

FOREWORD

*Quem dii oderunt
lexicographum fecerunt
Plautus*

The current issue of our periodical presents a series of essays dealing entirely with the lexicography of the Ancient Near Eastern languages. Hence this issue continues the monographic nature of *SEL* 8, 1991, which was devoted to onomastics.

Likewise our aim is to offer an up-to-date outline of the different fields and their related linguistic *corpora* – as large as possible – by giving the *status quaestionis* of the particular lexicographic problems.

Since the authors have the freedom to choose the general lines of their contributions, their essays represent several approaches to the main theme. Some scholars focus on the present state of the research and the available tools; a few restate the situation by offering several case studies in semantics, lexicon, etc.; others choose to take a middle course by both presenting the *status quaestionis* and examining special questions. Even if the essays published in this volume do not cover the whole of the Ancient Near East, they nevertheless represent a valuable landmark in the present state of lexicographical studies; they also show what remains to be done in the field and the various projects in progress.

The large participation of colleagues and the success of the present enterprise (like the one on onomastics a few years ago) have encouraged us to pursue further in that direction. Accordingly, we are planning a new special issue dealing with interdisciplinary topics of large interest.

We wish to express our gratitude to colleagues and friends who have generously collaborated in this volume. In a special way, our thanks go to the publisher of *SEL*, Mrs. Giuliana Pisto, for her constant support, help and understanding.

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During the preparation of this volume, the news about Jonas C. Greenfield's sudden death reached us. We would like to interpret the feelings of our colleagues by dedicating *SEL* 12 to the memory of such a dear friend and brilliant scholar whose works represent – *inter alia* – a valuable contribution to Semitic lexicography.

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