

John Alan HALLORAN, *Sumerian Lexicon: A Dictionary Guide to the Ancient Sumerian Language*. Los Angeles, Logogram Publishing, 2006. [III]-XIV-318 p. 15,6 × 23,6. £50.00. (Distribution: Oxbow Books, Oxford; David Brown Book Company, Oakville CT.) — The Sumerian Lexicon by John Alan Halloran is a well-known tool among the new generation of scholars and students, who have downloaded and consulted it (from the web site www.sumerian.org) since the very beginning of the project in 1999. The published version here under review collects 6,400 entries bringing together the lexical contributions of the last half-century of Sumerian studies. Regrettably, the provided list of 96 sources, inexplicably not arranged by year or author but by date of use, is de facto of little use. This printed version of the Sumerian Lexicon improves the electronic Version 3.0 by adding 2,600 new entries, as well as correcting and expanding many of the previous entries and features. The concise dictionary provides word definition, *hamtu* and *marû* forms for some verbs, extensive cross-references to M.-L. Thomsen's *The Sumerian Grammar* (Copenhagen 1984), notations of Archaic Frequency of the signs and Emesal equivalents in addition to the main forms. A tentative etymology is sometimes given after a word definition. Perhaps the strongest point of the book is the wide range of actually-used meanings for each word and the large number of entries which makes the lexicon suitable for all kind of research, from the study of pure administrative documents to the analysis of literary texts. On the other hand, the author himself is well aware of the major shortcomings (see the Introduction) of the Sumerian Lexicon: it does not take into account the diachronic development or synchronic variation of the language and it does not quote any examples of word usage. Moreover, the author does not state from which of the sources he derives a particular meaning. However, it would be unfair to ask Halloran's Sumerian Lexicon to go beyond its author's intentions; an encyclopaedic description of the Sumerian language is still a desideratum and it not only requires group effort to be achieved but also the support of future linguistic studies of Sumerian which give fuller consideration to diachronic and synchronic changes. To conclude, Halloran's important book deserves our highest appreciation and gratitude as a highly useful and user-friendly tool *ad usum Delphini* as well as for experienced Assyriologists and scholars in different fields approaching the "obscure" Sumerian language and literature. — Palmiro NOTIZIA, Via di Acqua Bullicante 83, I-00176 Roma.