

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE AKKADIAN STATIVE
AS A NOMINAL SENTENCE*

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For Ignace J. Gelb on his sixtieth birthday

IN Akkadian grammar, the stative or permansive is commonly described as a finite tense of the verb.¹ The main morphological difference with respect to the other tenses is that in the stative the pronominal elements which serve as personal markers appear in final, rather than in initial, position. Since the verbal core to which the pronominal elements are added is identical in form to a verbal adjective (*pars-āku*, "I am divided" ~ *parsum*, "divided"), and since the same pronominal elements can also be affixed to primary nouns (*šarr-āku*, "I am king" ~ *šarrum*, "king"), the stative is also described as a conjugated noun.² But no matter how it is described, the stative is always treated as a verb,³ an interpretation which is seemingly made even more plausible by the observation that Akkadian stative and West Semitic perfect are parallel in form.

Differing from the common view, the thesis is advanced here that the stative is actually not a verbal tense⁴ but rather a nominal sentence. The idea as such is not new, for it has

* The material presented in this article was the subject of a paper submitted at the Ancient Near Eastern Seminar at UCLA, where I profited especially from the suggestions of Dr. Charles R. Krahmalkov and Mr. Richard D. Patterson. I am also grateful to Dr. Michael B. Rowton for reading a first draft of the manuscript and offering some valuable criticism.

¹ Thus, for instance, I. J. Gelb, *Morphology of Akkadian* (Chicago, 1952 [multilith]), pp. 56-57: "The Akk. 'tenses' are to be distinguished as a 'Stative' or 'Permansive' and action tenses representing 'Present' and 'Preterit'"; W. Von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik* (Rome, 1952), § 76 b: "Es gibt vier 'Tempora'; den nur mit Endungen konjugierten Stativ . . . und die Gruppe der drei präfigierenden 'Tempora' . . ."; *Idem*, "Akkadisch," in G. Levi della Vida (ed.), *Linguistica semitica: presente e futuro* (Rome, 1961), p. 43: "Da das Akkadische zusammen mit dem Stativ . . . über vier finite Verbaltheemen verfügt . . ."; I. M. Diakonoff, *Semito-Hamitic Languages: An Essay in Classification*

(Moscow, 1965), p. 87: ". . . a special finite form, the Stative."

² Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 77 a: "Der Stativ nimmt unter den 'Tempora' . . . eine Sonderstellung ein . . . durch seinen Gebrauch, da er eigentlich ein konjugiertes Nomen ist"; J. Aro, *Die Vokalisierung des Grundstammes im semitischen Verbum* (Helsinki, 1964), p. 7: ". . . das Zustandsverbum . . . ein Adjektiv [ist], das offenbar erst nachträglich als Verbum konjugiert wird"; E. Reiner, *A Linguistic Analysis of Akkadian* (The Hague, 1966), 5.4.6.1: "The stative is a noun . . . which inflects for person and mood."

³ Note for instance how Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 126 a, states that, when a nominal predicate is put in the stative, the nominal sentence becomes a verbal sentence.

⁴ For the time being we can operate simply on the basis of the statement that "tense" refers to the preterit, perfect, and present of the indicative. Therefore by saying that the stative is not a tense, I mean

occasionally been formulated in just these terms to explain the origin of the stative;⁵ the basic assumptions underlying my interpretation are also present in those descriptions of Akkadian which recognize the existence of a predicative state of the noun.⁶ Thus the difference in the interpretation presented here with respect to the traditional point of view lies in the suggestion that the "nominal sentence interpretation" should be carried through with consistency throughout Akkadian. What is suggested here is not (or not primarily) an explanation of the *origin* of the stative, but rather of the *nature* of the stative in *historical* times. The main points of the interpretation, in the order in which they are made in this article, may be summarized as follows: (1) by interpreting the stative as a tense one encounters several difficulties of a morphological and syntactical nature which are resolved if the stative is interpreted as a nominal sentence; (2) the component elements of the stative should be treated, from a morphological point of view, under the headings "noun" and "pronoun"; (3) the stative as a whole is a syntactical category; the predicative state, which is the shape taken by the noun in the stative, is *the regular* form of the predicate in the Akkadian nominal sentence; and (4) the Akkadian stative, though parallel in form to the West Semitic perfect, is actually parallel in function to the West Semitic nominal sentence. It may be noted at this point that a result of the approach here suggested is a more economical description of Akkadian grammar as a whole.

1. There are three reasons which make me question the traditional interpretation. The first objection is with regard to the notion of the stative as a conjugated noun. Any noun—says the traditional interpretation—may be conjugated as a stative, that is, any noun may be conjugated as a verb, but only in one tense. Now the process of deriving verbal forms from nouns is well known and quite operative in various Semitic languages;

that the stative *paris* is completely different in both structure and function from *iprus-iptaras-iparras*. A proper definition of "tense" has to be based partly on the conclusions reached in this article, and partly on a longer discussion than is possible here. Briefly I may say that from a strictly formal point of view I distinguish two primary moods, the imperative and the indicative, which are defined as having purely verbal patterns, i.e. patterns which are never used to form nouns. The tenses are then inflectional variations of the indicative mood. From the viewpoint of content, it may be said that the Akkadian stative (*šarrāku*) is as much of a "tense" as the West Semitic nominal sentence (**an öki melek*).

⁵ Z. S. Harris, *Development of the Canaanite Dialects* (New Haven, 1939), p. 84: "Proto-Canaanite and East-Semitic both had a stative perfect aspect developed out of a pronominally-inflected nominal sentence"; G. R. Castellino, *The Akkadian Personal Pronouns and Verbal System in the Light of Semitic and Hamitic* (Leiden, 1962), p. 83: "Akkadian permansive appears to be built on the same pattern as the nominal conjugation . . . In both cases we have a nominal (or verbal) root tied up to the personal pronouns that function as suffixes. Therefore, a first possibility to present itself would be to bring the Akkadian permansive near the nominal conjugation and derive permansive from the latter." A similar point of view is held by those authors who describe the stative as a combination of noun and pronoun, thus, e.g. A. Ungnad, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Gram-*

matik (Munich, 1906), § 26 b: "In Verbindung mit Pron. der 1. und 2. Person verschmilzt das Prädikatsnomen mit dem Pron. zu einem Wort"; *Idem*, *Das Wesen des Ursemitischen* (Leipzig, 1925), p. 9: "... *šarr-ākū*, wobei *-ākū* eine ältere Form des Nominativs des pronomens personale darstellt"; H. Bauer, *Die Tempora im Semitischen* (Leipzig, 1910), p. 12: "Dass das Semitische Perfect seiner Form nach aus der Verschmelzung eines Nomen agentis mit dem Personalpronomen erwachsen ist, wird allgemein anerkannt"; M. Cohen, *Le système verbal sémitique et l'expression du temps* (Paris, 1924), p. 43-44: "... un participe avec un pronom agglutiné est en réalité une forme conjuguée, une forme verbale de plein exercice. Par cette voie, des formes nominales s'insèrent dans le verbe et il en résulte que la conjugaison peut se compliquer ou se renouveler . . . On explique le permansif par la jonction d'une forme nominale avec une forme abrégée des pronoms personnels en fonction de sujet"; J. Kurylowicz, "Le système verbal du sémitique," *Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris*, 45 (1949), 51: "Il semble évident qu'il s'agit d'une fusion du pronom personnel avec un nom verbal précédent"; Gelb, *Morphology*, p. 45 (chart); Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 42 b: "Die Nom.-Formen sind die Konjugations-suffixe des Stativs und werden daher dort . . . behandelt."—Several of the conclusions reached in this article were already present in a more or less explicit manner in studies by Ungnad, Cohen, Ravn, and Nougayrol (see below, nn. 56 and 60).

⁶ See below, Table 1.

but what is uncommon, or rather unknown, is the alleged fact that one tense, and one tense only, should become specialized in making verbs out of nouns. In other words, it would be peculiar to have a *denominative tense* rather than denominative verbs, a consequence which is inescapable if one accepts the theory of the stative as a conjugated noun.

The second argument is based on the fact that the stative does not take the modal endings of the ventive, except for the third person of statives derived from verbal adjectives.⁷ This has not been explained from the viewpoint of the traditional interpretation of the stative, while it fits in well with the "nominal sentence interpretation." In the latter case, the stative *šarr-āku*, "I am king," is analyzed as a syntactical unit composed of a noun (as predicate) and a pronominal element (as subject); since the modal ending of the ventive is a verbal ending,⁸ it is only added to verbal forms,⁹ not to pronouns, and as a result a form of the type **šarr-āku-m* (with the ventive ending *-m* after the pronominal suffix *-āku*) is not attested. For the third person the situation is different because there is no pronominal element (alternatively: the pronominal element is {Ø}). As a result the ventive ending is in immediate contact with the first element of the stative and can be added to it. But—and this is an important point which does not seem to have been stressed sufficiently before—not all statives inflect for the ventive mood in the third person, but only the statives in which the first element is a verbal adjective: thus *paris*, "it is divided," occurs in the ventive as *pars-am* (< **paris-am*), while a form such as *šarr-am* is not attested as ventive of *šar(r)*, "he is king." The reason for this is the same as that which explains why a form **šarr-āku-m* is impossible: the ventive ending cannot any more occur after a noun than after a pronoun. The data may then be tabulated as follows (square brackets indicate that the ventive ending does not occur):

stative of	{	noun	<i>šarr-āku</i>	<i>šar</i>
			noun—pronoun—[ventive]	noun—[ventive]
	}	verb. adj.	<i>pars-āku</i>	<i>pars-am</i>
			v. adj.—pronoun—[ventive]	v. adj.—ventive

To my mind, these facts show that the stative cannot be analyzed as a conjugated noun. On the one hand, when the pronominal elements are present they do not serve as mere personal markers but retain fully their pronominal nature, and thus they prevent the affixation of a true verbal ending such as the modal ending of the ventive. On the other hand, even when the pronominal elements are missing (in the third person), the modal

⁷ See Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 82 d and Paradigm 6. The third person feminine singular does not receive modal endings, a fact for which I have no explanation.

⁸ The ending of the ventive may well be of a pronominal origin (see Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 82 a), but it functions as a verbal ending in the historical periods. Note how in the following examples a pronominal suffix in the dative is actually added to a stative: *mimma lā ḥabbulakšum*, "I do not owe him anything" (*CCT* 3, 12 a: 5-6); *šumma damqakkum*, "if it is convenient for you" (*BIN* 4, 34: 6, and *passim* in Old Assyrian letters).—The abbreviations for text editions are those found in *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*. Since the extensive use I made of it is not immediately apparent from my references, I wish to register here my indebtedness to *CAD*, which is an invaluable tool for much more than lexical matters.

⁹ By "verbal form" I mean either a finite form of the verb (i.e. the imperative and the indicative) or a verbal noun. By "verbal noun" I mean a grammatical item which behaves as a noun morphologically (because it inflects for state, gender, number, and case) and both as a noun and a verb syntactically (because it may govern the accusative). The verbal nouns in Akkadian are the infinitive (*parāsum*), the participle (*pārisum*; only the participle Š of verbs with double accusative governs the accusative), and the verbal adjective (*parsum* < **parisum*). I use the term "deverbal nouns" to refer to nouns which are derived from verbal roots, but do not govern the accusative. It must be stressed that the fact that a form governs the accusative does not make that form a tense (thus, e.g. O. E. Ravn, "Babylonian Permanent and Status Indeterminatus," *Ar. Or.*, 17/2 [1949], 303-304), as is clear in the case of the infinitive.

ending is added only to verbal adjectives, thus showing that the so-called stative conjugation does not of itself make a verb out of a noun: for if it did, there would be no reason to differentiate between the stative of a verbal adjective and the stative of a noun. Since both *šar* and *paris* are statives, and yet the ventive ending occurs after *paris* only, we may say that if *paris* acts as a verb and receives a modal ending, it is not as stative, but as verbal adjective. We may also add here that similar considerations apply in the case of the subjunctive, except that the lack of a marker for the subjunctive mood in all persons of the stative but the third singular¹⁰ may also be explained on phonological grounds.

The third argument which favors an interpretation of the stative as a nominal sentence is of a syntactical nature. A full discussion of the subject is better reserved for a later

TABLE 1
VARIOUS RECONSTRUCTIONS OF THE STATES OF THE NOUN

Ungnad ¹¹	absolutus	constructus	"stat. indet. bisw. auch sonst [i.e. not as predicate] in unbestimmten Sinne"	indeterminatus
Ravn ¹²	normal, individualizing	contact, generalizing		indeterminate, predicate, generalizing
Von Soden ¹³	rectus	constructus	absolutus	—
Gelb ¹⁴	rectus	construct	indefinite, indeterminate	predicate
Lancellotti ¹⁵	rectus	costrutto	assoluto	predicativo
Moscatti ¹⁶	rectus	construct	absolute	—
Ungnad-Matouš ¹⁷	rectus	constructus	absolutus	—
Diakonoff ¹⁸	rectus	constructus and pronominalis	indeterminatus	predicativus
Reiner ¹⁹	declension 1, independent declension, rectus, free form	declension 2, bound declension, constructus, bound form	"base alternants similar to terminal (preterminal juncture) forms"	declension 3, dependent declension, absolutus, terminal form, predicative
used here	normal	construct	absolute	predicative

¹⁰ Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 83 a.

¹¹ Ungnad, *Grammatik*, 1906¹ (= 1949³), §§ 24 a; 26; the quote in the third case is taken from the second edition, § 26 f (1926). The first edition has: "in prädikat. Sinne."

¹² Ravn, "Babylonian Permansive," 1949.

¹³ Von Soden, *Grundriss*, 1952, §§ 62-65.

¹⁴ Gelb, *Morphology*, 1952, p. 24; *Idem*, *Old Akkadian Writing and Grammar* (Chicago 1952¹), pp. 201-203; (1961²), pp. 145-53. For the absolute state see already *Idem*, "Šullat and Ḥaniš," in *Ar. Or.* 18/1-2 (1950), 197.

¹⁵ A. Lancellotti, *Grammatica della lingua accadica*, (Jerusalem, 1962), §§ 44-49.

¹⁶ S. Moscati (ed.), *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages* (Wiesbaden, 1964), § 12.79.

¹⁷ A. Ungnad and L. Matouš, *Grammatik des Akkadischen* (Munich, 1964), §§ 39-43

¹⁸ Diakonoff, *Languages*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁹ Reiner, *Analysis*, §§ 5.3.1; 5.3.1.1; 7.2; 7.2.1; 7.3.

stage of this study (§ 3); at this point we may simply state that the results presented there provide a confirmation of my main thesis. They may be summarized as follows. The stative is regularly used in Akkadian whenever the predicate of a nominal sentence is not immediately followed by a complement or a qualification. Therefore, if one accepts the traditional interpretation of the stative, one encounters an anomalous situation whereby there would be no nominal sentence in Akkadian except when the predicate is immediately followed by a complement or a qualification. No anomaly occurs, on the other hand, if the stative is analyzed as a special type of nominal sentence, the nature of which can (and will) be accurately described by relation to the other types of nominal sentences.

2. The interpretation of the stative as a nominal sentence necessitates the relocation of its component elements within the framework of Akkadian morphology. The first element should be treated under the heading "noun," the second under "pronoun."

The chapter on the noun is affected especially with respect to the problem of the so-called states of the noun. While the grammar of Von Soden recognizes only three states, the earlier editions of Ungnad's grammar as well as more recent studies include one more, which is generally called "predicative state"; Table 1 tabulates the position of various authors with the differences in their terminology. The predicative state, as described by these authors, is precisely the state of the noun when it functions as a certain type of predicate in the nominal sentence. The recognition of such a predicative state would seem to imply that the stative is actually considered a nominal sentence, for if it were a real verbal tense, how could it rigorously be defined in terms of the category "state," which belongs strictly to nominal, and not to verbal, inflection? Yet the authors who accept the idea of a predicative state will hold firm to the notion of the stative as a verbal tense. By divorcing the stative from the verbal system, on the other hand, one may perceive even better the role of the predicative state and draw a more resolute picture of the general structure of the nominal system, without the embarrassing appearance of a verbal tense as a state of the noun. Here is a general classification and description of the states of the noun which accounts satisfactorily for the first component of the stative:

(1) normal state	: free form	} with case endings
(2) construct state	: bound form	
(3) absolute state	: free form	} without case endings
(4) predicative state	: free/bound form	

The last item is the state of the noun when it occurs as the first component of the stative. Such state, called "predicative state," is free when the subject is in the third person (*šarr-Ø*), while it is bound when the subject is in the second or first person (*šarr-āku*). There are considerable similarities between the construct and the predicative state, but the two forms are not identical as is shown by the following contrasting pairs:

(constr.) <i>kabitti</i>		(pred.) <i>kabtat</i>	: difference in expression of same gender ²⁰
<i>abi</i>		<i>ab-āku</i>	: difference in expression of same case (nom.)
<i>šarrū</i>		<i>šarr-ātunu</i>	: difference in expression of same number. ²¹

²⁰ See *kabitti bēlēti*, "O momentous one among the deesses" (T. Jacobsen, in G. Loud, *Khorsabad*, Pt. 1 [Chicago, 1936], p. 133, No. 7: 1); *ša qibissa . . . kabtat*, "whose word is important" (*CH* Rev. xxvi 83-84).

²¹ An especially interesting similarity between construct and predicative state is the occasional use of the singular form of the construct state to express the plural, of the type *šar mātīm*, "kings of the land," see Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 64 l.

TABLE 2

THE AKKADIAN PERSONAL PRONOUN SINGULAR

	SUBJECT		NON-SUBJECT		
	Independent	Suffix	Independent	Suffix	
				After Verb	After Noun
Sg. 1	<i>anāku</i>	<i>-āku</i>	<i>yāti/yāšim</i>	<i>-ni/-am, -nim</i>	<i>-ī, -ya</i>
2m	<i>atta</i>	<i>-āta</i>	<i>kāti/kāšim</i>	<i>-ka/-kum</i>	<i>-ka</i>
2f	<i>atti</i>	<i>-āti</i>	<i>kāti/kāšim</i>	<i>-ki/-kim</i>	<i>-ki</i>
3m	<i>Ø (šū)</i>	<i>Ø</i>	<i>šūti/šūšim</i>	<i>-šu/-šum</i>	<i>-šu</i>
3f	<i>Ø (ši)</i>	<i>-(at)-Ø</i>	<i>šiāti/šiāšim</i>	<i>-ši/-šim</i>	<i>-ša</i>

The second element of the stative, namely the subject of the nominal sentence, should be treated under the heading "pronoun." Several authors have already indicated that the "endings" of the stative may be considered as personal pronominal suffixes in the nominative.²² It will be noted how this suggestion (similarly to what is the case in the recognition of a predicative state of the noun) also implies an interpretation of the stative as a nominal sentence; for if the stative were truly considered a tense, then its endings would simply be personal markers, such as the affixes of the finite tenses. But as soon as these "endings" are equated with pronominal suffixes and put on the same level as the pronominal suffixes for the genitive, accusative and dative, then they can hardly be considered as verbal endings. Indeed, they should simply be defined as pronominal suffixes in the nominative, acting as subject for the predicate which immediately precedes in a bound form. A simplified scheme of the system of the Akkadian personal pronoun may thus be presented as shown here in Table 2, where, incidentally, one can also see how the addition of a column for the pronominal suffix in the nominative contributes a more symmetrical and balanced reconstruction of the system as a whole.

The stative can readily be analyzed as a nominal sentence when the subject is of the first and second person. With a subject of the third person we may say that the subject is *Ø*, especially in the case of an impersonal subject: *damiq {damiq-Ø}*, "it is well, it is all right." With a personal subject one usually finds the subject expressed separately: *šū šarrāq*, "he is a thief." In this case the stative is not properly a complete nominal sentence but simply a predicate, unless one prefers to see in *šū šarrāq*, interpreted as *{šū šarrāq-Ø}*, an example of anticipatory emphasis similar to *anāku šarrāku {anāku šarr-āku}*, "I am king."²³

3. According to the interpretation proposed here, the stative as a whole should be considered rather as a syntactical than as a morphological unit, for the stative, it is argued, is a nominal sentence. A direct consequence of this approach is that a study of the syntactical role and meaning of the stative²⁴ cannot prescind from the study of the

²² See above, n. 5.

²³ See for example *anāku buzzu-āku*, "I am pressed for payment" (*YOS* 2, 104: 20); *atta šihrēta*, "you are small" (*ARM* 1, 85: 6); *nīni ina šilli šarri bēlīni . . . balānu*, "we live in the shadow of the king our lord" (*ABL* 886: Rev. 1-4). Note that anticipatory emphasis is also found in a nominal sentence with a predicate other than nominal: *atta ina libbi ekallika lū atta*, "you (should remain) in your palace" (*ABL* 1397: Rev. 7).

²⁴ The fundamental work in this respect is the article by M. B. Rowton, "The Use of the Permansive in Classic Babylonian," *JNES*, 21 (1962), 233-303. The question of the name—whether stative or permansive—does not seem settled yet. The term stative is used in this article simply because it is the one in most common usage, but, on the basis of my conclusions, according to which the stative is but a syntactical category, the need for either term practically disappears.

nominal sentence in general. It will readily be noted that the timelessness of the stative is really the same which is encountered in the case of the nominal sentence: from the viewpoint of temporality, *šarrāku* and *šarrum dannum anāku* are the same. The stative never came to express temporal relationship in Akkadian precisely because its grammatical structure was essentially different from that of the tenses. We will return to this point in § 4, where we will discuss the problem of the relationship between Akkadian stative and West Semitic perfect. Before we do that, we must try to determine more precisely the relationship of the stative to the commonly acknowledged types of nominal sentence in Akkadian.

An answer to our problem is already to be found in the definition of the stative which has been suggested here: the stative is a nominal sentence the predicate of which occurs in the predicative state. This implies that in the other nominal sentences the predicate occurs in some other state, namely the normal state and the construct state. If we now examine the conditions of occurrence of these various types of predicate we observe an interesting phenomenon which, to my knowledge, has not been clearly seen before: the occurrence of the stative and other types of nominal sentences is governed by a clear pattern of complementary distribution. Using the terminology elaborated above, we may say that the predicative state on the one hand and the normal and construct state on the other are mutually exclusive, and that their usage is predictable depending on the environment in which they occur: *the normal state occurs when the predicate is immediately followed by a qualification or complement, or by the particle -ma, while the predicative state occurs otherwise.* Various sentences which may be adduced to exemplify this rule are tabulated in Table 3. The Akkadian nominal sentences are there divided into three types depending on whether a qualification or complement of the predicate (1) occurs immediately after the predicate,²⁵ (2) is altogether missing, or (3) occurs regularly before the predicate.²⁶ To indicate more clearly the distributional pattern, square brackets are used to enclose sentences which do not occur in the language and are reconstructed here arbitrarily, while parentheses are used for forms which are rare. The sentences are meant to represent types, and thus they are not all attested *ad litteram* in the texts. The examples given do not exhaust all the possibilities which fall under each type; for instance, under Type 3 one could list other prepositions, as in *bēlūtu ana ili šarkat*,²⁷ "overlordship was given to the gods," or *ša eli šarrāni . . . nu*²⁸ *udat bēlussu*,²⁸ "whose rule is more respected than that of (other) kings." But the examples chosen seem sufficiently representative for each type.

The most interesting observation concerns Type 2. Differently from what is commonly believed, a sentence of the type *šarrum anāku*, "I am king" or, for the third person, *šu šarrum*, "he is king" (with an isolated predicate in the normal state) is not regular in Akkadian; the stative *šarrāku* or (*šu*) *šar* (with the predicate in the predicative state) is used instead.²⁹ Most of the exceptions of which I know are of a special character and

²⁵ Qualifications such as an attribute, apposition or relative clause introduced by the relative pronoun may occasionally precede the predicate, but this is quite exceptional, see e.g. *ša aḥḫiya rabūti aḫūšun šihru anāku*, "I was younger than my older brothers" (Borger, *Asarhaddon*, p. 40:8).

²⁶ Here too the order of occurrence may be reversed, but only exceptionally, as in *paṛrāku ana PN*, "I am free with respect to PN" (*MDP* 23, 326:3).

²⁷ *BWL*, p. 162:8.

²⁸ *OIP*, 2, p. 136:20-21.

²⁹ See already I. Gelb, "La mimazione e la nuna-zione nelle lingue semitiche," *RSo*, 12 (1930), 221: "Il sostantivo perde la mimazione quando è usato come predicato, riceve allora forma simile a quella dello stato costruito"; J. Nougayrol, "La phrase dite nominale en accadien," *GLECS*, 5 (1948-1951), p. 23; "à de rares limitations près, le prédicat de la phrase nominale, quelle que soit sa nature, est traité comme un forme verbale.—La 'conjugaison permansive'"; Reiner, *Analysis*, 5.3.1.1: "Declension (3) (dependent declension) is used when the noun is the predicate of a clause."

THE AKKADIAN NOMINAL SENTENCE

TABLE 3

	PREDICATE IN THE NORMAL AND CONSTRUCT STATE					PREDICATE IN THE PREDICATIVE STATE				
	Qualification or Complement of Predicate	Subject	Predicate	Qualification or Complement of Predicate	Subject	Qualification or Complement of Predicate	Subject	Predicate	Subject	Qualification or Complement of Predicate
TYPE 1 Qualification or complement immediately after predicate		<i>anāku</i>	<i>šarrum</i> <i>šarrum</i>	<i>dannum</i> <i>dannum</i>	<i>anāku</i>			[<i>šarr-</i> <i>āku</i>		<i>dannum</i>]
			<i>šarrum</i>	<i>ša in šarrī</i> <i>šūturu</i>	<i>anāku</i>			[<i>šarr-</i> <i>āku</i>		<i>ša in šarrī</i> <i>šūturu</i>]
		<i>anāku</i>	<i>šarrum</i>	<i>ša in šarrī</i> <i>šūturu</i>				[<i>šarr-</i> <i>āku</i>		<i>mātīm</i>]
		<i>anāku</i>	<i>šar</i> <i>šar</i>	<i>mātīm</i> <i>mātīm</i>	<i>anāku</i>			[<i>šarr-</i> <i>āku</i>		<i>mātīm</i>]
		<i>atta</i>	<i>šarr-</i> <i>šarr-</i>	<i>ī</i> <i>ī</i>	<i>atta</i>			[<i>šarr-</i> <i>ā!a-</i>		<i>ī</i>]
TYPE 2 Qualification or complement missing		<i>anāku</i>	<i>šarrum-mā</i> <i>šarrum-ma</i>		<i>anāku</i>			[<i>šar-ma-</i> <i>āku</i>]		
			(<i>šarrum</i> <i>šarrum</i>)		(<i>anāku</i>)			<i>šarr-</i> <i>āku</i>		
TYPE 3 Qualification or complement reg. before predicate	[<i>tēmam</i> <i>tēmam</i>	<i>anāku</i>	<i>sabtum</i>]	<i>sabtum</i>				<i>šabt-</i> <i>āku</i>		
	[<i>ina Bābilim</i> <i>ina Bābilim</i>	<i>anāku</i>	<i>šarrum</i>]	<i>šarrum</i>				<i>šarr-</i> <i>āku</i>		
					<i>anāku</i>]			<i>ina Bābilim</i>		
					<i>anāku</i>]					

do not vitiate the regularity of the principle. These exceptions may be divided in four groups.³⁰ (1) In a personal name the nominative ending of the normal state refers to the personal name as a whole, not to the predicate, e.g. in the name *Abi-ṭābum*,³¹ "My-father-is-good."—(2) In bilingual texts, the Akkadian version follows closely the Sumerian, which is translated word by word, as in *k i . a z a . e m a ḥ m e . e n / ina erṣeti atta širu*,³² "you are supreme in the netherworld."—(3) In texts from the West and in later texts from Mesopotamia one can attribute the presence of a predicate in the normal state to West Semitic influence (Aramaic influence in the case of the Mesopotamian texts), as in the following examples: *u šarrāqu*,³³ "then he is a thief"; *aḥum (šēš) atta*,³⁴ "you are a brother"; *eḫlu šū*,³⁵ "he is lord"; *eḫlu atta*,³⁶ "you are lord"; *abu u bēlu attama*,³⁷ "you are father and lord"; *ēdu anāku*,³⁸ "I am alone"; *mītu anāku*,³⁹ "I am (like) a dead man"; *mītūtu anīni*,⁴⁰ "we are (like) dead men"; *anāku akū*,⁴¹ "I am a destitute man"; *šihru atta*,⁴² "you are a child."—(4) In late texts, the presence of a predicate in the normal state may simply be due to the graphic customs of the scribes, who did not make a regular use of the case endings. In fact, if singular case endings had dropped by then in the pronunciation,⁴³ it had become impossible to differentiate in the spoken language between the normal and the predicative state. As examples we may quote *šudluḫū* (but notice the variant *šudluḫ*) *karšaki*,⁴⁴ "your inside is disturbed"; *šū šarru in Madya*,⁴⁵ "he became king in Media"; and the frequent expression in the Assyrian letters *šulmu ana . . .*,⁴⁶ "it is well with . . .," which alternates with *šulum ana*.⁴⁷—Cases in which the predicate is in the normal state, and which do not fall in any of these groups, are very rare, and constitute real exceptions, such as the following: *ul martu at'ti*,⁴⁸ "you are not an (inheriting) daughter"; *šarru atta*,⁴⁹ "you are king"; *adi inanna ṭābūtu šunu*,

³⁰ In some cases a passage which has been occasionally interpreted as a nominal sentence should really be understood in a different manner, e.g. the formula *pīku balṭu šaptāšu balṭātu* (*MDP*, 22, 135:4–5 137:3–4; 23, 285:2–3; 286:1; 24, 381:3) has been translated as a nominal sentence by Scheil in the *editio princeps*: "sa bouche est bien portante, ses lèvres sont bien portantes" (see also L. de Meyer, *L'accadien des contrats de Suse* [Leiden, 1962], p. 122), but may better be interpreted as an adverbial expression in the locative adverbial to be translated: "with his mouth and lips healthy" (thus *CAD*, B, p. 69 a; *AHw*, p. 100 b).

³¹ J. J. Stamm, *Die akkadische Namengebung* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 294; contrast *Abi-ṭāb* (*ibid.*). Many similar pairs are quoted by Stamm (pp. 293–97), who interprets the type *Abi-ṭābum* as "my good father (he is)." The example quoted by Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 126 d (*Adad-šarrum*) belongs in this category.

³² *BRM*, 4, 8:3–4; the last word is spelled *šī-ri*, and was possibly pronounced *šir*, see below, (4).

³³ *Al. T.* 2:31 (Alalakh, fifteenth century).

³⁴ Hrozný, *Ta'anek*, N. 2:3 (Taanach, fifteenth century). Differently W. F. Albright, "A Prince of Taanach in the Fifteenth Century B.C.," *BASOR*, No. 94 (1944), p. 20, who reads *aḫi attā*.

³⁵ *EA* 29:154 (Mitanni, fourteenth century).

³⁶ *KBo* 1, 10:76.

³⁷ *EA* 73:36 (Byblos, fourteenth century). Possibly also in this group belongs the following passage from a literary text on a school-tablet from el-Amarna: *atta lū bēlu, anāku lū bēlu*, "you will be the master, I will be the mistress" (*EA* 357:84–85); this

text comes from outside Egypt, either from Babylonia (J. A. Knudtzon in *EA*, p. 25) or from Syria (O. R. Gurney, "The Sultan-tepe Tablets, VII," *An. St.*, 10 [1960], 105).

³⁸ *ABL* 1374: Rev. 12 (Assyria, eighth or seventh century); contrast with several occurrences of *wēdāku* in the Old Babylonian period (*CAD*, E, p. 37 a).

³⁹ *ABL* 259: Rev. 3, 9; 274:12; 880:7 (Babylonia, seventh century); contrast with *mītāku* in earlier periods (*MDP* 23, 285:16, Old Babylonian; *TCL* 19, 32:30, Old Assyrian).

⁴⁰ *ABL* 915:6.

⁴¹ Craig, *ABRT* 1, 13:13; see also *STT* 70: Rev. 2, and W. G. Lambert, "The Sultantepe Tablets," *RA*, 53 (1959), 132 (literary standard Babylonian).

⁴² Craig, *ABRT* 1, 6:6; contrast with Old Babylonian *atti šāpḫēta* (*ARM* 1, 85:6).

⁴³ See Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 191 b; § 192 a.

⁴⁴ *Enūma eliš* I: 116. See also IV: 28; *Marduk-ma šarru*, "Marduk is king" (Professor W. L. Moran called my attention to this passage).

⁴⁵ F. H. Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* (Leipzig, 1911), p. 29, § 24:44.

⁴⁶ *ABL* 568:3–6, and *passim*.

⁴⁷ *ABL* 893:2, and *passim*.

⁴⁸ *MDP* 23, 285:18 (Old Babylonian), see De Meyer, *L'accadien*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ *EA* 4:8 (Middle Babylonian letter); should one consider *šarru* as the subject and translate: "the king is you"?—Possibly another Middle Babylonian example is found on a schooltext from el-Amarna, depending on the provenience of the text, see above, n. 37.

inanna anāku u kāša tābūtu nīnu,⁵⁰ “up until now they have been friendly, now you and I, we are friendly.”

As shown in Table 3, an isolated predicate can regularly occur in the normal state only if it is followed by the particle *-ma*, e.g. *aḥḥūšu mādūtum-ma*,⁵¹ “his brothers (= tribesmen) are numerous.”⁵² Notice how in the following example the predicative state and the normal state with *-ma* are used side by side according to the rule stated: *esirtu ša ana pani šabē lā passunūtūni . . . lā aššat esirtu-ma šit*,⁵³ “a concubine who has not been veiled in the presence of (other) men . . . is not a wife, she is a concubine.”

Can we point to a reason for the difference in the treatment of the predicate? The answer is a simple one: if the predicative state were used in the sentences of Type 1, there would be not one but two or more predicates. Thus *Ḥammurapi šar dan* would mean “Ḥammurapi is king, *he is* powerful”;⁵⁴ *Ḥammurapi šar ša in šarri šūturu* would mean “Ḥammurapi is king, *he is* the one who is eminent among kings.”⁵⁵ Besides, when the subject is of the first or the second person, any intervening complement or qualification would break the bound form in which subject and predicate occur. In the situation envisaged under Types 2 and 3, on the other hand, neither of these two objections obtains, and the predicate occurs therefore in the predicative state.

Thus from a discussion of the nature of the stative we are led to a re-evaluation of the Akkadian nominal sentence. For on the basis of our conclusions the rule stated earlier in this paragraph may be reformulated in more general terms as follows: *the nominal predicate of the nominal sentence occurs regularly in the predicative state (= stative), except when the predicate is immediately followed by a qualification or complement, or by the particle -ma, in which case the normal or construct states are used.*⁵⁶ The following example shows an application of these rules in one and the same

⁵⁰ EA 10:10–11 (Middle Babylonian letter).

⁵¹ ARM 5, 73: Rev. 12’.

⁵² In later periods, the anaphoric pronoun is used instead of the particle *-ma*, e.g. *šarru bēlīni rimānu šū*, “the king our lord is merciful” (ABL 78:7–8; 587:12–13; for the reading *bēlīni* see K. Dell and S. Parpola, “Neuassyrisch ‘unser Herr’ = bēlīni, nicht *bēlīni,” *Or. NS*, 35 [1966], 121–22). Similarly in Hebrew: *Yahwē hū hū ’ēlohīm*, “Yahweh is the (true) god,” see C. Brockelmann, *Hebräische Syntax* (Neukirchen, 1956), p. 27, and in Aramaic: *’ēlāhākōn hū ’ēlāh ’ēlāhīn*, “your god is the god of gods,” see H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-aramäischen* (Halle, 1927), pp. 267–68; 346.

⁵³ KAV 1: vi 6–10 (Ass. Code A § 41).

⁵⁴ See e.g. the frequent formula *PN šarpat laqī’at*, “she is bought, she is taken” (Johns, *ADD 207:10* and *passim*).

⁵⁵ See e.g. *PN ellet ša ramanīša šī*, “she is free, she is up to herself” (*BE* 6/1, 96:14).

⁵⁶ This formulation was already adumbrated in the first three editions of Ugnad, *Grammatik*; see § 26 a: “Das völlig unbestimmte Prädikatsnomen nimmt eine besondere Form an, die man *status indeterminatus* nennen kann”; § 26 d: “Ist das Prädikatsnomen irgendwie näher bestimmt, so steht es in der attributiven form: *šarrum dannum anāku . . .*”; § 30 d: “Das Perm. ist das *praedikativ* . . . gebrauchte *participium perfecti* . . .” The fourth edition edited by Matouš (1964) has dropped the whole section on the indeterminate state and replaced

it with a section on the absolute state (§ 43) which, however, covers a more limited range of cases. Ugnad’s ideas were emphasized and made more explicit by Ravn, “Babylonian Permansive.” He says that both substantive and adjective, when they serve as predicate, show a “forma generalis, without case-vowel and without a final *-m*” (p. 302), and he asks the question whether “it should be more correct, in setting forth Babylonian grammar, to exclude the phenomenon *wāšib-wāšbat* from the doctrine of the verb, and make it part of the phenomenon: noun in forma generalis as predicate, where it should be justly at home—unlike the current presentations, in which it forms part of the doctrine of the verb, termed ‘permansive,’ ‘form of duration’” (p. 303). His answer, differently from the one offered in the present article, is in the negative. Ravn claims (pp. 303–304) that the “permansive” is a true tense because it governs the accusative (but see above, n. 9), and because it is inflected for person (but see above, §§ 1 and 2).—See also the interesting little book by R. Campbell Thompson, *On Traces of an Indefinite Article in Assyrian* (London, 1902), where it is suggested that “some fundamental grammatical idea underlies” the many examples of nouns without case endings collected by the author, and that “this idea appears to indicate a certain *indefiniteness*” (p. 11). Note the statement on p. 15 that a sentence like *Ištarma širat, Ištarma šarrat* “well illustrates the difficulty of deciding whether the feminine predicates are permansives of verbs, or nouns in the simplest form.”

sentence: *sinnišāku eḷum muttallum anāku*,⁵⁷ "I am a woman, (yet) I am (also) a noble man."

4. We may now consider the relationship of the Akkadian stative to the West Semitic perfect. It is interesting to note that the idea of a predicative state of the noun has been brought forth only to explain the stative, and not the perfect, although the latter could conceivably be subjected to the same interpretation (by saying for instance that Hebrew *mālak* is the predicative state of *melek*⁵⁸). The reason this has not been suggested is of course that any Akkadian noun may be put in the predicative state (for instance, *kalab* from *kalbum*), while the same is not true in West Semitic (no Hebrew *kālab* is attested from *keleb*). As a result of our study we may now say that Akkadian stative and West Semitic perfect are basically different in structure and function. The perfect is a true verbal category, which develops along the lines of the other "tenses." It is beyond the point here whether or not the stative and the perfect are related in origin (conceivably, the perfect could have been originally a nominal sentence too⁵⁹); the fact is that the historical stative is different from the historical perfect. Quite clearly, there are similarities of form between the two; but their respective nature and functions have to be kept decidedly apart.

Rather, the Akkadian stative should be compared with the West Semitic nominal sentence.⁶⁰ If this has not usually been done so far, the reason is that a West Semitic sentence such as Hebrew *ʾānōkī baʿal*, "I am lord," was equated with Akkadian *anāku bēlum*.⁶¹ The latter, however, does not occur in Akkadian as a sentence, but only in the meaning "I, the lord . . ." The real set of correspondences is therefore as follows:

<i>bēlēku</i>	~ ʾānōkī baʿal	"I was / am / will be lord"
<i>ebe⁶²el</i>	~ ʿebʿal	"I (will) rule"
<i>ebēl</i>	~ bāʿaltī	"I ruled"

While the first equation accounts for the atemporality of the Akkadian stative, it also allows greater freedom for a discussion about the West Semitic perfect, since the need to harmonize stative and perfect now disappears.

A different problem is raised instead by our results, namely that Akkadian seems to be the only Semitic language, except perhaps for Amorite,⁶³ to be endowed with a special state for the noun when this serves as predicate. This particular feature of Akkadian may perhaps be correlated with another feature which equally isolates Akkadian, as well

⁵⁷ *SBH* 56, p. 106:40.

⁵⁸ See A. Ungnad, "Zur Syntax der Gesetze Hammurabis," *ZA*, 17 (1903), 369: "Die Verhältnisse liegen hier ebenso wie im Hebräischen, wo ja oft eine Form *kātēl* (aus **katil*) als Adjektiv oder Verb aufgefasst werden kann; sind ja doc him Grunde genommen beide Formen identisch!"

⁵⁹ On the origin of the West Semitic perfect see especially the recent contribution by I. J. Gelb, "The Origin of the West Semitic *Qatala* Morpheme," *Symbolae Kurjowicz* (Wrocław, 1965), pp. 72-80, where the origin of the West Semitic perfect is explained with reference to the predicative state of the noun.

⁶⁰ This point has already been emphasized by Cohen, *Système*, pp. 40-51, where the stative is compared especially with the use of the participle as a

predicate in the West Semitic nominal sentence. Similarly, but in a succinct form, Nougayrol, "La phrase dite nominale," pp. 22-24.

⁶¹ As noted above in § 3, the type *anāku bēlum* occurs only in the late periods, as an interesting example of syntactical Aramaism (*anāku bēlum* being patterned on ʾānā bʿēl). See especially above, nn. 38, 39, 42, 46, and 47, where various cases of a contrast between early and late periods are pointed out.

⁶² For *ebe⁶²el* (rather than *ebēl*) see Reiner, *Analysis*, 5.4.5.6.1.

⁶³ See I. J. Gelb, "La lingua degli Amoriti," *RANL*, Ser. VIII, Vol. 13, Fasc. 3-4 (1958), §§ 3.2.5; 3.3.7.1.7; *Idem*, "Qatala Morpheme," pp. 75-80; G. Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period* (Naples, 1966), pp. 194-99; 219.

as Amorite and Ugaritic, from other Semitic languages, namely the lack of an article. As is shown by the following correspondences, the predicative state in Akkadian covers part,⁶⁴ if not all, of the semantic range of "indetermination," which is expressed in West Semitic by the omission of the article:⁶⁵

<i>bēlum ṭāb</i>	~	<i>habba'al ṭōb</i>	"the lord is good"
<i>bēlum ṭābum</i>	~	{ <i>ba'al ṭōb</i>	"a good lord"
		{ <i>habba'al hattōb</i>	"the good lord"

It would be interesting if one could set up the correspondence *anāku bēlum-ma* ~ ^ʾ*ānōkī habba'al*, "I am the lord," suggesting that *-ma* is used in Akkadian to render a determinate predicate; but the evidence does not favor this assumption. In any case, it would seem that further study on the Akkadian nominal sentence (including the stative) may throw some light on the difficult problem of determination and indetermination in Akkadian.⁶⁶ In terms of comparative Semitics, further study along the same lines may throw light on the origin of the article. As it has already been noted on the basis of phonological considerations for Aramaic, the appearance of the article is connected with the fall of the case endings.⁶⁷ A morphological reason may now be suggested (and not only for Aramaic): as the case endings dropped, it became impossible to differentiate between normal and predicative state, and thus a new category (determination and indetermination, viz. the article) was introduced to take care of the phenomena which were previously expressed by the use of different states of the noun.

⁶⁴ For this reason the term "indeterminate state" (see above, Table 1) does not seem fully justified.

⁶⁵ See C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, Vol. II (Berlin, 1913), § 45 b.

⁶⁶ See J. Nougayrol, "La détermination et l'indétermination du nom en accadien," *GLECS*, 5 (1948-51), 73-76; 78: Ravn, "Babylonian Permansive," pp.

300-301, who describes the contrast between an individualizing (or known) form and a generalizing (or unknown) form.

⁶⁷ See C. Brockelmann, in B. Spuler (ed.), *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Vol. 3. Part 2: *Semitistik* (Leiden, 1954), p. 140; S. Segert, "Aramäische Studien," *Ar. Or.*, 26 (1958), 584; G. Garbiri, *Il semitico di nord-ovest* (Napoli, 1960), p. 123.