

## *Sequential Reconstruction of Proto-Akkadian*

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Interrupting his work on the long-range project on social and economic history of the Ancient Near East, Professor I. J. Gelb dedicated the current academic year to the completion of a monograph in the field of linguistics. Entitled "Sequential Reconstruction of Proto-Akkadian," the monograph represents the first attempt to reconstruct the oldest attainable stages of Proto-Akkadian, and with it, of Proto-Semitic, by the positional analysis of its morphemes.

The main rule of positional analysis is that all morphemes occur in a certain ordered sequence, which is absolute and immutable. In the noun the order of the five sequential morphemes after the stem is gender, number, case, object, and enclitics. Thus a word such as *kalbušuma* "and his dog" is to be analyzed as *kalb+u+φ+u+šu+ma*, wherein *kalb* represents the stem "dog," (the first) *+u* the masculine gender, *+φ*, that is, zero, the singular number, (the second) *+u* the nominative case, *+šu* the pronominal suffix "his," and *+ma* the enclitic "and."

Heretofore applied partially in the field of Amerindian languages, positional analysis holds great promise in the future for the correct understanding of the structure of other Semitic languages and of other families of languages, such as Indo-European.



*Old Akkadian private letter from Tell Asmar, Iraq.  
"Thus (says) Uzeum to Šu-Mamu and Ilu-dan and  
Samsu: I laughed very heartily. And thus (Uzeum to  
. . .) Nunitum, Istar-tukulti and Illat: (quote) I  
laughed very heartily."*