
The Akkadian verbs *darāru* and their meanings

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Abstract

The study proposes that the verb currently known as *darāru/nadarruru* “to move freely” should be separated into two verbs, a G-stem verb *darāru* “to fall, to go down” and an N-*tantum* verb *nadruru* “to return”. For this purpose, every single attestation of the verb known to date is presented and discussed in detail. Furthermore, it is restated that the homonymous verb *darāru* “to intercalate” is etymologically unrelated to the root under study.

Key-words: Akkadian; Verb; Lexicography; Semantics; Etymology

Los verbos *darāru* en acadio y sus significados

Resumen

Este estudio propone que el verbo conocido hasta ahora como *darāru/nadarruru* «moverse libremente» debe dividirse en dos verbos distintos: un verbo en tema G, *darāru*, con el significado de «caer, bajar», y un verbo en tema N, *nadruru*, con el significado de «volver». Con este fin, se presentan y analizan en detalle todos los testimonios conocidos hasta la fecha. Asimismo, se reafirma que el verbo homónimo *darāru*, con el significado de «intercalar», no está relacionado etimológicamente con la raíz aquí estudiada.

Palabras clave: Acadio; Verbo; Lexicografía; Semántica; Etimología

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Introduction

At the heart of this study lies the Akkadian verb *darāru*. Being neither one of the best-known items in the lexicon, nor particularly rare or problematic, this verb is mainly known for its nominal derivate *andurāru* “release, exemption”. Those especially involved with the matters of grammar may remember that this verb is also attested in the form *nadarruru* and thus belongs to the curious group of ‘*naparruru*-type’ verbs. As to the meaning, the verb is universally translated as “to move freely” (CDA 57, SAD 2 21), “to become free (of a task), to move about freely, to run off” (CAD D 109), “freien Lauf bekommen” (AHw 163). It is this translation that I will attempt to update in the present article.

The promotion of the meaning “to run free” as the standard for this verb was not immediate. In the early days of Assyriology, the preferable translation was “to be free” (Delitzsch 1896: 228, Muss-Arnolt 1905: 268, Bezold 1926: 109), which was likely influenced by *andurāru* “freedom”, rather than inferred from the meagre verbal attestations available then. This interpretation was opposed by Meissner (1931: 42), who was the first to notice that *darāru* is in fact a verb of movement. He suggested a different interpretation: “to run, to go astray, to disappear” (“laufen, sich verlaufen, sich verkriechen”). Somewhat later Lewy (1958: 21*-22*) reinforced this proposal with the West Semitic evidence and arrived at the following range of translations: “to move about, to run away, to be at large, to be free, to become free”. In this elegant manner the two different strands of interpretation, the ‘freedom’ component and the ‘(fast) movement’ component, were eventually united, and so appeared in CAD and later AHw as a single translation “to move freely”. Due to its adaptability (contextual interpretations vary from “to be released from task” to “to run together”), this translation became the norm we know and use to this day.

And so it would remain unchallenged were it not for Charpin (1990), who set about to establish the meaning of the Neo-Assyrian noun *dirru*. Analysing it in context of the verbal root *darāru*, he concluded that the basic meaning of the Akkadian root should be “to return to the point of origin, to make a circle”. This suggestion was almost immediately supported by Margalit (1990), who provided Semitic etymology for such a meaning. This translation, however, did not somehow spread any further. The possibility of translating *darāru* as “to return” or similar is unanimously absent from the post-1990 translations of text passages featuring this verb¹.

¹See, for example, van Soldt 1994: 59, Farber 2014: 283, 318, George 2016: 137.

Furthermore, there exists another alternative translation for *darāru*. In his discussion of a legal document from Alalakh, Zeeb (1993: 468) translated the verb as “to decrease” (*ul iddarrar* “es wird nicht weniger”), and the same translation was adopted by Mayer (2001: 160) in his edition of a similar legal text from Ekalte. Both scholars remain silent as to their basis for such a meaning, and it seems to be primarily motivated by the context of the specific legal formula, which will be discussed below, rather than by their total reinterpretation of *darāru*. The translation “to decrease” equally left no trace in the subsequent treatments of the verb or of the texts concerned.

1 The proposal

I believe that both marginally represented translations of the verb, that of Charpin and that of Zeeb, should in fact be taken in all seriousness. At the core of this study lies the suggestion that Akkadian possessed *two* homonymous verbs *darāru*. The first of them is *darāru* with the meaning “to fall, to go down”. This verb is attested in the G-stem, and its existence has not been recognised before. The second verb is the N-tantum *nadruru*, the primary meaning of which was approximately “to return, to circle”, but in Akkadian the root underwent a semantic shift. In the following I will show how the attestations available up to date for the root *d-r-r* in Akkadian are to be distributed between these two verbs.

At the same time, even without the new partition, the standard dictionaries already distinguish several homonymous verbs of this composition: AHw has *darāru* I and II (AHw 163), and CAD lists as many as three different verbs, *darāru* A, *darāru* B and *darāru* C (CAD D 109-110). The second question answered in my study is whether all these verbs should indeed be separated, or they might be etymologically related. To this end, after the discussion of *darāru* “to fall” (Section 2), *nadruru* (Section 3) and separately of the form *nadarruru* (Section 4), additional sections will be devoted to the remaining *darāru*-verbs, Section 5 to CAD *darāru* B (= AHw *darāru* II) and Section 6 to CAD *darāru* C.

2 *darāru* “to fall”

I propose that the set of meanings “to go down, to fall” fits very well in seven textual passages which were previously attributed to the verb *darāru* “to move freely”. The first of these attestations comes from the lexical list *Diri*:

*gi-ig-re*GIGRI = *da-ra-ru šamši* (Diri II 47)

Here the verb is found at the very end of the section devoted to the Sumerian verb GIGRI “to sink, to dive, to plunge” (Attinger 2023: 540), where it appears together with the expression *rabē šamši* “sunset” (or “to set, said of the sun”). The conventional translation of the phrase *darār šamši* is “to become free (of its daily task, said) of the sun” (CAD D 109); according to Charpin, the phrase would rather be interpreted as something like “to return to its point of departure, said of the sun”. Both translations, while not totally impossible, are somewhat clumsy, which can be avoided by applying the newly suggested translation “to go down” instead:

GIGRI = *rabē šamši* “to set, said of the sun”
darār šamši “to go down, said of the sun”

Pairing of the two synonymous phrases *rabē šamši* “setting of the sun” and *darār šamši* “going down of the sun” as equivalents of the verb with the meanings “to sink, to dive” appears much more straightforward.

The second instance is found in the short two-line section of the group vocabulary *Antagal*:

*šu-ub*ŠUB = *da-ra-ru*₃
 ŠUB^{min.min}ŠUB = *na-par-šu*₂-*du* (Antagal III 150-151)

In this case, the grounds for the conventional translation “to run away” (CAD D 109) are stronger, as *darāru* here is paired with *naparšudu* “to flee” (AHw 735, CAD N I 283). However, this translation does not correspond to the Sumerian part, which clearly states ŠUB “to fall”. The solution, in my opinion, lies in *naparšudu*, and namely in its second meaning “to fall into disuse (said of temples)” (CAD N I 285), which neatly corresponds to one of the translations of ŠUB “to fall apart, to be abandoned” (Attinger 2023: 1310). Thus, the whole section may be reinterpreted as follows:

“to fall” means “to go down”
 “to fall apart” means “to fall into disuse”

The next four attestations of *darāru* “to fall” represent a repetitive phrase, found four times in two literary texts:

išmū igigū anni³am kabāšu [id-r]u-ru-m[a iššik]u šepišu
 “Igigi heard his speech, they ... and kissed his feet” (OB Anzu II 35)

ana ipiš piša ihdû ilū mātim id-ru-ru-ma iššikū šēpiša

“The gods of the land rejoiced at her speech, they ... and kissed her feet” (OB Anzu II 42)

išmû-ma igīgi annâ kabâšu id-dar₆-ru-ma igīgi unaššakū šēpišu
“Igigi heard his speech, Igigi ... and kiss his feet” (SB Anzu I b+164)

išmû-ma anni³am ka[bâša] id-da-ar-ru-ma unaš[šikū šēpiša]
“They heard her speech, they ... and kissed her feet” (OB Atrahasis I 241)

The context of the phrase is always the same: in the assembly, gods discuss a difficult problem, and in response to their distress one deity provides promise of assistance and solution. When the gods hear the good news, their immediate reaction is the sequence “*darāru* and kiss the feet” of their benefactor. The existing translations employ all facets of the conventional translation of the verb:

- “to be free”: “the Igigi were freed (from anxiety) and kissed his feet” (Dalley 1989: 210 and 223)
- “to run free”: “the Igigi, of burden free, ran to kiss his feet” (Hallo and Moran 1979: 87; Vogelzang 1988: 45), “they ran, restored, and kissed her feet” (Foster 2005: 237, similar 559 and 566)
- “to run together”: “they ran together and kissed her feet” (Lambert and Millard 1969: 61), “es liefen herbei die Igigi und küßten seine Füße” (Hecker 1994: 751), “sie... liefen allenthalben hinzu, küßten ihre Füße” (Von Soden 1994: 624), “accorsero e le baciarono i piedi” (Ermidoro 2017: 87)

And yet, the new interpretation of the verb as meaning “to fall, to go down” provides a much smoother translation for this line: “they fell down and kissed his/her feet”. Several arguments speak in support of the new translation.

The first pertains to the weakness, a certain lack of precision noticeable in the current translation of the verb. Taking a second look at the six instances collected above, one cannot help observing how its meaning wavers from context to context: from “being free” with no trace of ‘running’-element in the first case to “running together” with no element of ‘freedom’ in the third. In addition, “running together”, to me, is different from “running away”, and as a matter of fact, this semantic aspect is only applied to this literary phrase, it does not feature elsewhere.

Secondly, the translation “they fell down and kissed his/her feet” appears more natural, if only because bowing down is a necessary physical action required when trying to kiss the feet of a person. As a matter of fact, the gesture of bowing down and kissing the feet or ground in front of a superior is well attested in Mesopotamian literature. Elsewhere, it is expressed similarly to our passages, with a sequence of two verbs, the first of which is a verb of prostrating: *šukennu* “to prostrate”, *kamāsu* “to kneel”, *našpuku* “to become prostrated”, *šutaknunu* “to bow down (constantly)”:

uškēn-ma iššik kakkara maharšun

“He prostrated and kissed the ground in front of them” (En el III 69)

uškēn-ma iššik kakkara maharšu

“He prostrated and kissed the ground in front of him” (Poor man of Nippur 73)

ikmis iššik kakkara maharšu

“He kneeled (and) kissed the ground in front of her”² (Nergal and Ereškigal 203)

nīši bābili ... šapalšu ikmisā unaššikū šēpuššu

“People of Babylon kneeled before him (and) kissed his feet” (Cyrus cylinder 18)

kullatsunu ana šēpiya iššapkūnim-ma unaššikū šēpāya

“All of them prostrated at my feet and kissed my feet” (Nabonidus 3 v 4’)

ša reši šarre ultanaknanū šēpē ša šarre unaššukū

“Royal eunuchs repeatedly bow down and kiss the feet of the king” (KAL 12, 1 ii 14’)

Thus, the four passages presented earlier fit neatly as exhibiting a similar practice.

The third argument bases on the use of tenses in this phrase. While the OB versions of *Anzu* utilise the simple sequence of two preterite forms

²Even though the enclitic pronoun is masculine *-šu*, the context clearly requires a feminine referent.

(*idrurū-ma iššikū*), the SB version alters the second form into the present tense (*unassākū*, also changing G-stem to D). The sequence PRT(-ma) PRS is a known feature of literary Akkadian (Streck 1995; Mayer 2007), which indicates a particular function of the second verb with respect to the first verb, namely circumstantial, temporal or final. In our case, the function of purpose (Streck 1995: 68-73) fits well: “they fell down, **so that they could** kiss his/her feet”, “they fell down **in order to** kiss his/her feet”, “they fell down **with intent to** kiss his/her feet”. With the conventional translations, the two verbs do not really work together, especially if the meaning “to be free” is preferred, as ‘kissing the feet’ can in no way be considered a subordinate or simultaneous action to ‘feeling free’. Admittedly, the connection is still possible with the translation “they ran together”, if it is assumed that the gods initially stood at a distance and had to run closer to the benefactor in order to perform the kissing of the feet. Yet, as I have already mentioned, “to run together” (as opposed to “run away, run free”) is a one-off meaning employed only for this literary phrase.

In actuality, reading the verb as *darāru* in all four attestations is also not entirely unproblematic, because the SB *Anzu* spells the form as *it-TAR-ru*. The very rare value *dar₆* of the sign TAR causes friction regardless of whether the verb is translated as “to be free” or “to fall down”. One solution to this problem was to read the verb as *tarāru* “to tremble” (AHw 1325, CAD T 207) instead (Annus 2001: 49), but it is only a half measure, as in *Atrahasis* the same verbal form is explicitly spelled as *id-da-ar-ru*. Moreover, as rightfully noticed by Moran (Hallo and Moran 1979: 100), *tarāru* is not used for the expression of joy. In addition to a divinatory text from Susa (Von Soden and Röllig 1991: 3*), the value *dar₆* is also found in a MA ritual (*ilānē dar₆-su-te* “deposed gods”, KAL 12, 1 ii 4), so its appearance in our text is not entirely out of question. Finally, one could also speculate that the original verbal form in *Anzu* was later erroneously reinterpreted as a form of the more familiar verb *tarāru*, leading to the spelling with TAR.

Finally, the seventh attestation, a protasis of a *Šumma ālu* omen, also appears to display the same verb:

šumma nāru ... mūša kīma rādi ikarrurū kīma rādi i-dar-ra-ru
 “If the river ... its water flows like downpour, falls like
 downpour” (Alu 61 61)

In this case, the preference of the translation “to fall” is, for me, mainly facilitated by the complement *kīma rādi*, since *rādu* “heavy rain” (AHw 941, CAD R 60) almost entails a verb with the meaning “to fall, to flow down”. The association of the constituent *kīma rādi* with *darāru* is, admittedly,

somewhat obscured by the fact that the first element is spelled by KI.MIN, which alternatively could be replacing the repetitive subject: *mûša kîma râdi iķarrurû mûša idarrarû* “its water flows like downpour, its water falls down”. Still, in this arrangement *darâru* would make a perfect synonymous counterpart to *karâru kîma râdi* “to flow like rain”, i.e. to pour *down*.

To sum up, at least seven instances testify to the existence of a root *d-r-r* with the meaning “to go down, to fall”. Interestingly, these cases are also united by a second feature: in all of them, the verb is used in the G-stem, specifically, two times the infinitive *darâru* is found and at least once the preterite *idrurû*. Formally, they are in clear contrast to the examples we will see in Section 3, neither of which will be unanimously interpreted as G-forms, and most of them will only allow analysis as N-forms. That leads me to suggest that the verb had the form *darâru* and was used in the G-stem. Additionally, this also means that the form *iddarrû* in *Anzu* and *Atrahasis*, traditionally analysed as N-preterite, is to be reinterpreted as the G-perfect, equally, *i-dar-ra-ru* in *Šumma ālu* is the G-present (*idarrarû*), not an N-present (*iddarrarû*). Thus, in Akkadian there existed a verb *darâru* “to fall”, so far found in Old Babylonian and Standard Babylonian.

Etymologically, I believe the Akkadian verb can be connected to the modestly spread root *d-r-r*, the primary meaning of which can be reconstructed as “to flow down” or similar. The root is found most clearly in Arabic *d-r-r* “to flow, to stream abundantly” with several nominal derivates (Lane 1968: 862-864)³ and in Tigre *d-r-r* “to flow down, to descend” (Littmann and Höfner 1962: 522) as well as, more marginally, in Ugaritic⁴, Hebrew and Phoenician⁵, Sabaic⁶, Amharic⁷ and Soqotri (Leslau 1938: 136)⁸. The rare Aramaic root *n-d-r* “to flow down”, attested in Syriac

³One of the facets of the meaning of the Arabic verb is “to yield milk” and (caus.) “to make milk flow”, which is also found in MSA, possibly as a loanword, Johnstone 1981: 40; 1987: 72.

⁴Once, said of sweat pouring down the face of a person, Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 279.

⁵Only in the phrase *mr dr(r)* “liquid myrrh”, Köhler and Baumgartner 2001: 230, Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 258.

⁶In the once attested *drr* “to exercise irrigation rights” and its derivate *mdr(r)* “irrigation controller”, Beeston et. al. 1982: 36.

⁷“To sink in”, said of a roof, Kane 1990: 1730; *d-r-r* “to be lively (said of a market, of conversation)” and “to be successful (said of marriage)” may also be related through the meaning *“to be flowing smoothly”.

⁸Curiously, the root is found in the expression “at the sunset”, making a perfect parallel to the Akkadian usage.

(Sokoloff 2009: 892) and possibly Samaritan Aramaic (Tal 2000: 505), may eventually also be related.

3 *nadruru* “to circle”

The root *d-r-r* with the core meaning “to circle, to return” has a very good Semitic etymology. It can be traced back to the Proto-Semitic biconsonantal base *d-r* (Cohen 1993: 306) with a wide set of meanings having to do with circling: “to roll, to turn, to return, to repeat, to circle, to go around, to surround”. This base is manifest in two common West Semitic roots: *d-w-r* and reduplicated *d-r-d-r*. The root *d-w-r* in its verbal and/or nominal forms appears in almost every Semitic language: Amorite (Golinets 2018: 381), Ugaritic (Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015: 277), Hebrew (Köhler and Baumgartner 2001: 217), Phoenician (Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 259), Biblical (Köhler and Baumgartner 2001: 1849), Palmyrene (Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 243) and major Middle Aramaic languages (Drower and Macuch 1963: 105; Sokoloff 1990: 142; 2002: 322; 2009: 287; 2014: 83; Tal 2000: 175), Arabic (Lane 1968: 930), Epigraphic South Arabian varieties (Beeston et. al. 1982: 36, Ricks 1989: 41), most Ethio-Semitic (Kane 1990: 1821; 2000: 2145, considered a loanword from Arabic, Littmann and Höfner 1962: 536) and all Modern South Arabian languages (Johnstone 1977: 26; 1981: 42; 1987: 76, Leslau 1938: 124). The quadriliteral root *d-r-d-r* is found in Arabic (Lane 1968: 863), Amharic (Kane 1990: 1752), Tigre (Littmann and Höfner 1962: 522), Tigrinya (Kane 2000: 2091) and Mehri (Johnstone 1987: 73). The reduplicated variant thus almost always appears in a language alongside the *d-w-r* variant.

The ‘split’ of a theoretical proto-base into two attested roots is also mirrored in Akkadian. The rare verb *du²āru* “to encircle” (SAD 2 37), primarily known for its common derivate *dūru* “wall” (AHw 178, CAD D 192), represents the direct equivalent of WS *d-w-r* (Kogan and Nurullin 2021: 816 with previous literature). At the same time, WS *d-r-d-r* is to be connected to Akkadian *darāru*. West Semitic reduplicated roots (P-R-P-R) normally correspond to Akkadian P-R-R roots instead of P-R-P-R, which Akkadian does not have, and especially to the *naparruru*-type roots (Kouwenberg 2010: 320), so *darāru* is just another witness to this system. Thus, on the synchronic level Akkadian possesses two similar roots, *du²āru* “to encircle” and *darāru* “to circle”, which can be described as root variants similar to *pa²āṣu* “to crush” ~ *paṣāṣu* “to break” and *du²āku* “to kill” ~ *dakāku* “to crush”.

As to the semantics of the Akkadian verb, the etymological meaning “to return, to circle” is in fact not well attested for Akkadian *nadruru*. Instead, the verb undergoes two different semantic shifts resulting in two independent meanings.

The first of these shifts involves change of direction, while retaining the movement component: “to circle” → “to move (in a certain direction)”. In this meaning, the verb is used with the preposition *ana* designating direction, mostly with respect to animals. It is found at least six times; once in an Old Babylonian letter:

*ina daglā alpūni kasū-ma alpum ištu šipri kīma patārišunu ana
ekel šamaššammī id-da-ri-ir*

“Our oxen were tied in Dagla, and when they were untied after work, one ox wandered off into a sesame field” (AbB 12, 177:7)

Once in an Old Babylonian incantation:

*kīma būrū id-da-a[r-ru-u₂] ana li²ātim id-da-ar-ru-u₂ lalū ana
enzētim namzītūm mārat enki li-da-ri-ir ana terhīša*

“Just as calves walked to (their mother) cows, kids walked to (their mother) goats, let the brewing jar, daughter of Enki, walk to its vat” (LAOS 12, 28:2'-4')

The four final attestations all feature the exact same clause. The clause is used once in the protasis of a *Šumma ālu* omen and repeated in its commentary, and once in the apodosis of an *Izbu* omen, likewise repeated in its commentary:

šumma šahū lā šū id-da-ri-ir-ma ana bīt amēli īrub (Alu 49
68')

šumma šahū lā šū id-da-ri-ir-ma ana bīt amēli īrub (CCP
3.5.49:26)

šumma šahū lā šū id-da₂-ri-ir-ma ana bīt amēli īrub (Izbu XXII
144)

šumma šahū lā šū id-da-ri-ir-ma ana bīt amēli īrub (De Zorzi
2014: 857, l. 14)

“If an alien pig walked off and entered the house of a man”

Most likely, the same meaning is found in the passage from an incantation against Lamaštu:

ezzet bišat [...] mu-ut-ta-ad-ri-ra-at tur-...]

“She is furious, she is foul, [...], she is constantly roaming [...]”

(Farber 2014: 260, OB3 ll. 1-2)

The form here is unique, as it is the only Ntn attestation of the verb known to date as well as its only participial attestation. Unfortunately, due to the damage, the context remains not totally clear, in particular, if the broken part of the line might have contained a destination or a direct object. Still, the problem is not acute, as the meaning “to walk (around)” correlates well with the previously cited passages and with the general gist of these incantations.

This group of seven passages is united here under the meaning “to walk off, to roam” of *nadruru*. I propose that this meaning originated from the etymological meaning “to return” through a plausible semantic shift: “to turn, to return, to circle” → “to roam, to wander” → “to walk aimlessly, to walk on its own, to walk off” → “to walk in a certain direction”⁹.

Conventionally, these passages are translated in a slightly different manner: “to run free, to run wild, to run off” etc. But is such translation really unavoidable, or, in other words, is there evidence that the verb referred necessarily to *fast* movement? The redistribution of cases between two different verbs reveals that all attestations which necessitated translation “to run (free)” now belong to *darāru* “to fall”. Those included the lexical instance from *Antagal*, where appearance together with *naparsudu* “to flee” supported the preference of translation “to run away” over “to go away” or similar. The other case was the pig “running wild” in the apodoses of *Šumma ālu* and *Izbu*. Here the ‘wilder’ interpretation seemed justified mainly because of the textual commentary equating the verb with *nadru* “furious”; this commentary will be discussed in detail in Section 4. Finally, the literary phrase about rejoicing gods could hardly be interpreted in the sense of ‘walking’, since any calm movement would deprive the passage of the emotional surge it needed. Now, when these instances are out of the way, there are no solid grounds to postulate specifically the translation “to run off” as opposed to “to walk off”¹⁰. That is to say, by no means is the

⁹This semantic shift appears to be paralleled by Arabic, where *d-r-d-r* also has the meaning “to walk about, to go, to come”, Lane 1968: 863.

¹⁰The additional reason for the popularity of the translation “to run” may be hidden in the German original. The initial proposal to translate *darāru* as a verb of movement was executed in German (Meissner 1931: 42), where “laufen”, though indeed means “to run”, is frequently used in the more general meaning “to walk, to go”. Thus, German scholars could enjoy both aspects in one translation, while English (and other languages)

possibility of the translation “to run” for *nadruru* excluded, there is simply not enough evidence currently to prove one over the other.

The second semantic shift of *nadruru* is observable in a group of Old and Middle Babylonian legal texts displaying a very similar protective clause against the effects of *andurāru* “release, exemption”. Here the best translation for the verb would be “to be subject to *andurāru*”, vulg. “to be *andurāred*”. The first text of this kind comes from Mari:

kaspum šū uddarārum liššakin-ma ul id-da-ra-ar

“Even if *andurāru* is proclaimed, this silver will not be affected by it” (ARM 8, 33:14)

A similar clause is found several times in Old Babylonian texts from Alalakh:

kaspum šū ul uṣṣab u ul id-du₂-ra-ar (ALT 30:9)¹¹

kaspum ul uṣṣab ul id-da₂-ra-ar (ALT 29:11)¹²

kaspum ul uṣṣab ul id-da₂-ra-ar (ALT 31:9)¹³

kaspum ul uṣṣab ul [id-da₂-ra]-ar (ALT 38:10)¹⁴

“The silver bears no interest, it will not be affected by *andurāru*”

kunāšu ... ul uṣṣab ul id-da₂-ra-ar

“The emmer bears no interest, it will not be affected by *andurāru*” (ALT 42:6)¹⁵

Once in Alalakh, the formula changes when referring to a person:

ina andarārim ul i-na-an-da-ar

“(The bought person) will not be released during *andurāru*”
(ALT 65:7)¹⁶

speaking translators and dictionary authors had to choose one over the other, gradually consolidating the idea that *darāru* is necessarily a verb of *fast* movement.

¹¹Edition in Dietrich and Loretz 2005: 279. The form *iddurrar* instead of *iddarrar* elsewhere is unexplainable.

¹²Edition in Dietrich and Loretz 2005: 277.

¹³Edition in Dietrich and Loretz 2005: 280.

¹⁴Edition in Dietrich and Loretz 2005: 271.

¹⁵Edition in Dietrich and Loretz 2005: 251.

¹⁶Edition in Dietrich and Loretz 2004: 138. For the unusual form *inandar* see Section 4.

Finally, the standard formula is found once more in a Middle Babylonian text from Ekalte:

kaspu šurpu ... ul uššab ul id-da-ra-a[r]

“The refined silver bears no interest, it will not be affected by *andurāru*” (WVDOG 102, 68:4)

Seeing this formula side by side with the examples shown previously naturally poses a question: how does this legal meaning even correspond with the previous identification of the verb as of a verb of movement? And how did such a distinct meaning evolve? The solution to this riddle is, I believe, my initial proposal, inspired by Charpin’s suggestion, that the etymological, proto-meaning of *nadruru* was “to return”. It must have been this verb which produced a nominal derivate, the noun *andurāru* with the meaning “return (to the original state)”. It is a known fact that the initial, core essence of the *andurāru* procedure was not in releasing slaves and cancelling debts, but rather in “the return to the original state of ownership” (Charpin 1987: 36-41; Westbrook 2003: 384). This is also supported by its Sumerian equivalent AMA.AR.GI₄, which contains the element GI₄ “to return”. In practice, however, proclaiming an *andurāru* resulted in alleviation of enslavement and debt obligations, due to which *andurāru* soon changed its meaning to “release, freedom”. The noun seems to have been much more prominent than its parent verb, judging by the number of extant attestations, so it is not surprising that it could have bent the original meaning of the verb to fit its own new mould. The process likely originated in the clauses like the one above, where *andurāru* and *nadruru* are used together in a kind of *figura etymologica*: *uddarārum liššakin-ma ul iddarrar* “even if there is *andurāru*, the silver will not be *andurāred*”. The next step might have been applying a similar formula specifically to people: *ina andarārim ul inandar* “she will not be *andurāred* in *andurāru*”, as the translation “to be released” appears the most natural when referring to animate referents. Thus, the following chain of shifts can be reconstructed for *nadruru*:

**nadruru* “to return” > *andurāru* “return” → *andurāru*
 “release, freedom” > *nadruru* “to be released in the event of
andurāru” → *nadruru* “to be released, free”.

The final step of this chain, where *nadruru* is no longer tied to the legal sphere and is used in the simple meaning “to be free” without any allusion

to *andurāru*, is traceable in the following instance from an Old Babylonian letter:

annī³ am epuš-ma i ni-da-ri-ir-ma u kurummatam i nirši
 “Do this, so that we could be free and receive our rations!”
 (AbB 13, 62:10)

The situation where an initially deverbal noun semantically influences its parent verb, or alternatively described, derives a new denominal verb, is not unique to *nadruru*. For parallels, one may think of *tadmīktu* “favour”, a ta-PR̄S-t noun from *dummuktu* “to treat well”, which in OA narrowed its meaning to “a type of loan” and then produced a denominal verb *dummuktu* “to give a *tadmīktu*-loan”; or of a similar chain *ešēru* “to draw, to plan, to decide” > *išurtu* “a type of document” > *ešēru* “to draw an *išurtu*-document”.

In passing, I would like to note that the just presented legal formula *ul uṣṣab ul iddarrar* was the initial source of the translation “to fall, to drop, to decrease” for *darāru* (Zeeb 1993: 468; Mayer 2001: 160). The initiative for it, as it appears, was kindled by the use of *waṣābu* “to increase”, to which it made a good opposite, creating a neat clause: “the (amount of) silver will neither increase, nor decrease”. Despite being the main advocate for the meaning “to fall”, I must with all due respect dismiss such an interpretation specifically for the passages concerned. My doubts lie primarily in the other two cases, similar to the formula, and yet different, namely *uddārarum liššakin-ma ul iddarrar* “it will not be exempt even if *andurāru* is proclaimed” and *ina andarārim ul inandar* “she will not be released in the event of *andurāru*”. Here the translation “to decrease” is impossible, and yet these cases, especially the first one which likewise refers to silver, seem to form clear unity with the *ul uṣṣab ul iddarrar* examples.

To conclude, Proto-Akkadian root *d-r-r* “to circle, to return” developed in Akkadian into a verb with two very distinct sets of meanings: (1) “to roam, to walk on its own, to go off to” and (2) “to be released (through *andurāru*), to be free”. I hope I was able to show how these two sets arose from a single primary meaning. As to the form of the verb, all attestations unequivocally point to the N-stem, note, in particular, how in the majority of cases scribes explicitly spell the present and preterite forms with gemination, *id-da₍₂₎-*, to exclude any chance of interpreting them (especially the similar present *idarrar* vs. *iddarrar*) as G forms. That compels me to normalise the verb as N-tantum: *nadruru* “to walk, to go off; to be free”.

4 The form *nadarruru*

The special form *nadarruru* of the root *d-r-r* poses a certain problem for my two-verb model, because it is unclear whether it belongs to *darāru* “to fall” or to *nadruru* “to walk off”. Finite forms of this verb are not in use, and the infinitive is only found in three lexical lists, which makes me suspect that *nadarruru* is a somewhat artificial creation. Even more importantly, the available context in all cases does not allow a positive identification of the semantics of the verb. This is particularly true in the first case, where two different forms of the verb are simply equated with each other:

$$na-[dar]-ru-ru_3 = da-ra-ru_3 \text{ (An IX 82)}^{17}$$

Judging by the use of the infinitive *darāru* in the right column, and not *nadruru*, this attestation would belong to *darāru* “to fall, to go down”. However, using the stem as the justification for the semantic identification appears to me to be somewhat of a circular argument, since the two defining stems (G or N) have just been observed on the basis of semantics. Yet, the main problem in this case is the damage of the crucial sign, because of which the left column allows alternative readings, for example *naparruru*, *nagarruru* (Meissner 1931: 42) or *naṣarruru*. For now, this instance must remain unallocated to one verb or the other.

The most prominent example of *nadarruru* comes from the lexical list *Diri*, where it is found in the Old Babylonian, Ugarit and standard recension:

$$\begin{aligned} ^{di-ri}DIRI &= na-da-ar-ru-rum \text{ (OB Diri Sippar 1:10)} \\ ^{[di-ri]}DIRI &= na-dar-ru-ru \text{ (Diri Ugarit I 11)} \\ ^{[di-ri]}DIRI &= na-dar-ru-ru \text{ (Diri I 15)} \end{aligned}$$

Here *nadarruru* is found in a long section of Akkadian verbs equated with Sumerian DIRI “to be excessive”. Some verbs in the section seem to form something of a synonymous group: *nekelpû* “to drift, glide”, *nešelpû* “to glide, slither”, *našallulu* “to crawl, slither”, *nahallulu* “to creep, slink”. Others do not follow any visible semantic pattern: *naparruru* “to be dispersed, scattered”, *naṣarruru* “to drip, flow”, *našāru* “to pour out” (OB), *nagarruru* “to roll”, *mahāhu* “to soak”, *mahāru* “to face, oppose”, *mahāšu* “to beat” (OB), *nakāpu* “to push, gore” (OB), *ašāšu* “to be disturbed” (OB), *na²duru* “to become worried” (OB). The context is thus too imprecise,

¹⁷Edition in DCCLT as P345982 r 23.

almost any meaning of *d-r-r* could easily fit in, and therefore this attestation is not reliable for determining the meaning of *nadarruru*.

At the same time, the curious prevalence of quadriliteral verbs of various meanings (*nadarruru*, *nagarruru* “to roll”, *nahallulu* “to creep”, *naparruru* “to be dispersed”, *nasarruru* “to drip”, *našallulu* “to crawl”, *nekelpû* “to drift”, *nešelpû* “to glide”) all serving as equivalents of Sumerian DIRI in this section is remarkable. One might almost suspect that their inclusion into the list had something to do with their form rather than meaning. Could it be possible that the Akkadian quadriliteral verbs were referred to by the ancient grammarians as DIRI, literally “extended” verbs? While tempting, such an arrangement, whereby a word would appear in a lexical list as a *semantic* equivalent to its *grammatical* definition, has no parallels in the Mesopotamian lexical tradition.

While the *Diri* instances allow any meaning to be proposed for *nadarruru*, the third and final attestation of the infinitive stumbles upon an opposite obstacle: neither of the available meanings of *d-r-r* would fit in the context. The case in question comes from the following section of the group vocabulary *Erimhuš* IV. The text is known from two exemplars, which are so different that it appears more prudent to quote them separately:

Ex. E:

42)	EN.NAM.DUB.SAR.RA	= <i>na-aT-ru-ru</i>
43)	DIM ₃ .KUR ₂	= <i>na-dar-ru-ru</i>
44)	DIM ₃ .MU ₂ .RA	= <i>na-zar-bu-bu</i>
45)	U ₂ .SU ₃ .GI ₄ .A	= <i>sa-pi-hu-tu</i>

Ex. G:

EN.NAM.TAR.RA	= <i>na-aT-ru-[ru]</i>
DIM ₂ ^{di-im} .KUR ₅	= <i>na-dar-r-[u-ru]</i>
DIM ₂ .MU ₂ .RA	= <i>na-zar-bu-[bu]</i>
SU ₃ .SU ₃ .GA.AM ₃	= <i>sa-ap-pi₂-hu'-[tu]</i>

The general sense of this section is blurred mainly by the left column, as the meaning of the Sumerian words is difficult to extract from under what seems to be several layers of misunderstanding and corruption. Neither do the Akkadian equivalents constitute a coherent group, for example *sāpihūtu/sappihūtu* “the dispersing ones” in l. 45, equated with a Sumerian phrase containing SU₃ “empty”, is not easily connected to the other three verbs. The identification of the verb in l. 42 is not even certain. At

first glance, it appears to be the verb under scrutiny, *nadruru*, particularly in view of presence of the same root in form of *nadarruru* in the next line. However, its collocation with EN.NAM.TAR.RA “lord of fate” or EN.NAM.DUB.SAR.RA “lord of scribal art” makes hardly any sense. Coincidentally, the subsequent section of the list contains the equation TAR = *tarāru* (Erimhuš IV 46), so using the element TAR, common for both collocations, as the hook, one might suggest that the line displays the form *natruru* from *tarāru* “to tremble” instead. Due to this unclarity, I do not include the reference Erimhuš IV 42 among the secure attestations of the verb *darāru/nadruru* into the present study.

As to the lines 43-44, they seem to point towards “insanity” or “raging” as their underlying semantics. This is suggested most evidently by *nazarbubu* “to rage”, further by Sumerian DIM₂ KUR₂ = *tēma šanū* “to be out of one’s mind” and possibly corroborated by the element MU₂ “to rave (?)”¹⁸ in the left column of l. 44. Hence, *nadarruru* should theoretically also fall in this semantic domain. One way to incorporate it would be to use the conventional translation “to run wild”, which in its turn would annul the earlier discussion on “walking” vs. “running” components in the semantics of the verb.

The other, less straightforward and yet more curious, solution would be to consider *nadarruru* to belong to the verb *nadāru* “to be furious” (AHw 703, CAD N I 59) instead. There exist at least two more cases of confusion between the roots *d-r-r* and *n-d-r*, likely due to phonetic similarity, especially since, similar to *nadruru*, *nadāru* also prefers to be used in the N-stem, *nanduru*. The first case, produced possibly by a non-native speaker of Akkadian, is the form *inandar* in the legal phrase *ina andarārim ul inandar* “she will not be released during *andurāru*”. In the context, the verb can hardly be anything else than *nadruru*, but formally *inandar* is the 3rd person singular present tense of *nadāru*. The second case is the following commentary to the already quoted Šumma ālu protasis:

šumma šahû lā šū iddarir-ma ana bīt amēli īrub \\nadri \\šegû
 “«If an alien pig walked off and entered the house of a man»
nadri means «raging»” (CCP 3.5.49:26)

¹⁸This meaning is based on the lexical equation LU₂.MU₂.DA = *šarbû* “rabid” and *maħħû* “ecstatic” (Lu-azlag B, Sec. 5:13-14). The Sumerian verb seems to end in *-d*, the spellings MU₂.RA in Erimhuš may be a confusion caused by the prominent reading SAR of the sign.

While the base text uses the form of *nadruru*, the commentary equates it with the root *n-d-r* instead, which it then explains with its synonym *šegû* “wild, raging” (AHw 1208, CAD Š II 259). It is thus not improbable that the *Erimhuš* passage displays a similar split: the form is that of *nadruru*, but the semantics is that of *nanduru* “to become furious”¹⁹.

Thus, the three available forms of *nadarruru* give little to none basis for clarifying the semantics of this variant. One of them is damaged (*na[...]ruru*), the other may be a confusion instead of another verb (DIM₂.KUR₂ “to lose one’s mind” = **nanduru* “to become furious”), and the *Diri* attestation is not strict enough regarding the semantics of the verb. In such a case, I have to call for additional arguments to settle the issue. Namely, the existence of the derivate *andurāru* “release” should not be overlooked. Semantically, this noun is clearly tied to *nadruru* “to circle, to return”, while formally it is not a typical N-stem derivate. Even though the pattern an-PuRāS is unique — and partly because of this uniqueness — the likelier derivation of it is not from the normal *nadruru*, but from the rare *naparruru*-variant of the verb. Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, several other verbs of the ‘*naparruru*-group’ display connections to the WS reduplicated roots P-R-P-R, so following this logic, *nadarruru* should also be connected to WS *d-r-d-r* “to circle” rather than WS **d-r-r* and, consequently, to Akkadian *nadruru*. These two considerations, for me, tie the variant *nadarruru* with *nadruru* “to walk off to; to be released” as opposed to *darāru* “to fall”.

5 *darāru* “to intercalate”

Both dictionaries distinguish a second verb *darāru* (AHw 163, CAD D 109). It is attested only five times in the Neo-Assyrian letters and is used with months in the technical meaning “to intercalate”. The finite forms are found three times:

urha lid-ru-ru ... ina lumne addāru lū lā etti_k lid-ru-ru
 “Let them intercalate a month! ... So that Adar would not pass
 unfavourably, let them intercalate!” (SAA 8, 98 r 8-10)

¹⁹ Could *nadarruru* in *Erimhuš* be interpreted as a literal form of *darāru*? Such an analysis would not find any parallel among the known grammatical forms of Akkadian verbs. And yet, curiously, the infinitive of the rare R-stems has not, to the best of my knowledge, been discovered so far (unless *dababābu* “speech” from *dabābu* “to speak” is interpreted as such), so what if *nadarruru* or *nadāruru* were analysed as an R infinitive? However, *darāru* is not even used in any R-stem, so there is no evidence to support such an unusual analysis.

isinnu ša bābile šū akē ni-id-ru-ur

“It is the feast of Babylon! How could we intercalate?” (SAA 13, 60 r 1)

nemmar immaite nidarraruni

“We shall see when we should intercalate” (SAA 10, 42 r 20)

Once it is found in the stative:

ur̥hu anni³u da-ri-ir

“This month has been intercalated” (SAA 10, 44 r 3’)

And once the infinitive is attested:

ina muhhi da-ra-re ša ur̥he ša šarru išpuranni

“Concerning the intercalation of a month, about which the king wrote to me” (SAA 10, 42 r 10)

In his treatment of the verb *darāru*, Charpin (1990) proposed that these attestations also represent a facet of the etymological meaning “to return (to the point of origin)”, in this case, to make the starting point of the calendar year return to its initial point in the solar year. While ingenious, this suggestion does not take into consideration a number of phonetically similar words, all related to intercalation: *darû*, *dīru* and *dirigû*.

In Sumerian, the intercalary month is referred to as DIRI(.GA) “additional”, and ITI.DIRI(.GA) serves as the logogram for the Akkadian expression (*w*)*ar̥hu* (*w*)*atru* “intercalary month”, which is, by the way, almost always spelled logographically. Due to this regularity, Sumerian DIRI.GA was in the Old Babylonian period borrowed into Akkadian as *dirigû* “intercalary month” (AHw 173, CAD D 159), and later in the first millennium, when Sumerian final consonants were completely dropped, Sumerian DIRI was borrowed again as *dīru* (AHw 173, CAD D 159). The later word is attested in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian, and it produced a denominal verb *derû* (Ass. *darû*) “to intercalate” (AHw 167), attested several times in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian, in contexts very similar to those of *darāru* (compare *elūlu da-a-ri* “Elul has been intercalated” and *ur̥hu darir*, *ina muhhi da-re-e ša šatte* “concerning the intercalation in the year” and *ina muhhi darāre ša ur̥he*, *elūlu nidri* “we have intercalated Elul” and *ur̥hu nidrur*, etc.).

Thus, accepting Charpin’s proposal would, in my view, tear the tightly bound net of intercalary terms DIRI—*dirigû*—*dīru*—*darû*—*darāru*, because,

according to him, *darāru* would be an inherited Semitic verb with its nominal derivate *dīru* (*dirru*), while *dirigā* of the same meaning would be a Sumerian loanword, and the etymology of *darū* is not even a part of his discussion. The phonetic similarity and semantic identity of the two verbs, *darū* and *darāru*, as well as their diachronic limitation to the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian royal and scholarly correspondence makes it more likely that the two come from the same source. Therefore, *darāru* “to intercalate” is probably a denominal verb, eventually going back to a Sumerian loanword. On the synchronic level, *darāru* and *darū* are root variants.

Admittedly, the derivation of *darāru* from *dīru* is not free of controversies either, primarily because the exact form of the source lexeme is unknown. It is spelled only as *di-ri* and *di-ir* (in NB)²⁰, and may have been an unaccustomed loanword *diri*, or a short base noun *diru*, or could have contained long vowel (*dīru*) or geminated consonant (*dirru*). The crux of the issue is that the radical make-up of the two denominal verbs makes it difficult for them to be derived from the same source lexeme. The solution appears to be postulating two phonetic variants of the noun, *dīru* as the primary form, responsible for the appearance of *darū*, and *dirru* as the secondary variant emerging due to the length metathesis and eventually leading to *darāru*.

6 *darāru* C

The verb listed in CAD D 110 as *darāru* C “to spin”, does not in fact exist at all. It was supposedly found once in the lexical list Ea²¹, but the actual line reads as follows:

su-ur SUR₈ = *ša-ra-ru* (Ea I 84)

Admittedly, the meaning of the verb *šarāru*, here translating Sumerian SUR₈ “to drip” (Attinger 2023: 1236), is uncertain (CAD Š II 58), but it plausibly represents a phonetic variant or a mistake for *šarāru* “to drip” (AHw 1084, CAD Š 105), equated with SUR₈ elsewhere in this section of the lexical list (Ea I 83, Aa I/2 263). It needs to be noted that Charpin considered this *darāru* to represent the same root *d-r-r* “to return”, and

²⁰The spelling *di-ir-ri*, alluded to by Charpin, is uncertain, as the signs may be read either as ITI¹ *di-ir-ri* “(Adar is) intercalary month” or *ud-de-er-ri* “(Adar) has been intercalated” (AHw 167).

²¹CAD D 110 has “Ea I 48”, but it is clearly a typo instead of “84”.

indeed, a verb with a meaning “to spin” would fit perfectly into the semantic group of “turning, circling”. However, since the reading of the first sign as ŠA is certain²², this argument is no longer relevant.

Summary

As the result of my study, I would like to propose the following chain of shifts and developments leading to the appearance of three different verbs *darāru* in Akkadian. On the Proto-Semitic level, there existed two independent and unconnected roots, a certain *d-r-r* with the meaning “to flow, to go down”, and a certain biconsonantal base *d-r* with the meaning “to circle”. In practice, the latter existed in two versions, the hollow *d-w-r* and the reduplicated *d-r-d-r*, semantically synonymous.

Akkadian inherited all three of these roots. The root *d-r-r* was retained as the verb *darāru* “to fall”. This infrequent verb is attested seven times and is used of persons bowing down, of sun setting and of rainstorm falling. The second root, *d-w-r*, appears only once in the extant texts, as the *hapax* *du⁷āru* “to encircle”, but its existence in Proto-Akkadian is additionally secured by its prominent derivate *dūru* “wall”. Finally, the reduplicated *d-r-d-r* could not have endured in its original state due to total absence of reduplicated verbal roots in Akkadian, and was instead manifested as a geminate root *d-r-r*.

This second *darāru* “to circle” existed in Akkadian as an *N-tantum* verb *nadruru* as well as in the infinitive *nadarruru* together with its nominal derivate *andurāru*. Semantically, it has shifted to be a verb of movement: “to roam, to walk, to go off to”, and it is used several times of animals and demons walking around and away (curiously, frequently of animals going where they are not allowed to go). The vestige of the etymological meaning might be seen in the reference to the young animals returning to their mothers. At the same time, in the legal sphere the verb acquired a new, technical meaning “to be released in certain legal conditions”, from which it then spread to form its second basic translation “to be free”. Thus, in Akkadian, the second *darāru* is now the verb *nadruru* with two meanings, “to roam, to walk off” and “to be(come) free”.

Finally, in the first millennium, Assyrian and Babylonian astronomers required finer terminology to refer to the issues they were working with.

²²Also confirmed in the latest edition of the text, see Hrúša and Weiershäuser 2023: 95, l. 31.

For this purpose, the Sumerian word DIRI was borrowed into Akkadian as *diru/dirru* “intercalary month”, and two technical verbs were modelled on it to refer to the process of intercalation: *derû/darû* and *darâru*. Thus came into existence the third Akkadian verb *darâru* “to intercalate”.

The three Akkadian verbs *darâru* are not etymologically related, and in practice each occupies its own separate niche, facilitating their distinction for the modern scholars. The technical verb *darâru* “to intercalate” is only used in vernacular Neo-Assyrian, where the other two verbs are not found. The verbs *darâru* “to fall” and *nadruru* “to walk off, to be(come) free” are both predominantly Old Babylonian and appear to have survived into the first millennium only as a part of literary and lexical tradition. The main difference allowing not to confuse the two is the stem: *darâru* “to fall” has only been attested in the G-stem so far, while *nadruru* appears to be an N-tantum verb with a rare *nadarruru* variant.

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