/ad* is very near *ud = sun = Apsü*, (verbal root *ap=open* in Alb. near *initiate*) and as Mother = *ama* or *am-a* in Alb., which can explain the name *Tiamat* through the root *am=mother*, *Tiamat > Ki-am-ak = Earth-mother-is this (t<>k)*, they may have similar meanings as in Alb. root words *t/ti = thou* and *k/ki = this*. The base *am* for the etymology of *Tiamat/Ki-am-ak* would suggest the same for the Akk. *šamu = sky*, with the result that *Kiamak*, as the primeval mother, would be equated with the first sky (from 7 ones), the Akk. *šupuk šamē (šamū) = vault of sky = Alb. kup e qiellit*, inverted to *kupuš êmaš = pick/break of mother* in Alb., which might corroborate certain views about our understanding of Creation Epic. Also the Hebrew and Greek names for *Tiamat/Kiamak* may have good etymology in Albanian: Hebrew *Tehom > ki.e.hum = earth-lost/ disappeared*; Greek *Omorka = unmur-kia = lost/ disappeared Earth*; *Ummu-ur-ki = Ki umur = lost/ disappeared Earth*; *Um-ma Hu-bu-ur > Ama Hubur > Ama Humbur = Lost Mother*.

Regarding the etymology of the Akk. *Apsü=sun* it might be derived semantically from the function of sun as source of light which enables us to see, the light is needed for the eye to function, the light opens the eye. By combining the verbal root *ap=open* with Alb. word for *eye=sü/sy* it may have been created *Ap-sy = sun = ud (near ad/at)*. This analysis might be corroborated by the graphic etymology of the sign which seems to be a graphic representation of the verb *open* and of the eye. The *sun over the hillock* has the same graphic etymology if seen in its original position, rotated for 90°.



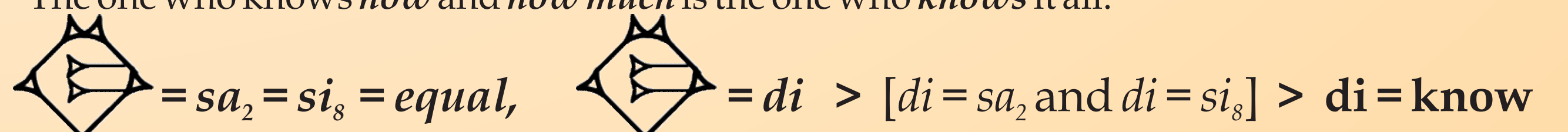
The third quality, perhaps the most important, *the all-knowing*, may be expressed through value *diġir*. Such value for the sign AN may have been derived in similarity with ES equivalents such as *dim₃-me-er*. Regarding the value *diġir*, it can be proposed and analyzed an etymology based on the Albanian verb *di=know*.

The first syllable of ES form *dim₃* might be the verbal element of the compound, phonetically similar to the verb *di*, while *-m* function is to connect the next syllable of the word. With the possibility of *-m-* reading for the *-ġ-* phoneme of *diġir*, it may result an equal reading between the main dialect and ES forms, *dimir = dim₃-me-er*. The second and third syllable of ES form might have the reading *-mir*, as can be deduced from the EK form *dimir*. In Albanian *mir = good/well*, and so might be proposed the agglutinated meaning: *diġir = dimir = know-well*, which is almost the same as the All-knowing quality of God. That can be corroborated through the meaning in Albanian, for the widely accepted reading *dingir* of the AN sign, which is *di-ngir = know-satiated*, very near to the meaning *All-knowing*, which may also be corroborated through the possible etymology for *Ki-engir* and *Ki-uri* as the antonyms: *Ki-engir = satiated/good Land* and *Ki-uri = hunger/hungry Land*, designations that might be possible for both of them.

The meaning of the word *mer/mir* in Alb. may be derived from its Sumerian parts as in the ES form *dim₃-me-er*. The word *-me-* = *over, upon*, while the next syllable is formed of the connecting element *-e/i* and the meaning element *-r = ri = lay down*, resulting in the agglutinated meaning *over/upon + lay (down/upon) = good = me/mi+ri = mer/mir*, sth. that lays/stays over/upon is good.

The equation *di = know* represents the essential part of the term *dingir/dimir*, because most of the other ancient IE languages and beyond, have based their words for God in this Sumerian term. The Vedic Sanskrit had the term *Diaus-Pitar* similar to Pelasgian term *DiPatur-on* mentioned in a vocabulary Pelasgian-Greek of Hesych (S.Konda,53). Both terms begin with the root-verb *di*. The meaning of *pitar = patur* is that of the word *patur* - Alb. past participle of *to have* which is a homonym of *wealthy/rich*, near with (di-) *ngir = satiated*. The name of Zeus is written *Dias = Di+as = Knows+is*. The Latin term for God is *Deus = De+us / Di+as*, which is same thing. And this view can be corroborated in other later IE languages as well, in words like *Dio, God, Demiurge*, etc.

The accepted Sumerian word *zu=know* is phonetically similar with Alb. *sq/zgju = wise*, a cognate of word *di=know*, which might be argued through the equation *sa₂ = si₈ = equal*. The same cuneiform sign has the value *di*, and Alb. *sa = equal(quantity)/how much*, and *si = equal(manner)/how*. The one who knows *how* and *how much* is the one who *knows* it all:



Conclusions

The AN sign for god through its values *an, am, dingir*, might express all three main qualities of God, with the respective etymologies:

- 1 - He is *sky/star*,
- 2 - He is the *initiator, nr. one, father/mother*
- 3 - He is *satiated with knowledge, knows well*

Literature

1. J.D.Prince - Materials for a Sumerian Lexicon, Leipzig 1908
2. L.W.King - The Seven Tablets of Creation - London 1902-1924
3. W.Horowitz - Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography, USA 1998
4. J.L.Hayes - A Manual of Sumerian Grammar and Texts, USA 2000
5. D.O.Edzard - Sumerian Grammar - USA 2003
6. J.A.Halloran - Sumerian Lexicon - USA 2006
7. D.A.Foxvog - Introduction to Sumerian Grammar, USA 2013
8. ePSD - Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary, USA
9. G.Whittaker - The Case for Euphratic, Göttingen, Germany, 2008