ON THE AKKADIAN "ATTRIBUTIVE" GENITIVE

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The notion implied in the traditional term "attributive" genitive refers to a feature of surface structure, and as such is not particularly meaningful for an understanding of the construction involved. Rather the cases envisaged by the traditional category of attributive genitive must be understood in terms of other categories such as subjective or possessive. The reason for the use of the genitival construction in place of an adjectival one lies in the lexical specialization of the noun in the genitive: the notion of *kittum* in *dayyān kittim* "judge of just verdict" is not expressed in the available adjective from the same root, *kīnum*, which means "legitimate." Hence there is no room for a real stylistic choice between an adjectival and a genitival noun phrase, since the two have basically different meanings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTORY

The traditional explanation of noun phrases with the genitive reflects an understanding of syntactical phenomena close, in substance, to the principles of transformational grammar. Roughly speaking, the surface structure of the noun phrase is explained in terms of an underlying sentence, and this is normally expressed by referring to the role which the noun in the genitive has in that sentence--subjective if it corresponds to the subject, objective if to the object, and so on. At first, the notion of attributive genitive would seem to be of the same type: the genitive corresponds to the attribute. But there is a difficulty, because the attribute is in turn the result of nominaliza-tion which, traditionally, is explained in terms of surface structure only (agreement, word order, and the like). Thus the notion of attributive genitive is not on the same level as that of subjective or objective genitive and is proportionally less clea   in its meaning and import.

Whatever the case may be, the traditional explanation may be said to embody the following elements: a genitival noun phrase (e.g. *šar dannūtim* "a king of might") is synonymous with an adjectival noun phrase (*šarrum* dannum "a mighty king"); in either case the modifier (*dannūtim, dannum*) corresponds to the predicate of an equivalent sentence *šarrum dan* "the king is mighty." The choice between the two types of noun phrases is considered a matter of stylistic preference.[1]

2. LEXICAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE USE OF GENITIVE VS. ATTRIBUTE

Upon closer examination, the two noun phrases do <u>not</u> seem equivalent. A starting point is offered by the consideration that in some cases the two types of noun phrases are in complementary distribution, the criterion for such distribution being the lexical item which occurs as the head of the noun phrase. This means that certain nouns have a tendency to govern the GENITIVE of a noun from a given verbal root, whereas other nouns govern an ATTRIBUTE derived from the same root. Thus the phrase *šar dannūtim* "a king of might" given above, though formally possible, is not actually attested;[2] instead, it is the adjective dannum which normally appears in combination with *šarrum*, i.e. *šarrum* dannum "a mighty king." Vice versa, the noun *ālum* "city" occurs regularly with the genitive (*āl dannūtim* "city of strength") and not with the adjective (*ālum* dannum "strong city"). It is difficult to gauge how far these lexical constraints obtain without the benefit of living informants. The best substitute would be an accurate statistical count of attested forms based on a large amount of textual materials; but this has to wait until special tools providing this kind of information are made

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[1]See for example W. von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik,* Rome 1969[2] 136 f; 186c. For a preliminary statement on the "attributive" genitive see my article "On the Use of the Akkadian Infinitive after '*ša*' or Construct State," JSS 17 (1972) 1-29.

[2]Statements about attestation are based on the data found in the dictionaries, not on a complete utilization of any given corpus. Unattested forms are not starred if they are syntactically possible.

available.[3] But if we can take the selection in the modern dictionaries as indicative, both for what they do and do not show, some interesting conclusions emerge.

Let us consider another case of complementary distribution based on lexical categories. From the root *k:n* we have the noun *kittum* "justice" and the adjective *kīnum* "just, legitimate." When used as modifiers, the following distribution can be noticed: with *dayyānum* "judge" we have normally *kittum* in the genitive (*dayyān kittim*[4] "judge of justice"); with *aplum* "heir" or *šarrum* "king" we have normally the adjective (*aplum kīnum*[5] "legitimate heir," *šarrum kīnum*[6] "legitimate king"). In other words, *kittum* and *kīnum* are different not only in terms of morphological derivation but also in terms of lexical specialization, since they are restricted to cooccur with certain nouns and not with others. The adjective *kīnum* has a semantic range which does not include the meaning of justice as a quality of the subject, but rather that of legitimacy, i.e. respect for a just set of relationships in the succesion, for example, from father to son. *Kittum*, on the other hand, refers to the specific and concrete acts of justice performed by a judge in rendering a verdict; it may, in fact, be understood specifically as "just verdict" rather than abstractly as "justice" (this would account well for the use of the plural as in *dayyān kīnātim* "judge of just verdicts"). When a nominalization involving *kittum* becomes necessary, recourse to the adjective *kīnum* would be unsatisfactory, since it does not belong to the same semantic range as *kittum*. Hence *kittum* is retained as such, with a resulting genitival noun phrase: *dayyān kittim* "judge of the just verdict."

It so happens that a similar device is also used in English--a language which, though much richer than Akkadian in adjectival constructions, does nevertheless rely heavily on noun composition, as with "government decisions" (an adjective would also be possible: "governmental") or, "House committee" (an adjective is not possible). Thus, *dayyān kittim* could be properly translated as "just verdict judge," which implies that the judge is envisaged in the specific moment in which he acts as judge and renders just verdicts, rather than as an official endowed with a natural sense of justice.

If we look now at the converre set of examples, we find that *aplum* Enum is frequent, while *apil kittim* is not attested. This distribution can be explained with the same considerations made above. The association with *aplum* "heir" would normally limit the semantic range of a modifier derived from the root *k:n* to the meaning "legitimacy" (since an heir would not normally be linked with just verdicts or even justice in a broader sense); the adjective *kīnum* having become lexically specialized to express precisely such notion, it is natural to find commonly the noun phrase *aplum kīnum* "legitimate heir."

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[3]Work is currently being done at UCLA, under the provisions of a research grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, to establish a grammatical data bank for the entire corpus of Old Babylonian letters. The first published results will appear shortly as the first volume of a series entitled *Morpho-lexical Analysis of* Akkadian *Texts*.

[4]Also *dayyān kīnātim*, CAD K 471 b3'; D 30 d4', 32 m1', m3'a', 33 m4'. *Dayyānum* Enum is attested once. K 391 b2'.

[5]CAD K 392 cl'.

[6]*TCL* III 114 (SE, Sargon).

Should *apil kittim* occur in the language, it would probably mean "legitimacy heir," "heir through whom legitimacy is verified," or something to that effect.

Going back to the examples given at the beginning, *šarrum* dannum is a "mighty king," i.e. a king who is in himself strong and powerful, whereas *āl dannūtim* is a "fortress city," a city in which one is powerful and thus secure from enemy attack. In this case, the lexical feature which acts as a constraint may be that of animate vs. inanimate. In the sense of "strong," dannum is used properly with animate, perhaps especially with human, subjects. When referred to inanimate (or perhaps non-human) and concrete subjects, it means "massive, solid, big," or the like; hence *ālum* dannwn would properly mean "a big city." To express strength in military and strategical terms, one has to resort to the term *dannūtum* which can be both the abstract for "strength" and a concrete noun meaning "fortress," hence *āl dannūtim* "fortress city." Note how in English too phrases like "strong or powerful city," though quite possible, may be felt less proper than a phrase like "impregnable city," which similarly points to an animate subject other than the city.

3. THE LIMITS OF ADJECTIVAL DERIVATION

In the preceding section I have tried to elucidate the difference between genitival and adjectival noun phrases (*dayyān kittim* vs. *aplum kīnum*) taking as a starting point the fact of complementary distribution along lexical lines: since the correlation between the two elements in each noun phrase is constant (i.e. *dayyānum* occurs regularly with the genitive, *aplum* regularly with the adjective) the semantic nature of the two distinctive lexical items (*dayyānum, aplum*) was used as a clue to explain the difference between the second element derived in each case from the same root (*kittum, kīnum*). We may try now to formulate our results in such a way that they may apply more broadly, especially in cases where one cannot rely on complementary distribution.

We may take as a starting point an observation about noun derivation. If *kittum* means "just verdict" and *kīnum* "legitimate," an adjective which were to refer to *kittum* would have to be derived precisely from *kittum*, rather than generically from the root *k:n*; in other words, *kittum* has acquired a specialized lexical meaning which is not reflected in the underlying root k: n. But denominal adjectives are not productive in Akkadian, except for well defined categories, such as with the affix -i- used especially for gentilics (*Aššur-ī-u*, "Assyrian"). Thus an adjective from *kitt-um*, though formally possible (*kitt-ī-um*) is not attested and, most likely, nonexistent in the language. By default, as it were, *kittum* is retained as such and used as a modifier in the genitive. The explanation for the use of the attributive genitive can thus be summed up under two headings: (1) certain nouns become lexically specialized to such a point that the verbal adjective from the same root is not lexically correlated any longer; (2) the formation of denominal adjectives, which might serve as adequate correlatives of lexically specialized nouns, is not productive in the language (and other pertinent morphological processes, such as word composition, are practically non-existent).

By way of exemplification, a similar case may be adduced from English. The noun "power" can be used either in the sense of "might" or in the sense of "electrical energy." The adjective "powerful," however, is correlated only to the first acceptation of the noun; for the second, one will use instead the noun "power" in composition with another noun. A "powerful tool" is one capable of superior performance, whether operated manually or by a motor, whereas a "power tool" is one driven by a motor, whether "powerful" or not. The

adjective is lexically specialized in one direction, the noun in another--just as in Akkadian. The determination of these lexical differentiations is much easier in English where one can rely on living informants. In Akkadian, we used pairs of words in complementary distribution to facilitate the determination of the semantic range of one element by utilizing the semantic range of the other. But we can now extend the notion thus gained to cover cases without correlative constraints.

Awīl gimillim[7], for example, refers to a man who can and will do specific favors, whether or not he is an obliging person by nature; it can be translated literally as "a man of favor," or perhaps better as an "influential man." *Awīlum gāmilum*,[8] on the other hand, refers precisely to the second alternative just envisaged, i.e. a "merciful man" (as it may be translated), a person who is by nature disposed to show compassion and to do favors, whether or not he is in a position to deliver them. It is not inconceivable, in other words, to have an *awīl gimillim gāmilum*, "a merciful man of favors," just as it is possible to have a man who is merciful but impotent to help. (Similarly, it is conceivable to speak in English of a "powerful power tool.")

So far I have utilized nouns and adjectives derived from verbal roots. But naturally my conclusions apply even more in the case of non-verbal nouns. For these, no verbal adjective is possible, and thus the limits of adjectival formation, noted above, are even more stringent. No adjective is attested, for example, for the noun *šarrum* "king," so a noun phrase can only be of the genitival type, as in *āl šarrūtim* "a kingship city," "a royal city."

It should be stressed, however, that these limits are not absolute, since denominal adjectives do occur occasionally--they are non productive, but not non-existent. It will appear immediately that their distribution is non predictable, so that they can only be listed lexically. As examples one may quote *tupp-ī-um*[9] "registered" from the loanword *tupp-um* "tablet", and *ziqn-ān-u*[10] "bearded" from the primary noun *ziqn-um* "beard."

4. CORRELATION BETWEEN GENITIVAL AND ADJECTIVAL NOUN PHRASES.

If *awīl gimillim* "man of favors" cannot be considered synonymous with *awīlum gāmilum* "compassionate man," the underlying structure will also have to be different. *Awīlum*

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[7]*CAD* G 75.

[8]CAD   G 32-33.

[9]*ABB* 4 47: 7; 52: 8. 5'. 11'; 62: 9.

[10]Only in lexical texts, cf. CAD Z 125. In late texts there is even attested the verbal adjective zaqnu from a denominative verbal root zqn. The regular expression for "bearded (man)" is *awīl ziqnim* or *ša ziqnim*, cf. CAD Z 125-7.

gāmilum can easily be understood as the nominalization of *awīlum gāmil*[11] "the man is com-
passionate"; but what about *awīl gimillim*? The main consideration is that the special
lexical value of *gimillum* must be retained, whichever type of sentence one may consider as
a correlate (i.e. whatever form one may choose for the tree).   One may think, for instance,
of the man making favors (*awīlum gimillam išakkan*[12] "the man makes a favor"), or of favors
being possible through the man (*itti awīlim gimillum ibašši* "there are favors with the
man").

Before carrying these considerations any further, it will be well to clarify a point of
surface structure. By saying, as I did earlier, that a given genitival noun phrase (e.g.
awīl gimillim) is not synonymous with a given adjectival noun phrase (*awīlum gāmilum*), I
do not imply that the two types of noun phrases cannot in principle be correlated to the
same underlying structural pattern. What really matters is whether or not adjective and
noun in the genitive have the same specialized lexical value. Supposing that an adjective
were to be derived from *gimillum* and thus retain its special lexical value--e.g.*gimillūm*
from *gimill-ī-um* "favor making"--then *awīl gimillim* and *awīlum *gimillūm* would in fact
be synonymous. Such was precisely the case, for instance, with *awīl ziqnim* and *ziqnānu*,
both meaning "bearded man." Whether or not a genitive corresponds to an adjective will
thus depend on the vagaries, as it were, of adjectival derivation, since there are no
apparent rules according to which *ziqnānu* is found in the language, but not *gimillūm*.
Potentially, then, every genitive can be rendered by an adjective if lexically available,[13]
and the question will be to determine whether or not a given adjective is in fact related
to a given noun lexically, and not only derivationally. Each individual case will have to
be handled separately--utilizing, here too, as complete a corpus as possible to make up
for the lack of living informants. Since I cannot offer here a thorough review of the
pertinent cases, a few selected examples will have to suffice as an indication of the
direction which the research may take. The material can be divided in three parts.

(a)   Metaphorical[14] extrapolation. In some cases an adjectival noun phrase seems to be

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[11]The permansive of the participle is rare, but see for example *Amar-Sīn-gāmil* "Amar-Sin
is compassionate," Hussey, *Sumerian Tablets* 2 47: r. 7 (Ur III).

[12]Note the interesting Old Assyrian examples quoted in CAD G 74 lb, where one sentence
contains in effect the nominalization of the other: *gimillam ina šērīya šukna* u *anāku
awīl gimillim* "do me a favor, I too am in a position to do (somebody) a favor."

[13]Note also the case of the pronominal personal suffixes, which may be correlated to the
independent personal pronoun.

[14]Or perhaps metonymic, as suggested during the Santa Barbara Conference by Joseph L. Malone
who also added the following comment: "It seems to me that metonymic processes play a
vastly more important role in linguistic organization than has hitherto been recognized
and are, au *fond*, responsible for the kinds of syntactic patterns captured by transforma-
tions like those called Psych-Movement (Postal) or Flip (Lakoff), the ultimate etiology
being a psychological ambivalence as to the locus of emotive stimuli and responses. From
the vantage of this hypothesis, then, whereas in a given case (e.g. the Akkadian *ūmum
hadūm*) a usage glossable as 'happy day' might derive historically via metonymy from a base
like 'day which makes a person happy', yet the quintessential aspect of such development
would be the a *priori* psychological difficulty of determing the locus of happiness.'

synonymous with a genitival noun phrase if the adjective acquires, by metaphorical extension, the lexical meaning proper of the genitive noun in the genitive noun phrase. Thus the phrase hi *ḫidūtim*[15] can be readily understood as the "day in which there is happiness"; but *ūmum ḫadūm* "happy day" would be equally possible[16] in a metaphorical sense: while *ḫadūm* is properly construed with an animate subject, if used with an inanimate subject it transfers to it, as it were, an animate feature, making for a more pregnant and colorful expression. Or again--the noun phrase *ālum dannum* (in the singular) does not occur, as already noted above; in the plural, on the other hand, the adjectival type is standard: *ālānu dannūtum* and the like[17]. For reasons that escape me, the metaphorical extension to an inanimate subject of an adjective (dannwn meaning "strong") otherwise reserved to animate subjects is here subject to a distribution based on number.

(b)   Adjectival noun phrase without genitival correlative. With some roots, only the adjectival noun phrase is found, e.g. *mātum rapaštum*[18] "wide territory," and not *māt rupšim* "territory of width," or the like[19]; *kalbum ṣalmum*[20] "black dog" and not *kalab ṣulmim*[21] "dog of blackness" or the like. This negative type of evidence is important. If the adjective does not impose lexical constraints such as requiring an animate subject, then it is properly and regularly used without recourse to another type of noun phrase, i. e. the genitival phrase. There is, in other words, no room for stylistic choice because the adjectival noun phrase is in fact the rule. This explains a fact noted earlier, namely the lack of the genitival noun phrase *šar dannūtim*: since *dannum* properly means "mighty," there is no room for a genitival phrase "king of might."

(c)   Apparent ambiguity. The noun phrase *awāt damiqtim*[22] "word of goodness" is attested alongside *awātum damiqtum*[23] "good word." They may be considered synonymous, because the adjective and the noun can be synonymous, and the contexts in which they occur also seen to be synonymous. Since the adjective can occur with inanimate subjects, a decision depends on whether the nominalization is primarily the description of a condition ("the word is good") or of an action with an object ('the word brings good luck"). This brings us back to a consideration of the structure of the noun phrase, which we should now take up directly.

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[15]*CAD* Ḫ 183 *ḫidūtu* d.

[16] Cf. *mušītu ḫadāt* "the night is happy" CAD H 26 lb.

[17]*CAD* D 381 1c1 (*dannūtim* being here the plural of the adjective rather than the genitive singular of the abstract).

[18]AHw 957 *rapšu* 2b.

[19] Cf. AHw 994 *rupšu*.

[20]*CAD* Ṣ 77 lal'.

[21] Cf. CAD Ṣ 240-41.

[22]*CAD* D 65f. lb.

[23]CAD D 69 la (end) .

5. THE STRUCTURE OF THE NOUN PHRASE.

Let us consider for a moment the possibility of a phrase such as *kalab ṣulmim* "dog of blackness," even though unattested, as indicated above. The phrase can clearly be under-stood in the sense of a stative sentence, i.e. a sentence in which the predicate expresses the state, condition or quality of the subject: *kalbum ṣalim* "the dog is black." If it were possible, one would then call *ṣulmim* a stative genitive.[24]

Let us consider, next, the phrase *awīl ziqnim* "man of beard," and the synonymous *zaqnu* "bearded." In spite of the adjective, the genitive cannot be considered stative, but rather possessive: "the man has a beard"; and the same applies to the adjective. Similar-ly, the adjective *tuppūm* "registered" is not stative (it does not mean that something is a tablet), but rather locative (something is entered on a tablet).

Thus the presence of an adjective is not sufficient to make a noun phrase stative: this determination will depend on the deep structure of the noun phrase itself, rather than on its surface realizations. With one exception: a clue which can be taken from surface structure is that a genitival noun phrase does not stand for expression of state--in other words, a stative genitive does not occur in Akkadian. This observation is based on the fact that, where lexical considerations make any interpretation other than stative impossible, one does not find a genitival noun phrase. *Kalab ṣulmim* could only mean, for lexical reasons, "a black dog" (not "a dog through which there is blackness," or the like), *māt rupšim* "a vast territory" (not "a territory through which there is vastity"). It is for these limitations that *kalab ṣulmim* and *māt rupšim* are in fact missing in the language; instead of a stative genitive, we have a stative adjective: *kalbum ṣalmum, mātum rapaštum.*

But what about genitival noun phrases with nouns from roots which are typically stative, and which do occur next to adjectival noun phrases--such as *awāt damiqtim* and *awātum damiqtum* which left us in doubt a moment ago? Lexical considerations will help once again to provide the answer. As apparent from the context,[25] *damiqtum* in the genitival noun phrase means "good luck"; hence *awāt damiqtim* is properly "a word through which there is good luck." The adjectival noun phrase may be taken, depending on the context, either in the different meaning of "a good word" (stative) or synonymously as a "propitious word," i.e. " a word through which there is good luck" (subjective).

The term subjective genitive is used in a sense only partly different from the traditional. The traditional subjective genitive (a category which is obviously to be retained) refers to a noun phrase in which the genitive (or modifier) corresponds to the subject of an underlying sentence, and the construct state (or head) to the predicate: e.g. *erišti*

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[24]"Stative" is not used here to refer to the permansive or predicative state of the noun, but rather to the fact that the predicate expresses a state (or quality or condition).

[25]And from the parallelism with *idat dumqim* "a good luck omen," CAD I 307 2b

šarrim "the king's desire" is understood as related to a sentence of the type *šarrum irriš* "the king wants (something)." The difference in *awāt damiqtim* is not in the genitive, but in the head of the noun phrase, since it does not correspond to the predicate, but rather to an adjunct or complement, with a resulting underlying sentence of the type: *ina awātim damiqtum ibbašši* "through the word there is good luck." To describe the two types of subjective genitive one must therefore refer to the noun phrase as a whole, not only to the genitive: *erišti šarrim* is a subjective genitive with the head (*erišti*) corresponding to the predicate of an underlying sentence; *awāt damiqtim* is a subjective genitive with the head corresponding to adjunct or complement. Because of the correlation between genitival and adjectival noun phrases, the definition applies also to adjectives; so in *awātum damiqtum* the adjective *damiqtum* "propitious" may also be described as subjective.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The main results of this research may be summarized briefly as follows:

(1) noun phrases with the genitive reflect the need to retain specialized lexical meanings (this may be especially useful in order to provide correct translations);

(2) every genitive may be rendered by an adjective if lexically available;

(3) there is no specific category of "attributive" genitive, if "attributive" means that the genitive may be rendered by an adjective, since all genitives may potentially be rendered by adjectives.

(4) there is also no "attributive" genitive if "attributive" means that the genitive stands for a stative genitive, since a stative qualification may only be rendered by an adjective, not by a genitive;

(5) there is practically no room for a stylistic choice between an adjectival and a genitival noun phrase, since the two types have basically different meanings.

(6) thus what is traditionally considered an attributive genitive will have to be classified as subjective, possessive, or the like (occasionally with further qualifications for the head of the noun phrase).

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and

*The Case Against the Alleged
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