

THE STATE OF THE "STATIVE"¹

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1. Distributional analysis

A dead language is only dead inasmuch as its carriers are dead. As a communication system, it is alive to the extent that it can function systematically and synchronically: what living carriers (i. e. living human speakers) brought to it in the past was a special kind of compe-

¹A preliminary draft of this article had been written when I received a copy of Huehnergard 1986 and 1987 through the courtesy of the author, so that I have been able to consider them fully in the present version of the paper. I had also heard Huehnergard's paper on the same subject presented in March, 1986 at the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society in New Haven. Since Huehnergard has reviewed in detail Kraus's presentation (especially in his 1986), with admirable lucidity and with arguments with which I am in full agreement, it will not be necessary for me to do so here. Even though the basic thrust of Huehnergard's work is very close to my own, the perspective of my present article and some of its main conclusions are sufficiently different to justify its publication in its present form. I am very grateful to Huehnergard for his generosity in sharing with me the text of his two important articles before publication, as well as for his comments on a preliminary draft of this paper.

tence, whereby the internal conditions used to regulate the system were observed and applied without conscious reference to any specific grammar. It follows that the methods and procedures which have been applied to "living" languages can also in principle be applied to "dead" languages to the extent that questions as to the possibility or impossibility of postulated forms may be verified against a sufficiently large body of data. Without belaboring this observation, I wish to use it as a starting point for some considerations about method.

In a recent monograph on the nominal sentence in Akkadian (Kraus 1984), the method I followed in an earlier article on the same subject (Buccellati 1968) was found at fault to the point that the author, while devoting several pages to a rebuttal of my conclusions, still felt that "eine detaillierete Auseinandersetzung mit einer so gearteten Arbeit untunlich, wo nicht unmöglich wäre" (Kraus 1984: 40), adding that he wondered why Reiner 1970: 291, should have bothered to recommend it. The method I follow here will fall short again of Kraus' expectations, and will thus again (unfortunately, to be sure, for the progress of our studies) not be susceptible to his full criticism. That not all is lost,² is shown perhaps by the fact that other authors,

²I will not take up here in detail the criticism by Kraus, which has, in large measure, already been undertaken by Huehnergard and to which I otherwise respond in a general way throughout this article. I wish only to respond to two specific points of criticism. (1) My 1968 article was not based on a specific corpus of data because it dealt generally with issues that can legitimately be taken to affect Akkadian as a whole. Surely, it must be acceptable to speak, for instance, of an Akkadian form *i-prus* without specific reference to a given corpus and without creating thereby the impression that one ignores the obvious diachronic development of Akkadian. My considerations about the stative were presented from such a perspective. Here too I am not basing my argumentation on a restricted corpus, because my aim is not to provide an exhaustive philological documentation for a given dialect, but to define a linguistic phenomenon that seems applicable to Akkadian (or at least Babylonian) as a whole. (2) Also along the lines of documentary evidence, I think that Kraus' objections represent a singular type of philological reasoning: on p. 37 he faults me for leaving it to the reader to find out that the predicative state is, he says, linguistically late; but the case for such diachronic consideration has just been made by Kraus in his own work, using ten volumes of the series *ABB* of which only two were available to me in 1968.

besides Reiner, have not been put off by my line of reasoning, and some have in fact even expressed their substantial agreement with it: Kienast 1980 (not quoted by Kraus); Gai 1984; Huehnergard 1986 and 1987; see also Andersen 1970: 45, and, with some objections, Castellino 1970: 92, n. 2; D. Cohen 1975: 92 ff.³

Si licet parva componere magnis, I find some analogy in the attitude shown by Kraus to that shown by Von Soden 1961 in response to Jacobsen 1960 (with the rejoinder by Jacobsen 1963), and this on two levels. First, one will find that levels of analysis are improperly mixed because morphological criteria are used to discuss syntactical phenomena; and second, excessive reliance on notional categories masks the need for formal distributional analysis. There develops as a result of the second point a certain overconfidence in our basic intuitive understanding of linguistic phenomena present in a dead language.⁴ Such understanding is often based on the transfer (or "translation", in the broadest sense of the term) of categories from the dead language into one or more living languages with which we are familiar. Thus Jacobsen

³Unfortunately, I have not been able to see, as of this writing, the book by D. Cohen 1984.

⁴A similar limitation would seem to be operative with Kraus's approach in an altogether different kind of argumentation. In a critical remark directed, this time, to a work of economic history (Yoffee 1977), Kraus 1979:425, objects to Yoffee's use of the term "crown" in lieu of what he calls "**gut altmesopotamische 'Palast'**" (emphasis mine): how German 'Palast' could be considered a "good Old Mesopotamian" word requires explanation! It does not seem to be a case of *lapsus calami*, for on the same page Kraus speaks of "Old Mesopotamian concepts" whereby the broad semantic range of a word (e. g. "palace") is considered a more valid conceptual tool than one derived through structural considerations (e. g. "crown"). Whether or not the conclusions of a structural approach may be considered acceptable, one cannot dismiss so easily the underlying method: to just attribute such procedure to capricious Young Turks ("Man kann es den jungen Leuten halt nie recht machen" *ibid.*) is not very productive. —If I may be allowed an irreverent and unorthodox reference, I would like to quote from the first chapter of H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*: when the "very Young Man" proposes enthusiastically that one might use the Time Machine to "get one's Greek from the very lips of Homer and Plato", the "Medical Man" retorts more soberly that that is in fact not necessary because "the German scholars have improved Greek so much."

had to point out through distributional analysis (one of the first instances of such an approach being applied to Akkadian syntax) that what is marked morphologically as the accusative case can stand syntactically for a much wider range of relations than the one subsumed under the accusative in other languages. Or, as in the case we are taking up here, an Akkadian verb of condition is generally understood as such simply because it expresses condition, i. e. because when translated into any number of modern languages it is rendered with a verb that expresses, in those languages, state or condition: just as *ekallum* has come to be identical, for Kraus, to German "Palast", to the point that he can use "Palast" as if it were an Akkadian word,⁵ so *alākum*, for example, has come to be understood as a fientive verb because its basic translation in any modern language results in a verb of action.

A workable method for reaching beyond the lack of living informants is to distinguish rigorously formal from notional criteria, and to articulate our formal analysis of the data in a consistent structural fashion. An efficient way of proceeding with such structural method is to view the data according to distributional arrays. Heuristically, this procedure posits relationships among slots which bring our assumptions to their logical conclusions and invite us to test their validity: thus a blank slot within an array which appears otherwise to be structurally valid will have to be justified as a meaningful zero (and might instead even escape notice if the analysis is carried out in an ad hoc, rather than a structural fashion). Descriptively, a distributional procedure allows us to represent at a glance not only individual phenomena but also and especially their relationships.

Such a procedure is in fact commonly used in traditional morphological presentations — in the form of paradigms. Paradigms are distributional arrays in the sense just described. And if one should comment, on the basis of such a simple and obvious fact, that this brief *apologia pro methodo sua* appears as an unnecessary theoretical exer-

⁵See preceding note.

cise⁶, then I must point out the following two facts. First, the use of syntactical paradigms is by no means an accepted procedure in our field, to the point that Kraus, for instance, belittles my earlier efforts claiming that the reconstructed forms in the paradigms are but unattested and undocumentable examples (1984: 20). Second, distributional analysis is in fact at the basis of even the most traditional effort, except that its presuppositions and goals are generally not made clear or even well understood, so that it cannot properly be used to its fullest extent; thus Kraus' es typology (1984: 43-61), for instance, is paradigmatic in intent, and his descriptive labeling (e. g. "I. B.2.a Selbständige Possessivpronomina als Prädikat der ersten Person Singular") is quite similar to a reconstructed paradigmatic form (just as "third person singular masculine, preterite B, indicative, fientive transitive root with root vowel u/a" would be for *iprus*).

2. The "stative" category

Properly understood, all grammatical classes should be defined distributionally according to formal properties. That we do not normally do so is the result of a form of conceptual short-hand: we assume intuitively that a certain grammatical class is distributionally valid, often on the basis of our acquired competence in that language or on the basis of our knowledge of other languages. The more common the class seems to be across linguistic boundaries, the more valid its application to individual languages will also appear to be. The concepts of "verb" and "noun" are a case in point. A verb is a verb: so why bother defining it?

And when a definition *is* given, it is generally couched in descriptive rather than distributional terms. In such cases we have in fact a paraphrase, not a definition. A real definition should set up clear and explicit formal boundaries⁷ of the element in question, articula-

⁶That would only lead again, in Kraus's words, to an "ebenso wortreich wie ergebnisarm ... Artikel" (1984: 39), or, as he complains about Rowton, to a "spitzfindigen Einteilung des Materials" (1984: 8).

ting on the one hand the contrasting elements to which it can be compared and on the other the higher nodes under which both the element in question and its paired contrasts may be subsumed;⁸ the formal boundaries are expressed in terms of attributes which are present or absent in any given element. A paraphrase, on the other hand, is an approximate notional description which employs broadly accepted lexical values as listed in the dictionaries.

It goes without saying (a) that we should retain the use of common terms when referring to distributional classes,⁹ and (b) that we need not justify distributionally every single term we use. We should, however, be ready to provide such a formal justification whenever called upon, and revise our concepts¹⁰ if necessary.

Given the attention that is currently being paid to the notion of the stative, it is important to be clear about its conceptual range. It has not, in fact, been defined in the works that deal with it from the viewpoint of Akkadian, probably because the term seems notionally

⁷One should remember that, etymologically, *to define* means precisely "to set up limits." In this sense, the effort at establishing proper terminology is not "futile", as suggested, for instance, with regard to the choice between "stative" and "permansive", by Aro 1965: 407.

⁸As an early example of such a basic conceptual procedure I may refer to Delitzsch 1889:234, Note, where he justifies as follows his term "Existenzweise" to subsume both stative and fientive forms: "Ich finde augenblicklich keinen besseren Namen als diesen, welcher insofern wenigstens berechtigt ist, als *existere* die Bedd. des **Eintritts in das Sein** und des **Daseins** vereinigt.

⁹Accepted grammatical terms are in fact representative of bundles of attributes, i. e. they stand in principle for distributional classes, and they are much easier for human minds to remember than any other alphanumeric combination.

¹⁰To this extent we should also be ready to revise the corresponding terms, if accepted terms stand for different bundles of attributes. It is to this extent, and to this extent only, that new terms should be encouraged. Technical terms are required to describe different distributional classes; needless jargon occurs only when we use a different term for a class which is already adequately defined by an existing term.

transparent. The *communis opinio* might be expressed along these lines: the stative describes the "state" or the condition of being, while its opposite describes the unfolding of the action. As an attempt to provide a more specific and precise definition,¹¹ I suggest that we compare this concept to others that are commonly applied to related phenomena.

When we speak of "tenses" of the verb, for instance, we envisage a situation whereby the time frame expressed by the predicate is placed in a certain relationship to the time frame of the speaker. Thus we may say that the preterite is temporally marked because it refers to an event that took place before the speaker's current position in time; on the other hand the infinitive, which is not a tense, is temporally unmarked. Otherwise stated, we have a binary pair with one pole (the preterite) marked as <+ time> and the other pole (the infinitive) marked as <- time>. It is useful to have terms that refer to the higher node under which the binary pair is subsumed. For some binary pairs, such terms are available in the tradition — thus for instance the term "aspect" refers to the node under which the two poles of perfective and imperfective are subsumed. In other cases, there are no terms available for the higher nodes, and this may often signal a corresponding lack of reflection on the underlying phenomenon, in which case the issue becomes conceptual rather than just terminological. In the case of the tenses, for instance, there is no traditional term that subsumes, conceptually, the notion of both time and non-time reference to the speaker, and there is a corresponding lack of clarification of the conceptual dimension of the categories in question; provisionally, I am using for this the term "range", which I take to refer to the degree by which a certain process is removed from, or overlapping with, the time of the "speaking".

The purpose of this brief digression was to explain the frame of re-

¹¹For a general framework of my argument and for a somewhat more detailed presentation of the concepts see Buccellati forthc., Chapters 16. 2; 63. 3-7; 70.4.

ference within which I am attempting to provide a more formal definition of the concept of stative. I use the terms "stative" and "fientive"¹² to refer to the two poles of a binary pair subsumed under a higher node which I call "**scope**"; and I view such a category of "scope" as expressing the **relationship between time frame of predicate and time frame of subject**. In this respect, then, the concept expressed by the term "fientive" is marked, and the concept expressed by the term "stative" is unmarked. In other words, the category of "scope" defines the temporal situation of the subject; under it are subsumed the two categories of "stative" and "fientive", whereby the fientive expresses a relationship of the subject to the time sequence while the stative does not.¹³ Thus the stative *şabit* "he holds/held" does not in and of itself express a temporal scope vis-à-vis the subject, whereas the fientive *işbat* "he seized" does.

Before continuing with a discussion of our immediate topic of interest, it may be useful to present a synoptic chart of the various relevant categories of the same type. This may perhaps show how my approach is closer to the traditional understanding of things than it may appear at first; the main difference is that I articulate explicitly and structurally insights which, in the traditional presentation, remain incomplete and are at best given as *ad hoc* explanations of isolated phenomena.

How valid my understanding of the category of "scope" may be will result from further study, as attempted in part in the rest of this

¹²I use "fientive" instead of the more common "fientic" to stress the relationship with "stative".

¹³A general atemporality of the nominal phrase has often been noted, e. g. Buccellati 1968:7 and 11; Contini 1982:13 with notes 102-104. But the observation does not seem to have been restricted to what I am calling "scope", whereby only the temporal position of the **subject** is envisaged. That a noun phrase may otherwise be placed at a special point in time vis-à-vis the speaker is quite possible and well attested, and is signaled by adverbs, particles, conjoined clauses or the like, as in the expressions noted by Lambert 1960: 309, note 255 (cf. Kraus 1984:30).

node	relationship between:	binary poles ¹⁴
scope	time frame of predicate and time frame of subject	fientive : stative
range	time frame of predicate and time frame of speaker	finite forms (moods and tenses) : verbal nouns
dimension ¹⁵	time span of action and position of predicate	punctual : durative
aspect ¹⁶	conclusion of action and position of subject	perfective : imperfective

this article. But at least the frame of reference suggested here provides a mechanism for handling the issue of the definition of the stative according to formal parameters, more so than a notional understanding of the category of state which is based primarily, it would seem, on the meaning of the English term.

3. Terminology

Given the broad variety of terms used, and concepts implied, in the literature on the subject,¹⁷ it seems useful at this point to present a review of the terminology used in this article — even though the justification for some of the choices made and a fuller explanation of the underlying assumptions will come later in the course of the article. I will do this in outline form, listing the terms by grammatical category.

¹⁴For our present purposes, only forms derived from the verbal paradigm are given, while derived nouns such as *ḡibtum* are omitted. For each pair, the marked element is given first.

¹⁵I use this English term to refer to what is normally expressed by the German term "Aktionsart"; I owe this suggestion of the English term to my student Robert Wexler.

¹⁶This concept is actually not operative in Akkadian, but is common in other Semitic languages.

¹⁷For a thoughtful and comprehensive review, with special attention to works on Indo-European and Semitic linguistics, see Contini 1982: 1-31.

Terms pertaining to the expression of **state**:

morphology	permansive (or stative morphological class): predicative state of the noun plus pronominal suffix in the subject case
syntax	verbless (or nominal or stative) sentence: sentence with stative predication (expressed morphologically by means of permansive, complex noun phrase in the nomi- native, invariable or pronoun)
semantics	stative root and pattern: defined distributionally in terms of attestations for specific slots

Terms pertaining to the expression of **action**:

morphology	finite verbal forms (i. e. moods and tenses), par- participle ticiple
syntax	verbal (or fientive) sentence
semantics	fientive root and pattern

Three sets of considerations may be added here. First, the outline given above suggests, on the one hand, that the terms "stative" and "fientive" should be used in a primary sense when referring to the semantic sphere, but that, on the other hand, they may also be used in a secondary sense when referring to either the morphological or the syntactical spheres. The semantic range of the term "stative" was defined by Landsberger 1967: 142, n. 15, in a way that found special acceptance by Reiner 1970: 292, Kraus 1984: 30, n. 72 and Huehnergard 1987, section II f. Here I also accept it,¹⁸ but with the following qualifications. The term "stative" does not, in and of itself, refer exclusively to the semantic sphere; it is simply that, if we want to distinguish the morphological, syntactical and semantic spheres, then different terms should be used — and then, out of convenience, we may choose the term stative for the semantic sphere and other terms for the other spheres. In other words, the main point is not that we

¹⁸My use of the term "stative" in Buccellati 1968 to refer to a morphological set and a syntactic category was clearly qualified (p. 6, n. 24) as being conditioned by prevailing usage, and did not derive from an intention to extend unduly the range of the term from the semantic to other spheres.

should not confuse terms (although this is important enough), but more significantly that we should not confuse concepts and levels of analysis.

* * *

As a second point, we may consider the term "permansive". This term, used as far back as 1889 by Delitzsch (though with a slightly different range of meaning) and then for instance by Ungnad 1906, was generally replaced with the term "stative" as a result of Von Soden's authoritative grammar (1952). Following the remarks in the preceding paragraph, I would argue that either term ("stative" or "permansive") is legitimate, but that the term "permansive" is preferable for practical purposes.

The term "stative" seems legitimate for two reasons. First, the predicative state of the noun (which is the first component of the category under consideration) is the only morphological class of the noun which is linked specifically, on the syntactical level, with the expression of state. Second, the kind of state that it expresses is the same (notionally) as the one discussed under syntax and semantics, hence no harm can arise due to conceptual interference.

There is, however, no one-to-one correlation between the sentences expressing state and the stative, since not all stative sentences occur in this particular morphological realization: specifically, stative sentences with a complex predicate use either the normal or the construct state, and pronouns and invariables may also occur as predicates of a stative sentence. As a morphological class, therefore, the "stative" covers only a subclass of the stative sentence, namely the subclass with simple nominal, indefinite predicate inflected in the predicative state. If we wish to stress this aspect, then a different term may be useful, and the term "permansive" is certainly the most appropriate. It expresses the same notion as the term "stative" and is, at the same time, already current in the traditional literature.

* * *

A third class of considerations pertains to the discussion as to the most appropriate terms to be used for the major types of Akkadian

sentence. Kraus 1984: 67-69, argues for the terms "verbal" (as in "verbaler Satz" or "verbalsatz") and "non-verbal", citing Gardiner (see p. 68 with n. 140). A similar terminology had already been used for Semitic by Andersen 1970 and for ancient Egyptian by Callender 1970 (not quoted by Kraus). Kraus argues that the term is preferable to "nominal" because the predicate of the sentences in question is in fact not only nominal, but also pronominal and adverbial; he also wonders why the issue had not been taken up before, and why the term "nominal" has become entrenched in traditional grammar (of which he quotes several pertinent examples).

Huehnergard 1986, n. 3; 1987, n. 2, accepts the concept, but correctly prefers the term "verbless", already introduced by Andersen, since the term "non-verbal" could also be taken to mean "not associated with words or speech".

Even though I will also use here the term "verbless" instead of "nominal" (as I did in 1968), I wish to point out that the use of the term "nominal" does not represent a gross error, nor does it engender any real confusion in Akkadian, but has simply been used in the tradition as a term $\kappa\alpha\tau'\epsilon\xi\omicron\chi\eta\nu$: on the one hand, it is conceptually clear that "nominal" sentences include sentences whose predicate is normally a noun or noun phrase, but also occasionally an invariable or a pronoun; on the other hand, there is no ambiguity between nominal sentences *strictu sensu* (i. e. with a noun as predicate) and nominal sentences *lato sensu* (i. e. with a noun). A good case for a distinction between "nominal" and "verbless" (whereby "nominal" is a distinct subset of "verbless") has been made by Callender 1970 and 1984, who deals specifically and exclusively with sentences in which the predicate is a noun. It is especially in view of such possible specific usage of the term "nominal" as discussed by Callender (at least in Egyptian and Coptic), that I will also use in this article the term "verbless".

But once the issue is raised, then I should like to carry it even further. If we are taking issue with established terminology, then the direction of the argument should be oriented differently. The problem with both sets of terms (verbal/nominal and verbal/verbless) is

that they give primacy to morphological categories when dealing with syntactic phenomena. It would be like calling the (morphologically defined) accusative case the "open" case because in the singular it is characterized by the (phonologically defined) open vowel α . More within the realm of actual practice, the case is similar to that of the morphological category "accusative" which is regularly used as a term for syntactical phenomena — at times with serious conceptual harm (as shown already by Jacobsen 1960 and 1963; see also, in detail, Buccellati forthc., chapters 57-59).

The syntactical difference between the two types of sentence is indeed signaled by different morphological categories (which is why morphologically oriented terms may be retained to the extent that they do not otherwise create confusion), but can also be identified, if desired, in terms of syntactical categories. In this respect, the two types of sentence differ on account of the type of predication that they convey: one (morphologically marked by finite verbal forms) expresses action, while the other (morphologically marked by nouns, pronouns or invariables) expresses condition. From this perspective, then, we may well speak of a fientive and a stative type of sentence, where "fientive" is the adjective corresponding to "action", and "stative" the adjective corresponding to "condition" or "state". Still, I am not recommending the use of these terms because in this case the (morphologically oriented) terms "verbless" and "verbal" are appropriate and more distinctive than the terms "stative" and "fientive". In other words, while I think that the terms "stative" and "fientive" are valid conceptually, where applied to syntax, I do not necessarily think that they are required terminologically.

4. Semantics: the stative root

That individual "words" may convey in and of themselves the notion of state has often been pointed out. In the literature, such an identification happens generally in terms of the perceived semantic overlap with modern languages. If we look for formal indentifiers, the following may be suggested.¹⁹

In the first place, we should qualify the concept of "words": For our purposes here, we mean units of speech whose meaning is not context-dependent. As such, it seems better to speak of roots, rather than verbs, of state or of action. A root, then, can be formally identified as being **of state** if

- (1) it does not normally have a B²⁰ participle (of the pattern (*pāris*),
- (2) it occurs with a causative/ingressive value in the Š stem,
- (3) it occurs with an ingressive value in the finite forms of the B stem (and then rarely),
- (4) it does not occur normally in the N stem.

A root of action, on the other hand, should be further subdivided depending on whether it has transitive or intransitive features. Accordingly, an **intransitive root of action** is identified as such if:

- (1) it does not normally have a B verbal adjective (of the pattern *parVs*),
- (2) it does not normally have a D stem (and when it does, then not generally in a factitive sense),
- (3) it does not occur with an ingressive value in the finite forms of the B stem,²¹
- (4) it occurs rarely in the N stem, and then generally with an ingressive value.

A **transitive root of action**, on the other hand, has both

- (1) a B participle and
- (2) a B adjective, and at the same time
- (3) it does not occur with an ingressive value in the finite forms of the B stem,²² and
- (4) it occurs in the N stem with a passive value.

¹⁹See Goetze 1942 for some important considerations in this regard.

²⁰I prefer to use the term B stem (for English "basic") over G stem (for German "Grundstamm").

²¹The ingressive value for such roots is expressed sometimes with the N stem, but perhaps more frequently periphrastically, for instance, by means of the infinitive of the root in question governed either by a finite form of the verb *epēšum*, e. g. *alākam ipuš* "he got going", or by the expression *ana x qātam šakānu* e. g. *ana alākim qātam iškun* "he set out to go". Note also that the ingressive equivalent of a verbless sentence with a primary noun as predicate is expressed periphrastically with the verb *ewū* and the terminative adverbial of the noun in question, e. g. *awīliš iwē* "he became a man"; see below, section 7.

²²The ingressive value is expressed periphrastically as with intransitives, see the preceding note.

Our documentation is such that we cannot always have sufficient data to perform the tests indicated for each root, and in addition exceptions do occur as a result of specialized lexical developments; nevertheless, the tests proposed are adequate to give a good handle on a formal treatment of the issue at stake.

It is important to note that a distributional definition of the category of scope (i. e., of stative and fientive forms) along these lines clarifies a potential antinomy which is otherwise inherent in the notional "definition" of the concept of stative. A stative root may in fact be inflected according to fientive forms and with a fientive (ingressive) meaning. It appears then that **"stative" does not mean that a root can only express state or condition, but rather that a root so qualified occurs with a certain configuration of forms in which forms expressing state clearly prevail.**

The situation may be rendered synoptically as follows (* indicates that forms are common, - indicates that forms are rare or non-existent); it must be stressed again that this is indicative only of a trend and it does not mean that a root in any given category will occur in all forms listed for that category nor that certain roots might not develop a specialized lexical meaning for a given slot:

	verbal nouns				finite forms		
	inf.	partcpl.	vb.	adj.	imptv.	pret.	perf. pres.
action/transitive (e.g. <i>ṣabātum</i>)	B	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
	N	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
	D	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
	Ṣ	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
action/intransitive (e.g. <i>alākum</i>)	B	*****	*****	-----	*****	*****	*****
	N	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	----- (ingressive)-----
	D	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Ṣ	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
stative (e.g. <i>damāqum</i>)	B	*****	-----	*****	-----	-----	----- (ingressive)-----
	N	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	D	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
	Ṣ	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	----- (ingressive)-----

Besides roots, individual **patterns**²³ may also be identified as expressing state or action, according to formal tests which are in part derived from the considerations sketched above. Finite forms of the

verb express action, and so does one verbal noun, the participle (*pārīš-*). The verbal adjective (*parVs-*) expresses state only. The infinitive appears to be ambiguous (*ṣabāt-um* would seem to stand for either "to hold" or "to seize"). Deverbal nouns, on the other hand (of the type *ṣarrāq-um* "thief" or *ṣurq-um* "theft", for example), and unmotivated nouns (such as *ab-um* "father" or *bīt-um* "house") I will for now leave out of consideration.²⁴

5. Morphology/1: simple predicate in *-um*

There is only one morphological class which is used exclusively to express state, i. e. the noun in the predicative state. The predicative state is a bound form, i. e. it occurs regularly with the pronominal suffixes of the subject case. The resulting combination (predicative state + pronominal suffix, of the type *damm-āku* "I am strong" or *sarr-āku* "I am king") is generally referred to by a single term, which has fluctuated in the tradition as either "stative" or "permansive". In traditional grammars, this form is normally included within the system of verbal tenses and considered as a tense of the verb next to the tenses of the indicative (*iprus, iptaras, iparras*).

The main thrust of my 1968 article was to propose that the "stative" not be considered a tense of the verb, but rather a form of nominal sentence. The disassociation from the tense system has been generally accepted, even by Kraus (1984: 25), so I will not come back to it here.²⁵ I will instead discuss two other points which have been

²³ I must refer to Buccellati forthc., chapters 7-8, 12, 16, for a full justification of terms and concepts.

²⁴ An avenue of research which I have not fully investigated is to sort all deverbal patterns according to the criteria indicated above for the differentiation among roots. Thus for instance, it would seem that the pattern *parrās-* is associated with roots of action as defined above, i. e. it may not occur with roots which also exclude the B participle, and the Š and B stem finite forms in a non-ingressive value (hence, no *dammāq-um*, for example).

²⁵ For a full systematic presentation of my understanding of this system within the overall framework of Akkadian grammar I may be allowed to refer once more to Buccellati forthc., chapters 25; 63. 3-4.

discussed in the literature: (1) the evidence for simple nominal predicates ending in *-um*, which will be considered in this section, and (2) the question as to the paradigm and morphological nature of transitive permansives, which will be considered in the next section.

In Buccellati 1968: 7, I had suggested that a sentence with simple nominal predicate in the nominative case of the normal state (of the type *Ḫammurapi šarrum* with the meaning "Hammurapi is king") is not regular in Akkadian, and that the regular form is instead *Ḫammurapi šar*, with the predicate in the predicative state. I considered there various exceptions, which I classified into four subtypes plus a residuum of a few unexplained forms (Buccellati 1968: 9 ff.), and I have noted a few others in the intervening years. Kraus (1984, esp.: 47) has also provided a list of such exceptions to my proposed rule, which Huehnergard (1986 n. 54²⁶) has sifted and qualified. Huehnergard has also included frequency computations, by which he comes to the conclusion that the number of exceptions is in fact so high that the rule itself must be called in question.

To some extent, my evaluation of the proposed exceptions differs from Huehnergard's, as I will endeavor to show presently, but I do agree with him that the nature of the evidence is such that it is best to provide a revision of the rule as stated in 1968. It must be stressed, however, that such an interpretation does not affect the basic understanding of the "permansive" or "stative" as "nominal" sentence.

Let me first show how some of the proposed exceptions are in fact not exceptions, because they can be better explained other than as simple predicates in the nominative. I will refer here to **three such categories which fall outside the proposed rule**: (1) the locative-adverbial in *-um*; (2) a sentence with deletion of the verbal predicate; (3) complex predicate (appearing on the surface as a simple predicate).

²⁶Huehnergard also refers to an unpublished paper by K. Wilcke who, he says, has reached the same conclusions.

(1) In some cases a simple predicate written with final *-um*²⁷ may best be understood as being in the **locative-adverbial case** (phonemic *-ūm /-u:m/*) rather than the nominative (phonemic *-um /-um/*). The possibility of such an interpretation has already been discussed in an exchange of articles between Lambert (1969; 1971) and Von Soden (1969; 1970; 1978; 1979: 7),²⁸ dealing especially with the first verse of *Atram-ḫasīs*.

Basically, I agree with Lambert's interpretation of the verse as

Inūma ilū awīlūm When the gods were **like** man,
taking *awīlūm* as a locative-adverbial in *-ūm*, rather than as

Inūma ilū awīlum When the gods were man,
reading *awīlum* as a nominative in *-um*. This interpretation is supported, besides other arguments, by the existence of a late duplicate which has *kīma amīli* in place of *awīlum* (Lambert 1969).

Here are some other examples, the first of which is in effect a converse formulation of the beginning of *Atram-ḫasīs*:

Ina panā Ut-napištim amēlūtūm-ma Heretofore Utnapištim was but like
(the rest of) mankind);
enennā-ma Ut-napištim u sinni-
*štašu lū emū kī ilānī nāšī-ma*²⁹ but now Ut-napištim and his wife have
indeed become like the gods, (like)
us.

[*Huwa*] *wa rigmašu abūbū(m), pī[šū]* Huwawa — his noise is like the flood,
*išātum-ma, napiššu mūtūm*³⁰ his mouth has real fire, his breath
is like death.

*birburrūka girri(š),*³¹ *rigimka* Your brightness is fire-like, your
addūm, kīma nēšim-mi nā'irim voice is storm-like, you behave like

²⁷ It must be remembered that the cuneiform system of writing does not normally indicate vocalic length.

²⁸ For an altogether different interpretation see Jacobsen 1977: 113.

²⁹ Gilg. xi 193 ff. Note the parallel between *amēlūtūm* and *kī ilānī*.

³⁰ Gilg. P iii 18-20; *išātum* is written logographically (GIBIL), hence its inflection is not made clear in the text; the presence of *-ma* suggests that it may be a nominative, and might indicate that the mouth is viewed as in fact spewing real fire, whereas the noise and the breath are not identified with the flood or with death. On the other hand, the lack of *m* in *abūbū(m)* presents a problem, since it is normally retained in the locative-adverbial.

tabašši, bašmūm-mi pīka, Anzūm a raging lion, your mouth is serpent-
(DINGIR.IM.DUGUD) *šupraka*³² like, your talons are eagle-like.³³

(2) In several cases what appears to be a predicate, should in fact be considered as the subject with a **deleted predicate**. The following example shows how deletion can occur:

Šumma ḥabbātum lā ittašbat ... If the robber has not been caught,
ālum u rabīānum, ša ina eršetī- the city and mayor in whose region
šunu ... ḥubtum iḥḥabtu, mimnāšu the robbery has taken place will
ḡalqam irīabbūšum make restitution for whatever has
*Šumma napištum <uḫtalliḡ>*³⁴ been lost. If a life <has been lost>,
ālum u rabīānum l mana kaspam the city and mayor will pay out one
*ana nišīšu išaqqalū.*³⁵ mana of silver to his family.

Here *napištum* is to be understood as the subject of a sentence with deleted predicate, parallel in form to the clause *ḥubtum iḥḥabtu*, and not as a verbless clause. Many one-word sentences (e. g. Kraus 1984: 43 ff.) may be understood in this manner, for instance:

*<Inanna> ebūrūm*³⁶ The harvest is <now>, /It is harvest time.

³¹ Since the text is available only in a preliminary copy by Pinches, from a tablet which can no longer be collated (see Güterbock 1939-1941, 46), it is possible that *gi-ri* is a mistake of the copier rather than the scribe. An emendation *gi-rum* is just as possible, in which case the mistake could be explained on account of the following *gir*. At any rate, a reading *girri* seems ungrammatical.

³² Güterbock 1939-1941, Rev. ii 1-3; I owe this reference (though not the interpretation proposed) to W. L. Moran.

³³ The alternation of *-ūm* (and probably *-iṣ*) with *kīma* + genitive is not to be viewed as a sequence of contrasting formulations, but rather as a chiasmic construction, emphasized by the switch in word order with the subject in first position in the first, and in last position in the third line, — I have rendered the forms in the adverbial case with the English postposition "-like" to suggest a more generic nuance in the adverbial formulation as compared with the fuller noun phrase containing an adjective; note that a noun phrase with a concord of substantive and adjective in the adverbial case (*nēšūm nā'irūm*) seems excluded. See also below, note 49.

³⁴ This is not an emendation, but rather a suggestion for a possible verb which we may assume to have been deleted.

³⁵ CH §§ 23 and 24.

³⁶ *ABB* 7 110: 8. For the deletion of the predicate *<inanna>* cf. *inanna ebūrūm, inanna erēšūm*, Kraus 1984: 44; *inanna anumma dīšūm*, *ARM* 10 48: 15.

Aššum tēm bītīm, <ana bītīm>
šulmum³⁷

Concerning the affairs of the house,
there is peace <for the house>, i. e.
Everything is all right at home.

(3) At times, what may appear to be a simple predicate, is in fact a **complex predicate** or, through inversion of word order, may be considered as a **subject**. See for instance:

Šumma abum atta ina kīnātīm...³⁸

If you are truly a father...

... yāšim pištum³⁹

(the fact that you speak in a deceitful way) is an insult to me.

Ina ālīka qaqqadānum attā-ma⁴⁰

You are indeed a man of importance
in your city.

Isinša tamhāru.⁴¹

Battle is a feast for her (Ishtar).

* * *

The three types described so far do not constitute exceptions to the rule I proposed in 1968 (i. e. the rule that would require regular use of the permansive for simple nominal predicates), but rather fall outside it. There are other cases, instead, where the normal state nominative does in fact occur with the simple predicate, so that a **qualification of the proposed rule** is necessary. Four such qualifications had already been advanced in Buccellati 1968: 9, namely:

- (1) nominalization of a **personal name**;
- (2) Akkadian portion of **bilingual texts**;
- (3) **external linguistic influence** in Western Akkadian and in Mesopotamian texts from the late periods;
- (4) **hypercorrection** of the graphic system in the late periods, when (wrong) case vowels are often added in final position.

To these I will now add the following three qualifications:

³⁷ABB 7 152: 9. For the deletion of the predicate <ana bītīm>, see ana ālim Kahat šulmum, ARM 2 59: 12 ff.

³⁸ABB 8 18: 17 ff.

³⁹ABB 9 1: 17. The dative yāšim serves as an adjunct for the predicate pištum.

⁴⁰ABB 3 18: 24 ff.

⁴¹VAS 10 214: iii 7 (Agušaya), see CAD I 197a. I owe this reference, though not the interpretation proposed, to W. L. Moran.

- (5) **Determination vs. indetermination.** In several examples a simple predicate in the normal state nominative may best be understood in terms of the context as being marked by a special degree of definiteness,⁴² as in the following examples:

*Ana epēš bītīki, lū awiltum attī*⁴³ As for the organization of the house, you are **the one** in charge.

*Ul martu atta*⁴⁴ You are not **the** heiress!⁴⁵

*Šarru atta*⁴⁶ You are the king.⁴⁷

If so, the rule proposed in Buccellati 1968: 10, may be rephrased as follows: **the simple, indefinite predicate of a verbless sentence occurs regularly in the predicative state.**

In order to place the concept of determination in a better perspective, we may consider its distributional correlation to indetermination on the one hand and to alternative forms of determination on the

⁴²On this concept see already Buccellati 1968: 10, n. 56, and :12, with references to previous literature. The notion of markedness, proposed by Huehnergard 1986: 3, tends in the same direction, but without quite proposing a full distinction between determination and indetermination. On the other hand Wilcke, as quoted by Huehnergard 1986, n. 59, has suggested a similar distinction, whereby "the predicative form is used when the predicate qualifies its subject, whereas it does not appear when the predicate is identified with the subject". This distinction is also central to Andersen's theory, 1970: 32 ff., about clauses of classification and clauses of identification, for which see also Hoftijzer 1973: 473 ff.. — Note that the old term "status indeterminatus" for the permansive (e. g. Ungnad 1906: §§ 24a, 26) reflects a similar basic understanding.

⁴³ARM 10 173: 7 ff.

⁴⁴MDP 23 285: 18 (OB). This passage was quoted in Buccellati 1968: 9, as an unexplained exception.

⁴⁵Determination makes good sense here because of the context: the text is a will, and the passage refers to a possible contestation of the will on the part of other children who might object to this particular daughter having been nominated the only heiress.

⁴⁶EA 4: 8 (MB). This passage was quoted in Buccellati 1968: 9, as an unexplained exception.

⁴⁷Determination here is derived from the immediately preceding context, where reference is made to the "king of Egypt". The expression "You are **the** king" is thus equivalent to "You are the king of Egypt". See also the next note.

other hand. In this light, determination is viewed as part of a continuum, namely the discourse, within which varying degrees of cross-referencing are possible:

1. if **no cross-referencing** occurs, we have indetermination;
2. if there is cross-referencing to an item that is **generally known** to the speaker (either from the discourse or from the overall situation external to the discourse), then we have determination;⁴⁸
3. if there is a marked cross-reference to elements which are **implicitly known** from the discourse, then we have emphasis;
4. if there is a marked cross-referencing to elements **specifically known** from the discourse, then we have an anaphoric reference;
5. if finally we have an **explicit mention** of the element being referred to, then the reference is built into the immediate context.

Here is a paradigm that lists the various alternatives:

type of reference

1. indeterminate	<i>Ḫammurapi šar</i> ⁴⁹	H. is king (he is royal, he belongs to the royal class)
2. determinate	<i>Ḫammurapi šarrum</i>	H. is the king (about whom we all know, e.g. the king of Babylon)
3. emphatic	<i>Ḫammurapi šarrum-ma</i>	H. is truly the king (he is not just the crown-prince, or some other such exclusion to be understood in terms of the discourse)
4. anaphoric	<i>šarrum šū</i> ⁵⁰	the above-mentioned king
5. built-in	<i>Ḫammurapi šar Bābīlīm</i>	H. is the king of Babylon

⁴⁸ A good example of this type of determination is the use of the term *šarrum* or *awīlum* to refer to the ruling king of a given territory without specification of such territory: thus in Mari *šarrum* or *awīlum* in the determinate sense "the king" means "king of Mari", while in Babylon the same term means "king of Babylon".

⁴⁹ Possibly a similar relationship of determination and indetermination occurs in a pair of the type *addūm/kīma nēšim* (see above, n. 33): the locative adverbial would then be indeterminate, and could be rendered as "storm-like", i. e. having the quality of the storm, whereas the prepositional phrase would be determinate, and could be rendered "like a lion", i. e. looking like a given lion.

⁵⁰ A sentence of the type *Ḫammurapi šarrum šū* seems to occur only with a special meaning of *šū* as a copula pronoun, see Huehnergard 1986: 5.

It will be apparent that determination (calling for the simple nominal predicate to be in the normal state nominative) can occur only with substantives, and that when adjectives are so constructed, they should be considered as substantivized (see Huehnergard 1986, n. 54).

- (6) **Subordination with substantives.** When the predicate occurs in a subordinate clause, the use of the normal state nominative for a simple predicate corresponds to the use of the subjunctive with a regular verbal form. See for example:

... *kīma bēlī atta awīlum.*⁵¹ (All of Sippar and Babylon know)
that you, my lord, are a gentleman

- (7) **Diachronic distribution.** All of the categories given above, except for 3 (partially) and 4, are synchronic in character. The suggestion of an important diachronic differentiation has been advanced by both Kraus 1984: 35 ff. and Huehnergard 1986: in their opinion, the normal state nominative was the original form of the predicate, at least for substantives, and only in later times, beginning especially in the Old Babylonian period, would the predicative state have come into regular use. A full discussion of this aspect of the problem would require on the one hand a thorough study of data from Old Akkadian (see for instance the permansive in -a, Gelb 1952: 146-153; 1965; 1969: 213) and Ebla (Gelb 1981: 36 ff.), and on the other hand a thorough statistical analysis of the documentation for the Akkadian of the early second millennium, neither of which I can do here. Such a study would have to take into account the synchronic considerations made above, especially category 5. A preliminary review by Huehnergard (1986, n. 55 and 1987: IIb) of the corpus assembled by Kraus concludes that "the predicative appears in Kraus's corpus in roughly half of the examples (i.e., 16 of 30) in which its use is possible and the form is unambiguous (not a logogram)." However, most of the examples in which the predicate is not in the predicative state may be explained according to one of the categories listed above. This means that the juxtaposition of the two types *Ḫammurapi šar* and *Ḫammurapi šarrum* must be viewed **not as a case of free variation, but as distributionally predictable.** As a result, any interpretation aiming to show that the normal state nominative was the regular form taken by a simple predicate in early Akkadian would still have to explain how such a grammatically meaningful distributional array came into existence as early as the Old Babylonian period.

6. Morphology/2: The paradigm of transitive permansives
A second issue to be discussed with regard to the morphology of the

⁵¹ ABB 2 83: 29.

permansive pertains to the paradigm and morphological nature of transitive permansives. This issue has been raised and formulated very lucidly by Huehnergard (1987: IIa/beginning, IIe, and IIf/end). While I agree with him on the merits of the issue, I wish to propose a different line of argument.

Huehnergard's point of departure is that a transitive permansive as in the sentence *eqlam šabit* "he holds a field" cannot be derived from the adjective *šabtum* which is, it would seem, a passive adjective with the meaning "seized" and not an active adjective meaning "holding". Hence one should envisage two different forms, a regular permansive derived from the verbal adjective and a "pseudo-verb" which is derived directly from the root and behaves as a transitive. The two forms as assumed by Huehnergard may be shown paradigmatically as follows:

- (a) *eqlum šabit* the field is seized — permansive (*parvs*)
eqlam šabit he holds the field — pseudo-verb (*paris*).

Since the vocalism of the first form can be in *i*, *a* or *u*, whereas the vocalism of the second is always with *i* in the second syllable, he uses the symbolic representation *parvs* (*v* = vowel) for the first form and *paris* for the second.

My argument will address first the issue of the presumed passive value of the verbal adjective, and then the issue of the proposed new verbal form which Huehnergard labels a "pseudo-verb".

* * *

On the face of it, a passive translation would indeed seem to be the best for the word *šabtu* in the following passage:

- (a) *šumma awīlum ... mimnāšu halqam* If a man seized from the hand of
in qāti awīlim iṣṣabat, awīlum, another something of his that was
ša hulqum ina qātišu šabtu, lost, the man, from whose hand the
 ...⁵² lost property was seized, ...

Consider, however, the following two alternative clauses:

- (b) *awīlum, ša hulqum ina qātišu iṣṣabtu, ...*
 (c) *awīlum, ša hulqum ina qātišu, ...*

⁵²CH § 9, vi 70 - vii 8. This is the sample text used by Huehnergard 1987 IIc for his argumentation; see also Kraus 1984: 31 ff.

The translation given above for (a) is also a proper translation for (b), and the question arises whether the two Akkadian clauses are just in free variation, or whether there may be a difference. Since the N-stem of the verb exhibits very regularly a passive (fientive) value, and since the permansive of the B-stem exhibits just as regularly a stative value, one should seriously consider the possibility of a stative value even for the few permansives which at first appear to have a passive (fientive) value. With this in mind, we may propose the following translations:

- (a) the man, in whose hand the lost property was held, ...
 (b) the man, from whose hand the lost property was seized, ...

The proposed translation for (a) makes in fact good sense in terms of the broader context of this particular law. The second man is presented in the rest of the law article as having become the new owner of the "lost" property, so that he has to establish a valid title to the property obtained through a regular purchase; the fact that the lost property "is owned" by him (stative value of *ṣābtu*) is therefore more significant than the fact that the lost property "has been seized" from him (passive fientive value of *iṣṣābtu*).

As a corollary one may ask what the corresponding value of the formulation in (c) might be implied by the literal translation,

- (c) the man, in whose hand the property was, ...,

this formulation does not place any emphasis on the aspect of ownership, leaving open the possibility that "he happened to have with him the lost property".

Even in the few cases where an adjective, followed by the genitive, appears to correspond to a case of nominalization of a passive + agent construction, a stative interpretation ought to be preferred. Thus a phrase like *maḥṣam igārim*⁵³ which is generally understood as a passive struck by a (falling) wall,⁵⁴ may better be understood as a stative in a state of shock through the (collapse) of a wall

⁵³SLT 1: 4 (OB lexical).

⁵⁴Cf. Von Soden 1960: 165; see also Reiner 1966: 125-127.

— which seems to fit with the proposed interpretation of the term as referring to a nervous disorder rather than to a specific event (Von Soden 1960: 165).

Our understanding of the Akkadian situation is made especially confusing if we rely more on English (or other modern European languages) for an intuitive analysis of the category. And this is because English does not have at all the grammatical mechanisms of Akkadian to render the stative category. Instead, English generally employs lexical means to render the contrast between fientive and stative (seize/hold, struck/in a state of shock). Only very rarely is a morphological variation from the same base used in English, as for example with the verb "to open":

- (a) the door is opened (by someone)
- (b) the door is (i. e. stays) open.

In some cases, in fact, English exhibits complete homonymy. Consider for instance the following two examples:

- (a) he plays the guitar = he is playing the guitar : fientive
- (b) he plays the guitar = he plays the guitar professionally
or he knows how to play the guitar : stative

Note how the passive transformation is possible for (a): in fact the sentence "the guitar is played" can only be related to the fientive value, and not to the stative, much as is the case (apart from the grammatical differences) with the Akkadian pair *šabit/iššabit* discussed above.

* * *

Regardless of whether the verbal adjective is passive (fientive) or stative, it would seem at first that the predicates in the two sentences mentioned at the beginning are different from each other in terms of their derivation from a nominal base: (a) seems derived from the verbal adjective, whereas (b) does not seem to be so derived since the verbal adjective is not attested in the normal state with the particular meaning of (b):

- (a) *eqlum šabit* the field is held/ *šabtum* held
eqlam šabit he holds the field/ [- holding].

It is on the basis of this distributional array (besides the presumed existence of a passive fientive) that the concept of a pseudo-verb has been introduced. We should consider the possibility that the empty slot in the array may be filled, but this is on the basis of examples which are neither numerous nor conclusive. Two of the examples (both OB) quoted by Von Soden 1960: 165, appear to have a transitive meaning, and if so they would govern in the construct state an objective genitive:

<i>nāšiam rēši</i>	the one who holds up high the head
<i>pātia īnim</i>	the one who keeps open (his) eye.

The assumption that they are verbal adjectives is based primarily on the morphological form of the construct in *-am*, and to some extent perhaps on what is perceived to be (notionally) the stative meaning of the expression. They could however be fientive/punctual participles (since the writing allows either reading):

<i>nāšiam rēši</i>	the one who lifts up the head
<i>pātia īnim</i>	the one who opens (his) eye.

The same ambiguity applies (in reverse) to noun phrases which are regularly taken to consist of the construct of a participle B followed by an objective genitive, of the type

<i>šābit eqlim</i>	the one who seizes a field,
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rather than a verbal adjective B, equally followed by an objective genitive, of the type

<i>šabit eqlim</i>	the one who holds a field.
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The only formal considerations that one could call upon to resolve the ambiguity would be examples in the feminine or examples of phonological crasis, of the type:

<i>šabtat eqlim</i>	the one (fem.) who holds a field
<i>šabṭeqlim</i>	the one who holds a field.

Yet even if we have no convincing examples of a noun phrase (as different from a sentence) with a verbal adjective used in a transitive sense, it does not necessarily follow that permansives that are so used (i. e. in a transitive sense) must be considered as a distinct morphological class, to be called "pseudo-verb". Since roots that ad-

mit of such a use are relatively few, and of a specialized type at that, it seems to me simpler to argue for a special lexicalized use of the permansive in a transitive sense. The case may be considered similar to that of the transitive use of an intransitive verb such as *alā-kun* in expressions of the type

ilkan illak he performs the *ilku*-duty (i. e. the obligation inherent in a certain type of restricted title to a field).

In such cases we do not, and do not need to, posit a separate lexical item or morphological class for the transitive use of a verb that is otherwise exclusively intransitive. In the same way we should consider the transitive use of the permansive as a specialized lexical use of a noun base that is otherwise used not in a fientive transitive, but in a stative function.

7. Syntax: the stative sentence

I have already argued in section 3 that the expression of state need not be restricted to the semantic sphere. In fact, as I will endeavor to show in this final section, the term and the concept may just as appropriately be applied to the grammatical sphere. The real problem would be to confuse levels of analysis, i. e. to argue for one level (e. g. semantics) with elements derived from another (e. g. syntax). With this proviso, the category of "scope" as defined above (i. e. the node comprising action and state) may very properly be applied to morphology and especially syntax. In morphology, as we have already seen, there is one category, the permansive (i. e., predicative state of the noun bound with the subject pronominal suffixes) which is reserved exclusively for the expression of state, although the reverse does not obtain (i. e., not all expressions of state require a permansive). In syntax there is, on the other hand, a univocal correlation and complete overlap between formal mechanisms and the "scope" of the sentence, because predication of state on the one hand, and of action on the other hand, are restricted to certain morphological and syntactical categories which in turn are reserved exclusively for either type of predica-

tion.

The "stative" (or "nominal" or "verbless" sentence) is characterized by a type of predication that expresses state or condition — i. e. (in the sense proposed above in section 2), a predication that does not entail a relationship of time between the subject and the process. This predication is consistently and regularly different from the type of predication that expresses action: predication expressing state uses the permansive (i. e. predicative state of the noun plus pronominal suffix) when the predicate is a simple indefinite noun, the nominative (of the normal or the construct state) when the predicate is a simple definite noun or a complex noun phrase, or simply the invariable form with invariables and pronouns; predication expressing action, on the other hand, uses the finite forms of the verb.

Intransitive fientive roots occur as predicates only in "verbal" (or "fientive") sentences — thus no stative sentence is generally possible with a verb like *aṭākum* "to go".⁵⁵

Stative roots and transitive roots occur as predicates in both "verbal" (or "fientive") and "verbless" (or "stative") sentences; in the case of stative roots, "verbal" (or "fientive") predicates acquire an ingressive value.

The paradigm may be expressed as follows in its simplest forms:

root type	sentence type	
	"verbal" (or "fientive")	"verbless" (or "stative")
intr. fientive	<i>awīlum illak</i> the man goes	
intr. stative	<i>awīlum idammīq</i> the man becomes good	<i>awīlum damīq</i> the man is ⁵⁶ good
trans. fientive	<i>awīlum iṣabbat</i> the man seizes	<i>awīlum ṣabit</i> the man holds

This paradigm restates in a different way what has already been stressed above in section 4, namely that a stative root is not to be

⁵⁵ But see below, n. 65, for expressions of the type *allāk*.

⁵⁶ I disregard here the fact that nominal predicates are neutral with regard to time, and render all examples arbitrarily in the present.

understood as "stative" in the sense that it expresses only state or condition, because it does in fact occur with fientive forms, albeit generally in a restricted ingressive value. Similarly, a fientive root is not exclusively fientive in that it occurs frequently in a stative construction. Only the intransitive fientive roots are generally restricted, in Akkadian, to a purely fientive value since expressions of the type *awīlum alik* "the man is in a going state" are quite infrequent (hence the blank slot in the paradigm).

We may consider in this connection an important point of comparison between Akkadian and English. Whereas in Akkadian stative and fientive sentences are rigorously differentiated by inflectional means, the same sentences in English are differentiated by lexical means (as with the contrast between "to seize" and "to hold" given in the paradigm") or by other similar mechanisms as shown in the chart that follows:⁵⁷

	fientive		English	
Akkadian				
<i>idammiq</i>	tense	he improves		lexical
<i>ipteṣṣi</i>	tense	he turns white		periphrastic
<i>imarraṣ</i>	tense	he falls ill		periphrastic
<i>iṣabbat</i>	tense	he seizes		lexical
<i>iṣṣim</i>	tense	it happens to fit		periphrastic
<i>uṣṣab</i>	tense	he sits		adverbial
stative				
<i>damiq</i>	permansive	he is good go		copula
<i>peṣi</i>	permansive	he is white		copula
<i>maruṣ</i>	permansive	he is sick		copula
<i>ṣabit</i>	permansive	he holds		lexical
<i>wasim</i>	permansive	it is fitting		gerund
<i>waṣib</i>	permansive	he sits		lexical

Clearly English is unpredictable in its rendering of the category of "scope" (i. e. action and condition): while it is true that the copula followed by an adjective or a gerund is always stative, it does

⁵⁷This is an additional reason why the terms "verbal" and "nominal" (or "verbless") are quite appropriate for a definition of the syntactical type of sentence in Akkadian.

not follow that expressions of state are regularly rendered by means of the copula. Analogously, it is true that a periphrastic expression using the verb "to become" is the regular ingressive counterpart of the sentence with a copula (I have omitted this translation in the list above in favor of more idiomatic expressions, but of course sentences like "he becomes good" or "he becomes white" are just as possible as "he improves" or "he turns white"); but the point is precisely that there are other ways in which this can be rendered as well, and that these are generally the more idiomatic ones.

It is interesting to consider further the English construction which appears to be a standard grammatical mechanism for expressing state with a fientive verb, namely the gerund as in "he is seizing". Since this sentence is different in meaning from the sentence "he holds", it does not affect directly the paradigm given above. But it points to another interesting characteristic of Akkadian. The Akkadian equivalent of "he is seizing" would seem to be the predicative state of the participle, i. e. *ṣābit*. Such a construction (the permansive of the participle) is in fact quite rare in Akkadian, unlike other Semitic languages:⁵⁸ it occurs with any degree of regularity only in the so-called physiognomatic omnia (Kraus 1936; 1937), where it is used to express the habit developed with regard to a given action, e. g. *šumma muštēzib*⁵⁹ If he is concerned about saving (others)...

If we extend our paradigm to include other types of sentences, the picture that has already emerged — of strict inflectional regularity in Akkadian and, conversely, of inflectional fluidity in English — is amply confirmed. This may be rendered at least in part by the following paradigm (where parentheses enclose periphrastic formulations):

⁵⁸ See for example, for Hebrew, Gordon 1982.

⁵⁹ Kraus 1936: 94, 51.

	fientive (verbal)		stative (verbless)	
	performative	ingressive	indefinite	definite
primary noun	(<i>āšipūtam ippeš</i>) ⁶⁰ he performs the office of exorcist	(<i>awīliš iwwē</i>) ⁶¹ he turns into a man	<i>awīl</i> he is a man	<i>šū awīlum(-ma)</i> he is the man
			<i>šū awīlum damqum</i> he is a good man	<i>šū awīlum damqum(-ma)</i> he is the good man
stative root	(<i>damqa ippeš</i>) ⁶² he acts well	<i>īdammiq</i> he becomes good	<i>damiq</i> he is good	<i>šū damqum-ma</i> he is the good one.
fientive- trans. root	<i>išabbat</i> he seizes	(<i>šabātam ippeš</i>) ⁶³ he starts to seize/hold	<i>šabit</i> he holds ⁶⁴	—
fientive- intr. root	<i>illak</i> he goes	(<i>alākam ippeš</i>) he gets going	— ⁶⁵	—

A certain parallelism might perhaps be recognized between the two sets of columns. Just as the referential trait of definiteness introduces a higher degree of specificity in the stative (or verbless) sentence, so an ingressive form may be considered as more specific than a "performative" one. As for the various periphrastic constructions, they are included to show more graphically how the correlative concept may be rendered in the language through means other than inflectional: as such, they do not belong properly in the paradigm.

⁶⁰Cf. CAD A/2:435. This periphrastic expression may be considered as a performative correlative to the ingressive and stative constructions with primary nouns.

⁶¹Said of Enkidu (with verb in the preterite), Gilg. P iii 25 (OB); a similar periphrastic construction is found, for instance, with the verb *tāru*, as in *itūrā ana tiṭṭi* "they turned to clay", Gilg. xi 133.

⁶²I. e. "he does a favor", cf. CAD E:208.

⁶³And other such periphrastic constructions, see above n. 60.

⁶⁴Or "he is in a holding pattern", which may include also the "passive" notion "he is held".

⁶⁵Deverbal nouns (i. e. nouns other than infinitive, verbal adjective or participle), which are not otherwise considered for purposes of this paradigm, might of course occur in this slot, e. g. *allāk* "he is a goer", i. e. a "traveller" or a "courier".

8. Conclusions

The distinction between state and action is of paramount importance in Akkadian because it is regulated by specific inflectional mechanisms, which find no real counterpart in English, and thus must be understood structurally from within. I have endeavored to explain how this happens by means of formal distributional analysis. By pointing at recurrent patterns and by correlating phenomena which are otherwise looked at in an ad hoc, atomistic fashion, we obtain, I believe, two important results. First, we gain a better handle on linguistic description, especially as it pertains to a dead language. Second, we gain a better understanding of the structural connections within language — both the means of expression and the message expressed.

Intuitive definitions and explanations, which should certainly furnish the point of departure for a critical inquiry, become much more manageable as analytical tools if we embed them within a system of correlations which are stated in formal terms. Such formal representation of intuition can be more easily assessed and validated and more constructively criticized. Thus to label a phenomenon as stative because it expresses state implies (a) that we share the same notional understanding of the concept of state, and (b) that we know when a given word or grammatical phenomenon matches that notion. If, on the other hand, we articulate the concept of state by viewing it as part of a larger structural system, with discrete and circumscribed (i. e., formally "defined") components, then we may more easily know just what we are talking about and validate (or disprove) the explanations proposed. Such categories as I have proposed of "scope" or "range" may or may not be acceptable (either terminologically or conceptually) but have at least the merit, I trust, of calling attention to formal patterns of correlation among means of expression.

That such an approach is not sterile, needlessly abstruse or a mere cover for philological ineffectiveness (as Kraus would have it when judging my earlier and, no doubt, present efforts) may perhaps be appreciated by a reader who will more sympathetically look at the contra-

stive presentation I have given above. Whether in the form of paradigms, or by means of concepts brought together under binary classes or through sets of complementary types of examples, the approach I have followed is, I submit, heuristically rewarding. The correlation to the temporal dimension that I have brought out in articulating the classes of scope and range, for instance, does yield a concrete insight into the structure of the verbal system. The integration of periphrastic performative or ingressive expressions, as proposed in the last section, clarifies the meaning of individual constructions by highlighting the potential contrast they convey with other parallel and complementary constructions. Just as an articulatory description of phonology does more justice to each individual phoneme than a mere alphabetical list, so a distributional study of sentence types sheds more light on the individual types than a listing by, say, relevant lexical items.

Nor are we dealing just with sentence "types" but, indeed, with "sentences". In other words, our sight is ultimately set not on the elegance of linguistic description but on the substance of the message conveyed. The reading of texts becomes more fruitful at the same time that it becomes more controlled. Our "good" translations will not be paraphrases of "poor", i. e. literal or morpho-lexical, translations, but rather they will reflect a reasoned understanding of syntactical and compositional regularities. If Akkadians could say something well in Akkadian, surely we can, to a large extent, say **the same** just as well in English. The emphasis on "same" is meant to imply that if we understand the syntactical uniqueness of Akkadian, we can render exactly that level of expression, rather than translating a translation, as one tends to do when aiming for a "good" translation. In this regard, translation is not just a service we render to the uninitiated, but an expression of our comprehension of both texts and language. Philological documentation and linguistic insight are then no different than, simply, understanding.

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