AN INTERPRETATION OF THE AKKADIAN STATIVE AS A NOMINAL SENTENCE*

GIORGIO BUCCHELLATI, University of California, Los Angeles
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. 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 (parš-āku, "I am divided") and since the same pronominal elements can also be affixed to primary nouns (šarr-āku, "I am king"), the stative is also described as a conjugated noun. But no matter how it is described, the stative is always treated as a verb, 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 tense but rather a nominal sentence. The idea as such is not new, for it has been suggested, for instance, by I. J. Gelb, Morphology of Akkadian (Chicago, 1962 [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'..."; Iden, "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 Verbalhemen 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 Zustandsverb... ein Adjektiv [ist], das offenbar erst nachträglich als Verb 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 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...
Akkadian permansive near the nominal conjugation

nouns that function as suffixes. Therefore, a &st
thus, e.g. A. Ungnad, Babylonisch-Assyrische Gram-
nominal (or verbal) root tied up to the personal pro-
the stative as a combination of noun and pronoun,
nominal conjugation appears to be built on the same pattern as the
possibility to present itself would be to bring the
as much of a "tense" as the West Semitic nominal
sentence; G. R. Castellino, The Akkadian Personal
developed out of a pronominally-inflected nominal
and East-Semitic both had a stative perfect aspect
and their point of view is held by those authors who describe
nouns. The tenses are then inflectional variations of
patterns, i.e. patterns which are never used to form
indicative, which are defined as having purely verbal
nature which are resolved if the stative is interpreted as a nominal sentence; (2) the
stative as a tense one encounters several difficulties of a morphological and syntactical
structure and function from iprus-.iptarasiparras. A
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 origins 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 we 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 syn-
tactical 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 may make us 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 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 part is completely different in both structure and function from (verbo-
parente). 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 dis-
agree with theories which recognize the existence of a predicative state of the noun6 Thus the
stative, is

5

2.

S. Harris, Development of the Canaanite

Par cette voie, des formes nominales s'insdrent dans
la phrase et il en rRsulte que !a conjugaison peut se
compliquer ou se renouveler

3.

H. Bauer, Das Verben system des Semitischen

. . . Les formes verbales de plein exercice.

4.

K. Cohen, Le systRme verbal algonique

Par cette voie, des formes nominales s'insdrent dans
le verbe et si en rRsulte que la conjugaison peut se
conspiquer ou se renouveler

5.

J. Kurylowicz, "Le syste
du pronom personnel

du pronom personnel avec un nom verbal pre-
form de conjugaison est en réalité une
forme composée, une forme verbale de plein exercice.

6.

Dissertation (Leipzig, 1925), p. 9: "Das
hervorgehoben, wird allgemein aner-
kennt"; M. Cohen, Le syste
des pronoms personnels en fonction de
l'expression du temps (Paris, 1924). p. 43-44: " . . . un
participe avec un pronom agglutiné est en réalité une
forme composée, une forme verbale de plein exercice.

7.

C. Jaccobi, "Le syste
du pronom personnel

Verbs and Pronominal Systems in the Light of Semitic and
Hamitic (Leiden, 1962), p. 84: "Proto-Syriac and
Akkadian permansive appear to be built on the same pattern as the
nominal conjugation; and (4) the
Akkadian per-

8.

M. Cohen, Le syste
des pronoms personnels en fonction de
l'expression du temps (Paris, 1924). p. 43-44: " ... un
participe avec un pronom agglutiné est en réalité une
forme composée, une forme verbale de plein exercice.

9.

"Abstraktionstechnik"; H. Bauer, Das
Verben system des Semitischen

. . . Les formes verbales de plein exercice.

10.

Dissertation (Leipzig, 1925), p. 9: "Das
hervorgehoben, wird allgemein aner-
kennt"; M. Cohen, Le syste
des pronoms personnels en fonction de
l'expression du temps (Paris, 1924). p. 43-44: " . . . un
participe avec un pronom agglutiné est en réalité une
forme composée, une forme verbale de plein exercice.

11.

"Abstraktionstechnik"; H. Bauer, Das
Verben system des Semitischen

. . . Les formes verbales de plein exercice.

12.

Dissertation (Leipzig, 1925), p. 9: "Das
hervorgehoben, wird allgemein aner-
kennt"; M. Cohen, Le syste
des pronoms personnels en fonction de
l'expression du temps (Paris, 1924). p. 43-44: " . . . un
participe avec un pronom agglutiné est en réalité une
forme composée, une forme verbale de plein exercice.
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 conse-
quence 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. This has not been explained from the viewpoint of the traditional inter-
pertation 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 com-
posed of a noun (as predicate) and a pronominal element (as subject); since the modal
ending of the ventive is a verbal ending, it is only added to verbal forms, not to pro-
nouns, 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 šarr(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):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{stative of} & \quad \text{noun} & \quad \text{noun} & \quad \text{noun} \\
& \quad šarr-āku & \quad [\text{ventive}] & \quad [\text{ventive}] \\
\quad \text{noun} & \quad \text{noun-pronoun} & \quad \text{v. adj.-pronoun} & \quad \text{v. adj.-ventive} \\
\quad \text{verb. adj.} & \quad pars-āku & \quad \text{pars-am} \\
& \quad \text{v. adj.} & \quad \text{v. adj.-ventive} & \quad \text{v. adj.-ventive}
\end{align*}
\]

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 pro-
nominal 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 pro-
nominal suffix in the dative is actually added to a
stative: minna lā ḫabbulakām, "I do not owe him
anything" (CCT 3, 12 a: 5–6); summa damqakkām, "if
it is convenient for you" (BIN 4, 34: 6, and passim in
Old Assyrian letters).—The abbreviations for text
editions are 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* < *pārisum*). 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 Perman-
sive 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 singular 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>absolutus</th>
<th>constructus</th>
<th>&quot;stat. indet. bisw. auch sonst [i.e. not as predicate] in unbestimmten Sinne&quot;</th>
<th>indeterminatus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ungnad¹¹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravn¹²</td>
<td>normal, individualizing</td>
<td>contact, generalizing</td>
<td></td>
<td>indeterminate, predicate, generalizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Von Soden¹³</td>
<td>rectus</td>
<td>constructus</td>
<td>absolutus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gelb¹⁴</td>
<td>rectus</td>
<td>construct</td>
<td>indefinite, indeterminate</td>
<td>predicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancellotti¹⁵</td>
<td>rectus</td>
<td>costrutto</td>
<td>assoluto</td>
<td>predicativo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscati¹⁶</td>
<td>rectus</td>
<td>construct</td>
<td>absolute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungnad-Matouš¹⁷</td>
<td>rectus</td>
<td>constructus</td>
<td>absolutus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diakonoff¹⁸</td>
<td>rectus</td>
<td>constructus and pronominalis</td>
<td>indeterminatus</td>
<td>predicativus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiner¹⁹</td>
<td>declension 1, independent declension, rectus, free form</td>
<td>declension 2, bound declension, constructus, bound form</td>
<td>&quot;base alternants similar to terminal (preterminal juncture) forms&quot;</td>
<td>declension 3, dependent declension, absolutus, terminal form, predicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used here</td>
<td>normal</td>
<td>construct</td>
<td>absolute</td>
<td>predicative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁰ Von Soden, *Grundriss*, § 83 a.
¹¹ Ungnad, *Grammatik*, 19061 (= 1949²), §§ 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."
¹⁶ S. Moscati (ed.), *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages* (Wiesbaden, 1964), § 12.79.
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
(2) construct state : bound form
(3) absolute state : free form
(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.) kabitti | (pred.) kabtat : difference in expression of same gender²⁰
ABI | AB-ĀKU : difference in expression of same case (nom.)
šarrū | šarr-ātunu: difference in expression of same number.²¹

²⁰ See kabitti bēši, “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 šarr mātim, “kings of the land,” see Von Soden, Grundriss, § 641.
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.\(^\text{22}\) 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 \(\emptyset\), especially in the case of an impersonal subject: \(\text{damiq} \{\text{damiq-}\emptyset\}, \) “it is well, it is all right.” With a personal subject one usually finds the subject expressed separately: \(\text{Barrdq}, \) “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 \(\text{Barrdq}, \) interpreted as \(\{\text{Barr dq-}\emptyset\}, \) an example of anticipatory emphasis similar to \(\text{anāku Barr dq-}\emptyset\), “I am king.”\(^\text{23}\)

### Table 2: The Akkadian Personal Pronoun Singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Non-Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Suffix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sg. 1</td>
<td>anāku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2m</td>
<td>atta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2f</td>
<td>attī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3m</td>
<td>-Ω (σā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f</td>
<td>Ω (ši)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\text{22}\) See above, n. 5.

\(^\text{23}\) See for example \(\text{anāku buzzu-āku}, \) “I am pressed for payment” (YYY 2, 104: 20); \(\text{atta śehē}, \) “you are small” (A M 1, 55: 6); \(\text{nini ina šili šarr bēlīni ... balānu}, \) “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: \(\text{atta ina lībbi šallika lā atta, you (should remain) in your palace} \) (ABL 1397: Rev. 7).

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 stative\(^\text{24}\) cannot precede from the study of the

\(^\text{24}\) 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, (2) is altogether missing, or (3) occurs regularly before the predicate. 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 šarrat. "overlordship was given to the gods," or ša eli šarrāni...nirudat bēlussu, "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. 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. šu abhīya rabītu aḥšām šīnu anāku, "I was younger than my older brothers" (Borger, Asarhadon, p. 40:8).
26 Here too the order of occurrence may be reversed, but only exceptionally, as in paṭrāku ana PN, "I am free with respect to PN" (MDP 23, 326:3).
27 BWL, p. 162:8.
29 See already L. Gelb, "La mimazione e la nunazione 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 predicat de la phrase nominale, quelle que soit sa nature, est traité comme un forme verbale. — La 'conjugaison permensive'"; Reiner, Analysis, 5.3.1.1: "Declension (3) (dependent declension) is used when the noun is the predicate of a clause."
TABLE 3

THE AKKADIAN NOMINAL SENTENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification or Complement of Predicate</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Qualification or Complement of Predicate</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Qualification or Complement of Predicate</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Qualification or Complement of Predicate</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Qualification or Complement of Predicate</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1 Qualification or complement immediately after predicate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anāku</td>
<td>šarrum</td>
<td>dannum</td>
<td>anāku</td>
<td>[šarr-</td>
<td>āku</td>
<td>dannum]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šarrum</td>
<td>ša in šarrī</td>
<td>šātur</td>
<td>[šarr-</td>
<td>āku</td>
<td>ša in šarrī</td>
<td>šātur]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anāku</td>
<td>šarrum</td>
<td>ša in šarrī</td>
<td>šātur</td>
<td>[šarr-</td>
<td>āku</td>
<td>mātim]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šar</td>
<td>mātim</td>
<td>anāku</td>
<td>[šarr-</td>
<td>āku</td>
<td>mātim]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šarr-</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>atta</td>
<td>[šarr-</td>
<td>āla-</td>
<td>i]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2 Qualification or complement missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anāku</td>
<td>šarrum-mā</td>
<td>anāku</td>
<td>[šar-ma-</td>
<td>āku]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šarrum-ma</td>
<td>(anāku</td>
<td>šarrum)</td>
<td>šarr-</td>
<td>āku</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[tēnam</td>
<td>anāku</td>
<td>sabtum]</td>
<td>[tēnam</td>
<td>sabtum</td>
<td>anāku]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ina Bābilim</td>
<td>anāku</td>
<td>šarrum]</td>
<td>[ina Bābilim</td>
<td>šarrum</td>
<td>anāku]</td>
<td>[ina Bābilim</td>
<td>šarr-</td>
<td>āku]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 newInstanceAbi-šārum, \(^{31}\) “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 h e . e n / īnā ērṣēti at-ta šēru, \(^{32}\) “you are supreme in the netherworld.”—(3) In texts from the West and in later texts from Mesopotamia one can attribute a 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: \(u \ šarrāgu,\) \(^{33}\) “then he is a thief”\(^{34}\); ābūm (šēś) at-ta, \(^{35}\) “you are a brother”; ēlu šā, \(^{36}\) “he is lord”; ēlu at-ta, \(^{37}\) “you are lord”; ābū u bēlu attama, \(^{38}\) “you are father and lord”; ēdu anāku, \(^{39}\) “I am alone”; mītu anāku, \(^{40}\) “I am (like) a dead man”; mītūtu anini, \(^{41}\) “we are (like) dead men”; anāku akū, \(^{42}\) “I am a destitute man”; šēru at-ta, \(^{43}\) “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, \(^{44}\) it had become impossible to differentiate in the spoken language between the normal and the predicative state. As examples we may quote šudušu (but notice the variant šuduluh) karšaki, \(^{45}\) “your inside is disturbed”; šā šarru in Madya, \(^{46}\) “he became king in Media”; and the frequent expression in the Assyrian letters šulmu ana . . . , \(^{47}\) “it is well with . . . ,” which alternates with šulmu 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 aṭṭī, \(^{48}\) “you are not an (inheriting) daughter”; šarru at-ta, \(^{49}\) “you are king”; adi ianna tābātu šunu,
inanna anāku u kāša ṭabūtu ninu,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. aḥḫūsū māādu-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 pānī šabē lā passunutūnī . . . lā aššat esīrtu-ma šīt,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 ḍan would mean "Ḥammurapi is king, he is powerful";⁵⁴ Ḥammurapi šar ša in šarrī šūru 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 concerning 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 situation in which the normal or construct states are used. ⁵⁷

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 bēltini rimānu šī, "the king our lord is merciful" (ABL 78: 7–8, 587: 12–13; for the reading bēltini see K. Deller and S. Parpola, "Neussyrisch 'unser Herr' = bēltini, nicht *bēlinī," Or. NS, 35 [1966], 121–22). Similarly in Hebrew: Yahweh kā bēltihē, "Yahweh is the (true) god," see C. Brockelmann, Hebräische Syntax (Neukirchen, 1956), p. 27, and in Aramaic: ḥēbākhōn bē ḥēbākhēbākhōn, "your god is the god of gods," see H. Bauer and P. Leander, Grammatik des Biblisch-aramäischen (Halle, 1927), pp. 267–68; 346.
⁵⁴ See e.g. the frequent formula PN šarpat laqita, "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 8/1, 96:14).
⁵⁶ This formulation was already adumbrated in the first three editions of Ungnad, 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: sarrum dannum anāku . . ."; § 90 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. Ungnad’s ideas were emphasized and made more explicit by Ravn, "Babylonian Permanive." 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 wašiš-wašbat 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 ‘permanive,’ ‘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 "permanive" 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 Išarma šīrat, Išarma šarrut "well illustrates the difficulty of deciding whether the feminine predicates are permanives of verbs, or nouns in the simplest form."
sentence: *sinnīšāku ʾēlum 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 ʾmālak is the predicative state of melek58). 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 ʾānōkî 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bēlēku} & \sim ʾānōkî baʿal & \text{"I was / am / will be lord"} \\
\text{ebeʾel} & \sim ʾebʿal & \text{"I (will) rule"} \\
\text{ebēl} & \sim bāʿaltī & \text{"I ruled"}
\end{align*}
\]

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 *katēl*) als Adjektiv oder Verb aufgefasst werden kann; sind ja doch beim 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 Kuryłowicz* (Wroclaw, 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 ʾānōkî bēlēl). 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 ebeʾel (rather than ebēl) see Reiner, *Analysis*, 5.4.5.6.1.
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, if not all, of the semantic range of "indetermination," which is expressed in West Semitic by the omission of the article:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bēlum tāb} & \sim \text{habba'āl tōb} & \text{the lord is good} \\
\text{bēlum tābutum} & \sim \begin{cases} 
\text{bā'āl tōb} & \text{a good lord} \\
\text{habba'āl hattōb} & \text{the good lord}
\end{cases}
\end{align*}
\]

It would be interesting if one could set up the correspondence \textit{anāku bēlum-ma} \sim \textit{ānōki habba'āl, "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. 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. 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.

