

## MATERIALS FOR SUMERIAN LEXICON

*M. Civil*

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Mesopotamian culture, its basic unity notwithstanding, was always a bilingual culture. To describe it by using Akkadian sources alone, or Sumerian sources alone, would be as senseless as trying to study the French or Italian Middle Ages with Latin documents only or with documents written in Romance languages only. The semantic investigation of the Akkadian words for our Chicago Assyrian Dictionary needs the constant use of Sumerian materials. The most important materials of this kind are obviously the native lexical lists. They were reconstructed in the last twenty years as part of the CAD project, under the direction of Professor Landsberger. The publication of those lists, as a by-product of the CAD work, is done under the auspices of UNESCO by the Pontificio Istituto Biblico in Rome. The ninth volume is scheduled to appear in the near future. In addition to the lexical material, interesting Sumerian literary compositions have been appearing in increasing numbers in the last few years. Since the real meaning of a word comes alive only from its occurrence in a concrete context, a word in a lexical list being as dead as a plant in a herbarium, the collaborators of CAD are making an increasing use of the Sumerian literary material. In the absence of a Sumerian dictionary, to make the literary texts easily available, a computer-prepared concordance of the texts currently is being made. Thus far, over nine thousand lines have been processed. As the results have proved eminently useful, plans have been made to prepare a concordance of twelve thousand more lines in the next two years. Mr. G. Gragg has been working as technical adviser on this project for the last year.