CHAPTER TWELVE

GEMINATION: FROM ICONIC TO GRAMMATICAL

12.1. In Chapter II (2.1.5) those categories of Akkadian were listed that show gemination of the second radical, with an outline of the functions which are generally ascribed to them. Now that we have established these functions more accurately, we are in a position to sketch an overall picture of the role of gemination in Akkadian and its development from iconic to grammatical. The categories in question are repeated here, with a short description of their function(s) based on the results of the present study:

1. The present tense gemination, which - as argued in 2.2.4.2 - can be explained as resulting from the grammaticalization of an originally iconically motivated category which probably expressed durativity, iterativity or a similar notion.

2. The D-stem (including the secondary stems (Dt, Dtn, ŠD) derived from it, which were described in Chapter IX). With the exception of the marginal group of intransitive D-stems discussed in 7.6, and a number of D tantum verbs listed in 8.6, the basic function of the D-stem is that of underlining an increase in transitivitiy vis-à-vis the corresponding G-stem. In intransitive verbs this is usually realized as the factitive function (Chapter VII); in transitive verbs the D-stem is associated with plurality and salience, mostly plurality of the direct object and the action itself, sometimes of other constituents, cf. Chapters VI and XI.

3. The Gtn-stem, which serves to denote various aspects of verbal plurality, cf. Chapter IV and 6.7.3;

4. The pattern parras, whose main function is that of underlining plurality and salience in adjectives denoting dimensions, cf. 3.1.3;

5. The patterns parris and parrās, which denote agent nouns; the geminate underlines the more nominal character of these words, which correlates with the more permanent nature of the activities expressed, cf. 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4;

6. The pattern purreus, which is partly nominal, serving to underline salience and plurality, cf. 10.6, and partly verbal, as stative and VA of the D-stem, cf. 10.2;

7. A few substantives which form their plural by means of gemination, cf. 2.1.5.

12.2. In order to explain the functional relations between these categories three claims were made in Chapter II concerning the general nature of gemination, in so far as it is motivated and contrasts with a corresponding form without gemination. First, the functions performed by the majority of the categories enumerated in 12.1 show a striking degree of similarity: they have to do with nominal or verbal plurality. This suggests that there is a relationship between gemination and the expression of plurality, and that gemination can therefore be explained as an iconic phenomenon: the formal extension (gemination) corresponds to a semantic extension (plurality). Second, gemination has an expressive origin since it plays an im-
important role in the formation of expressive words, comparable to that of reduplication and some other formal extensions. Third, gemination is involved in a process of grammaticalization which has partly eroded its iconic nature and made it into a grammatical device to perform various grammatical functions.

12.3. On the basis of these three claims we can describe the nominal and verbal categories of Akkadian that show gemination of the second radical as representing different stages in this process of grammaticalization.

The starting point is the use of gemination as an expressive device. It is found in individual words which belong to the semantic classes defined in 2.2.3 as being especially susceptible to expressive extensions, i.e., those which refer to highly salient entities or qualities. They differ from the contrasting simple words in that they contain, apart from their referential meaning, an additional nuance expressing the emotional involvement of the speaker, which is iconically reflected in a formal extension. They typically belong to sporadic, unproductive patterns. In this category, gemination is still closely related to reduplication and other formal extensions. Instances from Akkadian and other Semitic languages were mentioned in 2.2.4.1.

Only a small number of the motivated words with gemination can be regarded as expressive in the strict sense of the word. The great majority of them belong to productive patterns and tend to show a rather consistent semantic relationship to the basic category, i.e., they tend to be predictable in meaning. This is also the case in Akkadian: the sporadic patterns referred to above are hardly found here (cf. 2.2.4.1); almost all Akkadian words which can be considered expressive on the basis of the semantic criteria just mentioned belong to a single pattern: purrus (cf. 10.6.2 and 10.6.3). This shows that in Akkadian the grammaticalization of these words is already on its way.

12.4. Among the productive patterns with gemination we can distinguish several types on the basis of the extent to which they show grammaticalization.

The first type consists of three categories, which can be taken together because they are more or less equivalent in this respect: the pattern parras in its most common function of underlining plurality in adjectives denoting dimensions (3.1.3), the pattern purrus, mainly in its lexical function (cf. especially 10.3, 10.6 and 10.9), and the D-stems of transitive verbs (cf. 6.4.9 and 6.7.1).

In these categories the forms with and without gemination seem to alternate without any observable difference. However, the forms with gemination are more restricted, in that their use is dependent upon the presence of two semantic features in the context: a relatively high degree of salience and (often) some aspect of plurality. Gemination makes these features explicit. In contexts which meet the conditions of salience and plurality, a speaker of Akkadian can choose whether he will use a simple form or a form with gemination. If he chooses the