

ANASTAS SHUKE

Alb-Science Institute, Tirana, ALBANIA

anastas.shuke@gmail.com

Foreword

The verb *to be* is the most basic and useful verb in many languages. It must have been the same with Sumerian too. Its Fortune would have been fixed from the Beginning. The Copula may have passed through numerous “misfortunes” of morphological changes and development, even though it is a verb of frequent use, thus expected to have more stability. Now, we may only have the good luck of re-discovering its long journey through Fortune and Misfortune in the Ancient Near East, and maybe here, in Europe.

From a general point of view, being a verb of most frequent use in its 3.sg. form, the Copula is expected to be spoken and/or written with short words of few, simple, unless the simplest, phones/phonemes or syllables in any language. On the other hand, the disagreement on morphology reflected in the Sumerian copula paradigm and homonymy which leads to ambiguity, make necessary a further study.

For Sumerian, supposed to have had a long phonetic development before the invention of its cuneiform script but assumed without inflection of verbs yet, we might accept that the copula root/stem for all persons would be part of the 3.sg. The view expressed in the present paper is that copula might have been spoken with the simplest phone – the *a* – and written with the simplest cuneiform sign – the $\checkmark a\checkmark$ sign, which is part of A-sign for water in the *am₃*, followed by the suffixed pronominal element, completing the inflected form.

This paper analyses a number of arguments supporting such view.

Key-words: Sumerian, enclitic Copula, Nominalizer, verb, personal pronoun, A.AN

1- *“It may be partially true that *am₃* is the 3.sg.”*

The enclitic copula *am₃* is accepted to be the 3.sg. and most frequent form of the copula paradigm. This view might be linked to the presence of homonymity in the copula conjugation. Also, as Edzard (2003: 55) points out that *“it’s hard to ascertain the exact phonetic nature of 1.sg. & 2.sg. pronouns,”* it might be linked to the lack of certainty in determining personal pronouns, the morphology and their occurrence in a given text. It seems reasonable that the 3.sg is expected to be used much more than 1&2.sg. for the basic reason that the objects of this world we call with the 3.sg. pronouns, are much more than those we call with the 1 & 2.sg. By the latter, we call a part of human beings only, those who are near & including the speaker. On the other hand, the enclitic form *-am₃*, seen as 3.sg. copula, can replace 1.sg. or 2.sg. personal pronouns (see Thomsen 1984: §526, §545), who do not actually replace a noun, being substantives themselves. Their absence means there can be no expressed/visible subject in the sentence (see §5 below), and/or a different word-order.

Supported by the seeming “absence” of any pronominal forms of 1.sg. or 2.sg., both accepted as

*en*₃ (Edzard 2003: 82; Hayes 2000: 335), the usage frequency of *am*₃ gives the impression and leads to reasoning that *am*₃ is the 3.sg. But, that may be partially true. Not true for the whole compound but for a part of it, the 𐎠 A sign, which may also have the meaning ‘is.’ Also, for Sumerian as a verb based language (an opinion, which is not in the scope of this paper, and will not be analyzed here), we might expect that the root of the copula is there, in the 3.sg, written with a most simple, primeval sign. The other persons of the copula paradigm may have been expressed by using that verbal root, adding the suffixed (>enclitic) pronominal element. The enclitic position of pronominal elements (*en*₃) in the accepted copula conjugation bespeaks a different, OVS word order, at least for the 1 & 2.sg, which might tell us to analyze the *am*₃ also.

2- *One might express the idea water through that of rain, A = ‘rain’*

The water is life, the water is existence, A = ‘is’

The *am*₃ 𐎠𐎵 is formed of the sign for water A, and the sign for sky/God AN, while in OS period, it has been written with the AN sign only, having a similar reading, same meaning, and a synonymic etymology for both *am*₃ and *am*₆ (see §7 below). Let’s analyse the 𐎠 sign graphically and etymologically.

The whole sign, since its origins, is said to represent “falling water” (Prince 1908: 2). It might be formed of two elements, the *aš* sign 𐎠 and a second one 𐎵 *še* (see §3 below for the possibility of such reading), which I think represents a kind of falling water, the rain. In fact, the concept of *rain* is more primary than that of *water* because the occurrence of rain is much more frequent in the sense of space and time, than the water of springs, waterfalls, rivers, etc. So, when it comes the time to write it, one might express the idea *water* through that of *rain*. This might be the reason why the A sign is not rotated for 90° as the other signs, thus keeping the vertical direction of rain.

Also, we all know the expressions “the water is life, the water is existence,” and analysing that saying literally, from the linguistic point of view, we could get the possible equation: A = *exists*, A = *is*. The A is the simplest phone in all of our languages, spoken by the very first cry of a newborn coming into.....
Existence.

If the things are so, that A = rain, and also A = is, we must accept and bear in mind the high level of abstraction of the compilers of cuneiform script, the Beginners (*Ne’philim?!)* of our Civilisation, beginners of our Fortune, in the Ancient Near East.

3- *The meaning of 𐎠A = is, can be the origin of nominalizer [-a].*

Also, it can be part of, or just the verbal element of enclitic copula.

Another argumentation for the proposed meaning of 𐎠 A = is, may be derived from the copula writing with the same signs A.AN as *šeĝ*₃ ‘rain’ (A.AN = *šeĝ*₃ shorter form is *še*, see Prince 1908: 313). Its reading might be *šeĝ*₃ = *šen*, probably the result of a more “literal” one [*aš-še-an*], where the value *še* (*še* [š*i*] - Albanian, Βροχή [vro.š*i*] – Greek, *kiša* < *ka.š*i** – Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian, *pioggia* – Italian, *pi* – Alb. = drink), may be derived for the second part 𐎵 of the A sign. This value makes possible or support the graphic etymological division of A sign as: *aš* + *še*[š*i*] by the equation *water is/equals rain*. The graphic representation of *rain* with double/multiple vertical strokes, and of *equity* or copula with a single stroke, seems to have been commonly used at all times, they are like “instinctive” signs. From such equation and reasoning, the *aš* sign may have the meaning *is*, while the 2-nd part of A sign represents graphically the *rain*.

As the origin of the nominalizer [-a] is unknown (Edzard 2003: 151), here it might be proposed that the meaning of 𐎠 A = is, can be the origin of nominalizer [-a]. The first part of the A sign, *aš* ‘is’, might be

responsible for the function of nominalizing, while the second registers to it, the logographic concept of water through that of the rain, [A] = [is rain]. In relation to its function in the am_3 compound, the A sign, might be part of, or just the verbal element of enclitic copula and its root/stem for all persons, because Prince 1908: 6, says that the common verbal prefix $a-$ 𐎠𐎡 may indicate all three persons. This may lead us to the conclusion that the origins and root/stem of the verb *to be*, or the copula, might be its 3.sg. form.

- 5- *The formal phonetic and philosophical parallelism of A.AN to the writing on the Christ icon – O.ON, meaning I am, would suggest the possible same meaning for the enclitic copula am_3 – A.AN 𐎠𐎡**

The readings, meanings and etymology of the sign for sky/god AN, as the second element of the enclitic copula, might provide to the copular root *a*, the expected pronominal element which determines the person represented by the am_3 form.

- 6- *The Septuagint version “ego eimi O ωN,” translated I am who (I) am, may be a double-language phrase. Reflecting the importance of such statement, the Jewish translators may have added here, its original.*



Traditional Icon of Christ The Doctrine of the Trinity is echoed in the three arms, and the Deity of Christ is explicitly expressed in the inscription of the three Greek letters *O ωN* that spell *Ho On*, the translation of "I am" found in the Septuagint version of Exodus 3:14. The Septuagint translates *ehyeh asher ehyeh* of Exodus 3:14a into Greek as "*ego eimi ho on*", translated into English as "I am the one who is". The *ego eimi* is the usual way to translate the Hebrew imperfect, as most English versions do. This earliest of all translations of the Hebrew thus associates the revelation of Exodus 3:14 with the concept of absolute existence.

3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO (I) AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

I believe that Septuagint version is a double-language phrase, as it is accepted that the Septuagint may show Semiticisms, and as such, this God's name *O.ON* might be a same meaning loan in Greek. It is given the Greek *ego eimi* = I am, and then, because of the importance of such statement (see §9 below), is added its original *O.ON*, which is the Sumerian *A.AN*¹, primeval religious language of the Kienĝir – the Good-God-Land.

- 7- * AN = *šamu* = 'sky' = 𐎠𐎡 MU = 𐎠𐎡 *me* (*sth. on/upon sth.*); *na, me (mi), mu* - may share the meanings *high/above/over/on/upon*. All such readings and meanings have equal phonetic resemblances in Albanian.

9- *OωN = A.AN = a-mû = am-û = a-m-û = is – above – I = I am above*
Each phoneme with a precise meaning, each phoneme – a word
That is Sumerian written Fortune on the origins and development of the Copula

12- *About contextual semantics of the am_3*

CONCLUSIONS

- The A sign for water may represent the equation [A] = [is + rain] from which $a\check{s}$ = 'is'
- The function of the suffix *-a* as nominalizer of verbal phrases, may originate from its meaning *is*.
- The verb *to be* and *copula* in Sumerian might be understood as a combination of the copular root element *a-* = 'is' and the respective possessive pronoun, where the latter functions as the determinative of the person.
- The enclitic copula am_6/am_3 might be understood or equated to the phrase *(it) is me* in English, meaning *(I) am*.
- The full form of the 1.sg. might be $am-\hat{u} < a-m\hat{u}$, where $-\hat{u}$ can be the suffixed pronominal element of 1.sg.
- The completed heteronymous paradigm of verb *to be* or *copula*, in singular, might be: $am-\hat{u}$, *a-ti*, *a-ni*.

Anastas Shuke

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Warsaw, Poland