HOW TO READ
BABYLONIAN
OMINA

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BABYLONIAN OMINA

The Babylonian astral omnia is highly specialized branch of literature. Because of that you can learn how to read it comparatively easy.

What you need is the equivalent of two 1-year 3 credit courses- one in Sumerian and another one- in Akkadian.

The Sumerian is the frist written language of Mesopotamia to arise around 4,000 BC. It is close to Turkish and in the family of the Turcic languages.

The Akkadian is a Semitic language.

The writing of Sumerian and Akkadian is a mixture of Ideograms and syllabic writing. The Ideograms are signs that convey a whole idea. Usually one sign conveys several ideas and at the same time can be read as several syllables. In the examples here the Sumerian reading comes first in the parentheses, then comes the Akkadian reading in italic.

It has two ideogramatic meanings: 1: god (dingir, illu) and 2: sky (an, shulmu)

Syllabic Reading: an, 'il (il₁), 'el (el₂) ilu, le₄, 'ana (ana₂)

Ideas: 1: Sun (utu, shamash) 2: day (ud, umu)
3: white (babbar, petsu) 4: when, at the time when (u₄, enuma)

Syllabic Reading: ud, ut, tam, tu₂, par, pir, lih, u₄, um₂.

Ideas: 1: go (du, alaku) 2: be stable (du, kama)
3: correct, true (du, kinu) 4: to be situated at (gub, izuzzu)
5: carry (tum₂, abalu) 6: lead (lah₄, shalatu)

Syllabic Reading: du, gub, kub, kup, gu, tu₃, ra₂, sh₄.

One and the same syllable can be written with several different signs. That's why they are numbered in the order of their frequency. The second and third usually are designated by acute and grave accents. In this convention:

:e = e₁ (most frequent 'e'); ː = e₂ (second frequent 'e'); ː = e₃; e₄; e₅ ...

1: In the US system of University education, a 3-credits course means 3 hours per week of class study with a tutor.

2: As in many other things in this sensitive branch of knowledge, the political correct notions of today requires that the Sumerian language be represented as a language without any relatives and outside of any group! And as with so many other things in this branch, this is simply not true. The closeness of Sumerian to Turkish is obvious to anyone who has studied both languages. The Old-Bulgarian is in the same family as also is the language of Chuvashia (once called Bulgaria on the Volga river).
One sign can mean several ideas and can be read as several different syllables. This sounds very scary, but in fact it's not so bad! Very often, a special sign is added after an ideogram to show which of its many meanings we should take. This sign also adds some grammatical information. It is called phonetic complement. It shows what is the last syllable of the word meant by the first sign.

Here the second sign is 'ku'. This comes to show that the last syllable of the reading of the first sign is -ku.

There is only one possible Akkadian reading of the first sign that can fit in this: alaku meaning 'go' (infinitive) ...

So, the whole combination is to be read in Akkadian as illaku = they go. It is being written in transliteration (with Latin letters) as DU-ku and as illaku-ku or illaku ku in normalization (Akkadian with Latin letters).

A combination of several signs results in a new sign with new meanings. $s = \text{read as 'ts'}$  \hspace{1cm} $\check{s} = \text{read as 'sh'}$

\[ \text{DU} + \text{DU} = \text{DU} (\text{e}_3) = \text{sun} + \text{go} = \text{situ} = \text{rise, appearance}. \]

\[ \text{DINGIR} + \text{UD} + \text{SHU} + \text{A} = \text{god} + \text{Sun} + \text{set} + \text{nominalization part} = \text{ereb Šamši} = \text{sunrise}. \]

There are special signs called 'determinatives'. They stay in front or in the end of another sign and show its category.

\[ \text{DINGIR} = \text{god} \hspace{1cm} \text{DINGIR UD} = \text{god Shamash} = \text{god Sun} \]

\[ \text{DINGIR 30} = \text{god SIN} = \text{god Moon} \]

\[ \text{KI} = \text{land} \hspace{1cm} \text{SHESH UNUG KI} = \text{UR (city)} \]

Notice here that SHESH.KI meant god NANA, the Moon god in Sumerian and that the sign UNUG is a ziggurat with the sign of the Moon inside, as Ur was the sity of the Moon cult. UNUG

The determinatives are written in the transliterations as superscripts. $d\text{UD or dingir UD}$. \hspace{1cm} SHESH.UNUG.$^\text{KI}$
The cuneiform script has a 4,000 years history!

The first one is the Sumerian and then come the two main variants of the semitic Akkadian: Babylonian and Assyrian. They, in turn, are divided into old-, middle- and new-

The stages of deciphering a cuneiform text

1: The first stage is taking an Autograph of the tablet. It is an exact copy of the cuneiform text, but on a paper.

Many scholars, however, took and are taking autographs writing always in a standard Neo-Assyrian script, no matter that the tablet e.g. may be with a text in Old Babylonian script! Other researchers would keep the Old Babylonian script but would write only in standard signs...

These are important caveats.

2: The second stage is called Transliteration. Basically, it is to write the cuneiform with the Latin alphabet keeping the Sumerian Ideograms.

From this stage we can easily deduce the original cuneiform.

3: The third stage is Transcription also called Normalization which shows how is the text to be read in Akkadian. Here the Sumerian Ideograms are supplanted with their Akkadian reading. From this stage it is often impossible to reconstruct the original cuneiform signs.

The old assyriologists from the beginning of the 20th century published only the normalization. But they also always gave the original cuneiform. Today, most scholars publish only the transliteration and they do not bother to give the cuneiform text.

4: The fourth level is Translation in modern language.

5: The final stage in case of deciphering Astrological omina is the Interpretation of the omen in question. Here we will show all the stages using several signs in the beginning of the omen of the Sumerian king Ibbi-SIN, taken from ACh, Ishtar 21:12 (ACh. = ‘L’Astrologie Chaldeenne’, Virolleaud Ch. (1908-1912), Paris)

1: [Cuneiform text]

2: DISH MUL SHUDUN ina E₃ a₂ ITU.SHU₂ A IGI-shu₂ GAR-nu

   if star Yoke in rise-its to god Sun set face-its turned

3: Shumma kakkab Niru ina šitu-shu ana ereb Shamshi pana-shu shaknu₃u

   if star Yoke in rise-its towards set - Sun face-its turned

4: If the Yoke Star in its rise faces the sunset (lit.'to the sunset its face is turned')

5: I will reserve the Interpretation for the article about the Omen of Ibbi-Sin.