CHAPTER THREE

THE PATTERNS PARRAS, PARRIS AND PARRĀS

3.0. In this chapter we will discuss the use of nouns of the patterns parras, parris and parrās. More specifically, we will be concerned with, first, the nature of the contrast between these nouns and the corresponding simple nouns without gemination, and, second, the differences in function between these patterns themselves, in order to establish the function of gemination as accurately as possible.

Therefore, we will concentrate on words in which the formal differences between these patterns are immediately observable, i.e., on nouns which are derived from strong roots and do not have e-colouring. Generally speaking, these can be assigned to a specific pattern with a reasonable degree of certainty, in spite of the fact that cuneiform writing does not consistently distinguish between simple and geminate consonants on the one hand, and short and long vowels on the other (cf. GAG § 7d/e). The former feature makes it often difficult to decide whether a given form belongs to pāris or parris (see 3.2); the latter whether it belongs to parras or parrās (see 3.3).

It is not the purpose of this chapter to give an exhaustive account of these patterns. Poorly attested and uncertain cases are generally not considered, unless they are interesting for some specific reason.

3.1. The pattern parras

The pattern parras has a double function: it is used to form agent nouns from fientive verbs for the expression of activities, and to form derived adjectives from basic adjectives for the expression of states and qualities (GAG § 55m). We will deal with the former function in 3.1.1. The latter function is by far the most common. The parras forms in question can be divided into two types. The first type, to be discussed in 3.1.2, are parras forms which for the most part are very rare and mainly restricted to literary and lexical texts. The second type, to be discussed in 3.1.3, consists of a group of adjectives - some of which occur quite frequently - which are mostly used as plural formations of simple adjectives denoting dimensions. It is mainly this type which has a special relevance for our purpose.¹

3.1.1. Parras for agent nouns derived from fientive verbs

Agent nouns are almost always expressed by parris and parrās, and by the pattern pāris, which represents the simple, neutral form with which parris and parrās contrast. The use of
parpas for agent nouns is marginal; only the following three types are found.

First, the only certain parpas substantive derived from a fientive verb with a strong root is OA šarruquum "thief", in which the presence of vowel harmony guarantees the short a (cf. GAG § 10e; Hecker 1968: 19ff). Hecker's examples for his claim that occasionally also long vowels are subject to vowel harmony (1968: 20f) are unconvincing: in none of them is the long vowel based on independent evidence. It will be argued in 3.3 that in all probability fientive parpas, in so far as it has substantival function, has usually been replaced by parras.

Second, there are a few more agent nouns with the pattern parpas that are used as adjectives (for the reason why these nouns are interpreted as parpas rather than parpas forms, see 3.3), such as aššaru "expert" in aš-ša-ru ūnga "your expert mind" (BWL 80: 167, tr. CAD sv), gammalu "merciful", cf. AHw sv (also gammalū, see below) and sallaquu "domineering" in SpTU 4, 149: II 20' lš-lā-la-ṭa-at "sie ist tatkräftig" (tr. Von Weiher). In some other cases the parpas form has been extended with a suffix -i, which coalesces with the case ending into -i, and possibly serves to underline their adjectival character: nakkapū "prone to going", šaggasū "murderous", tammamū "often swearing" and gammalū "merciful" (quoted AHw sv gammalū'ū 1).

Third, a small but remarkable group of parpas forms which are also derived from fientive verbs and used as adjectives consist of plural forms of parsis participles:

Allaku "going, moving" in al-la-ka birkāja "my knees are moving" BWL 242: 21; šēpēki al-la-ka-ti Maqlû 96 and II 33 (with šēpēja). [The other instance mentioned in CAD sv (BWL 134: 139) is a substantive, and more likely to represent allāku "traveller", cf. 3.3.1 and CAD sv šamalū 1c.]

Ebbereu "marching" in birkēja eb-be-re-e-ti "my marching knees" Maqlû II 34 (but III 97 birkēki e-bi-re-e-ti). [The other instances mentioned by CAD and AHw sv are to be cancelled: Ec VII 125 lā eb-bi-rū is a present 3rd p. pl. and Tn-Ep. IV 25 eb-be-rī (AHw) is more likely to contain the word bēru "mile", cf. CAD sv bēru A 1a 2' and sv nesū 1b-1'.]

Lassamu "running" in ina šēpēja la-sa-ma-(le) "on my swift feet" RIMA 2/1, 135: 70 (beside la-as-ma-te 154: 124).

Sahharu "turning" in eri sāh-ha-ru-tu MSL 9, 10: 109, a unique variant of erri sāhirūtu "convoluted intestines" (cf. CAD sv sāhiru B adj. lex. sect.).

Šarraru "blazing" in ša-aš-ru-ra (Var. of ša-ri-ir) nīši nīšu "his (Marduk's) eyes, when they look, are frightening" Ec I 87 (restored and tr. CAD sv), but "blazing" seems a better translation, cf. AHw sv šarāru I G 4a "funkeln"; šarir is the grammatically correct form, šarrarā is a constructio ad sensum.

Māssū "forgetful in uzōja mla-āl-ša-a-tū "my forgetful ears" STT 66: 35, cf. AHw 1574a sv, is an exact parallel of the preceding cases; therefore it is likely to represent parpas, although the fact that it comes from a weak root does not allow us to classify it on the basis of its form.

The similarity in the use of these words is striking: they qualify parts of the body as variants or parallels of parsis forms in literary - in one case (sahharu) lexical - texts. This suggests that, in spite of the fact that they are extremely rare, they are a definite subgroup of parpas in its function of forming the plural of adjectives (see 3.1.3). They have a parallel in Arabic,