

T-Perfect in Old Babylonian: The Debate and a Thesis

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1. Current debate: an overview

After some 70 years of research, the nature of the Perfect *iptaras*¹ remains a vexing problem of Akkadian linguistics. Neither its etymology nor primary meaning are matters of consensus in the current scholarship. In fact, the semantic interpretation of *iptaras* in all syntactic contexts it occurs remains unclear.²

¹In this paper, I apply the following orthographic conventions:

- *the Perfect*—a morphological label used for the description of the Akkadian verbal system, *iptaras* is often used here in the same sense; *(the) perfect iššabat*—as applied to the parsing of a verb occurring in a quoted context;
- *PERFECT*—a verbal meaning grammaticalized in some languages of the world.

Often (but not consistently) used abbreviations are as follows: MC = main clause(s); TC = temporal clause(s); CC = (*šumma*) conditional clause(s); HL = Hammurapi-letters.

² The following overview does not seek to be complete or well balanced. It is meant only to highlight points important for the present study.

1.1. The meaning of *iptaras* in current research

According to GAG, the basic (? “vor allem”) meaning of *iptaras* in OB is “soeben erst vollendete bzw. als solche gedachte und noch wirksame Handlungen” (§ 80b).

Besides, “[d]as Pf. dient ... dem Ausdruck der Nachzeitigkeit in der Vergangenheit, wenn diese besonders betont werden soll” (§ 80d). “[W]ird aB ... eine im Prt. begonnene Erzählung im Pf. fortgeführt (sog. consecutio temporum)” (§ 156c).

“Auch in Beding.-S[ätzen] gibt es aB ... die consecutio temporum, der zufolge spätere Handlungsstufen im Pf. stehen” (§ 161e).

“Das Pf. in Bedingung.-S. ... bezeichnet ... aB die Bedingung als potential oder hypothetisch (Grundbedeutung wohl: ‘nun, X wird getan haben’...)” (§ 161f). Among modal uses of *iptaras* with certain modal particles GAG also mentions Irrealis in the future (§ 152d) and in the past (§ 152e), *iprus* being also used with the latter force.

In future time temporal clauses, GAG ascribes the Perfect the force of *futurum exactum* (§ 170g).

Suppl. to § 79b and to § 80c introduces into ³GAG the “Brief-Perfekt”, not differentiated from “Brief-Präteritum”.

One sees immediately that “soeben erst vollendete Handlung” is a grammatical meaning incompatible with “Nachzeitigkeit”, and the alleged potential (?) force of *iptaras* in clauses of “real” condition is difficult to reconcile semantically with either of them.³

Huehnergard 1997 begins by stating: “As a tense, the Perfect often corresponds roughly to the English present perfect” (p. 157), then he singles out the use of the Perfect (preceded by preterites) to indicate the critical event/the main point in legal protases and letters, partly following Maloney 1982. He notes that in letters “the next main clause verb [after *iptaras*. —S. L.] ... is almost always an injunctive form” (p. 157f.).⁴ J. Huehnergard’s only example from a letter is *inanna Nabi-Sîn ana mahyrika attardam*, which he translates as ‘I have now sent Nabi-Sîn to you’. J. Huehnergard first explains this *attardam* as presenting “the main point of the letter” (p. 158) and observes:

³ The use of the Perfect to express Irrealis is not studied in this paper. See Krebernik–Streck 2001.

⁴ This fact was noted already by Oppenheim 1935:8, the first scholar who examined closely the *iptaras* form (see also his earlier contribution Oppenheim 1933). Maloney 1982:7–30 has a very well written history of research into the OB Perfect, so I will not dwell on this matter any longer.

“The clause with *aṭṭardam* begins with the adverb *inanna* ‘now’; this adverb, or another, *anumma* ‘now, herewith, hereby’, or both (*inanna anumma*), often (but not necessarily) accompany the Perfect, to emphasize *the immediacy, the current relevance*, of the event. This use of the Perfect, in which the verb may denote *the actual performance* of the action it describes, is variously termed by grammarians the ‘announcement Perfect’ or ‘epistolary Perfect’. (Some scholars prefer, in such cases, to translate the Perfect into English by the present rather by the present perfect; in the example above: ‘I now send Nabi-Sîn ...’)” (ibid.).

Thus, J. Huehnergard follows GAG as far as the definition of the basic function of *iptaras* is concerned,⁵ but he treats CH, letters and contracts separately, since “the Perfect has slightly different uses in different genres of texts” (p. 157). Actually he says little about these differences. His formulations are not really definitive, but the impression left on the reader is that the *iptaras* as the last verb in the CH protases is “present perfect”, cf. his translation of a law: ‘if a man *rented* an ox and a god *struck* it, and it *has died* (*imtūt*), the man who rented the ox will swear an oath and be set free’ (p. 157, italics added).

The only study taking account of *iptaras* in all of AbB 1–13 known to me is Leong 1994.⁶ Following Goetze 1936, GAG and Maloney 1982, T. F. Leong founded his whole analysis of *iptaras* on the concept of *current relevance*.

I will not attempt to sum up the results of Maloney 1982⁷ and Leong 1994 but will refer to their thoughts in this paper wherever necessary. Still, one observation will perhaps be appropriate here. Maloney 1982 and Leong 1994 explain the invariant (or primary) meaning of both the cross-linguistic category PERFECT and the OB *iptaras* as “current relevance”, which latter is no elementary notion, yet unfortunately it seems to be self-explanatory and therefore is easily “reified” in Assyriology. To say “the perfect in OB serves to indicate the current relevance of a past event” (Maloney 1982:33) is perhaps not quite wrong, but within this approach it will be difficult to draw a clear enough distinction between *ipta-*

⁵ As is well known, GAG is dependent in this respect on Goetze 1936, still the most insightful study of the OB “*t*-form”, though it was written at the time when no reliable theory of verbal derivational and temporal categories in Akkadian was available. A. Goetze calls the temporal *t*-form “aorist” when it is used in MC, the terms “perfect” and “relative tense” are employed by A. Goetze to describe the functions of *t*-form in subordinate clauses.

⁶ The epistolary corpus of Kaplan 2002 is restricted to the letters of Hammurapi.

⁷ Discussions of Maloney 1982 can be found in Streck 1995a (conveniently, the book offers an index of quoted scholars) and in Metzler 2002:880f.

ras and *paris*, which, as our intuition tells us, does exist, although in certain contexts both verb forms may be used (almost) synonymously.⁸ Leong 1994 subscribes to J. F. Maloney's definition of the Perfect and glosses "current relevance" (quoting McCoard 1978:19) as "a present state resulting from a past action", which again does not help to keep *iptaras* and *paris* apart. Incidentally, the explanation of the undeniable fact that the Preterite too can have "current relevance" by claiming it is an implicature and not a grammatical meaning of the Preterite (Leong 1994:169) is not convincing, since eventually this explanation can lead (and does sometimes lead in Assyriology) to the embarrassing conclusion that *iptaras* is optional in most of its surroundings.

A note: Defining the PERFECT

"A present state resulting from a past action" definition of the PERFECT is common in linguistics, but such notions as "action", "state" or "result" when used as the definition's core may be misleading because they are related to lexical and aspectual semantics. A more formal way to grasp PERFECT as a cross-linguistic grammatical category is to be preferred, cf. e.g. the approach suggested by Ö. Dahl, who points out that the semantic element shared by the "perfect of result" and the "perfect of recent past" (Comrie 1976:56ff., 60f.) is "that both involve a point of reference (in Reichenbach's sense) which is different from the 'point of event'" (Dahl 1985:133). To be more exact, in Reichenbach 1947:290, 297 the English present perfect is schematized as E → S, R and labelled "Anterior pre-

⁸ Thus, one thinks of examples like *it-te-eh-ri ... u₂-ul hi-ri-a-at* "(one canal) has been dug, (the other canal) has not been dug" (AbB 2, 5:4f.). One wonders why the author did not choose the N Pret as the negation of *it-te-eh-ri* (cf. 2.6 and 3.2 below). For a collection of "currently relevant" statives, see Rowton 1962:292ff. The N Preterite often seems to be interchangeable with the G Stative, cf. e.g. AbB 4,79:16f. BUR₃.3.IKU A.ŠA₃ *ša i-na E₂.GAL ka-an-ku-šum* "...the three-bur field that was transferred to him in the Palace through a sealed document" with *ibid.* ll. 24f. A.ŠA₃-*am ša pi₂-i ka-ni-ki-im ša i-na E₂.GAL ik-ka-an-ku-šum* "...[return] the field that <belongs to him> according to the sealed document that was given to him in the Palace". In this text, both verb forms refer to the same extralinguistic fact and obtain in identical syntactic surroundings. See also the examples adduced in Metzler 2002:94. It is generally clear that "the resultative (~ the Stative.—S. L.) points to the state resulting from the action while the anterior (~ the PERFECT.—S. L.) points to the action itself" (Bybee et al. 1994:65), but one wonders whether OB has positions of neutralization for these verb forms.

sent” (S = the point of speech, E = the point of the event, R = the point of reference).

In some quarters, this way to define the PERFECT has become almost commonplace, cf. e.g. Li et alii 1982:19: “[T]he essence of the Perfect is its function of relating events/states to a Reference Time, either to the time of the narrative or to the time of the speech act”.

Disagreements in defining the PERFECT observable in current linguistic literature are perhaps partly due to the pre-theoretical origin of this notion (cf. the non-definable concepts of *word*, *part of speech*, etc.). The term seems to be attested for the first time in the Greek grammar of Dionysios Thrax (ca. 170—ca. 90 BC), who listed four kinds of past tenses, among them *παρὰκειμένον*, lit. “lying beside or before” (Ars Grammatica 13); this term was rendered in Latin as *perfectum*.

In this paper, the PERFECT is understood as a semantically complex *temporal* grammeme that denotes a fact situated on the time axis to the left of the reference point and observed from the latter. In other words, a fact encoded by the PERFECT grammeme is depicted as having a resultative component that holds at the moment of observation. This definition presupposes that respective languages have grams (i.e. formal elements) to distinguish the PERFECT from the punctive/simple past.

Linguists often consider the PERFECT among verbal aspects (so e.g. Comrie 1976). The standard understanding of aspect is that it is so to speak “internal time”: “aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation” (ibid. 3). Still what is distinctive about the PERFECT is not “the *internal temporal* constituency” of the respective fact but rather a morphologically “in-built” *external temporal* vantage point from which the fact is viewed, quite irrespective of its internal properties. Therefore I regard the PERFECT as a temporal value, albeit a complex one.

* * *

The research of M. P. Streck and K. A. Metzler⁹ embodies a radical departure from the “Goetze approach” outlined above. According to Streck 1998a:189f., one of the two most important usages of *iptaras* in the time of Hammurapi is “anteriority in the future in main clauses, subordinate clauses and conditional clauses. In contrast to *iprus* ... , not only anteriority relative to the reference point but also future tense are marked”. His example:

⁹ Streck 1995a, 1998a, 1999; Metzler 2002.

šumma awīlum in mār awīlim uhtappid inšu uḫappadū ‘If a man (will have blinded =) has blinded the eye of another man, they shall blind his eye’. CH § 196.

From Streck 1999 it is clear that “anteriority in the future in main clauses” refers to the epistolary Perfect (henceforward EPf), “anteriority in the future in subordinate clauses” refers to temporal clauses.

The second typical usage of *iptaras* is, according to Streck 1998a:190, “to express the temporal progress in main clauses, subordinate clauses and conditional clauses”. In Streck 1999:108 this usage is referred to as “zeitlicher Progress der Vorzeitigkeit”, it embraces *iprus—iptaras* chains in the main clauses of letters (“vorzeitig zum Gegenwartspunkt”, *ibid.*), *iprus—iptaras* chains with the force of “epistolary past tense” (“Vorzeitigkeit in der Zukunft”, p. 110), one example of *iprus—iptaras* sequence in a relative clause with past time reference (p. 112), and *iprus—iptaras* chains in the protases of CH (according to Streck, “Zeitstellenwert Zukunft”, i.e. within this system the CH protases denote future time anteriority relative to apodoses).

Thus, in M. P. Streck’s view, the temporal meaning of OB *iptaras* is always as follows: “liegt der durch *iptaras* bezeichnete Sachverhalt vorzeitig zum ersten und nachzeitig zum zweiten Relationswert” (Streck 1995a:199). Consequently, *iptaras* is “kein Perfekt” in the cross-linguistic sense (Streck 1999:118, cf. Streck 1995a:214), and therefore has no more “current relevance” of its own than the Preterite.

As is clear from Streck 1998a, Streck 1999:102, and Streck 1995a:235–245, M. P. Streck understands both OB and late Babylonian verbal systems as expressing relative and not absolute time. Thus, he believes that the OB *iparras* “denote(s) situations that are not anterior, hence simultaneous or posterior, relative to a given reference point” (Streck 1998a:183), while *iprus* “denote(s) situations that are anterior relative to a given reference point” (Streck 1998a:188), which may be the moment of speaking or may be located in the past or in the future (p. 188f.). Streck 1999:102 formulates this approach in a straightforward way: “Im Zentrum des altbabylonisches Verbal-systems steht die Opposition zwischen dem Preteritum *iprus* und dem Präsens *iparras*. Sie dient im Rahmen eines relativen Tempussystems dem Ausdruck des semantischen Gegensatzes ‘Vorzeitigkeit’ : ‘Gleich- und Nachzeitigkeit’ in Relation zu einem vom Sprecher zu setzenden, nicht im Gegenwartspunkt verankerten Zeitwert”. It is against this background that M. P. Streck solves the problem of *iptaras*.

Thus, according to M. P. Streck, both *iprus* and *iptaras* express anteriority, but *iptaras* additionally denotes posteriority relative to a second reference point.

M. P. Streck thinks that “isolated”¹⁰ *iptaras* in main clauses (with the exception of the “epistolary perfect”) represents its secondary and innovative use:

“Die sekundäre F[un]kt[ion] von *iptaras* setzt schon aB ein und führt im nach-aB-Akk. zur Verdrängung von *iprus* durch *iptaras* in PAHV”¹¹ (Streck 1995a:202, same in more detail in Streck 1999:114, 117f.).

This is the conclusion reached in Streck 1995a on the basis of evidence presented in GAG, Maloney 1982 and Hirsch 1969. In the corpus consisting of 195 letters of Hammurapi, Streck 1999 found 8 such examples of isolated *iptaras*, all of them in reported speech. In both studies M. P. Streck explains this usage as a development (Weiterentwicklung) of the temporal progress function and as a feature of the spoken OB.

Metzler 2002 thinks that in his corpus¹² all four Akkadian tenses denote relative time (a conclusion earlier reached by M.P.Streck for all of the OB). K. A. Metzler is consistent in claiming throughout his study that *iptaras* in all its regular (or “explainable”) functions points to another finite verb obtaining in the immediate left co-text of the respective *iptaras* form,¹³ most often a preterite, i.e. each isolated (or syntactically independent) *iptaras* is relegated to unclear usage (“Unklarer Gebrauch des Perfekts”, featuring in all the genres studied by K. A. Metzler, see the summary on p. 878). In Metzler’s view, the only function of *iptaras* valid for all the literary genres is “Perfekt des Fortschreitens”, roughly equivalent to GAG’s *Nachzeitigkeit* and M. P. Streck’s “zeitlicher Progress”. In terms of verbal grammatical semantics, “hat das Perfekt die Bedeutung des Präteritums zuzüglich einer zusätzlichen Nuance. Unter hypothetischem Verzicht auf diese besondere Nuance ließe sich das Perfekt durch das Präteritum ersetzen” (p. 875). K. A. Metzler excludes the PERFECT meaning of *iptaras* (as opposed to *iprus*) from his corpus.

In his analysis of *iptaras*, K. A. Metzler disagrees with M. P. Streck mostly in his rejection of the two-reference-points theory:

¹⁰ “Isolated” means in this case that an *iptaras* form in the non-subordinate clause is not preceded by a preterite.

¹¹ PAHV = Positiver Aussagehauptsatz der Vergangenheit.

¹² It comprises OB literary texts, i.e. laws, omnia, narrative texts in prose and verse, literary dialogues, hymns, prayers, letters to and from gods, and incantations.

¹³ With the exception of EPf and of what K. A. Metzler calls “Perfekt der Retrospektive und des Hintergrunds” in the narrative texts (p. 461–481).

“Man gewinnt den Eindruck, daß in der Darstellung M. P. Streck’s die Anzahl der Bezugspunkte von Präteritum und Perfekt dem Verständnis der Texte vorangeht und daß sich das Verständnis der Texte an der Anzahl dieser Bezugspunkte orientiert” (Metzler 2002:883).

1.2. The outline of the present study¹⁴

It is clear that one’s idea about the functions of *iptaras* depends on one’s understanding of the OB verb tenses and aspects. Thus, M. P. Streck’s and K. A. Metzler’s views do not hold if OB did possess absolute tense(s).

It is equally clear that the question “did OB have absolute tenses?” and the problem of verbal aspects in OB are not quite settled in the research, so I will try to grasp the basic meaning of *iptaras* without first attempting to present a general view of what semantic features are grammaticalized in the OB verb. Since *iptaras* often occurs in letters,¹⁵ our main source for deictic use of verb forms in OB, it is reasonable to regard them as the primary source of linguistic evidence.

The Perfect *iptaras* is largely restricted to three types of syntactic patterns: main clauses, temporal clauses and conditional clauses.¹⁶ A simplified statement of my conclusions is as follows: in main clauses, the temporal value of *iptaras* is derived from the coding time (writer) or decoding time (addressee), the latter usage is often referred to as EPf. In temporal clauses, *iptaras* itself provides reference time for main clauses’ facts (~ “*futurum exactum*”). In conditional *šumma*-clauses, the temporal value of *iptaras* is either derived from the coding time (pre-present conditions) or, as in temporal clauses, *iptaras* itself serves as a point of reference for main clauses (future conditions). The use of tenses in OB laws is examined separately (Excursus III).

If we stay with the time-honoured post-Saussurian structuralism, *iptaras* is expected to acquire its meanings paradigmatically, through opposition to other finite forms occurring within the same syntactic patterns (i.e. the two kinds of main clauses just mentioned, temporal clauses and conditional clauses), and syntagmatically, from the properties of the respective syntactic

¹⁴ Because of time pressure, it has been impossible to check every relevant verb form in the extant OB corpus, therefore some of my conclusions are of necessity preliminary.

¹⁵ For AbB 1–7, see an alphabetic list in Maloney 1982, for AbB 1–13 see numerous examples (but unfortunately no indexes) in Leong 1994. As far as I know, Mari letters have not yet been systematically studied for *iptaras*.

¹⁶ Certain less typical syntactic contexts are also mentioned in the paper.

contexts. Since a full-fledged OB grammar does not yet exist, a description of this kind will be of necessity preliminary, still it will be attempted.

Any research into verbal tense and aspect of OB has to take into account semantic types of verbs, i.e. ultimately their lexical meanings. A developed classification of verbs according to their semantic types does not yet exist in Akkadian linguistics, still I offer a few *ad hoc* observations on the interplay between verb form and lexical meaning.

2. The use of *iptaras* in non-subordinate clauses

2.1. OB finite verb in the context of *inanna*

As the first step I will pick up the deictic adverb *inanna* “now” as the most explicit among the likely pointers to the moment of speaking to study its compatibility with finite verb forms.¹⁷

These are all the examples found in my corpus:¹⁸

- (1) <after a quote from an earlier letter> *te₄-ma-am an-ni-a-*
am PN SUKKAL KA.KAS₄ *u₂-te-er-ra-am i-na-an-na aš-šum*
 GU₂.UN *uh-ḫu-ra-at an-ni-iš at-ta-an-sa-ka-am*

¹⁷ I hope to study *adi inanna* and *adīni (ul)* elsewhere. In this paper, I am using wherever possible a small corpus consisting of documents written in the Diyala region mostly in pre-Hammurapi time. The corpus includes Letters from Harmal (LH), Greengus 1979 abbreviated as OBTIV (only texts transliterated in Greengus 1979 and Greengus 1986 are used), L(aws of) E(shnunna), and Whiting 1987. R. Whiting called the dialect of the earlier letters from AS 22 “archaic Old Babylonian”, but he admits that “[t]here is nothing particularly unusual about the tenses of the verb or their use in the letters” (p. 12). Since I feel that the language of CH and HL (I of course consider these corpora in my study) is perhaps over-standardized, I have decided to draw for comparison texts from a different location but a little bit older and no less Babylonian (in the broader sense of the word) than the documents written in Babylon and dated to the reign of Hammurapi. LE has been subject of in-depth philological research, and AS 22 is provided with good commentary. For LH I have used the edition by Goetze 1958 and a new philological commentary prepared in 2003 by Ekaterina Markina of the Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow (unpublished MA thesis). Wherever the readings of LH quoted in this paper deviate from Goetze 1958, they are based on the proposals of AHW. and CAD, on Markina 2003 or on my own considerations. Fortunately enough, the discrepancies in the reading of the cuneiform text of LH and in its philological interpretation do not seriously affect the linguistic treatment of the respective passages as proposed in this paper.

¹⁸ I indicate wherever necessary the immediate left and right co-text of the respective utterances because to take it into account is essential for establishing the meaning of both *inanna* and the verb forms following it.

PN *šukkallum* of KA.KAS₄ brought me this message. *Now I am being blamed here for the tribute which has fallen in arrears.* (For five days from now I will be waiting to receiving the tribute). LH 1:33–36, the translation of the italicized part is as in Goetze 1958.

(2) *an-ni-tam ta-aq-bi-a-nim i-na-an-na ḫal-šum ša wa-aš-ba-a-ku dan-ma a-la-kam u₃ pa-ni-ši-na a-ma-ra-am u₂-ul e-li-i.*

This you told me. Now the fortress I live in is in danger and I am unable to go to see them.¹⁹ LH 3:9–13.

(3) *i-na-na a-nu-um-ma Bu-ri-ia at-ta₃-ar-da-ak-kum*

Now then I have sent Buriya to you. LH 14:9–10, Goetze’s translation. EPf,²⁰ right co-text is not quite clear to me.

(4) *i-nu-ma a-na ra-BI-[x-o] LUGAL u₂-wa-e-ru-[ka] 1 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR ta-aq-bi[-o] i-na-an-na aš-šum ša-bu-ka a-na me-eḫ-ri-i-im it-ta-al-kam da-ḪA-at-ni u₂-ul ta-ša-al*

When the king sent you to [...], you promised 1 shekel of silver. Now, because your people has attained equality,²¹ you do not pay any attention to us. (Send us either 1 shekel of silver or 1 fattened ram). LH 17:6–11.

(5) *i-na-an-na ITI.1.KAM im-ta-la u₂-ul KU₃.BABBAR tu-ub-lam u₂-ul ṭe₄-em-ka tu-te-er-ra-am*

¹⁹ The reference of *-ši-na* is not quite clear. Goetze 1958 translates “I am unable to come and to see them (the towns)”. But *ālum* does not seem to be feminine in OB, and anyway no “towns” are mentioned in this letter. CAD A/II 22 sees the problem of grammatical gender and translates differently: “I cannot come (to your city) and see them (the inhabitants) personally”. As pointed out in Goetze 1958:16 (and see M. Stol *apud* AbB 9, 226 for more examples outside of LH), the self-designation of the letter’s author, *ṭa₃-ri-du-um*, is most probably a common noun for an official, in this case residing permanently in Eshnunna. If this is true, *a-la-kam* (l.12) is to be translated as “go”, not “come”, and ll. 14–16 *al-ka-a-ma ṭe₄-em-ku-nu ma-ḫar E₂.GAL-lim šu-uk-na-nim* should be translated “come to Eshnunna and put your request before the palace”, not “go”, as Goetze did, since the ventive on *šu-uk-na-nim* does the duty also for *alkā*. The writer is staying in an endangered fortress but he presents Eshnunna as his spatial deictic centre.

²⁰ On *anumma* and *inanna anumma* see 2.7 below.

²¹ Goetze 1958:38: “(But) since now your people has attained equality...”; CAD M/II 4: “because your wish has been realized (you pay no attention to us)”, reading *ša-bu-<ut>-ka* and introducing a hapax *melyrû* “advancement (?)”, but very doubtful.

<after “betreffs”> Now one month²² has elapsed (but) you have neither brought the money nor sent me your report (narrative continues). LH 21:4–5.

(6) <after a quote> *i-na-an-na šum-ma* KU₃.BABBAR *šu-bi-lam šum-ma u₂-la-šu-ma me-ḫi-ir tuḫ-pi₂-ia šu-bi-lam*

Now either send me the silver, or, alternatively, send me a reply to my tablet” (+ another Imperative). LH 21:11–13.

(7) *pa-na-nu-um-ma be-li-i iq-bi-a-kum-ma u₂-ul tu-da-bi-ib-šu u₃ i-na-an-na aš-šu-mi-ia la tu-da-ab-ba-ab-šu*

Previously my lord spoke to you and you did not complain to him,²³ and now do not complain to him for my sake! (+ another Prohibitive) LH 24:5–10.

(8) *aš-šum* 8.0.0.0. GUR ŠE *ša i-na Ne²-bir₅-tim a-na Iṣ-ru-pa-an-ni ta-aq-bu-u₂-ma im-du-da-am u₃ i-na-an-na* ^dEN.SU(sic!)*-mu-ba-li₂-[it] [š]i-pa-as₂-si-šu i-du-^[u₂] u₃ um-ma Iṣ-ru-pa-[an-ni-ma] še-um šu-u₂ u₂-ul ta-[...] LH 32:4–11.*

Goetze 1958:57 emends *im-du-da-am* to *am-du-da-am* and remarks: “Text *im-du-da-am*; lines 12f. show however that it was Iddin-Sîn (the author of the letter—S. L.)—here speaking—who measured out the grain” (p. 57). Goetze translates: “Concerning the 8 kur of barley which you ordered (me to measure out) and (which) I (!!) measured out to Iṣrupanni in Nēbirtum, to the marking of which Sîn-Muballit can now testify—this is what Iṣrupanni says: ‘The barley in question ...’,” and explains in a note: “Literally ‘the markings of which S. knows’.”²⁴

CAD Š/III 57 quotes this text as follows: *aššum* ... PN *ši-pa-as₂-si-šu iddû* and translates: “because PN affixed his clay sealings”. Since *aššum* is “betreffs” and not “because”, it does not account for the subjunctive in *i-du-^[u₂]*. To see here the well attested word combination *šipassī nadû* ‘to attach sealings’ is attractive, but Goetze’s translation of *i-du-^[u₂]* might also suit

²² Goetze 1958:43 reads the UD sign; CAD M/1 180 reads ITI (!).

²³ Or perhaps “previously my lord ordered you (not to complain) and so you did not complain to him”. Goetze translates *dubbubum* here as “to claim services”, which is also possible.

²⁴ The emendation of Goetze makes the ventive in **am-du-da-am* difficult; perhaps the text can be interpreted differently: *imdudam* means “Iṣrupanni measured out to me”, in ll. 12ff. Iṣrupanni complains that the author has not reimbursed him in full because of “theft” (*šu-ur-qum*).

the overall context of the letter, which is after all not very clear. *inanna* in relative clauses is very rare; here *u inanna* most probably marks a turn in the author's train of thought, therefore I suggest that *i-du-^[u₂]* can be explained as having the force of assertive: "And now, Sîn-Muballit does know its markings/did seal the granary."²⁵

(9) *a-an-nam i-ta-ap-lu-nim i-na-an-na a-la-ak ša bi-ti-im qi₂-ru-um-ma ma-am-ma-an u₂-ul at-ru-da-am*

...They have given me their consent. Now the (time to do) service for the estate is near, (but) I did not send anybody. LH 36:8–11.

(10) *i-na-an-na ša še-a-am GU₄.HI.A E₂.GAL-ia u₂-ša-ak-ka-lu u₂-ul i-ba-aš-ši*

There is no one now who would feed barley to the cattle of my palace (within the narrative part of the letter). LH 39:8–9.

(11) PN *ki-am aš-pu-ra-ku-um a-na li-bi-tim qa-ti a-ša-ka-an a-wi-le-e da-an-nu-tim tu₂-ur-da-am i-na-an-na a-di IG-la-tim **ta-at-ta₃-ar-da-am***

<immediately after the letter-head> I sent PN to you with the following message: 'I am going to start (making) bricks. Send

²⁵ Cf. other occurrences of the 3rd person assertive in the corpus. LH 47:27–29: [*š*]*u₂-ha-ru-um ša il-<la>-ka-kum ki-ša-da-am la i-ma-ru [aš]-ku-un-ka*: "The servant who will come to you will surely not see the pendant, I demand this of you (= I hereby put this stipulation to you)". If the restored [*aš*] be correct, an assertive (*lā immaru*) is combined with a performative (*aškunka*), perhaps a unique case in the whole extant OB corpus. See also LH 14:14 (quoted and commented upon in 3.1 below). LH 14:20–21 *E₂.GAL-lum it-ti-ka i-ta-wu-u₂*, "The Palace will speak to you" probably also belongs here, cf. *E₂.GAL-lum šu-ur-qa₂/qa-am it-ti-šu i-ta-wu*, "The Palace will speak with him about the theft" LE A 4, 6f. = B 4,10. If the verb forms in LH 14:20–21 are to be interpreted as assertives expressing menace, this phenomenon is comparable to what one is tempted to call "performative-epistolary" usage of *aštaprakkum* at the end of some OB letters: *lu ti-di lu ti-di aš-tap-ra-kum*, "Do know (it)! Do know (it)! I have written to you!" (AbB 3, 45:9f. discussed in Sallaberger 1999:147). Note that here I employ the label "performative-epistolary" *not* in the sense of "epistolary-performative" of Pardee–Whiting 1987:27 (this is how they describe the epistolary prostration formula).

me strong men! Now you have sent here ... cripples² (Send me a strong man!).²⁶ LH 43:4–10.

aš-pu-ra-ku-um is performative: “I hereby ask you through PN”.²⁷

(12) *qi₂-bi-ta-am u₂-ul ta-aš-me an-na i-na-an-na tu-sa-ar-ra-ra u₃
pa-gar₃-ku-nu ta-at-ta-na-ab-ba-la*

...You did not obey the order. Indeed, now you tell lies and take care (only) of yourselves (+ threats and commands). LH 45:8–12.

(13) <after a short narrative > *i-na-an-na wa-ar-ka-at LU₂ [X]
pu-ru-us₂-ma LU₂ ag-ri šu-ri-im*

Now investigate the case of ... and conduct my hired man here (end of letter). LH 50:9–11.

(14) *u₂-la am-gu-ur-ki [i¹]-na-na a-na a-wa-ti-ki [uz¹(?)-[ni aš-]-[ta¹]-
ka-an²⁸*

...But I did not agree with you. Now I have come around to your point of view (rest destroyed). AS 22, 54:5–7, translation as in the Edition.

(15) *ka-ar-ši₂²⁹-šu la ta-ma-aḥ-ḥa-ar i-na-an-na šum-ma i-na [ki¹]-
na-a-tim ta-ra-am-ma-an-ni Ia-am-nu-nu iš-ti-ib um-ti-iq la u₂-
d[a-ab-ba¹]-bu-u₂-šu*

²⁶ *adi* is probably used here with the force of “einschließlich” (AHw. 12). *IG-latim* is difficult. Goetze 1958:67 translates “weaklings” or “invalids” *ad sensum*. Markina 2003:158 considers relating it to *iklu*, ‘victim’, CAD I/J 61 (a *hapax legomenon* in Hh), i.e. in this case ‘victim of a disease’, ‘disabled’. This looks appealing.

²⁷ As shown by Sallaberger 1999:87f., *ana šulmika ašpuram* is a performative expression within the letter greeting. Since in the epistolary literature *šapārum* may be used to denote different kinds of speech acts, it may be employed as a performative with different illocutionary forces.

²⁸ On the handcopy, only *-ka-an* is quite clear to me in l.7, but if one agrees that what we have here is a form of *šakānum*, the restoration seems to be rather plausible.

²⁹ The transliteration has *ši*, but on the handcopy a clear-cut ZI is visible. Same inconsistency in 326:52.

...Do not believe the slander about him. Now—if in truth you love me³⁰—the Jamnunité has grown old and has become feeble;³¹ they should not pester him”. OBTIV 23:29’–32’.

Thus, in this corpus *inanna* is compatible with the Perfect, the Present, the Stative and with injunctive verb forms, but there are no unambiguous cases of its collocation with the Preterite (still, see (8)).³²

These and related data (presented below) permit one to posit two *inanna*-lexemes:

***inanna*_A**: temporal deictic adverb, further subdivided into

***inanna*_{A1}** pointing to the moment of speaking, used with the Present employed in non-future sense and with the semantically “present-tense” Stative: 2, 4, 9, 10, 12 (speaker-orientation).

***inanna*_{A2}** pointing to the moment of speaking; it is used with the Perfect and locates its resultative component: 1, 5, 11, 14, 15 (speaker-orientation).³³

***inanna*_{A3}** pointing to the future, used with injunctive forms and with EPf: 3, 6, 7, 13 (addressee-orientation).

***inanna*_B**: metatextual “particle” marking a turn in discourse, i.e. a means of discourse deixis. It is formally set apart from *inanna*_A through the combination of two features: *inanna*_B is used only with the Preterite and, unlike *inanna*_A, is incompatible with injunctive utterances in its immediate right context/co-text. Its semantic interpretation is slightly different from case to case, therefore I will sometimes render it simply by capitalized NOW. Among the above examples, only (8) belongs here—and, I believe, it does on any of the two readings (*nadû* and *edû*). The semantic interpretation of *u₃ i-na-an-na* ^dEN.SU-mu-ba-li₂-[it] [š]i-pa-as₂-si-šu i-du-^lu₂ (LH 32:8f.) will be “and PN did in fact seal/however, PN does know”.

³⁰ A well-known epistolary formula (=AbB 3, 2:51 verbatim).

³¹ Greengus 1979:64 notes: “Translation assumes Gt of *šābum* ‘to be gray haired’, and Dt (passive) of *muqqum* (III, AHW. 675a)”.—Both stems are not in the dictionaries for the corresponding roots; Gt-stem for a semantic stative is not common in Akkadian.

³² Such cases do of course occur in OB letters, see below.

³³ The contrast of *inanna*_{A1} and *inanna*_{A2} is not very pronounced; it is introduced first of all to illuminate the verb usage. In a lexicographical study, one perhaps would not stress this distinction too much.

Excursus I: Previous research on inanna and anumma

Goetze 1936:308 says: “The *t*-form is very frequently preceded by the adverbs *anumma* or *inanna*”, and then goes on to analyze the almost completely quoted text of the OB letter TCL VII.11. He remarks: “The first two parts, beginning with “last year” and “this year” respectively, report on what happened in the past. They give an account which is without immediate significance. Grammatically, the verbal forms are exclusively derived from *t*-less stems. The third part, however, introduced by “and now” (*S. L.: a-nu-um-ma*), turns to the actual business, for which the preceding facts have merely been an introduction; it states the resultant measures. This is no longer a narration, this is an announcement... The meaning of this *anumma* is not merely temporal. It points to preceding events and indicates that the action which is now introduced was influenced by, and resulted from, these preceding events or actions. The very closely related *inanna* seems more to emphasize the temporal element” (p. 309f.).

The text, as it now stands in AbB 4, 11: 20–23, reads:

(16) *a-nu-um-ma* RA₂.GAB.MEŠ A.ŠA₃ *i-ša-ab-ba-tu* (UGULA.
MAR.TU.MEŠ-*šu-nu* *u*₃ *A-pil₂-i₃-li₂-šu* DUMU.E₂.DUB.BA—
left out by Goetze) *a-na ma-ah-ri-ku-nu at-tar-dam*

And now, I have sent before you the *rakbus* who should receive the field (Goetze’s translation, injunctions follow).

A. Goetze is doubtless right in his general vision of letter’s structure. Still, I define the meaning of *anumma* differently (see 2.7).

GAG § 80c mentions in connection with the PERFECT theory of *iptaras* that it is ‘das normale Tempus’ after *inanna* and *anumma* but supplies no examples.

AHw s.v. *inanna* has no comments on verb usage, AHw s.v. *an(n)umma* does examine the compatibility of *an(n)umma* with different kinds of predicates in various dialects.

CAD A II 147f. subdivides the use of *anumma* for each dialect into “in gen[eral]” and “used to introduce the message, its bearer, and what he brings”, the examples of the latter usage for OB seem to be always in the context of EPf. For the distribution of *inanna* and *anumma*, CAD A II 148b refers the reader to *inanna* discussion section.

CAD I/J 142f. provides no comments on the verbal usage in the context of *inanna*. The relevant part of the discussion section reads as follows: “[T]he Mari letters use *anumma* to introduce the first topic of a letter, and

inanna for the following, and always for the last topic.³⁴ Apart from the uses in the temporal meaning proper, the use of *inanna* in letters is very often more that of an interjection (?—*S. L.*) than of a temporal adverb”.

Streck 1995a:199 writes: “In Hauptsätzen ist *iptaras* vor allem nach *inanna* und *anumma* bei den Verben *šapāru*, *šūbulu* und *tarādu* in Briefen belegt (GAG § 80b/c)”, but actually GAG does not say that much: it explains the use of *iptaras* with *inanna* and *anumma* by the PERFECT force of *iptaras*, though the reason for the use of (what we now call) the “epistolary perfect” *aštaprakkum* ‘vor allem nach *anumma*’ is not explained in GAG.

Leong 1994:191–197 also discusses *inanna* and *anumma* within his analysis of EPf. He thinks (I believe, incorrectly; his understanding is inferior to that of Goetze) that both words mean “now” (p. 191). He correctly explains the phenomenon of EPf in OB letters as transfer of the temporal zero-point to the addressee (p. 47, 197ff.) but he is wrong in claiming that *anumma* and *inanna* locate the “event component” of the EPf (p. 194), see below. He also mentions the use of *inanna* and *anumma* with non-epistolary perfects and reaches the conclusion that in this case they are often not time adverbs but “transitional discourse conjuncts” (a term roughly equivalent to “metatextual operator” and similar expressions I am using in the present paper), which I believe is a near miss. Unfortunately, T. F. Leong did not pay attention to the use of *inanna* with the Preterite: it is in this context where *inanna* is always a textual connector.

Sallaberger 1999:139–146 indicates positions within the letter structure where *inanna* and *anumma* + Perf. appear regularly. I will discuss some of his ideas below in this paper.

J.-M. Durand adduces a few Mari examples in which *inanna* announces, as he believes, “le retour de l’irréel à la réalité” (Durand 1998:415), i.e. displays metatextual usage, cf. e. g. ARMT 1 8:8 (in the context of the Present *u₂-ul i-ba-aš-ši*); for more examples found by J.-M. Durand, see the Index s.v. *inanna* in Durand 2000.

J.-M. Durand’s observations merit more attention, still I will not dwell on them any longer since it is out of question to give *inanna* a full lexicographical treatment within a paper dealing with grammar. Besides, some of the relevant examples are not yet published. My impression (partly dependent on French translations) is that J.-M. Durand’s examples are those of *inanna*_{A1/3}, which (like English “now”) can have a meta-communicative function in addition to the temporal one in the same utterance, as

³⁴ This is not true even of letters published before 1960; in Mari, *anumma* does introduce EPf as the last “topic” of a letter, cf. e.g. ARMT 2, 17:20.

is clear from the LH examples adduced above. In all likelihood, it is the combination of both meanings that matters in J.-M. Durand's examples, "le retour de l'irréel à la réalité" being in some cases the contextual force of the meta-communicative function.

Complex semantics and pragmatics of *nunc*-words seem to be a cross-linguistic phenomenon. Thus, metatextual and/or situation-deictic *nunc*-lexemes materially identical to the basic adverbs for temporal deixis are attested e.g. in Greek, Latin, and English.³⁵

* * *

Here are a few examples of *inanna*_B:

(17) *ki-a-am a-wa-tam an-ni-tam aq-bi-[k]um-ma a-an-na-am ta-pu-la-an-ni i-na-an-na PN šu-u₂ [a-n]a KA₂.DINGIR.RA.KI wa-a[r-k]i-ka il-li-kam tu[p]-pi₂ ik-šu-da-ak-ka-ma a-na š[i]-ri-ka a[t-t]ar-da-aš-šu*

This is what I told you, and you gave me a positive answer. NOW this Abbi-Adad came to Babylon after you(r departure?).³⁶ My letter reached you, and I have sent him to you. AbB 12, 69: 23–28.

tu[p]-pi₂ ik-šu-da-ak-ka-ma a-na š[i]-ri-ka a[t-t]ar-da-aš-šu resembles the alleged *consecutio temporum* with a cause and effect relationship between the two verbs, but *a[t-t]ar-da-aš-šu* is most probably an EPF, so the *iptaras* here does not depend on the (contextually probable) cause and effect relation, which is not marked except by *-ma*, a general expression of irreversible sequence. *warkika* explicitly places *illikam* in the past, so this *inanna* clearly belongs not with time adverbs but with metatextual operators that connect different fragments of the text,³⁷ and this is true of *inanna*_B in general. In terms of epistolary structure, *inanna*_B usually signals a turn within

³⁵ Such cases as Spanish *ahora bien* or Biblical Hebrew *wšattā*, both meaning roughly "so (now)", are disregarded.

³⁶ Assuming the writer is in Babylon, which could be inferred from *il-li-kam*.

³⁷ Another widespread metatextual operator is *šanītam*, often introducing a new subject at the end of a letter and somewhat similar to our "P.S." (for a selection of examples see AHW. 1164 + AbB 12,69:33, the letter just quoted because of *inanna*_B). All anaphoric expressions have metatextual function by definition. On metatextual operators in general, see Wierzbicka 1971; Iordanskaja–Mel'čuk 1999 (with previous literature).

the descriptive part of a letter. Its semantic invariant is probably “at *this point* of the present discourse”.³⁸

An example from a different genre, a mathematical problem, also reveals the contrast of *inanna*_B and *inanna*_A:

(18) ¹[...] *ag-ra-am a-gu-ur* ²[x times] NINDA UŠ 9 *šu-ši* SIG₄
³[...] 5 SILA₃ *še-a-am i-di-šu il-qi₂-ma* ⁴*i-na-an-na* 4
 LU₂.ĜU[N.G]A₂ *a-gu-ur*

...I hired a hireling ... He carried 9 sixties of bricks at a distance of [x times] NINDA, he took as his wages [x *sūtum* and] 5 *qa* barley. NOW I hired 4 hirelings.³⁹ AOS 29, 98, P 1–4.

The context leaves no doubt that here *inanna* is a means of textual rather than temporal deixis. Its contextual semantic interpretation is something like “*and then*”, “*and after that*”.

An interesting occurrence of *inanna*_B is found in a letter to god Amurrum:

(19) *it-<ti> a-mi-li ta-ab-na-an-ni-ma su-qa₃-am tu-še-te-qa₃-an-ni*
^{u₃} *ša-at-ti-ša* UDU.SISKUR₂.RE *a-la-qi₂-ku-ma a-na i-lu-ti-ka ka-*
bi-it-tim i-ip-pu-uš i-na-an-na na-ak-ru ik-šu-da-an-ni-ma mu-uš-ki-
ni-ku-ma a-aḥ-ḥu-a u₂-ul i-a-ri-ru-ni

You created me among men and you made me pass (safely) along the street, so every year I used to bring to you a sheep offering and to sacrifice (it) to your honoured godhead. NOW an enemy seized me, and I became miserable, and my brothers did not come to my help. AbB 12, 99:5–12.

Here, as in example (17), *inanna* appears in the narrative part of the letter, surrounded by verb forms with past time reference.⁴⁰ Its contextual interpretation is probably “in spite of the facts just mentioned”.

³⁸ Levinson 1983:85 notes: “Since discourse unfolds in time, it seems natural that time-deictic words can be used to refer to portions of the discourse...”.

³⁹ The rest of the problem is almost completely broken, but it is quite clear that the author of the problem wanted the student to make a calculation of work and wages for the four men.

⁴⁰ Metzler 2002:761 discusses the forms of the Present in this text and comes to the conclusion that the present time reference of *a-la-qi₂-ku* and *i-ip-pu-uš* is slightly more likely than the representation of “auf die Vergangenheit beschränkte[r] Gewohnheit”. Still, it is possible that *inanna*_B favours the past-time reference of both verbs, though my interpretation does not demand it.

(20) 2 GEME₂.MEŠ *ša-da-aq-di-im tu-ša-bi-lam-ma* 1 GEME₂ *im-tu-ut-ti i-na-an-na* 2 GEME₂ *ub-lu-nim* 1 GEME₂ *im-tu-ut-ti-ma*

Last year you sent me two maids, and one maid has died.
NOW they brought me two maids, one (of them) has died.
ARMT X, 39:15–19.⁴¹

The contextual interpretation of *inanna* here is probably “*so/in this way*”.

For another example of *inanna*_B in narrative epistolary context, see (31) below.

*inanna*_B is also used with the performative Preterite:

(20a) *ki-ma un-ne-du-uk-ki ta-am-ma-ru* A.ŠA₃ *ša-a-ti a-na PN-ma*
i-di-in a-li-ik i-na-an-na aš-pu-ra-ak-ku ši-ri-im-ma TA-*pu-ul-šu*⁴²

When you read my letter, give the said field to PN. Go,
hereby I prescribe you: be careful in satisfying his claim! AbB
4, 57:11–16.

Turning to *inanna*_A: the incompatibility of temporal deictic *inanna*_A with *iḫrus* shows that the other three indicative tenses and the injunctive forms are jointly opposed to *iḫrus*.

I will first consider *inanna*_{A3}, used with EPf and injunctives. It appears at the turn to the **operative part** of letters and within it.⁴³ *inanna*_{A3} points to the “present moment” of the addressee, i.e. to the time of reading. Thus, in (3) *i-na-na a-nu-um-ma Bu-ri-ia at-ṭa₃-ar-da-ak-kum* EPf *aṭṭardakkum* depicts the action of sending (the writer’s *future*) as the *past* from the retrospective point of view of the observer (here the addressee), while *inanna*

⁴¹ Durand 2000:398 seems to be right when he claims (against ARMT X, p. 73) that in the quoted lines the author states twice her message about the single dispatch of maids and the death of one of them. However, I do not understand what this text has to do with the “sense fondamental d’*inanna* qui oppose ce qui aurait dû être à la réalité” (Durand 2000, *ibid.*).

⁴² CAD § 101a and the Edition suggest that *apulšu* is to be read.

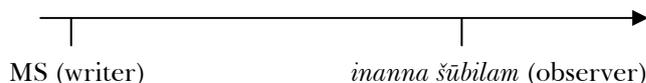
⁴³ What I call “the operative part” is “die Initiative” (EPf) and “die Aufforderung” (injunctives) in terminology of Sallaberger 1999:146ff. My term is meant to evoke associations with the suggestive English expressions “operative words” and “operative clauses”, especially in their legal uses.

points to the time of observation (here the reading of the letter).⁴⁴ Graphically represented (MS = the moment of speaking):



In other words, the temporal values of both *inanna* and *aṭṭardakkum* are shifted to the addressee, but, against Leong 1994, *inanna* does not locate (i.e. “temporalize”) the *aṭṭardakkum* fact, i.e. (so Leong 1994:194) the “event” component of the EPf. Actually, *inanna* temporalizes the *resultative* component of EPf as “placed” at the moment of observation, see below at the end of 2.1 and 2.8.

In (6) *i-na-an-na šum-ma* KU₃.BABBAR *šu-bi-lam šum-ma u₂-la-šu-ma me-ḫi-ir tuṭ-pi₂-ia šu-bi-lam*, “Now either send me the silver, or, alternatively, send me a reply to my tablet”, *inanna* gets the same temporal interpretation as in (3) but, unlike in (3), it is simultaneous with the temporal reference of the verb forms (the imperatives), which is future by definition.⁴⁵ Graphically represented:



Thus, *inanna*_{A3} displays the same kind of temporal deictic projection to the addressee as e.g. used to be the case with both the addressee-oriented “now” and the present progressive tense of the sign at Checkpoint Charlie “YOU ARE NOW LEAVING THE AMERICAN SECTOR”.

By contrast, *inanna*_{A1} in (12) *an-na i-na-an-na tu-sa-ar-ra-ra u₃ pa-gar₃-ku-nu ta-at-ta-na-ab-ba-la*, “...Indeed, now you tell lies and take care (only) of yourselves” points to the time at which atelic processes denoted by both *tusarrarā* and *tattanabbalā* “cross” the temporal point of view which is the moment of speaking/writing.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ The notions of observer and of secondary (=observer-oriented) deixis are essential for the study of grammatical semantics, see e.g. Fillmore 1982 (spatial deixis), Apresian 1986 (ditto), Paducheva 1996 (tense).

⁴⁵ Cf. also OBTIV 14:8’ *i-na-na TUG₂ tu-ma-ra-am šu-bi-lam* “now send me the *tumarum* garment”.

⁴⁶ *inanna*_{A3} is to be distinguished from addressee-oriented *šar inanna* “right now”, occurring only in the letter head within the same conventional greeting: AbB 1, 52:6; 3, 40:6; 52:6; 10, 104:8, see AHw. 1182b.

Let us turn to *inanna*_{A2}, singled out through its combination with “non-epistolary” *iptaras*:⁴⁷

(1) *i-na-an-na aš-šum* GU₂.UN *uḫ-ḫu-ra-at an-ni-iš* ***at-ta-an-sa-ka-am***

Now I have been blamed here, because the (payment of) tribute is overdue.

The example is interesting because this one is an information letter, so *inanna* + Perf. does not introduce the PROBLEM part in the sense of W. Sallaberger. In other words, its usage is not motivated by or restricted to a “strong/marked place” in the epistolary structure.

It cannot be stressed too much that the appearance of a verb form in letters depends on the epistolary structure, which is sometimes very rigidly observed. Still, ultimately it is the intrinsic grammatical meaning of a verb form that is responsible for the stereotyped usage.

Sallaberger 1999 in a table on p. 145 brings three “deviating” examples of preterites rather than perfects in the context of *inanna* within the PROBLEM part of the complaints quoted in the letters of Hammurapi: “Thema—*inanna* Problem (Prt.) IX 190, XIII 14. 22?”. In AbB 13, 22:14 *it-ba-[al]* is notoriously ambiguous. In AbB 13, 14:21 the negated preterite *u₂-ul id-di-nu-nim* is the only verb form used in the context of *inanna* and therefore is the negative alloform of the Perfect (see 2.6). AbB 9, 190:13–18 reads as follows: *i-na-an-na* PN A.ŠA₃-am ša *id-di-nu-šum u₂-ul i-ri-iš a-na* LU₂ *ir-re-e-ši-im id-di-in-ma* LU₂ *ir-re-e-š[u] i-ri-šu*, “Now PN did not cultivate the field that they had given to him/do not cultivate the field they gave to him. He gave (it) to the farmer(s), and farmers cultivate (it)”. The writings *i-ri-iš* and *i-ri-šu* are ambiguous. I think that—against the Edition—both forms may well be Presents and that syntactic considerations strongly support this reading for *i-ri-šu*, cf. my discussions of *iparras* as the last verb in the STORY/PROBLEM linear verbal sequence (2.2 and Excursus III). The verb *erēšu* “cultivate” in this context may have atelic meaning. If these suggestions are justified, the cultivating/not cultivating of the field are the only facts obtaining at the moment of observation, and what we have here is *inanna*_{A1}.

⁴⁷ Wherever necessary, I provide the examples quoted above with new translations meant to secure correct semantic interpretations of the *iptaras* forms. These interpretations will be justified presently.

(5) *i-na-an-na* ITI.1.KAM ***im-ta-la*** *u₂-ul* KU₃.BABBAR *tu-ub-lam* *u₂-ul* *te₄-em-ka* *tu-te-er-ra-am*

Now one month has elapsed (but) you have neither brought the money nor sent me your report.

The perfect *intala* shows that a state resulting from a past-time fact holds at the moment of observation that coincides with the coding time and is indicated by *inanna*, while negated preterites are negative alloforms of perfects. The reasons and grammatical implications of restricted compatibility of *iptaras* with negations are discussed in 2.6 and Excursus IV.

(11) *i-na-an-na a-di* IG-la-tim ***ta-at-ta₃-ar-da-am***

Now you have been sending me “cripples”.
Same comment on *inanna iptaras*.

(14) ^[i]*na-na a-na a-wa-ti-ki* ^{[uz](?)}-[ni aš-]-***ta-ka-an***

Now I have paid attention to your words.
Same comment.

(15) *i-na-an-na ... Ia-am-nu-nu* ***iš-ti-ib um-ti-iq***

Now ... the Jamnunite has grown old and has become feeble.
Same comment.

The separation of *inanna_A* and *inanna_B* sometimes seems artificial, but the comparison of *inanna_{A2}* with *inanna_B* makes the distinction advanced here quite plausible: *inanna_{A2}* is a temporal adverb pointing to the “present moment” of the speaker (though it may sometimes *also* possess anaphoric or situation-deictic force), while *inanna_B* is not. According to the usual pattern of differences between adverbs with extralinguistic reference and metatextual words, *inanna_B* is not used in interrogative sentences and subordinate clauses.

Sallaberger 1999:146 n. 204 offers an interesting observation:⁴⁸ “Bei der Lektüre von Briefen scheint sich anzudeuten, daß *inanna* auch/vorwiegend text-deiktisch, *anumma* hingegen (nur?) situations-deiktisch gebraucht wird”. The observation is sharp, if a bit enigmatic; perhaps the

⁴⁸ It seems to be not limited to the “Initiative”, i.e. to the part of the letter containing verbs of sending.

conclusions reached in the present paper do not seriously contradict it, and see my analysis of *anumma* in 2.7 below.

The compatibility of *iptaras* with *inanna*_{A2} is a strong argument in favour of the PERFECT nature of *iptaras*: in its prototypical use, *iptaras* includes the zero time in its referential interval, i.e. the resultative component of *iptaras* coincides with the moment of speaking while its “action”⁴⁹ component is prior to it. As a counterpart to this evidence, *iptaras* is not used in the context of past time adverbials with any noticeable frequency, because these provide a past reference point for verbal predicates and detach them from the zero-point.⁵⁰

I have checked AbB 4, AbB 12, and AbB 13 for verb forms in the context of past-time adverbials with the KAM element and found no examples of the Perfect. Maloney 1982:254 believes to have found one such example: MU 15.KAM PN *i-ta-ka-al*, “and PN lived (supporting himself with this field) for fifteen years” (AbB 4, 69:39f.). The text makes it clear that this 15-years span is separated from the coding time by several years filled with all kinds of activities described in the letter and constituting the actual cause of the complaint, therefore *i-ta-ka-al* is most probably a Gtn preterite *ūtakkal*, because it is Gtn Preterite and not G Perfect that is routinely used to express this kind of tempo-aspectual sense, i.e. a past *period* (explicitly detached from the moment of speaking) within which a certain fact is presented as lasting or habitual. Cf. e.g. propositionally quite similar AbB 4, 96:5–9 A.ŠA₃ ... PN MU 2.KAM *i-te-er-ri-iš-ma še-šu il-te-eq-qi₂* “PN was cultivating this field and taking its barley for two years”; ditto AbB 4, 160:17’f.⁵¹

Still another example shows that one does not have to make a cult of temporal adverbials.

⁴⁹ “Action” is used here in non-technical sense to include all semantic types of verbal predicates.

⁵⁰ Past time adverbs block the use of PERFECT in some (probably in most) languages and do not in some others, see e.g. Dahl 1985:137f. Especially Swedish and Norwegian are often reported to use their present perfect tenses in the context of exact chronological indications when the latter appear in communicative focus.

⁵¹ One possible example of *šaddaqdam* “last year” + Perfect D *zenû* is the following: *ša-ad-da-aq-dam it-ti-ka ka-la-ma tu-uz-za-an-ni u₃ ša-at-ta-am a-di i-na-an-na mi-im-ma u₂-ul tu-ša-bi-lam*, “Last year you made everybody angry with yourself, and this year until now you have not sent anything to me” (AbB 1, 108:3–6). Is it attraction of the “perfect” grammatical meaning from the next clause? Alternatively, the reading as “medial” Dt preterite also seems to fit the contents (see § 4 below).

(21) *ki-am iš-pur-am um-ma šu-u₂-ma a-na GN aš-[t]a-a[p-p]a-ra-[am] ... [ki]-a-am iš-p[u-ra-am] iš-tu iš-pu-ra-[am] U₄ 10.KAM im-ta-l[u]-u₂ PN at-ṭar-da-ak-k[um] ...*

He wrote me the following: “I kept sending to GN...” This is what he wrote me. Since he has written me ten days have passed. I have sent you PN⁵²... AbB 13, 82:7–16.

The reference time of the perfect *imtalû* is the moment of speaking and not the temporal clause *ištu išpuram*. U₄ 10.KAM temporalizes the narrated fact (denoted by *išpuram* in the preceding main and temporal clauses) vis-à-vis the moment of speaking, with which the resultative component of *imtalû* coincides, while in the former examples (see the underlined portions) similar time adverbials by themselves temporalize the TC facts, there is no reference to the coding time. This peculiarity of AbB 13, 82 is perhaps due to the lexical semantics of *malû* and to this verb’s place in the letter.

Provided the restoration in (23) below is correct, the following are the only examples I know of past time temporal clauses followed by MC *iptaras* forms whose medial *t*-preterite reading is excluded (see § 4 of this paper for references to texts where I think medial reading of *t*-forms collocated with past-time adverbials is admissible and perhaps preferable on syntactic grounds).

(22) *ki-ma ṭup-pa-ku-nu eš-mu-u₂ a-na a-wi-le-e ša ba-ab E₂.GAL-[lim šu₂-ḥa]-re-[e] ka-li-šu-nu aš-ta-[pa-ar] u₃ a-na E₂.GAL-lim ṭup-pa-am uš-ta-bi-il*

As soon as I heard your letter, I have dispatched the young men, all of them, to the men (who are) at the door of the palace and have sent a letter to the palace. (The operative part injunctives follow.) LH 2:7–12.

(23) *[ki-ma tu]-uk-ka eš-mu-u₂ a-na mu-uh₂-ḥi ul-li-a-tim a-na GN ša-ap-li-i uš-ta-bi-il-ši-na-ti*

When I heard the warning, I have sent them to those in lower GN. (Let them remain <there> for a year!) AbB 1, 7:19–23.

⁵² Most probably an EPf.

In these cases, the context of the epistolary structure (i.e. the immediate vicinity of the operative part) proves “stronger” than that of temporal adverbials.

2.2. The primary meaning of *iptaras*. *iptaras* and *iprus*

In his structural analysis of Hammurapi-correspondence, Sallaberger 1999:144f. locates “non-EPF” *inanna* + *iptaras* as introducing the PROBLEM part of a letter, which will be true for most (and perhaps for all) uses of *inanna*_{A2} in HL, because their structure is rather rigid. This usage is rooted in the basic meaning of *iptaras*.

To explain the meaning of *iptaras* I have to introduce the notion of “speaker’s time” (T^S), i.e. the time span that the speaker perceives as extending all the way up to the moment of speaking, not detached from it. T^S can be metaphorically described as the speaker’s present expanded past-wise.⁵³ Thus, in the English sentence “I have lived (/I have been living) in Moscow for the last twenty years” these *last twenty years* constitute T^S.⁵⁴

In the deictic register (see presently), the meaning of non-“EPF” *iptaras* in main clauses may be described as follows: a past fact time (T^F) denoted by *iptaras* is included in T^S, while the time of observation is the moment of speaking: T^S ⊃ T^F, i.e. *iptaras* is used if the speaker presents the reported fact and the moment of speaking as belonging to the same temporal span within which the reported fact is situated prior to the moment of speaking.

Excursus II: interpretation registers of the finite verb

In the *deictic* (or *discourse*) register, the temporal interpretation of finite verb forms derives first and foremost from the moment of speaking, while in the *narrative register* the moment of speaking plays no part in the inter-

⁵³ For the view of the English present perfect as situating past events within the “extended now” of the speaker see McCoard 1978. T^S as defined here is very close to “the time of the speaker” as introduced in Apresian 1986 to explain the difference between past time perfective vs. past time imperfective aspect of the Russian verb in certain types of contexts.

⁵⁴ Here I am interested in the past-wise direction of T^S (the moment of speaking is the zero-point), but T^S can also expand future-wise, as e.g. in the English sentence “I am living in London for six years”, which, according to Close 1979:250, is acceptable if it is intended to mean “I am going to live in London for that period”, or in sentences like “I leave tomorrow” or “I am playing tennis this afternoon”, where not yet existing but scheduled facts are included in T^S.

pretation of a finite form, because it is replaced by the current moment of the *narrated* (= textual) time.

Linguistics has no uniform terminology to describe this opposition. Benveniste 1966 (first published in 1959), who seems to be the one who first described this phenomenon, distinguishes in French between *plan du discours* and *plan du récit*. This discovery was facilitated by the fact that in French, unlike in Akkadian, some of the indicative tense forms appear in complementary distribution depending only on the register of interpretation.

I feel that the traditional distinction of Principal/Primary vs. Historical/Secondary tenses in the Latin grammar also has much to do with this opposition.

Lyons 1977:688 employs the terms “historical and experiential description”, the latter mode “is ... related to the dynamic, deictic, subjective conception of time”.

According to Dahl 1985:112, “a sentence occurs in a narrative context if the temporal point of reference (in Reichenbach’s sense) is determined by the point in time at which the last event related in the preceding context took place”. This makes the narrative use of PERFECT, that possesses an external reference point, rare and mostly destined to convey special stylistic effects. For *iptaras* in narratives see 2.3 below.

In this paper I adhere freely to the terminology of Elena Paducheva (Paducheva 1996), who elaborated on the theories of Benveniste and some other scholars in her research into the imperfective aspect of the Russian verb and into the semantics of narrative.

Modern Russian does not have indicative temporal forms used in one of the registers to the exclusion of the other, and same is true of OB Akkadian, while languages whose strong deictic tense is beyond doubt (e.g. Classical Latin, literary Spanish, or English) often have a rich repertoire of indicative finite verb forms, partly in complementary distribution depending on the register of interpretation, and a developed *consecutio temporum*. Most probably, the lack of complementary distribution means that the deictic (= absolute) tense is rather weak in OB. But the deictic tense is not completely absent from the OB verbal semantics, since, as I will show in this paper, *iptaras* does have meanings that depend entirely on the register of interpretation, and the same is possibly true (though to a lesser degree) of *iparras*, see below.

The opposition of both registers holds not only for the verbal tense, but also for most of the shifter elements of language. Thus, in OB letters

the discourse deictic *inanna_B* appears mostly in narrative contexts and may be described as a *narrative projection*⁵⁵ of the temporal deictic adverbial *inanna_A*: in this case the narrative projection creates a new lexical meaning.

The concept of deictic vs. narrative registers of interpretation as employed in this study is not identical to the well-known distinction of Narrative vs. Comment (“erzählte und besprochene Welt”) which was developed by H. Weinrich and enjoyed partial reception both in Assyriology⁵⁶ and Old Testament Studies.⁵⁷ H. Weinrich studies only written texts (mostly modern fiction) and excludes tense and aspect from his “Textgrammatik”, replacing them by notions of his text-linguistics. Contrary to his approach, this study tries to establish the functions of OB *iptaras* starting from the canonical situation of utterance (in so far as it can be reconstructed from our written records of OB Akkadian) and therefore takes the notion of verbal tense as primarily the grammaticalized expression of speaker-oriented *temporal relations* very earnestly.⁵⁸

* * *

The predominantly temporal interpretation of *iptaras* suggested here is somewhat different from the “current relevance” approach, since sometimes past facts that would seem to be “currently relevant” for the writer are rendered by *iprus* or *paris*.

⁵⁵ This term is introduced in Paducheva 1996.

⁵⁶ See Streck 1999b:85, Metzler 2002:312–314 (with numerous reservations).

⁵⁷ See e.g. Talstra (ed.) 1995.

⁵⁸ I believe H. Weinrich was not mistaken when he claimed: “[Benveniste] versteht darunter (by both “planes”—S. L.) zwei verschiedene Ausdrucksregister, die sich zueinander komplementär verhalten. Von den Phänomenen, jedoch nicht unbedingt von der Methode her gesehen, mag man diese beiden Register mit den Kategorien des Besprechens und Erzählens identifizieren, die in diesem Buch verwendet werden” (Weinrich 1985:224). Still the concept of both “planes” can be employed to reveal semantic differences of formally identical finite verb forms in canonical situation of utterance and narrative (including Ich-Erzählung),—and this is what I try to do in the present study, while Weinrich’s Textlinguistik seems to work in the opposite direction: H. Weinrich applies the same semantic category of Sprechperspektive (I believe it replaces the traditional “tense”) to both commented upon and narrated worlds, laying bare basic text-structural features *shared* by both of them. The present paper is concerned with verb’s grammatical meanings in different linguistic settings, while H. Weinrich’s Textlinguistik studies the way verb forms shape literary texts.

Examples:

(24) 1 UDU.NITA₂ KI Nu-ur₂-^dMAR.TU *el-qi₂-ma a-na A-pil-ku-bi ŠA₃.TAM ad-di-in* 1 UDU.NITA₂ *dam-qa-am a-na Nu-ur₂-^dMAR.TU i-di-in*

I have taken one sheep from Nur-Amurru and given it to the ‘administrator’ Apil-Kubi. Give one good sheep to Nur-Amurru! LH 7:3–7.

The imperative *idin* “give!” opening the operative part of the letter shows that the facts expressed by *el-qi₂-ma ... ad-di-in* are “currently relevant” for the author, since it is these facts that stipulate his demand.

Both preterites (*elqe-ma ... addin*) appear in the part of LH 7 that is identical to W. Sallaberger’s “aufretendes Problem” as defined by him for HL,⁵⁹ where one expects and does often find *iptaras*. Now we see that in the PROBLEM the choice between *iptaras* and *iprus* depends on the speaker’s decision (cf. also Excursus III), therefore the Preterite can be used both in the deictic and narrative registers. In the deictic register, the Preterite—in contradistinction to the Perfect—denotes a past fact *not* included in T^S but still viewed from the temporal point at which the message is delivered.

This matches the generalization suggested by Ö. Dahl in his study of tense and aspect systems across languages: “If narrative and non-narrative contexts differ with respect to the marking of temporal distance, it will be the non-narrative contexts that exhibit the largest number of distinctions” (Dahl 1985:127).

(25) ¹*A-pil-ku-bi ... 1.0.0.0. GUR u₂-ku-ul-ta-am i-ri-ša-an-ni*
1.0.0.0. GUR ŠE *di-[ke-e] ... ar-ḫi-i[š i-di-in-šu]*⁶⁰

Apil-kubi ... has asked me for one *kor* of bread. Raise one *kor* of barley and give it quickly to him! LH 11:4–11.

Same comment.

⁵⁹ The analysis of Sallaberger 1999:137–149 is structural (in the sense of literary criticism) rather than grammatical. His research makes it clear that in order to use OB letters for the study of the verbal system one has to understand the letters’ structure.

⁶⁰ The continuation makes the restoration quite certain, cf. *ša ar-ḫi-iš na-da-n[im] e-pu-uš* “make a point of giving quickly”, ll. 15f.

Note that *i-ri-ša-an-ni* is most probably not a present (~ “PN demands from me...”) because in OB letters the Present of telic verbs is hardly ever used to denote facts simultaneous with the coding time.

(26) *aš-šum* GU₄.APIN *ša Ša-du-up-pe₂-e-e*[m KI] *be-li₂ a-na pa-qa-di-im iš-pu-ra-an-ni a-na be-li₂-ia ki-a-am aq-bi um-ma a-na-a-ku-u₂-ma GIR₃.NITA₂ ša Ša-du-up-pe₂-e-em KI *ḥa-li-iq u₂-ul i-ba-aš-ši* GU₄.APIN *šu-u₂ i-na qa-ti* KA.GUR₇-ma *ma-an-nu-um u₂-ma-al-la-a-šu**

Concerning the plough-ox of Šaduppum. My lord gave me a written order to assign (it). I answered to my lord as follows: “*The governor of Šaduppum has disappeared, he is not available. The said plough-ox is in the hands of the granary-supervisor. Who (then) is supposed to supply it (= the ox)?*” LH 1:3–8.

The lines italicized and put into inverted commas in the translation are quotation from the writer’s previous letter, where *ḥaliq* is a predicate within the PROBLEM part, while the author’s question is the operative part of the quoted letter: the writer *demands* instructions from his superior. *ul ibašši* joins in asyndetically and restates the *ḥaliq* fact, creating a rhetorical effect. Still tempo-aspectual values of both predicates are perhaps not identical: *ḥaliq* has *resultative* meaning, while *ul ibašši* is a true “prefixed *stative*”.

T^S is grammaticalized in OB via *iptaras*, while “notional” current relevance of a fact prior to the delivery of a given message may be associated with *iprus*, *iptaras*, or *paris* and consequently has no grammatical expression of its own. One may of course conjecture that current relevance appears as an implicature of *iptaras* being included in T^S.

It is clear that the notions of T^S and current relevance are closely related and to play off one against the other sometimes looks artificial as far as the usage of the Perfect is concerned. Both notions belong in the study of subjectivity in language in general and in the research into the verb’s grammatical semantics within the deictic register in particular. Still, the numerous cases of “currently relevant” Preterites and Statives may justify the distinction drawn here.

In what follows, I assume that T^S ∖ T^F as the basic meaning of *iptaras* presupposes that the respective past “action” (in the above non-technical sense) is analyzed by the language into a fact component and resultative component, which latter is temporalized at the temporal point at which the respective message is delivered. This view implies that “currently

relevant” Preterites and Statives have semantic structures different from that of the Perfect: *iptarus* facts are not regarded as having a resultative component at the zero time; for *paris*, see 2.6 below.

Thus, my view of the primary meaning of *iptaras* is basically in continuity with Goetze 1936 and opposed to ideas developed by M. P. Streck and K. A. Metzler. My understanding of *iptaras* remains within the standard concept of the PERFECT as a verb form with a complex temporal structure: the PERFECT relates the fact time to a reference time in a way the deictically used PRETERITE does not.⁶¹

In epistolary literature it is in certain cases a matter of writer’s discretion to include a fact in his “subjective past” or not. A close investigation of all the available evidence might reveal distributional rules of some kind and shed more light on the nature of both verb forms. GAG § 156e provides for the “Belieben des Sprechers” in the transition from the Preterite to the Perfect, but offers no cogent examples.⁶²

At this point, a look at LH 5 will help us to follow the interplay of *iptaras* with a whole set of OB verb forms, both indicative and injunctive:

(27) ¹*a-na Tu-tu-ub-ma-gir* ²*qi₂-bi₂-ma* ³*um-ma be-el-ka-a-ma* ⁴*i-na li-ib-bu* GABA.RA₂ *mu-un-na-ab-tu* ⁵*i-mi-du-u₂-ma* ⁶*ši-tu-lam ki-a-am aš-ba-at* ⁷*um-ma a-na-ku-u₂-ma an-na mu-un-na-ab-tu im-ti-du* ⁸GABA.RA₂ *ša a-na ka-ap-ri-šu i-la-ku* ⁹*a-di ka-ni-ki la na-šu-u₂ la i-la-ak* ¹⁰*an-ni-tam aš-ba-at-ma ak-ki-am aš-pu-ra-kum* ¹¹*iš-tu i-na-an-na* GABA.RA₂.MEŠ ¹²*ša ka-ni-ki u₂-ka-la-mu-ka* ¹³*i-na ka-ap-ri-šu li-ši-ib-ma* ¹⁴*E₂-su u₃ A.ŠA₃-šu li-mu-ur* ¹⁵*u₃ a-di wa-*

⁶¹ The PERFECT is often described diachronically as the resultative underway to becoming a past tense. See e. g. Maslov 1962:30ff.; Comrie 1976:52f.; Plungian 2000:299. Maslov 1988: 67f. writes: “[T]he resultative ... is one of the aspects of the verb. It is a special **perfect aspect** which does not correspond either to the Slavic PF.ASP. or to the IMPF.ASP. When it denotes a state, i.e. a certain duration, it may be akin to the Slavic IMPF.ASP. and may easily be replaced by the IMPF.ASP. of an appropriate verb. [...] As the actional perfect departs further and further from the statal perfect (= resultative—S. L.), it stops being an aspect and develops other meanings—those of taxis and of a relative tense.”

⁶² In the languages of the world, a choice between two verb forms is sometimes conditioned by the speaker’s subjective attitudes only, all the other parameters of the context being equal. In English, in certain types of contexts the choice between the preterite and the present perfect depends on whether “the speaker is somehow thinking of the present when reporting the past situation” (Declerck 1997:62). In Spanish, the forms of subjunctive and indicative moods alternate in a few types of syntactic surroundings depending solely on the speaker’s propositional attitude.

{x}⁶³ aš-bu b[i-il]-tum¹⁶ lu ši-ta-ku-na-at¹⁷ i-na pa-ni at-lu-ki-šu¹⁸
¹⁸E-x-x a-na E₂.GAL-lim¹⁹ li-ir-de-e-šu-ma u₃ ka-ni-ki²⁰ a-na i-di-
 šu li-ib-lam²¹ ša ka-ni-ki la na-šu-u₂-ma²² **it-ta-al-ka-ak-kum**²³ a-
 na wa-ša-bi-im la ta-na-ad-di-šum²⁴ a-na ši-ri-ia šu-ri-a-aš-šu⁶⁴

To Tutub-Magir speak! This is what your lord says:⁶⁵

Among the ‘riders’, fugitives became numerous, so this is what I decided upon reflection:⁶⁶

“Indeed, fugitives have become numerous. A ‘rider’ who intends to go to his village must not go while he does not have a document with my seal.”⁶⁷

I have decided as follows (lit. “this”), and consequently I prescribe to you (the two following things): (1) From now on ‘riders’ who will show you the document with my seal may live in their village(s) and take care of their houses and their fields,⁶⁸ and as long as they live (there), *there shall be established a regularly paid rent*.⁶⁹ Before any of them leaves, PN² should lead him to the Palace, and in this case⁷⁰ he (= the ‘rider’) should bring here with himself the document with my seal.

(2) The one who comes to you without the document with my seal—do not allow him to settle! Conduct him to me!

The text starts in the narrative register with two preterites *imīdū* and *ašbat*, only to switch to the discourse (= deictic) register, introduced by the performative “egocentric particular” *anna*, which selects the perfect *imtidū* as the verb form for “subjective past”.⁷¹ Then the kernel of the

⁶³ An erased sign.

⁶⁴ The reading (including restorations), where it deviates from Goetze 1958:21, mostly follows Markina 2003:37.

⁶⁵ The writer is *I-ba-al-pi-el*, the king of Eshnunna, *Tu-tu-ub-ma-gir* is most probably a governor of Šaduppûm, a small town within the reign of Eshnunna, now buried in Tell Abu Harmal (Baghdad), cf. Goetze 1956:1f., Goetze 1958:1.

⁶⁶ *ši-tu-lam* might be an adverbial accusative, lit. “through reflection”, while *tēmum* was probably implied as the direct object of *šabātum* (cf. AHw. 1068b).

⁶⁷ For the justification of this translation, see 3.1 below.

⁶⁸ Cf. ³GAG, § 132c*.

⁶⁹ An ad sensum translation of the Gtn Stative of *šakānum*.

⁷⁰ Cf. Finet 1955 § 82k.

⁷¹ Already Benveniste 1966:242 allowed for this kind of switches: “La distinction que nous faisons entre récit historique et discours ne coïncide donc nullement avec celle entre langue écrite et langue parlée. L’énonciation historique est réservée aujourd’hui à la langue écrite. Mais le discours est écrit autant que par-

king's decision follows, expressed by the Prohibitive *lā illak*. The (future) time within which the prohibition is valid is also the time of the state of "having no document". *annītam ašbat-ma* belongs—in spite of the preterite—in the discourse register, as is shown by the choice of the egocentric demonstrative pronoun *annītam* rather than of an anaphoric pronoun. A restatement of the previously narrated fact in the narrative register would probably sound **ša ašbatu* or **ša ašbatam* "this is what I decided". *ašpurak-kum* is used here as a performative verb introducing the full text of the royal decree (= the operative part of the letter), whose last four lines also deserve our attention.

ša ka-ni-ki la na-šu-u₂-ma it-ta-al-ka-ak-kum is a relative clause preceding its antecedent (here "postcedent") *-šum* in l. 23. This relative clause is itself a complex sentence with a subject clause *ša ka-ni-ki la na-šu-u₂* "the one who does not have the document with my seal". The *-ma* of *na-šu-u₂-ma* indicates the rheme within the relative clause. Semantically the whole is of course a conditional structure: "If the one who comes to you does not have the document with my seal, do not allow him to settle!" Cf. a similar headless relative clause in CH XI 1–4:

(28) *ša iṣ-ša-ab-tu-ma i-li-ik-šu it-ta-al-ku šu-ma i-il-la-ak*

He who has taken (it) and has performed its duty (= the duty related to the holding of real estate), it is he who shall/will perform (it).

Both the likely pragmatic perspective of the relative clause and the simultaneity of the facts expressed by *lā našû* and *ittalkakkum* support my interpretation rather than the *consecutio temporum* *lā našû* → *ittalkakkum*, and the "epistolary" nature of the perfect⁷² *ittalkakkum* makes this interpretation even more plausible, since the EPf can hardly ever follow a stative with a cataphoric *-ma*. This EPf is unusual: it stands in a relative clause, it denotes anteriority to the future action (*lā tanaddiššum*) of the addressee, i.e. it behaves somewhat like future-reference perfects in temporal and *šumma*-clauses (see 3.1, 2 below), while "normal" EPf's denote facts which are lo-

lé. *Dans la pratique on passe de l'un à l'autre instantanément. [...] Le propre du langage est de permettre ces transferts instantanés*" (italics added).

⁷² This is hardly a Gt preterite: in l. 17 *atlukum* denotes the movement away from the addressee, consequently here we expect the allative meaning, supported also by the ventive. This perfect is "epistolary" because its deictic force is shifted to the addressee.

cated in the writer's future and in the addressee's past. This usage might be due to the conditional nuance of the relative clause.

The sequence *munabtū imīdū-ma ... ašbat ... anna munabtū imtūdū* (ll. 4–7) proves that in the deictic register the appearance of *iptaras* has nothing to do with the “assyriological” *consecutio temporum* (~ Fortschreiten, zeitlicher Progress, Nachzeitigkeit). Both *imīdū* and *imtūdū* refer to the same extralinguistic fact but interpret it differently vis-à-vis the speaker.

This is not the only example of such usage. Here follows the complete text of a suit as quoted in a letter of Hammurapi:

(29) *ki-a-am u₂-lam-mi-da-an-ni um-ma šu-ma A.ŠA₃ E₂ a-bi-ia ša iš-tu u₄-mi ma-du-tim ša-ab-ta-nu ¹Še-ep-^dEN.ZU GEŠTU₂.LAL DUMU a-bi-ia-tum ib-qu₂-ra-an-ni-ma ^{1d}UTU-ḥa-zi-ir a-lum u₃ ši-bu-tum iz-zi-zu wa-ar-ka-at A.ŠA₃-im šu-a-ti ip-ru-su₂-ma ki-ma A-bi-ia-tum a-bi GEŠTU₂.LAL A.ŠA₃-am šu-a-ti la iš-ba-tu A.ŠA₃-um šu-u₂ ši-bi-it-ni-ma u₂-bi-ir-ru-nim-ma ṭup-pa-am id-di-nu-nim u₃ i-na ṭup-pi₂-im ša id-di-nu-nim ¹A-bi-a-tum a-bi GEŠTU₂.LAL [a-na] ši-bu-tim ša-te₄-er i-na-an-na GEŠTU₂.LAL DUMU A-bi-ia-tum A.ŠA₃-li ib-ta-aq-ra-an-ni u₃ še-e i-na-aš-ša-ar ki-a-am u₂-lam-mi-da-an-ni*

He communicated me the following, in his own words: “Šep-Sin the Deaf, son of Abiyatum, claimed from me the patrimonial field that we hold for a long time. Then Šamaš-hazir, the City, and the elders presented themselves. They examined the factual evidence regarding this field and confirmed that Abiyatum the father of the Deaf had not held the said field, (that on the contrary) the said field (had always been) our holding, and they gave me a document (to this effect). And in the document they gave me, Abiyatum the father of the Deaf is entered as a witness! Now Šep-Sin the Deaf, son of Abiyatum has claimed my field and keeps the barley”.⁷³ This is what he communicated to me. AbB 4, 40:6–21.

This text was listed in Streck 1999:110 (68) as an example of *iptaras* within “zeitlicher Progress der Vorzeitigkeit”. M. P. Streck believes that *inanna* in AbB 4, 38:13–14; 40:18–19; 108:13–16 is a “Progressweiser”

⁷³ This text shows very clearly that in some cases, as noted above, the time-deictic *inanna* has *also* meta-communicative function.

standing *between* *iprus* and *iptaras* and functionally equivalent to conjunctions *-ma* and *u*. Still, in AbB 4, 40 the last non-subordinate predicate before *inanna iptaras* is not a Pret. *iddinūnim* “they gave me” (as it is supposed to be according to the pattern advanced by M. P. Streck and as his reader is made to believe) but *šaṭer* “is entered” (in the list of witnesses), left out by M. P. Streck from the quoted text. Another fact disturbing M. P. Streck’s theory is that in this text the verbal chain is not closed by *inanna + iptaras*: 18–19. *i-na-an-na* PN₁ DUMU PN₂ A.ŠA₃-li *ib-ta-aq-ra-anni*, “Jetzt hat der ‘Taube’, Sohn des A., mein Feld (wieder) von mir vindiziert” (M. P. Streck’s translation) but continues with a present: 20. *u₃ še-e i-na-aš-ša-ar*, i.e. “now PN₁ son of PN₂ has claimed my field from me and (as a consequence) he keeps (my) barley”. Again, M. P. Streck leaves *u₃ še-e i-na-aš-ša-ar* out, which allows him to place the Perfect *ibtaqranni* within “zeitlicher Progress der Vorzeitigkeit”, the only “regular” function his theory provides for the non-epistolary Perfect in main clauses.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Streck 1999 found 16 such cases within his corpus of 195 HL. Streck 1999:114 also lists 8 cases of main clauses past-time *iptaras* without a preceding *iprus* and explains them as an innovative feature of spoken OB used consciously as a stylistic device: “Der Wechsel von isoliertem *iptaras* innerhalb der direkten Rede und *iprus* außerhalb der direkten Rede läßt sich damit erklären, daß der Briefstil es erfordert, die direkte Rede im Gegensatz zur Sprachebene des Texts außerhalb der direkten Rede durch Elemente der Umgangssprache zu charakterisieren. Vereinfacht und überspitzt können wir von einer Opposition zwischen gesprochener und geschriebener Sprache sprechen” (p. 117f.). It is true that all the 8 examples singled out by M. P. Streck stand in the utterances quoted by Hammurapi, still the utterances of Hammurapi and those of the persons he quotes share two features: they are *direct* speeches and they are *written* communications: *aššum ša tašpuram* is explicitly stated in AbB 4, 19:4; *kām ulammidanni* (4 times) is a common way to introduce quotations from complaints in HL; *kām iqbiām* (twice: AbB 2, 3; 26) and *kām maḥriya iškun* (AbB 4, 13) are ambiguous if we grant that Hammurapi in his letters processed oral complaints. This usage of *iptaras* is equally well explainable by the T^S { T^F thesis or by the “current relevance” theory: the only foregrounded verb (“isoliertes *iptaras*“!) within a quoted complaint is likely to be a Perf. A parade example of this usage is AbB 4, 12:4–11, as quoted and translated in Streck 1999:114 among his “isolated *iptaras*”: *I. nārum rakbūm kām ulammidanni umma šūma S. u A. aḥḥī abija eqlī ibtaqrūninni kām ulammidanni* “I., der Sänger, ein Berittener, hat mir folgendes mitgeteilt: ‘S. und A., die Brüder meines Vaters, haben mein Feld von mir vindiziert.’ Das hat er mir mitgeteilt”. M. P. Streck’s examples (p. 120) meant to show that *iprus* can be successfully used in the same type of environment are irrelevant because none of the adduced preterites is an “isolated” predicate introducing the gist of the matter (most typically, of a quoted complaint), as is the case in AbB 4, 12:4–11. Sallaber-

An unbiased reading of this letter makes it clear (against M. P. Streck) that *ib-ta-aq-ra-an-ni* in l. 19 refers to the same fact that *ib-qu₂-ra-an-ni* in l.9.

Summing up: In the discourse register, the temporal opposition of non-negated Preterite and the Perfect is that of the “simple past” vs. the PERFECT as outlined above.⁷⁵ In Reichenbachian terms, E → S, R would describe temporal values of both the Perfect in pre-present MC and the deictic Preterite as used e.g. in (24) and (25).⁷⁶ But it is to be stressed that past time adverbials do provide an additional reference time for the discourse *iprus*, in this case the Reichenbachian notation for *iprus* would be different from that for *iptaras*: R, E → S, cf. BUR₃.3.IKU A.ŠA₃ ... *iš-tu* MU.4.KAM PN *i-ki-ma-an-ni-ma še-šu il-te-ne-eq-qi₂* “Four years ago, PN took away from me the three-*bur* field ... and keeps appropriating its barley.” (AbB 4, 79:6–9 discussed below as 71). I believe that the preterite *ikimanni* is deictic rather than narrative because the zero-point for the temporal relationships in this compound sentence is the moment of speaking (i.e. of writing the complaint).

2.3. The Perfect in the narrative register

In narrative texts *iptaras* does not have the T^S { T^F function, because, as mentioned above, the moment of speaking does not participate in the interpretation of verb forms in the narrative (against Metzler 2002:299ff.). The function of *iptaras* in the narrative is text-structural, it is similar to the narrative function of the Perfect in Ugaritic epic and Biblical Hebrew prose.⁷⁷ Such use of the present perfect in English or of Perfekt in literary

ger 1999:145 makes an observation important for the present discussion: “Interessanterweise bleibt das neue Ereignis, das ‘Problem’, bzw. die Eigenhandlung im *t*-Perfekt stehen, auch wenn der vorhergehende Normalzustand gar nicht ausgebreitet, sondern nur z.B. durch attributive Ergänzungen angedeutet wird”.

⁷⁵ Here I leave aspectual properties of *iprus* out of consideration.

⁷⁶ This means that Reichenbach’s apparatus is not sufficient to express this temporal opposition.

⁷⁷ See numerous studies of the *wayyiqṭōl* ... *wawX qāṭal* construction in BH prose, most recently Zevit 1998. For the Ugaritic evidence, see Tropper 2000:705ff. For most practical purposes, my interpretation does not go against Metzler 2002:384–481 (an analysis of *iptaras* within narrative), since in fact K. A. Metzler always looks for some kind of compositional (erzähltechnisch) justification for narrative perfects in epic texts, but, as we will see presently, perfects of first person speeches of characters in the canonical situation of utterance (in the narrated world of the respective epic) *do not* belong with narrative perfects (against Metzler 2002). Besides, it is misleading to christen the compositional

19th-century German is hardly possible.⁷⁸ This narrative projection of *iptaras* shows that its deictic force was already weakened in OB. Let us consider examples of the narrative Perfect in letters.⁷⁹

(30) <immediately after the letter-head and greeting> *ki-ma a-na Ar-ra-ap-ḫi-im KI e-ru-ba-am ša-ma-al-le-e ANŠE.ḪI.A il-qi₂-ma iḫ-ta-li-iq u₃ a-na-ku am-ta-ra-aš i-na na-pi₂-iš₇-tim e-li-i u₃ am-UD⁸⁰ ša a-na šu-bu-lim a-na ši₂-ri-ka im-tu-ta-an-ni*

When I entered Arrapha, my assistant took the donkeys and fled away_{pret}⁸¹ As for me, I fell ill_{pret} and (almost) lost my life.⁸² And my slave-girl to be sent to you died_{perf.} AbB 2, 87:6–11.

A new subject matter, introduced by *ki-a-am ta-aq-bi um-ma at-ta-ma*, follows. In the continuation the author moves freely from reporting news (telling another story) to making requests. Both *iḫ-ta-li-iq* and *am-ta-ra-aš* are medial intransitive Gt preterites,⁸³ while *im-tu-ta-an-ni* is a “compositional” perfect, rounding up a piece of narrative, the *dativus incommodi* sense is rendered not by the *t*-form but rather by the adverbial accusative (sic!) *-anni*.

(31) *a-na-k[u] a-na mu-ba-al-li-it-tim na-še-e-em a-na Bi-da-ḫa KI aš-pu-ur a-di mu-ba-al-li-it-tam u₂-ša-ak-ši-du i-na ša-ni-i-im u₄-mi-im UR.MAḪ im-tu-ut MUNUS.UR.MAḪ ša-a-ti a-mu-ur ši-ba-at u₃ ḫa-la-at ... i-na-an-na ki-ma UR.MAḪ šu-u₂ i-mu-tu KUŠ-šu uš₂-ki-iš-ma a-na šu-ku-lim ad-di-i[n]*

(text-structural) use of *iptaras* “Perfekt des Fortschreitens” because it is normally used to round up a piece of narrative rather than to continue it.

⁷⁸ The much-discussed last sentence of Goethe’s “Werther”, *Kein Geistlicher hat ihn begleitet*, is no exception, since it signals the switch to the deictic register.

⁷⁹ For examples of the Perfect in narrative epic texts, see Metzler 2002 and § 5 of this paper.

⁸⁰ The Edition has *am-tam* with a footnote: “So, statt *-tum*”. Still, the reading might be *tu₂*, cf. the reading of A.3206:17 *dam-qa-tum_x*(UD), as suggested by D. Charpin (but perhaps *damqātu?*) and quoted in *MARI* 7, p. 43, n. 10. Cf. also *li-il-qu₂-tu₂* RIME 4 p. 70 II 11.

⁸¹ Pret. Gt of *ḫalāqu* is neither in the dictionaries nor in Streck 2003, but see presently.

⁸² *e-li-i* can hardly be anything but Pret. of *elû*, although the writing is uncommon.

⁸³ See § 4 of this paper.

I sent to Bidaha to fetch a cage—before they brought me the cage, the next day, the lion died. I saw that lioness—she was old and sick. ... Now then, since that lion died, I had its skin flayed and gave (its flesh) as food. ARMT 14, 1:14–20, 24f.

The Perfect *imtūt* signals the end of the narrative about the lioness' fate, i.e. it is used in the “epic” way.

2.4. *iptaras* and *paris*

The “currently relevant” *ha-li-iq* in LH 1 (quoted above as 26) prompts one to compare provisionally the semantics of *iptaras* and *paris*.⁸⁴

Within the deictic register, the relationship between *iptaras* and *paris* of telic high transitivity verbs of G-stem is mostly that of the (present) *PERFECT* and the (present tense) *objective resultative*,⁸⁵ i.e. it is rather similar to the relationship between Perfekt and the present-tense form of Zustandspassiv of the same class of verbs in German: *Das Kind hat sich das Bein gebrochen* ~ *Das Bein ist gebrochen*. Example:

(32) *u₂-ul ad-di-iš-šum ki-ma ʔ₄-mi a-na be-li₂-ia u₂-te-er-ru um-
ma a-na-ku-u₂-ma 1 GU₄ u₂-ul na-di-iš-šum*

I have not given him [an ox]. As I reported to my lord: “Not a single ox is given to him”. LH 1: 20–22.

The implicating fact is expressed by the Preterite probably because of negation.

The relationship between *iptaras* and transitive *paris* of low transitivity verbs is that of *the PERFECT* and *the possessive resultative*, it is similar to that of Pretérito Simple (in deictic usage) and new periphrastic perfect in the Mexican Spanish: *escribí la carta* ~ *tengo la carta escrita*. Examples:

(33) *iš-tu an-ni-ki-a-am ka-li-a-ku 3 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR a-na
ŠE.GIŠ.I₃ a-na ʔ₃-ti-im li-qi₂-a-ku*

Since I am detained here, I have taken 3 shekels of silver as fee for the sesame. LH 13: 21–25.

⁸⁴ Here my purpose is to contrast both verbal tenses as used in the same pattern, in particular as related to the same reference point.

⁸⁵ The term “resultative” is used as in Nedjalkov (ed.) 1988, passim.

(34) [m]i-nu-u₂ a-wa-tum-ma [']Ip-qu-i₃-li₂-šū DI.KU₅ [o-o] [a]r-di E₂-ia u₃ ši-ih-ḫi-r[u-ti-ia] ra-ki-is

What is it this that the judge Ipqu-Ilišu has the slaves of my household and my children bound by contract? AbB 12, 72:13–16.

The relationship between *iptaras* and *paris* of intransitive verbs is that of the *PERFECT* and the *subjective resultative*, it is similar to that of present perfect ~ resultative in English: *he has gone to the war* ~ *he is gone to the war*. Example:

(35) šu₂-ḫa-rum i-na ma-a-at Šu-bar-tim wa-ši-ib

The servant is staying in the land of Šubartum (and therefore I cannot send him to you). AbB 12, 60:11–12.

The Stative sometimes denotes the cancelled result, i.e. the result that (already) does not exist at the moment of observation:

(36a) GU₄.HI.A ša Ma-di-du-um ḫa-al-qu₂-ma i-na qa-ti PN₁ u₃ PN₂ iṣ-ba-tu-šu-nu-ma

Cattle belonging to Madidum had been lost, and (then) they found them in the hands of PN₁ and PN₂. LH 28:4–8.

(36b) DIŠ I₃ sa₃-pi-ih-ma ka-sa₃-am im-la ...

If the oil had been spread, and (then) filled up the bowl ... CT 5, 4–6, 5.

I include this text in the discussion on the self-evident assumption (with Metzler 2002:41ff.) that in omnia the moment of observation (pun not intended) is the time when the respective signs are seen and interpreted by the diviner. Since I think that the stative *sapiḫ* expresses the cancelled result, I accept the line of thought rejected in Metzler 2002:95: the “spreading” of oil (no matter how we understand it) is in fact “aufgehoben”, the stative does denote “Vergangenheit”, or, to be more precise, cancelled result.

2.5. *inanna* + *iptaras* in reported speech of OB literary texts

Reported speech in OB literary texts, the closest approximation to the canonical situation of utterance available to us, displays the pattern of

*inanna*_A used with *iptaras* discussed in 2.1. This proves once more that the collocation of *inanna* with the Perfect in OB letters as described by Salla-berger 1999 is conditioned by the basic meaning of the Perfect as outlined above.

(37) *iš-tu wa-ar-ki-šu u₂-ul u₂-ta ba-la-ṭam₂*
at-ta-na-ag-gi-iš ki-ma ḥa-bi-lim qa₂-ba-al-tu še-ri
i-na-an-na sa-bi-tum a-ta-mar pa-ni-ki
mu-tam ša a-ta-na-ad-da-ru a-ia a-mu-ur

After his (= Enkidu's) departure I did not find life.
 I kept wandering like a criminal in the midst of the steppe.
 Now, o ale-wife, I have seen thy face.
 I wish I were not to see the death which I ever dread!
 Gilg. Meissner/Millard II 10'–13'.⁸⁶

(38) ^dGIŠ *šu-mi a-na-ku*
ša al-li-kam iš-tu UNUG.KI E₂ AN-ni
ša as₂-ḥu-ra-am ša-di-i
ur-ḥa-am ri-qe₂-e-tam wa-ša-u₂ ^dUTU-ši
i-na-an-na su-ur-su-na-bu a-ta-mar pa-ni-ka
ku-ul-li-ma-an-ni u₂-ta-na-¹iš-tim¹ ri-qa₂-am

Gilgameš is my name, I (am the one)⁸⁷
 Who came from Uruk, the house of Anum,
 Who moved around in the mountains
 Along a far-away path, from the sun-rise.
 Now, Sursunabu, I have seen thy face.
 Show me the far-away Uta-Na'ištim!
 Gilg. Meissner/Millard IV 8–13.⁸⁸

The use of tenses in these two texts has been recently analysed in Metzler 2002:459f. K. A. Metzler notes that both *ātamar* forms “bezeichnen die der Gegenwart unmittelbar vorangehende und nachhaltige präsens-perfektive Vergangenheit. Der Gegenwartsbezug ist durch *inanna* ‘jetzt’ zum Ausdruck gebracht. [...] In beiden Passagen dient das Perfekt

⁸⁶ The reading follows Metzler 2002:459.

⁸⁷ Or just “(I am) Gilgameš, (it is) my name”, *anāku* being in apposition to the possessive suffix?

⁸⁸ The reading follows Metzler 2002:460.

im Rahmen der *Consecutio temporum*⁸⁹ zur Bezeichnung des Fortschreitens der Handlung. [...] Ungewöhnlich ist freilich die Verbindung von *inanna* mit einem Perfekt des Fortschreitens, welche die so gestaltete Sätze einerseits an das vorangehende narrative Geschehen bindet, andererseits schon auf die Gegenwart vorausweist". And he adds in a footnote: "Dies kann jedoch kein Argument bilden für die Annahme, daß akkadische Perfekt bezeichne an dieser Stelle ein präsens-perfektives Geschehen in Opposition zum Präteritum als einem dann vermeintlich nicht-präsens-perfektivem Tempus, da [...] auch das Präteritum präsens-perfektive Sachverhalte bezeichnet...".⁹⁰ This line of reasoning can only mean that the preterites in both passages (and Gtn Present *attanaggiš* 'Ich streifte beständig umher?') also have "präsens-perfektive" meaning, which is incompatible with the idea of temporal progress (Fortschreiten), claimed by K. A. Metzler for the *iptaras* predicates of both texts. As for the Perfect in the context of *inanna*, this collocation is quite "gewöhnlich" and expected in the deictic register.

In both Gilgamesh passages just quoted, *inanna iptaras* is followed by volitive verb forms, similarly to what often happens in the OB letters. This fact again shows a special relation of the Perfect to the moment of speaking.

2.6. Restrictions on the use of *iptaras*

As is well known, there are three "mild" syntactic restrictions on the use of the Perfect: it is usually avoided in noun clauses and relative clauses, as well as in negative clauses and question words questions (for the latter, see the example 63 below). The fourth restriction seems to be a strong one: the Perfect, unlike the other three tenses, is not used in the assertive mood (or "positive affirmative") **lū aptaras/*aptarsu* "I have truly decided".⁹¹

Diachronically, these facts suggest that the Perfect is a newcomer (or perhaps a relative "latecomer") in the Akkadian verbal system,⁹² since

⁸⁹ In K. A. Metzler's use, this concept is very close to M. P. Streck's "zeitlicher Progress": both notions imply that the appearance of *iptaras* is in most cases conditioned by the preterites in the left co-text.

⁹⁰ Metzler 2002 consistently uses the German adjective "perfektiv" in the sense of "current relevance" (as explained on pp. 14, 58f.).

⁹¹ AbB 2, 47:8 is the only possible exception I am aware of; its interpretation is disputed, see Maloney 1982:196f.

⁹² It is a commonplace that in formal semantics the PERFECT is the juncture at which the verbal system develops innovations, most often via the shift PASSIVE > RESULTATIVE > PERFECT. It is equally well known that later in the history of a

cross-linguistically these restrictions are typical of innovative verb forms.⁹³

Still, T^S ∫ T^F as the basic temporal value of *iptaras* provides a synchronic explanation for the first two restrictions.

The Perfect is rare in noun clauses and relative clauses because these, within a complex sentence, either replace or modify a noun (phrase) of the main clause, therefore their verbal predicates are usually not pragmatically foregrounded and easily “disengaged” from T^S.⁹⁴ If the writer wants to foreground the verb of a relative clause, he is free to use *iptaras*, cf. example (40a) below. The evidence from AbB 1–7 collected and analysed in Maloney 1982:184–195 corroborates this view.

language the PERFECT often shifts to past (simple or perfective, depending on the structure of past tense in a given verbal system), probably by route explained in Bybee et al. 1994:86f.: “The anterior (= PERFECT—S. L.) conveys the sense of past or perfective but includes a special flavor of relevance or proximity to the present or the current situation. Thus if a speaker wishes to frame his or her contribution AS THOUGH it were highly relevant to the current concerns, then the speaker might use the anterior more often than would be strictly necessary for the communication of the propositional content of the message. Such overuse weakens the force of the current relevance component, and eventually the hearer infers only past or perfective action from the anterior and no sense of current relevance” (and cf. *ibid.* 293). Perhaps the observation in GAG § 80f: “In positiven Aussagesätzen steht ... in m/spB und n/nA Briefen sowie in bestimmten Arten historischer Berichte ... fast immer das PF.” could be explained along some such lines (and cf. Aro 1955:81ff.). The development of the West-Semitic *qatala* from the resultative (~ OB *paris*) via PERFECT to the simple past with the concomitant suppression of the old simple past *yaqtul* reminds in general features the well-known evolution of the Latin resultative *habere/essere* + passive participle of the *scriptum habeo* type: it yielded PERFECT in Romance, the latter in turn partly supplanted the old perfective past in individual Romance languages and weakened or lost its “present perfect” meaning (Harris 1983).

⁹³ As mentioned in McCoard 1978:233f., Chaucer (late Middle English) used the present perfect for positive utterances, the simple past for negative ones. Some well-known Semitic facts also belong in the picture. In Arabic, the only rest of the PS simple past has been preserved in the context of negations: *lam/lammā yaktub*. In Biblical Hebrew prose the old simple past survived within the grammaticalized form for narrative progress *wayyiqtol*, while the new past tense *qatal* was used for past-time facts in all the other contexts (cf. e.g. Kuryłowicz 1972:66). Innovative future tenses are not used in some types of subordinate clauses in Romance and Germanic languages (especially in CC and TC). In Polish, the analytical future formed by the verb “to be” + the *t*-participle is not employed in the context of *wh*-questions, simple future is used instead.

⁹⁴ For possible examples of the Perfect in relative clauses in AbB, see Maloney 1982:184–195 and Leong 1994:208 ff.

The Perfect in MC is almost never negated in OB letters because the explicit inclusion of a past fact within T^s creates a certain temporal span for the respective fact, which span is of course absent in the case of a negative fact. Cf. Goetze 1936:316: “A negative action ... cannot have any extension (sc. ‘in time’—S. L.)” For negated perfects in *šumma*-clauses, see Excursus IV below.

Here is one of the very few examples of a negated MC perfect in AbB 1–13:

(39) *la-ma ša-pi₂-ri iš-tu gi-ir-ri-im i-ru-ba-am mu-ur-šum iṣ-ba-ta-an-ni-ma a-na ma-ḥar ša-pi₂-ri-ia u₂-ul al-li-kam i-na-an-na a-di-ni u₂-ul e-te-še-er u₃ ṣu₂-ḥa-rum u₂-ul šu-X-ur-^ldam^l-ma u₂-ul aṭ-ru-da-aš-šu*

Before my boss returned from the campaign, I had fallen ill and had not come to my boss. Now I have not yet recovered, and a servant not ..., and I have not dispatched him. AbB 9, 42:9–15.⁹⁵

For its discussion, see Excursus IV.

(40a) *ma-ti-i-ma a-na-ku-u₂ ba-ši-it E₂.GAL-lim a-šar a-ta-am-ru u₂-ul a-ka-ta-a-am*

I do not ever conceal the property of the Palace wherever I have been finding (it). LH 14:6–8.⁹⁶

(40b) *i-na šu-ku-sa-ti-ni a-šar 1 SAR GIŠ.KIRI₆ me-e ni-iš-qu₂ u₂-ul i-ba-aš-ši*

⁹⁵ On the use of tenses in the context of *adīni ul*, see GAG #151d, where this example is mentioned. Why should both the Preterite and the Present appear within this pattern, is not clear. My guess is that in *adīni ul* + Preterite clauses the verb has its usual “preterital” force as explained in 2.2, while *adīni ul* + Present represents a “present perfect” semantics: in OB, the Perfect is blocked by *ul* and usually replaced by the Preterite; this option is not available for the *adīni ul* pattern if the language is not supposed to allow the neutralization of Perf. ~ Pret. opposition in this pattern, therefore the Present rather than the Preterite was chosen here to convey the “present perfect” meaning. On the very rare cases of negated Perfect in main clauses of AbB, see Leong 1994:188–190 (with references to earlier literature) and below, Excursus IV.

⁹⁶ Goetze 1958:33 translates: “As far as I am concerned, I shall never conceal an asset of the palace where I have seen (it)”. The plene-writings are unusual. “Emphatic” intonation?

In our allotments there is no place where we watered a single ‘plot’ of garden.⁹⁷ LH 20:7–9.

The subordinate clauses in both examples can equally well be interpreted as relative, i.e. “(at) the place (where/that)”, or as adverbial clauses of place, i.e. “where(ever)”. For the sake of the argument, I choose the former interpretation.⁹⁸

Both complex sentences are structurally almost identical, so the use of the Perfect *ātamru* in (40a) requires explanation. The Perfect is used in the relative clause of (40a) because *ul akattam* actually denotes ‘Handlung’ and not ‘Unterlassung’, if one is allowed to employ the German legal terminology. Both the positive force of *ul akattam* “attracted” into the relative clause and the need to situate the *ātamru* fact within T^S contribute to the choice of the Perfect. By contrast, *ul ibašši* in (40b) denotes non-existence of the *nišqû* fact of the relative clause, where a non-negated preterite expresses ‘Unterlassung’. Besides, the Perfect is capable of creating a temporal span for the denoted fact, so the writer was able to use it to connote iteration: “wherever I have been finding”.

2.7. OB finite verb in the context of *anumma*

The use of *anumma* is not restricted to its collocation with EPf. The “non-EPf” use of *anumma* in Mari is documented better than in letters found elsewhere. *anumma* is compatible with all finite verb forms. I believe that *anumma* is primarily a linguistic equivalent of a demonstrative gesture pointing to the (place of the) addressee. *anumma* is never used for proximal deixis, although morphologically it is most probably a loc.-adv. of *annâm* “this (one here)” + “emphatic” *-ma*.⁹⁹ The usage of *anumma* in letters (the only one current in our OB corpus) makes it plausible that the core of its lexical meaning is *projectio perpetua*, constant transposition of the spatial deictic *origo* from the speaker to the addressee. Applying freely Jakobson’s model of “the constitutive factors in any speech event” and functions of language¹⁰⁰ to the classification of OB deictic words, we can suggest that *inanna_B* has to do with the “CONTEXT”-related elements of the communicative

⁹⁷ Goetze’s interpretation (p. 42) seems to be correct: “... there is no place where we could by irrigation create a single SAR of garden”.

⁹⁸ Anyway, the Perfect is not used in adverbial clauses of place whose main clauses refer to the past.

⁹⁹ “Here” is usually expressed in OB letters by *anniš* and *annikiam*.

¹⁰⁰ See Jakobson 1960:353–357.

act (Jakobson's referential function), while *anumma* is employed to sustain CONTACT (Jakobson's phatic function; it is needed "to check whether the channel works"). If one is not too demanding about distinction of deixis and anaphora,¹⁰¹ one can say that *inanna_B* serves the orientation within both the description and the world described, while *anumma* attracts attention of the addressee to the process of communication.

This view is close to an observation in Sallaberger 1999:146: "[B]edeutet die Initiative immer auch eine metakommunikative Äußerung, der die Funktion KONTAKTIEREN zukommt. Eine Äußerung wie *anumma aštaprakkum* 'nunmehr schreibe ich Dir' enthält keinen Informationswert mehr, indem etwas Neues mitgeteilt würde." Sallaberger's words refer to the "Initiative" part of the Hammurapi letters, i.e. the one containing EPf; the examples below will show that the phatic function of *anumma* holds also outside the context of EPf.

I make reservations about my "free" application of Jakobson's classification and about proximity of deixis and anaphora because Jakobson's REFERENTIAL (= "denotative", "cognitive") function of language is actually directed towards extralinguistic world, while *inanna_B* (singled out on formal grounds, i.e. through its compatibility with the Preterite) is a predominantly metatextual word. Roman Jakobson made room for METALINGUAL function of language but he did not recognize a domain of meta-communicative linguistic means.

In what follows I translate *anumma* with capitalized HERE supplied with a comma, on the assumption that *anumma* (like *inanna_B* and unlike *inanna_A*) relates to the whole clause that follows and is autonomous, i.e. it is no part of this clause. The examples below demonstrate the use of *anumma* with different verb forms.

(41) *a-[n]u-[u]m-ma* PN *[š]u-[u]d-di-a-š[u]-m[a]* [x GU]R *še-a-am*
i[d]-na-š[u]m

HERE, supply PN with food by giving him x *kor* of barley.
AbB 13, 58:5–10.

In this letter, *anumma* immediately follows the names of the addressees and the writer, thus simply separating the body of the letter from the let-

¹⁰¹ Anaphora is sometimes difficult to tell from deixis in any language, see Lyons 1977:657 ff. with English examples.

ter-head. This initial position of *anumma* is typical of letters lacking descriptive/narrative part and starting directly with injunctives.

(42) <immediately after the letter-head> *a-nu-um-ma aš-šum*
 NIN[DA₂. X².KU₆] *a-na Mu-na-nu-um ma-^[x]-[...] ma-aš-še-e*
 2.0.0.0. GUR NINDA₂. X².KU₆ *u₃ na-ši-šu-nu ki-i-in*
 HERE, re: (giving?) of *singurru*-fish to Munanum. Assign baskets² which can hold 2 *kors* of *singurru*-fish and those who carry them. LH 33:3–6.

anumma introduces “betreffs”, again in a letter lacking a descriptive part.

(43) <immediately after the letter-head> *a-nu-um-ma ši-ta*
na-ru-qa-tim ¹Sa-ri-qum uš-ta-bi-lam
 HERE, I have had PN bring (to you) two sacks. LH 42:3f.

No descriptive part, injunctives follow. The perfect is most likely epistolary,¹⁰² although *uštābilakkum* is much more common in this situation.

(44) <immediately after the letter-head> *a-nu-um-ma*
 LU₂.MEŠ *wa-bi-il tup-pi₂-ia an-ni-im ša a-wa-at DUMU ši-ip-ri-*
im ša Bu-nu-ma-^dIM iš-te-mu-u₂ be-li₂ li-iš(=UŠ)-ta-a-al-šu-nu-ti
 HERE, the persons bringing this tablet of mine who have heard the report of the messengers of Bunuma-Addu, let my lord interrogate them. ARMT 2, 141:4–8.

(45) *i-na mi-nim ša-ba-am a-di i-na-an-na la aṭ-ru-da-kum a-nu-um-*
ma ṭe₄-m[a]-am ga-am-ra-[a]m ṭe₄-em a-la-ki-ia PN u₂-te-e-ra-kum a-
na ṭe₄-mi-šu qu₂-u₂-ul

(You ask) why I have not sent you troops till now? HERE, PN has brought you all the information (and) the news about my arrival. Pay attention to his information. ARMT 1, 67:12–17.

Whether *u₂-te-e-ra-kum* is a pret. or a perf. is a moot question, though of course the EPf interpretation seems likely.

(46) *i-di ki-ma li-ib-ba-ti-ia ma-li-it PN₁ [k]ar-ši₂-ia i-k[u]-la-kum-*
ma u₃ a-na a-wa-ti-šu ta-qu₂-ul u₃ a-nu-um-ma¹⁰³ a-na PN₂ ad-bu-
ub pi₂-qa-at u₂-te-er-ra-kum pi₂-qa-at u₂-ul u₂-te-er-ra-kum

¹⁰² Cf. ll. 15 f. and similar examples referred to in Sallaberger 1999:139.

¹⁰³ For the moment, I see no radical difference between *anumma* and *u anumma*.

I know that you are filled with rage against me. PN₁ slandered me before you, and you paid attention to his words. HERE, I complained to PN₂. He may or may not have spoken to you about it. ARMT 2, 66:5–13.

(47) *u*₃ *a-nu-um-m*[*a* L]U₂.MEŠ *mu-ub-bi-bi* LUGAL *a-na* *ši-ri-ka* *i-ṭa*₃-*ar-ra*-[*d*]am

HERE, the king is going to send you census officials. ARMT 1, 129:25–27.

(48) *a*-[*nu-u*]m-*ma* 2 MA.NA KU₃.BABBAR *ša-ki-in*

(If you ask for silver), HERE, 2 minas of silver are deposited. AbB 12, 42:8.

(49) <after a quote> *u*₃ *a-nu-um-ma* [*ša-bu-ni*] *aš-ra-nu wa-aš-bu* *ša qa-be*₂-*e be-li*₂-*ka i-pi*₂-*šu*

HERE, [our troops] are there. They will act according to the command of your lord. ARMT 2, 21:13'f.

(50) *a-nu-um-ma* 30 UDU.ḪI.A ... *i-na* GN *ik-ta-lu-u*₂

HERE, they have held back 30 sheep in GN. ARMT 5, 9:4–8. A non-epistolary perfect.

(51) *a-n*[*u*]-*um-ma* PN 1 GUR *š[e]-a-[a]m* ... *i-ka-na-kam-ma ana* GN *ub-ba-al*

HERE, PN will put under seal and bring to GN one kor of barley. (Injunctives follow.) AbB 13, 138:7.

(52) *a-nu-um-ma* *ṭe*₄-*ma-am* *ša eš-mu-u*₂ *a-na* *ši-ri-ka* ***aš-tap-ra-am*** *ṭe*₄-*em-ka* *ša-ba-at* *u*₃ *ṭe*₄-*ma-am an-ni-im* *ša aš-pu-ra-kum ar-ḫi-iš* *a-na* *ši-ir* LUGAL *li-ik-šu-ud* ... (partly broken) ... *i-na* *a*[*n-n*]*a* *ṭe*₄-*em eš-mu-u*₂ ***aš-tap-ra-ak-kum*** *ši*₂-*bi-it* *ṭe*₄-*me-im ri-ši*

<after a *ṭēmum* on the movement of Babylonian troops>
HERE, I have communicated you the news that I have heard. Make your decision, and as for this news that I communicated to you, let it rapidly reach the king. ... Now I have sent you the news I heard. Make a decision! ARMT 2, 122:10ff.

Both perfects are “epistolary”, but *anumma* and *inanna* in this text are not synonymous.

Now we turn to the meaning of *inanna anumma* and the collocability of this expression with verb forms. I have not found *inanna anumma* in AbB 1–13 (except for AbB 6, 180:11 where the verb in l. 15 is broken), but there is one example of it in LH, quoted above as (3), all the other occurrences available to me are from Mari.

The evidence suggests that most often this is simply a sum total of *inanna_A* and *anumma*, both retaining their deictic functions as established above.¹⁰⁴

(53) *i-na-an-na a-nu-um-m[a] a-na GN šu-pu-ur-ma li-wa-aš-še-ru-nim*

Now (HERE!) write to GN so that they release (them). ARMT 5, 9:16–19.

(54) *i-na-an-na a-nu-um-[ma b]e-li₂ PN li-iš₇-ta-al u₃ an-ni-tam la an-ni-tam be-li₂ li-iš-pu-ra-am*

Let my lord now (HERE!) ask PN and write me this or that. ARMT 2, 29:2'–4'.

(55) *i-na-an-na a-nu-um-ma [a]-~~ta~~₃-ra-da-aš-šu be-li₂ la i-ka-la-š_u-ma [i]-na ha_l-ši₂-šu-ma li-ši-ib*

Now (HERE!) I am going to dispatch him (to you). Let my lord not detain him and let him live in his district. (End of letter.) ARMT 5, 40:22–25.

The use of the Present seems to show that the writer is free to choose the moment of writing as the zero-point for a typically “epistolary” verb.¹⁰⁵ This phenomenon needs more study.

In the majority of cases *inanna anumma* introduces an EPF, cf. e.g. ARMT 1, 28:28; 45:10; 111:10; 2, 13:8–9; 90:25.

¹⁰⁴ For counter-examples, see ARMT 5, 51:9; ARMT 10, 7:23 (*inanna anumma* + pret. *ušābīlam*). In line with the argumentation developed in this paper, this would be *inanna_B* used with a non-epistolary preterite, see presently.

¹⁰⁵ In relative clauses LH 8:11, 15 the present *ubbalakkum* is used in a typically “epistolary” context where epistolary preterites are also frequent (see examples in 2.8).

2.8. “Epistolary past” in OB

In OB, the “epistolary past” tense in main clauses is always *iptaras*, against Pardee and Whiting 1987 followed by Leong 1994:71f., Streck 1999:119, Metzler 2002:481, 879. The examples of OB epistolary preterites as distinct from EPf’s *apud* Pardee and Whiting are wrong or susceptible to a “non-epistolary” interpretation. Thus, ARM 1, 24:7, ARM 3, 28:7; 37:17; 40:8; 62:7 are subordinate clauses (as noted in Streck 1999: 112 n. 26), in which one expects “epistolary” preterites. ARM 1, 24:3–5 *a-nu-um-ma me-ḫi-ir tuḫ-pi₂-im ... i-na tuḫ-pi₂-im an-ni-im u₂-ša-at-ṭe₄-ra-am-ma uš-ta-bi-la-kum* is a hendiadys: “here (my) answer to the letter ... I have sent you as a copy”, lit. “copied and have sent”, same hendiadys occurs e.g. in ARMT 3, 19:21. The explanation of this phenomenon will follow in this section of the paper. AbB 5, 210:16–17 *u₃ tuḫ-pi₂ a-ni-a-am li-bi ga-am-ra aš-pu-ra-ki*, literally “and I wrote you this letter whole-heartedly”: the preterite *aš-pu-ra-ki* appearing as the very last word of the letter in the context of *li-bi ga-am-ra* is performative: “I hereby address you whole-heartedly through this letter”, cf. other cases of performative usage of *šapāru* pret. mentioned in this paper. AbB 5, 224:6–8 *lu-u₂ ša-al-ma-a-ta a-na šu-ul-mi-ka aš-pur-am šu-lum-ka šu-up-ra-am* “may you be well! I WRITE (to inquire) you about your well-being. Write me about your well-being”: *a-na šu-ul-mi-ka aš-pur-am* is a performative preterite within the greeting formula (with Sallaberger 1999:87ff.). On ARM 10, 50:29–32 see presently.

Now that we have described the primary meaning of *iptaras*, we are able to explain the temporal structure of the EPf more precisely.

EPf depicts, through deictic transfer, facts obtaining in the writer’s *future* as the *subjective past of the addressee*, i.e. as facts belonging in his *temporal “personal sphere”*. The latter notions are of course Du-deictic equivalents of T^S.

Fillmore 1982:37f. in his analysis of spatial deixis makes a point important for the present discussion: “Some prototypically deictic elements can be used with their deictic centre ‘transferred’ to something other than the speaker of the current utterance ... [I]t is by *virtue of an element’s participation in a deictic system* that its transfer brings about a particular ‘dramatizing’ effect...” (italics added). Same of course is true of temporal deixis. We can turn the argument the other way: the “epistolary” usage corroborates the prototypically shifter meaning of the Perfect.

Thus the above description of *iptaras* as belonging in the discourse register vs. *iḫrus* as predominantly a narrative verb form makes this epis-

tolary usage understandable.¹⁰⁶ Written communication is but a “distortion” of face-to-face speech interaction for which language is designed. Therefore the use of a ‘principal’ rather than of a ‘historical’ tense is an attempt to maintain the canonical frame of communication. Conversely, the choice of *iptaras* for this transfer confirms our conclusion about its nature as a prototypically shifter temporal grammeme.¹⁰⁷ As was noted in 2.1, the resultative component of EPf coincides with the decoding time, demonstrably so when verbs of sending refer to the actual tablet on which they are inscribed.

Since the Preterite is normally not used as an “epistolary” tense in OB main clauses, *ušābilakkum* vs. *uštābilakkum* forms most probably reflect dif-

¹⁰⁶ I must stress that *iprus* is not considered here *the* trademark of the narrative register. The constitutive essence of the narrative register is the zero-point different from both the coding and decoding time. As was shown in 2.2, *iprus* appears *also* in the discourse register. Non-negated *iprus* directly or indirectly relates to either the coding or decoding time as its ultimate zero-point in at least four cases: 1) in main clauses where *iptaras* is also possible, see above examples (24) and (25), with discussion; 2) as “epistolary preterite” in relative clauses; 3) in “epistolary past” hendiadyoi; 4) in *adi ... lā* clauses, see 3.1 below.

¹⁰⁷ As suggested in 2.3, its absolute use is already somewhat weakened in OB. This might be also true of the Present. In letters, the Present of telic verbs is not much used in main declarative sentences to express a fact actually taking place at the zero-point unless such meanings as habituality, iteration etc. are conveyed, i.e. the Present does not often display the prototypical “present tense” deictic meaning. Significantly, it is the Stative that is widely employed to express simultaneity of reported facts with the moment of speaking (wherever its diathesis properties make room for it), while the Present serves mainly to denote intentions (“is going to...”), future facts and habitual/iterated facts. Cf. e.g. a piece of reported speech: A.ŠA₃ ... *ša-bi-ūt u₃ ka-ni-ik LUGAL u₂-ul na-ši-i*, “he holds ... a field, but he does not have the king’s document” (AbB 10, 5:13–15), where the Present does not seem to be possible, with the following statement: [*pi₂*]-*ha-at URU.KI ša-a-tu a-na-ku a-ša-ab-ba-at*, “I am going to assume responsibility for this town/I will assume/I (hereby) assume...(?)” (LH 3:17–18). Streck 1995b comes to the conclusion that the Present in epic narratives, i.e. in the narrative register, often denotes simultaneity with a fact expressed by another finite form (preterite or stative), while Metzler 2002:496ff. re-analyzes most of M. P. Streck’s OB examples as expressing a plural nature of denoted facts rather than simultaneity. If K. A. Metzler is right, the meaning of the Present would at least partly depend on the register of interpretation, which would mean that the deictic sense of the Present as opposed to its narrative use is identifiable in OB. The relevant examples probably have to be investigated anew. Before we get a complete grammatical description of the Present in letters, the whole problem will remain unresolved.

ferent temporal localizations of respective facts. If we exclude often-mentioned but erroneous interpretations (e.g. verbs of sending in relative clauses and performative pret. of *šapārum*), we are left with only one “suspicious” usage, the preterite of *šūbulu*, and, as far as I can see, only in Mari letters. It is difficult to prove beyond doubt that the latter verb form was never used in Mari with the same deictic force as the epistolary *uštābilakkum*, since both the Preterite and the Perfect of *šūbulu* appear at the end of letters in similar lexical context, cf. e.g. ARMT 10, 8:24–28 *šar-ta-am u₃ s[i₂-i]s-si₂-ik-tam ak-nu-ka-am-ma a-na ši-ir be-li₂-ia uš-ta-bi-lam* with ARMT 10, 50:29–33 *a-nu-um-ma ša-ar-ti u₃ s[i₂-s]i₂-ik-ti ak-nu-ka-am-ma a-na ši-ir be-li₂-ia u₂-ša-bi-lam*, but to consider them synonymous we have to posit a lexicalized dialectal usage. This solution is not plausible. Most interestingly, *uštābilam* does not seem to appear in the context of *tuḫpam šuāti (annēm)/tuḫpātīm šināti* and similar expressions unambiguously referring to the very tablet on which they appear inscribed, while these expressions are frequent with *uštābilam*, see e.g. ARMT 1, 24:3–5; ARMT 2, 108:4f.; 121:18f.; ARMT 4, 80:7’.

EPf is not limited to the three verbs *šapārum*, *tarādum*, *šūbulum* but, unlike the epistolary tenses in Latin, it is sensitive only to all kinds of movements in the direction writer → addressee, i.e. it is centripetal in relation to *its own* deictic centre both in terms of temporal and spatial deixis.¹⁰⁸

(56) *aš-šum GIŠ.UR₃.ḪI.A ... a-na Ma-ri^{KI} sa₃-[ka-pi₂-im] be-li₂
iš-[pu-ra-am] a-nu-um-ma 50 GIŠ.U[R₃.ḪI.A] ša ... a-na-aš-ša-
ru **as-sa₃-ak-ḫa-a[m]***

My lord has written to me concerning the floating¹⁰⁹ of logs ... to Mari. HERE the fifty logs that I keep (for a different use) I have floated (to you). ARMT 3, 25:9–12.

The Present *a-na-aš-ša-ru* suggests that the Perfect *as-sa₃-ak-ḫa-a[m]* is epistolary. The same is possibly true of *uš-ta-ri-kum /uštārēkkum/*, “I have directed to you” (ARMT 1, 110:24), *[a-n]u-um-ma ... uš-ta-ri-ki-im* ARMT 10, 126:4, cf. also *as-sa₃-ak-ḫa-am* in ARMT 3, 24:21; ARMT 3, 50:20f. *ana šēr bēliya ittalkūnim*, “they will come to my lord”, if the restoration of this

¹⁰⁸ By the latter I mean both the shifter directionality of respective movement verbs and the meaning of the ventive in their context.

¹⁰⁹ CAD S 73a translates “to set afloat” under *sakāpu* A 2b) “to send cargo by boat”. AHW. 1011a suggests for similar contexts “(Holz) flößen”.

badly damaged text is correct. In AbB 6, 31 *turru* is probably used as EPf *utterrakkum*: *a-nu-um-ma* KU₃.BABBAR *u₂-te-ra-kum*, “HERE, I have returned you the silver”. The spelling does not help here, but the EPf interpretation is supported by the place of *u₂-te-ra-kum* in the letter: this verb is next to last, the last one being *šu-bi-lam*, “send me!”, and cf. ARMT 1, 67:12–17 quoted as (45) above.

The common “epistolary” usage of *uwa^{er}eram-ma aṭṭardam/ušaṭṭeram-ma uštābilam* type “I have dispatched with instructions/I have sent in writing (as a copy)” (see examples in Streck 1999:111, Metzler 2002:486) is explained by the fact that EPf—unlike the ventive—can be employed *only in the context of addressee-directional verbs*. In the “epistolary hendiadyoi” of this kind the “epistolary preterite” of non-movement verbs is temporalized in the addressee’s past, while the EPf of movement verbs “reaches” into the addressee’s present moment. The common verb of writing *šaṭāru* is not attested, as far as I can see, as EPf (against Metzler 2002:481), because it means simply “to record” and lacks a directional component.

Following this rule, ARMT 2, 5:15–18 has *two* perfects in hendiadys, because both verbs denote movement towards the addressee:

(57) *a-nu-um-ma* DUMU.MEŠ *ši-īp-ri-im ša* GN ... *u₂-uš-ta-aš-bi-it-ma aṭ-ta₂-ar-da-šu-nu-ti*

HERE, I have had the messengers of GN take the road to direct them (to you).

Note also ARMT 10, 166:6–8: *i-na-an-na uš-ta-an-ni-im-ma ... u₂-ša-aṭ-ṭe₄-ra-am-ma uš-ta-bi-lam* “Now I have again ... written and sent”. The Perf. of *šunnûm* “to do again” is employed because the contribution of *šunnûm* to the meaning of the text is more of grammatical than of lexical nature: this is a phase verb that quantifies the facts denoted by the following verbs, i.e. it is used as an analytical way of encoding an aspectual sense. Since in this text *šunnûm* shares the addressee-directionality with *šūbulum*, the choice of tense may be explained on the basis of the above rule. I have not yet found more examples of purely phase verbs combined with EPf.

The verbs of sending used in the Perfect are by definition not EPf if the receiver is not the addressee but a third party, these verbs do not have future reference vis-à-vis the coding time.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Against Streck 1999:111. From the above it is small wonder that *a-na* PN ... *u₂-da-an-ni-nam-ma aš-tap-ra-aš-šum*, “I have written to PN in strong words” (AbB 4, 36:13, 21f.) appears “ohne Einleitung” *anumma*: the latter is used only to

3. The Perfect in temporal and conditional clauses

Here I offer some preliminary observations on the use of the Perfect in temporal and conditional clauses. At the present stage of research, I cannot attempt a definitive treatment.

3.1. The Perfect in temporal clauses of OB letters

(58) *ur-ra-am ki-ma us₂-sa-an-ni-qu₂-nim hu-us₂-si-{X}-sa-an-ni-i-ma*

Tomorrow, as soon as they check (them), remind me... LH 1:29f. TC with future reference.

(59) *ur-ra-am i-nu-u₂-ma at-ta-al-kam GIR₃.NITA₂ i-na qa-te-ia u₂-ši-iz-zi-ib-ku-nu*

Tomorrow when I come (to you) <only> the *šakkanakkum* would deliver you from my hands. LH 45:13–14. Ditto.

(60) *i-nu-u₂-ma a-wi-lum it-ta-al-kam-ma te₄-e-em-ni ni-ta-am-ru-u₂ wa-ar-ki tup-pi₂-ia-ma lu-u₂ a-na-ku a-la-kam lu-u₂ 2 GURUŠ.MEŠ ta-ak-lu-tim a-tar-ra-da-am*

When the seigneur arrives (here) and we see our situation, as a follow-up to my letter, I will either come (to you) myself, or I will send (to you) two reliable workmen. LH 36:12–19. Ditto.

In letters, *iptaras* does not appear in TC with past time reference because respective sentences are interpreted in the narrative register, which restricts the Perfect to special positions in the text (2.3). Past time TC employ the Preterite or, where appropriate, the Stative.¹¹¹ Example:

point to the addressee. *u₂-da-an-ni-nam-ma*, against Streck 1999:110f., is probably a perfect and not a preterite (in OB orthography, UD sign with *ud/ut* readings is not frequent in Anlaut of D-stem verbs.). Same hendiadys occurs in AbB 4, 19:17 *a-na PN₁ u₃ PN₂ u₂-da-an-ni-nam-ma aš-tap-ra-am* (Streck 1999:111), it seems to be a stock phrase of Hammurapi. These hendiadyoi (with both elements in the Perfect) will represent what I consider the prototypical use of the Perfect, i.e. the Perfect in main clauses with pre-present temporal value.

¹¹¹ A. Goetze's idea of the *t*-form serving as both "past perfect" and "future perfect" turns out to be wrong because the examples of the former usage he adduces (now AbB 2, 158:6ff. and AbB 2, 88:21/13, 60:21) are better interpreted as

(61) A.ŠA₃-lam DUMU.MEŠ PN₁ aš-šu-ur-ma MU 15.KAM a-ku-ul iš-tu UD.UNU.KI il-la-wu-u₂ MU 2.KAM a-[d]i A.ŠA₃ ŠUKU be-li₂ iB-šu-ma-am DUMU.MEŠ PN₁-ma i-ku-lu iš-tu be-li₂ A.Š[A₃] ŠUKU-ZI iB-šu-mu ša-ad-da-aq-[d]i al-li-ik-ma PN₂ PN₃ u₃ PN₄ a-wa-ti-ia i-mu-ru-ma A.ŠA₃-li u₂-te-er-ru-nim

<immediately after the letter-head> I took a part of the field of the sons of PN₁ and supported myself with it for 15 years. After Larsa was besieged, it was the sons of PN₁ who supported themselves (with this field) for 2 years until my lord restored¹¹² the field to me as (my) subsistence. After my lord restored the field to me as my subsistence,¹¹³ I allowed the (whole of) last year to pass,¹¹⁴ and then PN₂, PN₃, and PN₄ investigated the facts of my case and returned my field to me <first-person narrative continues¹¹⁵>. AbB 4, 69:7–18.

By default, each verbal predicate in the narrative provides an anterior temporal point of reference for the next one (see 2.2). Thus, if we disregard the propositional (but not pragmatic) redundancy in AbB 2, 69:7–18 (underlined clauses), we can re-write this text without considerable loss of information using only the *ma*-chain. This proves that narrative TC serve

Dt preterites with passive meaning (see Goetze 1936:321). Leong 1994:212 offers two examples of perfects in temporal *kīma*-clauses “anterior to Past”. Of these, *ki-ma ta-aṭ-ṭu₂-la-an-ni* “when you had looked at me” (AbB 12, 124:3) is actually a preterite, while the *t*-forms in AbB 11, 94:10–12 *ki-ma ... i-te-eb-ru ... u₃ it-tu-ru-ni iq-bu-nim-ma* seem to stand in an object clause: “they told me that ... they had entered ... and returned (but as for you, you have not sent me a report)”. Since the Perfect is never used in object clauses with past time reference, it is preferable to interpret these verbs as medial Gt-preterites, see § 4 below. *lāma* “before” is used with the Present when the main clause has past time reference (GAG § 173j), and with both the Preterite and the Present when the main clause has future time reference (GAG § 173k–l). The rationale of this usage is not clear to me.

¹¹² AHw. 841b *ʔ/bašāmu* (a/u) etwa “zurückerstatten”?—dyslegomenon in OB. CDA 40 has *bašāmu* III ~ “to allocate” OB, jB lex. G (a/u) share of booty, field’, but “Addenda, corrigenda, and supporting bibliography” of CDA does not bring AbB 4, 69 in support of this entry.

¹¹³ Does ŠUKU-ZI stand for *kurummaṭī* with an (occasional) spirantization of *t*?

¹¹⁴ See the Edition for the justification of this translation.

¹¹⁵ It finishes, expectedly, with “the problem” part consisting of two asyndetically connected perfects, ll. 26–28: A.ŠA₃-li *i-te-ri-iš še-a-am ša* A.ŠA₃-ia a-na ma-aš-ka-ni-šu *it-ta-ba-ak*, “He has cultivated my field (and) he has stored the barley of my field at his threshing floor”.

not so much to temporalize respective main clauses as to create what H. Weinrich calls “text relief” (Reliefgebung), i.e. “to background” part of the information.

TC with *future time* reference belong, by definition, in the deictic register and employ all four tenses. Thus, TC introduced by *adi* use the Present, those introduced by *adi ... lā* may have the Preterite and the Present, while the future time TC introduced by *inūma*, *ištu*, and *kīma* use either the Perfect or the Present but do not use the Preterite.¹¹⁶ GAG § 171–173 explains this evidence as *Vorzeitigkeit in der Zukunft* (Futurum exactum) for the Preterite and the Perfect, and if the Present is used “[s]oll die *Vorzeitigkeit* nicht besonders betont werden” (§ 171i, cf. § 173h). This explanation is only partly convincing because all the examples of *inūma*, *ištu*, and *kīma* -clauses adduced in GAG do betray anteriority of TC facts relative to MC facts, whether the predicate of TC be the Present or the Perfect.¹¹⁷ In TC, the verb form usually employed to express simultaneity with the MC fact is the Stative, cf. (27) and (33) above.

In OB letters, the Perfect is used in future time TC to provide an anterior reference point for the MC facts (with GAG). The Present, when used with the same temporal conjunctions, seems to express *additionally* modal nuances,¹¹⁸ i.e. the *temporal* relationship between TC and MC facts (TC → MC) is the same whether the Perfect or the Present is used in the TC.

If apodoses of *inūma*, *ištu*, and *kīma*-TC have non-indicative predicates,¹¹⁹ respective complex sentences cannot be transformed into irreversible *ma*-sequence of coordinated clauses. Thus, there exists a (at least partial) text-structural asymmetry of past time and future time TC: the former convey background information i.e. perform a narrative-structuring duty, while the latter subdivide the future time sphere relative to a reference point.

¹¹⁶ The Stative of course appears in all types of TC, still here I do not attempt to discuss its use systematically.

¹¹⁷ W. von Soden’s (GAG § 170g) OB example of *simultaneity* in a *inūma*-clause is not convincing: *inūma ... irrubu dajjānū ... iparrasū* “wenn sie eintreten will, prüfen die Richter nach” (CH XIV r 31/8), as his own translation shows.

¹¹⁸ They are difficult to grasp precisely in each case, one thinks e.g. of uncertainty, supposition, wish, and doubt. I will not dwell on this problem in the present paper.

¹¹⁹ I.e. injunctives and other modal forms, see examples (58) and (59) above.

(62) *li-ik-ki-su-ni-ik-k[u]m-ma 5 šu-ši TA GIŠ.AB.B[A.HI.A] i-na MA₉.NI. DUB i-ta-ad-d[i-nu-ma] i-na SA.TUL₂ [x-x-o-o] a-na KA₂.DINGI[R.RA.KI] li-ib-lu-nim*

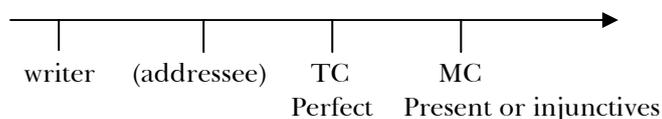
...Let them cut down for you (the trees mentioned before), and <when> GIŠ.AB.BA trees are loaded¹²⁰—300 pieces in each freight boat—let them bring <them> (= the trees) from Satul ... to Babylon. AbB 2, 56:12–17.

The whole of AbB 2, 56 consists of Hammurapi’s orders expressed with precatives. The underlined clause has the force of a TC although a temporal conjunction is lacking. In this example, a perfect in a non-subordinate clause has the same function as in future time TC: it establishes an anterior reference point for a future fact. In this contradictory context, exceptionally, the required grammatical meaning proves “stronger” than the syntactic pattern that normally does not admit it.

The use of *iptaras* in TC is both similar to and distinct from its use in the other two contexts discussed so far:

- (1) *iptaras* denoting a past fact included in the speaker’s time;
- (2) *iptaras* as the only “epistolary past” verb form in the MC.

Both latter usages are deictic. In (1) the point at which *a result of anterior fact* expressed by *iptaras* is temporalized and synchronically observed is the time of coding (speaking/writing), in (2) it is the time of decoding (reading). When *I-ba-al-pi-el* writes/dictates *anna munnabtū imtūdū*, he experiences and observes a result of past happenings at his present moment; when Zimri-Lim reads/hears *anumma ṭuppam šēti ana šēr bēliya uštābilam*, he sees and “hears” the letter that was sent at a certain point before the time of reading. As for sentences with future time TC, the ultimate *origo* of their temporal relationships is the moment of coding, while the Perfect in TC fixes an additional reference point for the respective MC fact:



¹²⁰ Taking *i-ta-ad-d[i-nu-]* to be N Perf. of *nadānu*. N Perf. of *nadū* might be semantically acceptable, still uncontracted *-ū* in pl. is hardly possible in a HL. Alternatively, if it is indeed a form of *nadū*, it could be f. pl. *ittaddiā* or just sg. *ittaddi* (GAG § 132c).

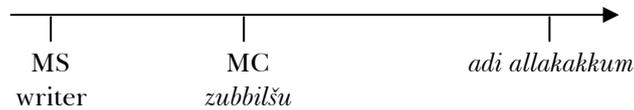
Thus, in TC the Perfect is used as a relative rather than a deictic tense. What is common to the meanings of *iptaras* in these three types of contexts is the expression of *anteriority*. As we will see in 3.2 below, this semantic component is also present when the Perfect is used in conditional clauses.

If one asks why then *the Preterite* is not used with the same force in future time *ištu-*, *kīma-*, and *inūma-*clauses, the answer is perhaps as follows: the TC indicates the point of reference *simultaneous* with the state resulting after the completion of the TC action, i.e. it is a pronounced “perfect” type of relative anteriority.¹²¹ Importantly, all the future TC known to me use only telic verbs with both the Perfect and the Present.¹²² Put the other way round: the choice of the Perfect (to the detriment of the Preterite) to express a future reference point is due to the difference in their grammatical structure as explained above.

The Perfect *is not* used in *adi* and *adi ... lā* clauses because their relation to MC is different from that of *inūma*, *ištu*, and *kīma*-clauses. In sentences with *adi*-clauses the MC fact is anterior to the TC fact or—if the Stative is used in TC—simultaneous with it (cf. e.g. LH 5 quoted above as 27), therefore these syntactic contexts do not qualify for the Perfect.¹²³

(63) 2 GIN₂ K[U₃.BABBAR] *a-di a-la-ka-ak-kum zu-ub-bi-il-šu*

Have him wait for 2 (additional) shekels of silver till I come to you. AbB 2, 164:17–19, cf. also (85) below.



(64) [*a*]-*di a-na-ku u₃ at-t[a] ba-al-ṭa₃-nu a-na da-ri-tim i-na*
 G¹⁵GU.ZA-*ka wa-aš-ba-ta*

¹²¹ I.e. the TC fact (~ “action” in the above non-technical sense) is anterior to the MC fact, but the resulting state is simultaneous with it.

¹²² See numerous examples from AbB in Maloney 1982 and Leong 1994. Mutual relationships between lexical classes of verbal predicates (state vs. process, telic process vs. atelic process etc.), verbal tense and aspect, verbal voice, and syntactic patterns in Akkadian have not yet been fully explored, still see e.g. (besides some important observations in GAG) Edzard 1996, Kouwenberg 1997, Kouwenberg 2000, Streck 2003.

¹²³ *adi*-clauses with past reference are not discussed here, for examples see (31) and (61) above.

Till I and you are alive, you will for ever sit on your throne.
ARMT 4, 20:18–21.

adi-clauses contribute information on the “right-hand” limit of the MC fact. The temporal relationship of MC and TC is reversed vis-à-vis the sentences employing the Perfect in TC.

adi ... lā clauses have (against GAG § 173h) the same temporal structure as *adi* clauses, for this reason they do not qualify for the Perfect either.¹²⁴ The MC facts in the respective sentences are always negative.

(65) *a-di pa-an ʔe₄-mi-im la ni-im-ma-ru mi-im- <ma> ʃa-ba-[am]
u₂-ul a-ʔa₃-ra-ad*

I will not dispatch a single soldier till we see the essence of
the matter. ARMT II, 23:23’f.

(66) *a-di ka-ni-kam la tu-ʃa-bi-lam KU₃.BABBAR u₂-ul u₂-ʃa-ab-
ba-lam*

I will not send you the silver till you send me (your) sealed
document. AbB 2, 171:22f.

Since the use of tenses in *adi ... lā*-clauses has nothing to do with *Vorzeitigkeit* in the sense of GAG § 173h,¹²⁵ the use of both the Preterite and the Present in *adi ... lā*-clauses has to be explained in some other way. The question remains open.

3.2. The Perfect in conditional (*šumma*-)clauses

šumma-clauses in OB laws have been subject of much research, but it unfortunately has produced no scholarly consensus.¹²⁶ Especially the relation of punishable facts to the temporal zero-point (before? after?) and— not surprisingly—the nature of the zero-point itself remain disputed. As for *iptaras* in legal CC, the conclusion reached most recently by Metzler 2002:89 is in line with much of the previous thought (if we drop the question of temporal localization), still it does not seem gratifying: “Sowohl in

¹²⁴ The *lā* of *adi ... lā* has nothing to do with the non-use of the Perfect in the respective clauses, since this *lā* is not a negation but rather a part of a compound conjunction.

¹²⁵ In fact, respective TC are “nachzeitig”, they cancel the (relevance of) MC facts.

¹²⁶ See, most recently, Metzler 2002, with comments on previous research.

Omina als auch in Rechtssprüchen ist das Perfekt entweder im syntaktischen Rahmen der Consecutio temporum verwendet und dient der expliziten Bezeichnung eines Fortschreitens, oder es ist in seiner Gebrauchweise nicht von der des Präteritums zu unterscheiden”.¹²⁷

The use of verb forms in epistolary *šumma*-clauses has been studied e.g. in Maloney 1982:214–261, Leong 1994:188 ff; 218 ff; 288 ff; 333 ff; Streck 1999. These studies offer numerous examples from AbB, still the exhaustive list of *šumma*-clauses for AbB 1–13 does not yet exist, let alone for other OB epistolary corpora.

Following the general approach of this paper, I will first study the evidence of letters and then will offer an Excursus on the verbal tenses in OB laws.

In *šumma*-conditional periods, I have found no apodoses temporalized prior to the coding time.¹²⁸ The verb forms of apodoses are usually injunctives and the Present with the future meaning. This state of affairs makes it sometimes difficult to locate *šumma*-clauses vis-à-vis the zero-point, since the general contents of a letter does not always help. In *šumma*-clauses, all four verbal tenses and nominal predicates are attested.

(A) The most transparent case is *the Present* in *šumma*-clauses: it can have present and future references, with connotations of desire, intention etc. in both cases (with GAG § 161i, Maloney 1982:249, Leong 1994:333f.), i.e. it displays the semantics it has in non-subordinate clauses within deictic register.¹²⁹

(67) *šum-ma ta-qa₂-ab-bi* AGA.UŠ *IA-u₂-um-ma li-ir-te-ed-de-e-ši-*
ma a-na pa-ni AGA.UŠ *IA-e-em ma-am-ma-an la i-pa-ar-ri-ik*

If you give an order, let a soldier of mine lead her away, and
let nobody hinder the soldier of mine! AbB 5, 124: 23–25.

¹²⁷Maloney 1982:100 stresses (I believe, correctly), that “a perfect is not a sequential preterite”, still he makes room for the sequential interpretation in the CH: “In many of these cases, the choice of the point at which to make the switch characteristic of the *Nachzeitigkeit* pattern would seem to be random from a functional standpoint. In other words, it is apparently impossible to formulate a precise rule in functional terms that will predict the switching-point” (p. 289).

¹²⁸ Clauses of contrary-to-fact condition, whether introduced by *šumma* or *šumman/šummaman*, are not considered in this discussion.

¹²⁹The Present in the “present-tense” use often has, as in main clauses, a “stative” sense, as e.g. in the epistolary formula *šumma tarammanni* “if you love me” (e.g. LH 26:9), in *šumma ... ibašši* (AbB 6, 129:12; AbB 12, 23:6), etc.

For an example of the negated Present in a *šumma*-clause with future reference, see AbB 7, 155:18–21.

(B) *The Stative* in *šumma*-clauses seems to have the same temporal values as the Present, the distribution of both tenses is perhaps not always self-evident, compare the following two texts.

(68) *šum-ma* NUMUN *i-ḥa-aš-še-eh* NUMUN *i-na* E₂-*ti-ka i-di-im-ma*

If he needs seed, give him seed from your house. AbB 1,17: 27f.

(69) *aš-šum* [šē]-*e-e[m]* *ša ta-aš-pu-ra-a[m]* *šum-ma* PN *ḥa-ši-iḥ a-na* PN *mu-du-ud*

Concerning the barley about which you wrote to me. If PN needs (it),¹³⁰ measure (it) out to PN. AbB 9, 84:15–20.

(C) *The non-negated Preterite* in *šumma*-clauses denotes facts anterior to the coding time, while *the negated Preterite* can have both past and future reference.

(70) *aš-šum* A.ŠA₃-*lim* *ša* PN *a-wi-lu-u₂-um li-qi₂-a-šu iq-bi-a-kum*
šum-ma *a-wi-lum iq-bi-a-kum* *aš-šum* A.ŠA₃ *ša-tu ma-ḥar a-wi-lim*
lu-uš-ku-un

Concerning the field of PN: was it the seigneur who told you to take it? If the seigneur (was the one who) told you (this), I am going to make a deposition concerning this field before the seigneur.¹³¹ LH 38:4–12.

In the following example, Hammurapi writes to Šamaš-hazir who at the time shared the duties of governor of Larsa with Sîn-iddinam (Sallaberger 1999:137):

(71) PN₁ SIPAD *ki-a-am u₂-lam-mi-da-an-ni um-ma šu-ma* BUR₃.3.
IKU A.ŠA₃ *ša i-na ka-ni-ik be-li₂-ia ka-an-kam iš-tu* MU.4.KAM PN₂
i-ki-ma-an-ni-ma še-šu il-te-ne-eq-qi₂ u₃ PN₃ *u₂-lam-mi-id-ma u₂-ul u₂-*
te-er-ru-nim ki-a-am u₂-lam-mi-da-an-ni a-na PN₃ ***aš-tap-ra-am šum-***
ma ki-ma PN₁ *šu-u₂ iq-bu-u₂* BUR₃.3. IKU A.ŠA₃ *ša i-na* E₂.GAL *ka-*

¹³⁰ For *ḥa-še-eh* governing an explicit direct object, see AbB 9, 15:22; LE A III r 24 = LE B III r 8.

¹³¹ Italicized words in the translation are as in Goetze 1958:62.

an-ku-šum PN₂ *iš-tu* MU.4.KAM *il-qe₂-e-ma i-ik-ka-al e-li-ša a-wa-tum ma-ru-uš-tum u₂-ul i-ba-aš-ši*

The shepherd PN₁ communicated me the following, in his own words: “Four years ago, PN₂ took away from me the three-*bur* field which was assigned to me in my lord’s sealed document and keeps appropriating its barley. I informed Sîn-iddinam, but they did not return (the field) to me”. This is what he communicated to me. I have already written to Sîn-iddinam. If, as this PN₁ said, four years ago PN₂ took the three-*bur* field that was assigned to him (= to PN₁) in the Palace under seal and supports himself with it, there is no graver abuse than this! AbB 4, 79:4–21.

The underlined passages remind one AbB 4, 40: 18-20 discussed above as (29): *i-na-an-na* PN₁ DUMU PN₂ A.ŠA₃-li ***ib-ta-aq-ra-an-ni*** u₃ *še-e i-na-as-sa-ar*: “now PN₁ son of PN₂ has claimed my field from me and keeps my barley”. The choice of the perfect *ibtaqranni* vs. the preterites *ikimanni* and *ilqe* is motivated by the respective contexts of *inanna* vs. *istu* MU.4.KAM. If Hammurapi had dropped the time adverbial from the *šumma*-clause he probably would have written **šumma* PN *eqlam ilteqē-ma ikkal* the way he sometimes did in his Code, see CH § 30 quoted and commented upon below in Excursus III.¹³²

(72) *šum-ma ki-ma* PN₁ ... *iq-bu-u₂ wa-ar-ka-at a-wa-tim ša* A.ŠA₃-lim *šu-a-ti* PN₂ u₃ *ši-bu-tum ip-ru-su-ma* A.ŠA₃-am *a-na* PN₁ *u₂-bi-ir-ru* u₃ *i-na tup-pi₂-im* PN₃ *a-bi* PN₄ *a-na ši-bu-tim ša-te₄-er* A.ŠA₃-am u₃ *še-am a-na* PN₁-ma *te-er-ra šum-ma wa-ar-ka-at* A.ŠA₃-lim *šu-a-ti la ip-pa-ri-is* PN₂ A.ŠA₃-am *šu-a-ti la u₂-bi-ir-ma a-na* PN₁ *la id-di-in* GIŠ.TUKUL *ša DINGIR a-na* A.ŠA₃-im *li-ri-id-ma at-tu-nu a-lum u₃ ši-bu-tum a-wa-a-tim ša* A.ŠA₃-im *šu-a-ti ma-ḥar* DINGIR *bi-ir-ra-ma* A.ŠA₃-am *ana du-ri-šu id-na*

If, as PN₁ ... said, PN₂, the City, and the elders (actually) examined the factual evidence regarding this field and confirmed the field to PN₁, and (if) PN₃ the father of PN₄ is entered in the document as a witness, return the field and

¹³² Another such case might be § 148 (XXXI 70–74): *a-na ša-ni-tim a-ḥa-zi-im pa-ni-šu iš-ta-ka-an i-ily-ḥa-az* “(if ...) he decided to marry another (woman and) is going to marry (her)”. Still, *pa-ni-šu iš-ta-ka-an* is a set phrase in CH, therefore there is no telling if it is G perfect or Gt preterite.

the barley to PN₁! If the factual evidence regarding this field was not examined, PN₂ neither confirmed (the status of the field) nor gave this field to PN₁, the weapon of the god should go down to the field and you, the City, and the elders—clarify the matter of this field before the god and give the field where it permanently belongs! AbB 4, 40:22–36.

(73) *a-na mi-ni-im la ta-di-in i-pi₂-ir PN i[-n]a ma-[t]i ta-na-di-in i-[d]i-in šum-ma la [t]a-di-in a-[š]a-pa-ra-am-ma i-pi₂-ir [š]a-ti-ša i-na bi-ti-ka ta-na-di-in*

Why have you not given? When are you going to give the ration of PN? Give! If you do not give, I will prescribe that you give her yearly ration from your property. AbB 2, 129:8–19.

Non-negated Preterite is not used in OB *šumma*-clauses with future reference in so far as the examples reported in the literature are concerned. Almost all the examples (with one exception) of preterites “anterior to future” in Leong 1994:120f. have a negation i.e. may be interpreted as negative alloforms of perfects, although Leong does not pay attention to this fact.¹³³ The only non-negated verb form in his catalogue is AbB 12, 52:11 *šum-ma* ^dUTU *it-ba-lam*, “if Šamaš brings (it) my way”. This is most likely a perfect of *wabālu*, as required by the sense. Maloney 1982:219–230 provides a complete list of preterites in *šumma*-clauses found by him in AbB 1–7. Again, negated preterites with assumed future reference are not singled out and commented upon as such. The verb in AbB 3, 39:27 *šum-ma wa-ši-tam u₂-še-šu₂-u₂* is probably a present 3 mp *ušeššû*. The only suspicious example left in the dissertation is AbB 3, 39:16–24, translated by R. Frankena in the Edition with German *Präsentia*, but the text does not force a future time interpretation.¹³⁴

¹³³ When I call a negated preterite with a future reference (as in 73 above) “a negative alloform of a perfect”, I simply mean that a perfect would have been used in the same position within a protasis if it were not for negation. In MC, negated preterites coordinated with perfects are deictic, cf. e.g. (5) above. This means that in discourse main clauses the negated Preterite represents the neutralization of the “Perfect ~ Preterite” opposition.

¹³⁴ For the moment, I have found only one example probably contradicting my claim and not mentioned in previous literature: [*šum*]-*ma ša-pi₂-ri iš-pur-am* [ER]IM-*am nu-še-eš-še-er* “If my superior sends² me a written order we will send the troops straight on” (AbB 13, 37:16f.). The statistical evidence will suggest past-time reading of the protasis.

Thus, as we have seen and will see in (D), the repertoire of verb forms in non-past (= present and future) time *šumma*-clauses includes all four verbal tenses, of these the Preterite is always negated by *lā*, the other three can be used in both positive form and negated by *lā*. I do not have a complete list of *šumma*-clauses in published OB letters and therefore cannot establish the distribution rules with any certainty, so I will limit myself to a few guesses to be corrected in the future.

(D) *The Perfect* in epistolary *šumma*-clauses is temporalized both before and after the moment of speaking. The meaning of the Perfect in the former case is very close to its prototypical (i.e. the least contextually bound)¹³⁵ meaning in “non-Epf” main clauses. The meanings of verbal tenses in CC deviate from their MC discourse register meanings less than in TC. This happens because a condition is pragmatically more foregrounded than a time adverbial. The foregrounded nature of *šumma*-clauses has its morphological counterpart in the zero subordinative morpheme, so that GAG is perhaps partly correct in including *Bedingungssätze* among *Koordinierte Hauptsätze*. *šumma* ... (*lā*) VERB_{∅subord} pattern is thus grammatically distinct from all the other ways to express a conditioning fact in Akkadian. The occasional Mari use of *ul* rather than *lā* in this pattern (GAG § 161b) witnesses eloquently for the foregrounded status of OB conditions. Where the genuine conditioning “particle” *šumma* is replaced by secondary conditional conjunctions derived from real subordinating elements (OB *iš-tūma* < *ištu*, n/spB *kī*), the subordinative morpheme also appears (in Mari again exceptions are attested, GAG § 176d), cf. e. g. AbB 6, 96:4–10. One wonders whether *šumma* possessed originally a demonstrative force; unfortunately its etymology remains obscure.

(74) [am-mi-n]im iš-tu ta-al-li-~~{li}~~-ku te₄-em A.ŠA₃-im ša a-wa-tu-šu la
ga-am-ra ša u₂-na-aḥ-ḥi-d[u-k]a ša-pa-rum-ma u₂-ul ta-aš-pur-am a-wa-
a-at A.ŠA₃-im ša la ga-am-ra **ta-ag-da-ma-a-ar** [o] ka-ni-kam **tu-uš-te-
zi-i-i[b]** *šum-ma* a-wa-at A.ŠA₃-im ša la ga-am-ra **ta-ag-da-mar** [k]a-ni-
kam **tu-uš-te-zi-ib** [k]a-ni-kam šu-a-ti a-na šu₂-ḥa-ar-tim i-di-im-ma

¹³⁵ All kinds of contexts are implied here, in particular the syntactic pattern, the presence of time adverbials and other syntagmatic elements influencing the choice and meaning of the verb form, the semantic type of respective verb, the pragmatic context such as e.g. propositional attitude (assertion/question/negation etc). The linguistic context supporting the meaning that the Perfect has in “non-Epf” MC is minimal or least specific, therefore this meaning is primary or prototypical. See also § 5 below.

Why have you, since you went, sent me no news whatsoever concerning the field over which the negotiations were not concluded, as I instructed you? Have you concluded the negotiations over the field which were not concluded? Have you had a sealed document drawn up? If you have concluded the negotiations over the field which were not concluded (and) have had a sealed document drawn up, give this document to the girl and... AbB 12, 18:11–18.

This one seems to me a clear-cut example of a *šumma*-clause perfect whose resultative component coincides with the moment of speaking.¹³⁶ Some of the examples listed in Maloney 1982:231–248 and Leong 1994:219–222 no doubt belong here, still to separate future time “conditional” perfects from pre-present ones with certainty is not always easy. In letters, I have not found CH-like “conditional” chains of *iprus-ma iptaras*.

The **non-negated** Perfect temporalized after the zero-point seems to indicate the reference time simultaneous with the state resulting from the completion of the *šumma*-clause action, i.e. its temporal structure is probably identical to that of the Perfect in future-time TC. I admit that this suggestion is not proven and is based on analogy with the other patterns, where the Perfect never quite loses its complex structure.¹³⁷ Compare the following examples:

¹³⁶ It takes a leap of faith to accept that the author used identical (except for “question intonation”) verb forms with different temporal references within the same passage.

¹³⁷ As mentioned in 1.1, GAG § 161f suggests that in this pattern *iptaras* has “hypothetical” or “potential” meaning. This idea was put in doubt for CH by Hirsch 1969:128, rejected for both CH and letters by Streck 1995a:200, declined for OB legal protases by Metzler 2002:879. *Futurum exactum* as a possible alternative was mentioned for OB legal protases by Hirsch 1969:130 whose interpretation however is not clear to me: “[G]ewinnt man den Eindruck, daß die meisten der am Ende der *šumma*-Sätze verwendeten Perfekta den harten Übergang von der Vergangenheit, die meist in den hier betrachteten Konditionalsätzen steht, zum Prs.-Futur des Hauptsatzes mildern soll. Das wäre etwa im Sinne eines *futurum exactum* ...”. Maloney 1982: 236–238, 259–261 rejects the *futurum exactum* interpretation for letters and favours von Soden’s “hypothetical quality of the perfect” (p. 236) in this syntactic pattern. Verbal moods, expressed either morphologically or analytically, serve to grammaticalize speaker’s propositional attitudes. For conditional clauses one expects, logically speaking, no more than two moods: 1) a mood expressing speaker’s belief that a condition is contrary to facts; 2) a default mood whereby the speaker establishes a condi-

(75a) *šum-ma ši-mu-um im-ta-aq-tam ar-ḫi-iš at-ta-la-kam*

If merchandise comes my way, I will depart promptly. AbB 12, 53:28–31.

(75b) *šum-ma ta-la-ka-am ki-ma pa-ni-ki-ma li-qi₂-a-am*

If you come, take for yourself according to your intention! AbB 5, 237:15'f.

An example from OB Gilg. shows that this usage was possible in the deictic register outside of letters:

(76) *šum-ma am-ta-qu₂-ut šu-mi lu-uš-zi-iz*

If I fall, I shall establish my name. Gilg. Y. 148.

Some people will possibly claim that this last example might feel as “potential” (whatever this should mean) but unfortunately no waterproof linguistic evidence can be produced to substantiate this claim for OB, a dead language.

Summing up: in past time epistolary protases, the tenses behave the way they do in the main clauses. In particular, the paradigmatic relationship between the Preterite and Perfect is the same as in the PROBLEM part of a letter, i.e. immediately before injunctives (see 2.2 above). In future protases, the Present and non-negated Perfect relate like in future-time TC introduced by *kīma* etc.

In epistolary *šumma*-clauses, the Perfect refers to facts preceding and following the coding time, while the Perfect is not acceptable in TC with past reference. This is because past time TC are backgrounded while past time CC may be either backgrounded (the Preterite) or foregrounded (the Perfect).

Excursus III: The verbal tenses in OB laws

GAG § 161d claims that the Preterite in CH protases corresponds to the German Präsens. W. von Soden did not explain the reasons behind his

tioning—conditioned relationship between facts but refrains from judging the truth value of the condition. Quite independently of this, *any* if-clause is “hypothetical” by definition.

claim.¹³⁸ The translation he gives as an example: “wenn ein Bürger in ein Haus einbricht” (CH IX 14/6) is difficult to reconcile with his Grundbedeutung of the protasis Preterite: “nun, X hat getan, (dann)”, since German Präsens is not usually synonymous with Perfekt. An addendum in ³GAG § 161d: “[d]ie Vergangenheitsformen nach *šumma* können teilweise (?—S. L.) vielleicht (?—S. L.) präterital interpretiert werden” actually cancels the interpretation given in the body of the grammar, so in this matter GAG leaves us to our own advices.

M. P. Streck believes that the Preterite expresses anteriority of conditioning facts to apodoses and that the moment of law-writing (= the present moment of the law-maker) constitutes the zero-point, i.e. the norms are temporalized in the law-maker’s future. Cf. e.g. Streck 1998b:304: “Nur die Vorzeitigkeit der Protasis zur Apodosis wird bezeichnet. Die Nachzeitigkeit zum Gegenwartspunkt bleibt dagegen unberücksichtigt”. According to this theory, the isolated Perfect in legal protases denotes “[s]owohl die Vorzeitigkeit der Protasis zur Apodosis als auch die Nachzeitigkeit der Protasis zum Gegenwartspunkt” (ibid. 305, and cf. 1.1 of this paper). For M. P. Streck’s view of temporal relations in *iprus—iptaras* chains in the protases of CH, cf. 1.1 above.

Unless a law is retroactive, both punishable facts and sanctions are always in the law-maker’s future, and transgression always precedes sanction. In a more general way, the default interpretation of an “if”-clause fact is that it does not follow the “Nachsatz” fact.¹³⁹ Therefore the kind of information M. P. Streck advances as the meaning of the Preterite in this pattern does not need grammatical encoding, in particular by methods otherwise alien to OB. As we have seen, in OB *šumma*-clauses the non-negated Preterite does not denote facts in the speaker’s future. Conditions temporalized in the speaker’s future are typically expressed by *ipar-ras* forms and—in relatively rare cases under certain circumstances discussed above—by perfects and negated preterites. Apart from this, the Preterite can denote a fact posterior to the zero-point only in TC introduced by *adi ... lā*.

¹³⁸ Metzler 2002: 47 interprets this position of W. von Soden in terms of history of Assyriology.

¹³⁹ If the opposite is the case, the relationship between the respective facts is not actually conditional, but rather that of signifying and signified, as e.g. in OB *omina* with past time apodoses (see Metzler 2002:45, 213 ff.), and cf. an English sentence “If he has not paid his taxes he must have lost all his assets”.

Lucien Tesnière likened the verbal sentence to “un petit drame”. We will try to clarify the structure of crime and punishment dramas of OB legal sentences by comparing them to another genre of OB literature. I believe the corpus that compares most naturally with CH is the Hammurapi-correspondence.¹⁴⁰ The structure of the HL as disclosed by W. Sallaberger is similar to that of a legal norm. F. R. Kraus noticed in 1973 that these letters “scheinen wenigstens zum Teile eher wie etwa Rechtsurkunden aufgesetzt worden zu sein, nach festen Regeln und mit Benutzung bestimmter Schemen...” (as quoted in Sallaberger 1999:137).

Ideally, a HL consists of two major “blocks”: a narrative and an operative part.¹⁴¹ Here I will call the latter “arrangement” by way of free imitation of W. Sallaberger’s Anordnung. In terms of contents, this format is parallel to the protasis (= Tatbestand, i.e. “facts of the case”) ~ apodosis (= sanction) division of CH legal sentences:

NARRATIVE : ARRANGEMENT \cong TATBESTAND : SANCTION

In Hammurapi-correspondence the temporal zero-point (T_0) is self-evidently retrospective vis-à-vis narrated facts (often a quoted complaint) and prospective vis-à-vis the ARRANGEMENT.

We have already seen (2.2) that the NARRATIVE of HL is divided into what may be called “story” and “problem”. The latter part houses *all* the pre-present MC *iptaras* forms found in the corpus by Sallaberger (1999) and Streck (1999), although as noted above this does not hold for other OB letters.¹⁴²

If one is allowed to drop from this preliminary exposition some (however otherwise important) details in order to bring the evidence into sharp relief, the pattern of linear sequence of verb forms in HL will probably look like this:

¹⁴⁰ I do not consider omina because their protases contain signs rather than conditioning facts.

¹⁴¹ W. Sallaberger provides “allgemeine Strukturmodell eines Hammurabi-Briefes” consisting of four parts and indicates the verbal use and basic functions for each of them (p. 140f.).

¹⁴² AbB 2, 87 is, against Streck 1999:109, not a HL but a private letter of a merchant Iddin-Sin written from Arrapha (see my example 30 above).

STORY: Pret. *-ma* Pret./Stat. chain (+Pret./Stat. in subordinate clauses)—
 PROBLEM: Perf. (Pret./Stat.) and/or Pres.¹⁴³—

T₀

ARRANGEMENT: Pres. + injunctives (Imv., Prec., Prohib.)¹⁴⁴

The literary-structural distinction of STORY vs PROBLEM corresponds to the grammatical opposition of narrative vs. discourse interpretations of verbal tenses. For the Present in the PROBLEM, see e.g. AbB 4, 40:19f. quoted above as (29) (Perf. + Pres.), AbB 4, 37:11ff. (Pret. + Pres.), AbB 2, 24: 10f. (two *iparras* forms and no Perf.), and more examples in Sallaberger 1999:145. The appearance of a perfect, a present, or both in the PROBLEM depends on the kind of situation calling for the king's decision.

This linear sequence of verbs could be contained in a single sentence whose constituent clauses stand in cause-and-effect relationship:

“[since] **the situation is/has turned out to be like this:**
 [therefore] **do so-and-so!**”

and some of the shorter HL do come close to a single sentence, see the examples referred to in Sallaberger 1999:139 (94).

From the perspective of text-linguistics, CH legal protases compare better with HL NARRATIVE than with conditional protases of OB letters because the latter entirely lack the “story” element. Incidentally, single-predicate legal protases have a counterpart in shorter LH. The repertoire and sequence of temporal forms in “Vordersätze”¹⁴⁵ of both discourse patterns (CH and HL) are identical,¹⁴⁶ while CH Nachsätze have only indicative verb forms, i.e. positive and negated *iparras* but no precatives or

¹⁴³ As expected, “present tense” statives of low transitivity verbs can also appear in the last, post-*iptaras* position of the PROBLEM: *ki-ma ti-du-u₂ a-na SAG. GEME₂ li-ša-a-am e-zi-ib-ma a-da-a-an KU₃.BABBAR ša-qa₂-a-lim ik-ta-aš-da-an-ni-i-ma DAM.GAR₃ is-ra-an-ni*, “As you know, I made out a debt-note for the slave-girl, and (now) the time to pay the silver has arrived for me, and the merchant is exacting payment from me” (AbB 2, 94:5–9).

¹⁴⁴ The author of the “problem” is often the plaintiff, while the author of the “arrangement” is always Hammurapi.

¹⁴⁵ I use German terms here because they do not define the nature of relationship (coordination vs. subordination) between parts of a larger unit.

¹⁴⁶ But see LE A IV 25 for a rare example of a present (of *qâpu* “to fall down, collapse”) used in the “story” part of a legal protasis, probably with a conative meaning “was going to collapse”.

prohibitives. This difference between general and individual norms is well attested across languages (cf. e.g. Biblical Hebrew).¹⁴⁷

I accept, with Metzler 2002, the present moment of legal decision-making as the zero-time for CH legal “dramas”,¹⁴⁸ i.e.:

TATBESTAND ← T₀ → SANCTION¹⁴⁹

This granted, one may posit for the TATBESTAND the use of tenses in conformity with the rules for past and pre-present MC in epistolary literature as described above, which renders the idea of *Nachzeitigkeit*/Fortschreiten unnecessary for the description of OB *iptaras*. The sequential sense is actually a notion contrary to the meanings of OB *iptaras* in all the syntactic patterns it is used, since its semantic invariant is “resultative” anteriority (see § 5 below). Typologically, PERFECT is of course the opposite of sequentiality. Therefore M. P. Streck and K. A. Metzler are in their own ways quite right in breaking with the contradictory tradition accumulated in GAG, where W. von Soden combined B. Landsberger’s “punktuelles Präsens” and A. Goetze’s “action which has just been performed and still affects the situation” with the “*Nachzeitigkeit*” notion. One has to choose either of these interpretations.

(78) *šum-ma lu* AGA.U[Š] *u*₃ *lu* ŠU.ĤA A.ŠA₃-š*u* GIŠ.KIRI₆-š[*u*] *u*₃ E₂-s[*u*₂] *i-na pa-ni il-ki-im id-di-ma ud-da-ap-pi₂-ir ša-nu-um wa-ar-ki-š[*u*] A.ŠA₃-š*u* GIŠ.KIRI₆-š*u* *u*₃ E₂-su₂ *iš-ba-at-ma* MU.3.KAM *i-li-ik-š*u* it-ta-la-ak šum-ma it-tu-ra-am-ma* A.ŠA₃-š*u* GIŠ.KIRI₆-š[*u*] *u*₃ E₂-su₂ *i-ir-ri-iš u₂-ul in-na-ad-di-iš-šum ša iš-ša-ab-tu-ma i-li-ik-š*u* it-ta-al-ku šu-ma i-il-la-ak**

¹⁴⁷ The details of the verbal usage in OB legal clauses are complicated (see e.g. Maloney 1981: 262–361), the criteria for telling G perf. from Gt pret. remain vague. Still the well-known basic pattern for longer protases prevails: preterites (and, where appropriate, statives) come first, perfects are mostly restricted to final position(s) in the respective protasis (see e.g. Metzler 2002:110ff. for protases with several perfects), the infrequently appearing Present always gets the last position within the “problem” part of a legal protasis (Metzler 2002:169–173).

¹⁴⁸ I hope this question has been definitely settled by K. A. Metzler. Both his arguments from the realm of OB verbal grammatical semantics and the parallels in tensing between CH and German StGB he adduces look convincing.

¹⁴⁹ In both HL and CH, the temporal reference of PROBLEM *iparras* forms “crosses” the T₀. As I have already mentioned, *iparras* forms in this position have aspectual values of durative, iterative or habitualis and do not usually denote telic processes actually taking place at the moment of observation. Under certain circumstances, statives are used in the same position and with the same kind of meaning (cf. e.g. AbB 4, 88:8).

If either a soldier or a fisherman abandoned his field, orchard, and house because of the service obligation and moved away,¹⁵⁰ another person took his field, orchard and house as his successor and performed¹⁵¹ his service obligation for three years—(and) if he <the former tenant> (then) has returned and claims his field, orchard or house (**T₀**)—it will not be given to him. He who has taken (it) and has performed its service (= the service related to the holding of real estate),¹⁵² it is he who shall/ will perform (it). CH § 30.

By using the Perfect, the drafter highlights certain parts of the TATBESTAND by making them “touch” the fictitious moment of observation. In other words, the perfect(s) explicitly mark(s) the PROBLEM part of the TATBESTAND, separating it from the STORY part. In laws and letters, the shift from STORY to PROBLEM is irreversible: 1-*ma* 2-*ma* 1 linear sequence does not seem to be attested with any noticeable frequency.¹⁵³

This interpretation is close to that of Maloney 1982: 277f.: “On the whole, the perfects express the actual crime... The preterites express those facts which serve as ‘background’ leading up to the most important fact or facts that the lawmaker wishes to provide a legal remedy for in the apodosis”. Still, many cases resist this straightforward interpretation in terms of contents. Cf. the following norm, which definitely contradicts it:

(79) *šum-ma a-wi-lum lu-ub-tam il-bu-ut-ma it-ta-aš-ba-at a-wi-lu-um šu-u₂ id-da-ak*

If a man committed a robbery and has been seized, that man shall/will be killed. CH § 22.

¹⁵⁰ *ud-da-ap-pi₂-ir* is difficult. Its position within the verbal chain is not suitable for a “normal” CH perfect. It could be a “narrative” perfect employed to indicate a break in the story or a medial Dt preterite (see § 4 of this paper). The latter option is more likely since epic narrative perfects do not seem to be a feature of CH and because of the identical form in the “continuing protasis” (§ 31, XI 7).

¹⁵¹ *it-ta-la-ak* is probably a medial Gt preterite since the Perfect is hardly possible here because of time adverbial. Still, the phrase *i-li-ik-šu it-ta-la-ak* appears in § 27 (X 22f.) not accompanied by a past time adverbial.

¹⁵² *ša iš-ša-ab-tu-ma i-li-ik-šu it-ta-al-ku*: the verb forms may be either G perfects or medial Gt preterites. Perfects do sometimes occur in relative clauses (see 2.6) and seem to have the same meaning as in pre-present MC.

¹⁵³ 1 stands for the Preterite, 2 for the Perfect.

I will restate Maloney's suggestion (accepted in Huehnergard 1997:157) in purely grammatical terms.

The preterites in 1-(*ma*) 1 protasis chains are sequential, i.e. each of them serves as a reference point for the following one, as in (78): A.ŠA₃-šu ... id-di-ma ud-da-ap-pi₂-ir ša-nu-um wa-ar-ki-š[u] A.ŠA₃-šu GIŠ.KIRI₆-šu u₃ E₂-su₂ iš-ba-at-ma. According to the definition of Ö. Dahl already quoted above, "a sentence occurs in a narrative context if the temporal point of reference (in Reichenbach's sense) is determined by the point in time at which the last event related in the preceding context took place", i.e. the preterites of CH protases (and sometimes perhaps *šumma*-clauses statives, which need a special treatment) satisfy the definition of the narrative context/register.¹⁵⁴ This proves that T₀ of a legal sentence makes no contribution to their temporal meaning.¹⁵⁵

The verb forms (a perfect and a present) in *šum-ma it-tu-ra-am-ma* A.ŠA₃-šu ... i-ir-ri-iš do not participate in the narrative sequence of preterites as the last elements of a verbal chain, the *-ma* at the transition point is but a means of textual cohesion; importantly, the variation of *-ma/u(/ū?)/∅* in the CH does not correlate with the change of verb forms (with Patterson 1970).

This "break" in terms of interpretation register within the protasis is proved by the following observations:

- *iptaras* possesses PERFECT temporal semantics in pre-present MC, in particular in the PROBLEM part of OB letters (as shown in § 2 of this paper); this use has nothing to do with "temporal progress" (with Maloney 1982 passim, especially p. 281, and cf. Dahl 1985:113: "One salient property of PFCT in general is the fact that it is not used in narrative contexts");

- in pre-T₀ *šumma*-clauses of OB letters, *iptaras* has the same meaning as in MC;

- the linear sequence of temporal forms is identical in HL and OB laws;

- when both the Preterite and the Perfect are used in a protasis, the latter regularly renders, as expected, the information that is legally most relevant (with Maloney 1982);

¹⁵⁴ Similar definitions occur elsewhere, e.g. in Paducheva 1996 and essentially already in Benveniste 1966.

¹⁵⁵ With Paducheva 1996 and with Dahl 1985: "[S]ince the point of reference <in narrative contexts> is by definition determined by the context, any further indication of its location in time will be redundant" (p. 127).

– the possibility to use the Present in the linear sequence of the protasis suggests that the foregoing perfects belong “to the right”, i.e. with the *iparras* form, as was shown above e.g. by the analysis of the sequence A.ŠA₃ ... PN *ib-qu₂-ra-an-ni-ma* ... *i-na-an-na* PN A.ŠA₃-*li ib-ta-aq-ra-an-ni* u₃ *še-e i-na-aš-ša-ar* “PN ... claimed my field ... Now PN has claimed my field and keeps the barley...” (AbB 4, 40, example 29).

The appearance of a perfect in a legal protasis signals the shift from narrative to discourse interpretation of verb forms: perfects as well as presents are related to the deictic centre of legal utterances.

Thus, in CH § 22 (79 above) the actual crime *lu-ub-tam iḫ-bu-ut* appears in the narrative context, while *it-ta-aš-ba-at* “he has been seized” obtains at the moment of observation. In CH § 155, similar facts are rendered by two perfects:

(80) *šum-ma* ... *wa-ar-ka-nu-um-ma i-na su₂-ni-ša it-ta-ti-il-ma iš-ša-ab-tu-šu* T₀ ...

If ... <the woman’s father-in-law> afterwards (= after the consummation of his son’s marriage) has lain in her lap and they have seized him ... CH XXXII 72–79.

In both norms the lawmaker stipulates that culprits have to be seized *flagrante delicto*.

Unless deictic perfects are disjunctive,¹⁵⁶ their relationship within the same protasis is most often that of temporal sequence, as in the protasis just quoted. Temporal sequence may be explicitly indicated by *warkānum* “afterwards” and *warka* “later”, as in both the preceding and the following examples.

(81) *šum-ma a-wi-lum LUKUR i-ḫu-uz-ma GEME₂ a-na mu-ti-ša id-di-in-ma DUMU.MEŠ it-ta-la-ad wa-ar-ka-nu-um GEME₂ ši-i it-ti be-el-ti-ša uš-ta-tam-ḫi-ir* T₀ ...

If a man married a *nadītu*, and she gave her husband a slave woman, and (the latter) has born children, (and) afterwards

¹⁵⁶ Metzler 2002:81ff. believes that *t*-forms in the context of disjunction are not perfects but rather preterites of *tan*-infix stems. This claim is supported by the writing *it-ta-an-di-in* showing nasalization of *-dd-* in CH §§ 117f.

that slave woman has positioned herself as equal¹⁵⁷ to her mistress T₀ ... CH § 146.

For a verb, the context of both the Perfect and a past time temporal adverb is a contradictory one (in AbB 4, 160:28'f a preterite is used with *wa-ar-ka-nu-um* in the context of yes/no question at the turn to the operative part); in CH § 146 (and cf. CH VI 6–30) the centripetence of the verb placed immediately before the apodosis proves stronger than its past time adjunct. Most importantly, this temporal adjunct relates *uš-ta-tam-ḥi-ir* to the preceding *iptaras* form.

The temporal sequence of two deictic perfects is also attested in the PROBLEM part of OB letters, e.g. in AbB 4, 69: 26–28 already quoted above: A.ŠA₃-li **i-te-ri-iš** *še-a-am ša* A.ŠA₃-ia *a-na ma-aš-ka-ni-šu* **it-ta-ba-ak**: “He has cultivated my field (and) has stored the barley of my field at his threshing floor”.

Cf. also a letter in which three deictic perfects most probably describe a linear temporal sequence of events:

(82) *ki-ma te-eš-mu-u₂ SIG₂ am-ta-ḥa-ar-ma i-na a-ki-tim ak-ta-n[a]-ak u₃ a-na KU₃ BABBAR ŠAM₃ ša qa₂-ti DAM.GAR₃.MEŠ a-na DAM.GAR₃.MEŠ iš-ta-su-u₂ i-na qa₂-be₂-e a-wi-lim aš-pu-ra-ak-kum*

As you have heard, I **have received** wool and **sealed** it in Akitum and they **have asked** (lit. “called upon”) merchants regarding the purchase-price silver which (is) in the hands of the merchants. I hereby address you in accordance with the order of the boss (EPf and injunctives follow). AbB 7, 162:1–7.

The most likely explanation of this evidence is as follows: perfects forming a pseudo-narrative sequence do not depend for their temporalization on their respective left-hand co-text but each of them relates individually to the “now” of their shared zero-point, which is both external vis-à-vis the (pseudo-)narrative and in-built morphologically.

This feature of OB letters and legal protases is paralleled by the use of tenses observable in today’s English biographical notes. Cf. e.g. the bio

¹⁵⁷ The form *uš-ta-tam-ḥi-ir* is interesting because it combines beyond doubt an inflectional and a derivational *-ta-* infix unless one is prepared to posit a Štt stem. See § 4 below.

note of a contemporary English composer published at the web-site of the Oxford University Press, abridged here:

Michael Finnissey was born in Tulse Hill, London *in 1946*. He was a Foundation Scholar at the Royal College of Music, London, where he studied composition ... and piano *Afterwards*, he studied in Italy Finnissey created the music department of the London School of Contemporary Dance, and **has been associated** as composer with many British dance companies He **has taught** at Dartington Summer School ... and **is guest lecturer** at many colleges and universities. He **has also been musician** in residence to the Victorian College of the Arts *In 1999* he was made Professor of Composition at the University of Southampton. Finnissey **has been featured** composer at the Bath, Huddersfield, and Almeida festivals, and his works **are widely performed** and broadcast worldwide.

I have underlined preterites, bold-typed presents and present perfects, and italicized temporal adjuncts. The relationship between verbal predicates in this text is loose, the linear sequence does not necessarily reflect the course of real life events (the latter is sometimes simply irrelevant) but most of the verb forms lacking a time adverbial point to the decoding time as their T_0 . The “**is guest lecturer**” makes this external point of view very salient. The choice of place where to shift from preterites to present perfects might seem arbitrary, and the shift—once made—is irreversible unless past time adverbials (such as *in 1999*) reappear in the text. As we have seen, these features are similar to what we observe in OB letters and legal protases.

Single-predicate protases with *iptaras* receive a straightforward deictic interpretation:

(83) *šum-ma* LU₂ *i-na be-la-a-ni* GIŠ.MA₂ *la ša-at-tam iṣ-ša-ba-at*
10 GIN₂ KU₃.BABBAR I₃.LA₂.E

If a man has seized a boat which is not his without intention (to steal it), he will weigh out 10 shekels of silver. LE § 6, A I 27–28.

See also e.g. CH §§ 192, 282 (*iqtabi*).

Single-predicate protases with an *iprus* (e.g. CH §§ 6, 21, 64) and *iprus-ma iprus* protases (CH §§ 128, 131, 178, 181, 228) are interpreted on analogy with OB letters displaying preterite(s) in the PROBLEM, see LH 7:3–3 quoted as (24) above, with a comment. For similar examples from HL, see Sallaberger 1999:145.

Excursus IV: negated iptaras in OB

Negated *iptaras* is restricted in OB—with very few exceptions—to *šumma*-clauses. Negated perfects are attested in CH (about 30 examples, Maloney 1982:351 has a list of them) and in OB letters (10 examples are known to me).¹⁵⁸ They are not used in LE.

This evidence poses several questions:

- 1) How are negated perfects different from negated preterites?
- 2) Why are negated perfects virtually absent from epistolary MC but used in CC?
- 3) Why are they used in CH protases but are absent from LE?

In CH, each negated perfect appears as the last predicate of respective protasis.¹⁵⁹ The negated Perfect denotes behaviour that is contrary to the normal (expected) course of events, most typically penalized omissions.

Goetze 1936:314 thinks that in CH the negated Perfect denotes “an action which has been performed without success”, but this does not square with much of CH evidence.

Here are all the examples of negated perfects that have no positive matches in immediate co-text of anaphorically related norms:¹⁶⁰

§§ 1, 2, 3, 127: *la uk-ti-in(-šu)* “<if> he has not brought proof”. A. Goetze’s explanation of these forms as expressing negative effect (= “proved unable”) is possible though it cannot be proven with any certainty.

§ 16 *la uš-te-ši₂-a-am* “<if> he has not brought out” (a fugitive slave or slave woman). Conative reading is excluded, this is a penalized omission. Metzler 2002:83 thinks that *uš-te-ši₂-a-am* is a Gtn preterite used to express disjunction. Syntactically, *iptaras* is quite possible here.

¹⁵⁸ I do not discuss here one possible example in the CH Epilogue XLIX:8.

¹⁵⁹ Exceptional cases are §§ 10, 109. In § 10, the *lā itbalam ~ itbalam* linear sequence (“if the alleged buyer **has not produced** the seller of the lost property \emptyset the owner of the lost property **has produced** witnesses who can identify his lost property”) is explained by the elliptic structure of the norm which actually contains two independent provisions: if the buyer has not produced ... he will/shall be killed; if the owner has produced ... he will/shall receive his lost property. In terms of tense grammar, both verb forms relate independently to T_0 . For § 109, see presently.

¹⁶⁰ I do not consider negated perfects that have positive counterparts in order to exclude the possibility that *iptaras* was just copied into the negative clause, still these negated perfects in CH admit the kind of interpretation I offer here for single negated perfects.

§ 18 *la iz-za-kar* “<if> he has not identified” (the owner). From the point of view of this norm, a slave is not legally competent and therefore is not subject to punishments, but this behaviour seems to be contrary to expectations while § 17 presents the “normal” course of events (identifying the slave’s master is unproblematic).

§ 42 *la uš-tab-ši*: “<if> he has not planted” (barley). Penalized omission.

§ 44 *la ip-te-te*: “<if> he has not opened” (the field). Ditto.

§ 48 *la it-tab-ši*: “<if> there has been no” (barley because of lack of water). This is a consequence of a *vis maior* violating the normal course of events. Still we probably have to disregard this case because *nabšû* seems to be a defective verb: in OB texts it is normally used in Pres. and Perf. but hardly ever in Pret.

§ 105 *la il-te-qi₂*: “<if> he has not taken” (a receipt). Penalized omission.

§ 109 *sa₃-ar-ru-tim šu-nu-ti la iṣ-ša-ab-tam a-na E₂.GAL la ir-di-a-am*: “<if> she (the ale-wife) has not seized those criminals and taken them to the Palace”. *la iṣ-ša-ab-tam* is a medial *t*-preterite.¹⁶¹ It is not clear to me why the last predicate of the protasis is a pret. rather than a perf. As we will see below, negated preterites as the last predicates of the protasis are not otherwise used in CH to denote punishable omissions.

In most of these examples conative reading is hardly possible.

§ 131f. need a special discussion. In § 131 the law-maker used the N pret. *la iṣ-ša-bi-it*: “<and if> she was not seized <lying with another male>”. A preterite rather than a perfect is employed as the last predicate of the protasis simply because this is not a case of penalized behaviour. The one who accuses a woman of adultery in this norm is her husband, and he does so without ground. The law does not punish suspicious husbands but by the same token the law does not create punitive consequences for the objects of their unsupported accusations. In § 132 the woman is accused of adultery not by her husband (as in § 131) but by a third party or possibly by the public opinion: *u₂-ba-nu-um e-li-ša it-ta-ri-iṣ*: “a finger was pointed at her <in accusation involving another male>”.¹⁶² The last predicate of the protasis is *la it-ta-aṣ-ba-at*: “<and if> she has

¹⁶¹ In CH it is the negated Preterite that is employed to denote penalized omission in the penultimate clause of the protasis, cf. e.g. §§ 43, 61, 62f (an interesting case of bifurcating continuing protasis with nominal clauses following a negated preterite), 65, 112, 133b.

¹⁶² Driver–Miles 1956:284 feel that “here the evidence against her is much stronger than that in the last section... How this evidence is produced is hard to say, but the fact is probably known in the district...”.

not been seized <lying with another male>. The law-maker assumes that an unproven accusation by a third party violates the normal course of events (= “although she has not been seized”) and for this reason uses a negated perfect. Put a little bit differently, *la it-ta-aš-ba-at* is grammatically the same usage as § 44 *la ip-te-te*: since they accuse her, they are supposed to have seized her in the act but they have not done so. If they had, another norm would have to be applied: *šum-ma aš-ša-at a-wi-lim it-ti zi-ka-ri-im ša-ni-im i-na i-tu-lim it-ta-aš-bat*, “if a man’s wife has been seized lying with another male” § 129, which represents so to speak a default situation.

A. Goetze offers a different explanation: “The difference between § 132 (*lā ittašbat*) and § 131 (*lā iššabit*) is very instructive. In § 131 the negative fact is stressed: the husband has no reason to suspect his wife. In § 132, however, an attempt at catching her is implied. The situation may best be expressed by rendering: ‘Supposing the wife of a citizen—the finger has been pointed at her because of another man, but it is not possible to seize her sleeping with another man’ ” (Goetze 1936:315 n.67). But the conative interpretation is not viable for most cases, so it is perhaps better not to posit it here.

§ 149 *la im-ta-gar₃*: “<if> she (a sick woman) has not agreed” (to live in her husband’s house); this behaviour is not penalized but the legislator’s premise is that it deviates from the normal course of events and therefore requires legal remedy (cf. § 148).

§ 178 *la it-ta-ad-nu-ši-im-ma li-ib-ba-ša la uṭ-ṭi-ib-bu*: “<if> they have not given to her <food, oil and clothing allowances> and (thus) have not satisfied her”. Same comment.

§ 190 *it-ti DUMU.MEŠ-šu la im-ta-nu-šu*: “<if> he has not made him equal with his sons”; this omission stipulates the sanction: “that adopted child shall/will return to his father’s house”.

§ 255 *šum-ma AB₂.GU₄.ḪI.A a-wi-lim a-[n]a ig-ri-im it-ta-di-in u₃ lu ŠE. [NU]MUN iš-ri-iq-ma i-na A.ŠA₃ la uš-tab-ši ...*: “If he hired out the man’s cattle, or stole seed and has not produced (crops) in the field T₀ ...” *it-ta-di-in* is a medial *t*-preterite, which is proved by the following *iš-ri-iq*. If we posit that *it-ta-di-in* is a disjunctive Gtn pret., *iš-ri-iq* would look awkward. The negated perfect *la uš-tab-ši* denotes penalized omission.

The negated Preterite as *the last* predicate of a protasis denotes negative facts to which no punitive sanctions are attached.¹⁶³ I disregard ne-

¹⁶³ § 109 discussed above is the only counter-example known to me.

gated preterites that have positive counterparts as the last predicates of anaphorically related norms to exclude the possibility of random copying, therefore I am left with only four examples of this kind.

§ 168 *šum-ma DUMU ar-nam kab-tam ... la ub-lam*: “if the son ... has not committed a grave offence T_0 ...” He has not violated a norm, his behaviour has been regular. Cf. also § 131 (*lā iṣṣabit*) discussed above.

§ 178 *šum-ma ... wa-ar-ka-sa₃ e-ma e-li-ša ta-bu na-da-nam-ma la iṣ-tur-ši-im-ma ma-la li-ib-bi-ša la u₂-ša-am-ši₂-ši*: “If ... he (the father of a priestess) has not written for her permission to give out her estate wherever she pleases and has not granted her full discretion ... T_0 ”. Again, the father is free to draw up his will this way or otherwise (§ 179).

§ 128 *šum-ma a-wi-lum aš-ša-tam i-hu-uz-ma ri-ik-sa-ti-ša la iṣ-ku-un* MUNUS *ši-i u₂-ul aš-ša-at* “If a man married a wife but has not drawn up a marriage contract for her, she is not a wife”.

The legislator stipulates that cohabitation without a marriage contract does not create the legal situation of marriage in the sense of CH, i.e. in particular the procedures of (dis)proving the adultery and sanctions attached to the latter (§ 127, 129–132) do not apply to the relationship between human beings described in the protasis of § 128, but this behaviour is not seen as deviating from a norm and therefore punishable.

So far the grammatical opposition of both negative forms in the final position is clear. Negated *iptaras* has the meaning of anti-PERFECT: (if) *an expected result of a past fact does not hold at the moment of observation*. Typologically, the sense grammaticalized by *lā iptaras* is somewhat close to the conative one (“frustrated attempt”), the difference is perhaps due to the legal setting where it is usually irrelevant whether an attempt to reach the result has been made or not. *lā iṣrus* in the same position denotes a fact that just failed to take place prior to the moment of observation. The latter form does denote a “normal” (legally acceptable) result, and this explains its relative paucity as the last predicate of legal protases.

This rather narrow anti-PERFECT meaning of negated *iptaras* might be due to its innovative character (see 2.6 above and § 4 below). The rare appearance of negated *iptaras* in epistolary MC as opposed to its regular use in CH has a pragmatic reason. The semantic value of “frustrated expectation” is most natural in normative settings: it belongs to the essence of any normative system to expect and encourage a certain kind of behaviour by attaching punitive sanctions to its opposite. Still, the anti-PERFECT reading is possible for AbB 9, 42:9–15 quoted above as (39):

*i-na-an-na a-di-ni u₂-ul e-te-še-er u₃ šu₂-ha-rum u₂-ul šu-X-ur-
[dam]-ma u₂-ul aṭ-ru-da-aš-šu*

Now I have not yet recovered, and a servant not ... and I
have not dispatched him.

In this text verb forms (*ētešer* and *aṭrudaššu*) behave differently in the contradictory context of both *inanna* [+ Perf.] and (*adīni*) *ul* [- Perf.]. *ul ētešer* is related to the moment of speaking as anti-PERFECT while *ul aṭrudaššu* is related to the moment of speaking as a past negative fact. Anti-PERFECT meaning is possible in AbB 9, 259:6ff.: *u₃ KU₃.BABBAR a-na u₂-ku-[li-im] u₂-la i-ta-ad-na-am* “and he has not given me silver for the fodder”. The last example known to me from secondary literature is AbB 6, 169: 28–31: [GU₄.]HIA PN₁ PN₂ *u₃ PN₃ u₂-ul iṣ-ša-ba-a[t]*. In this case the judgement is difficult both due to lack of agreement of the verb with its grammatical subjects and because it is possible to posit a Gt preterite for a verb of taking.

Our last question is “Why negated *iptaras* is absent from LE?” LE has *na-di-na-nam la u₂-ki-in*, “<if> he has not identified the seller” (A III 29 = B III 13), as the last verb of the protasis in the legal context similar to CH §§ 1, 2, 3, 127 *la uk-ti-in*, “<if> he has not brought (proof)”, and § 10 *la it-ba-lam*, “<if> he has not produced (the seller)”. This observation leads one to suggest that the grammar of CH is more refined and more sensitive to niceties of legal thought than that of LE, but it is impossible to elaborate on this point in the present paper.

In epistolary *šumma*-clauses, all the instances of *lā iptaras* known to me may have future reference and some of them may have anti-PERFECT meaning, although the second claim is very difficult to prove beyond doubt.

An unsettled question regarding OB epistolary *šumma*-clauses that is not studied in this paper is the relationship between negated *iparras*, *iprus*, and *iptaras* in future time protases. This problem has not yet been explored and therefore I am unable to establish the moment of observation to which the anti-PERFECT semantics tentatively assumed for *lā iptaras* in epistolary CC might relate.

Cf. the following examples:

(84) *ki-id-ma še-e la ik-ka-al-la šum-ma še-e la u₂-ta-ši-ir a-na-ku-
u₂ u₃ šu-u₂ ni-ša-ba-at-ma mu-ru-Iṣ li-ib-bi-im a-ḫu-um a-na a-ḫi-
im i-ra-aš-ši*

See to it that my barley is not detained. If he does not release my barley, I and he will start feeling bad one toward the other. (Future, as evident from the letter's contents.) LH 16, 6'–10'.

(85) *šum-ma a-wa-tum la im-ta-ag-ra-ka a-di a-la-kam še'am mišil qī la i-la-ḫa-at*

If the matter will not have pleased you, let him not touch (even) a half *sila* until I arrive. TCL I.27:15–18.¹⁶⁴

The other instances known to me are AbB 10, 74:13–20 (*kašādu* “to reach”), AbB 12, 200:9–18 (*amāru* meaning “to find”), AbB 8, 101:10–16 (*etēqu* “to cross over”), AbB 2, 161:20–29 (*alāku* “to come to the addressee”), AbB 11, 94:12–16 (*šapāru* meaning “to send <a report>”), AbB 1, 9:25–28 (*wašū* “to go out <of barley>”), AbB 2, 68:25–30 (*šūbulu* “to send”), AbB 2, 96:16f. (a hendiadys *šumma ... lā ugdammer-ma lā ittadin*, “if he does not pay completely”). It might be relevant that all the verbs appearing in the *lā iptaras* form are telic.

Contrast AbB 12, 200:15–17 *šum-ma i-na ka-ni-ka-tim a-ḫe₂-tim la i-ta-ma-ar*, “if he will not have found (it) among additional sealed documents” (“frustrated expectation”?) with AbB 1, 91:4–13 *ša-ba-am ... šu-ri-[a-a]m u₃ šum-ma la ta-mu-ur-šu-nu-ti aš-ša-ti-šu-nu-ti ... šu-ri-a-[a]m*, “direct ... the people, and if you do not find them (i.e. “if they are not available”?), direct ... their wives” (hypothesized *negative fact* in the future?).

One of the two extant OB examples of *šumma*-clauses used to express oath (³GAG § 185g*) has a negated *iptaras* that conforms to the anti-PER-FECT pattern:

(86) *šum-ma U₄.40.KAM x PI x x (x) at-ta-al-ka-ki-im-[m]a ši₂-bu-ut-ki la e-te-ḫu-uš*

I will most surely ... forty days ...—(when)² I come to you—carry out your wish. AbB 3, 68:16–18.

This utterance can be paraphrased as “(may I be cursed) if ... I have not carried out your wish”. An unfulfilled promise is an obvious case of “frustrated expectation”.

¹⁶⁴ Text and translation are as in Goetze 1936:321.

4. Place of the Perfect within the verbal system and its etymology

In GAG, W. von Soden is cautious but essentially optimistic: “Wir wissen auch noch nicht, ob das *ta-* des Pf. mit dem stammbildenden *ta-* herkunftsgleich ist und somit wie dieses eine richtungsändernde Funktion hat (s. § 92c). Wenn es eine solche hat, würde das Pf. die Blickrichtung zunächst auf die Gegenwart und erst von dieser aus auf die Vergangeheit zum Ausdruck bringen. Die tatsächlich bezeugten Gebrauchsweisen des Pf. würden sich aus einer solchen Grundfunktion des *ta-* durchaus ableiten lassen. Klarheit darüber kann aber erst eine umfassende Prüfung aller Gebrauchsweisen des Pf. in der älteren Sprache bringen” (GAG § 80a).

Von Soden 1965:104 adds to these considerations the following: “Die ‘temporale’ Funktion des *ta*-Infixes muss sich aus der verbalstammodifizierenden entwickelt haben. Eine Zurückführung des *ta* des Perf. unmittelbar auf das *ta* des reziproken Gt-Stammes (s. dazu GAG § 92) erscheint ebenso undenkbar wie die Annahme, dass die passiven *t*-Stämme Dt (*up-tarris*) und Št (*uštāpris*) den Ausgangspunkt bildeten. I. J. Gelb vertrat in BiOr XII 110 die Ansicht, dass sich das temporale *ta* aus dem bei Verben der Bewegung bezeugtem separativen *ta* ... entwickelt habe, und er hat wahrscheinlich Recht damit. Wir müssen nur daran denken, dass auch das separative *ta* bisher nur im Akkadischen nachgewiesen ist, dass die Entstehung des Separativs also ebenso der Erklärung bedürftig ist wie die des Perf.”

Some scholars deny the *t*-form the status of inflectional semantic category (= grammeme). Buccellati 1996 founds his case against the Perfect on both “formal” (p. 87: the “extreme scarcity” of double *t*-infix) and “notional” considerations (p. 108 ff.: a semantic development of the separative function of the *t*-stem). Buccellati 1996:112 claims: “I think it is questionable at best to distinguish a perfect from a *t*-stem preterite, because the formal criteria for the differentiation of a perfect as a separate morpheme are minimal (and adequately explained through the assumption of distinct compound stems), and because the meaning as temporal separative of the preterite of a *t* or *tn* stem is identical to the assumed meaning of the alleged perfect”.

Streck 1995a:221 surmises that the temporal use of *iptaras* in Akkadian came into being under Sumerian influence¹⁶⁵ and developed “im Leerlauf”. This view presupposes that Sumerian might have possessed verb

¹⁶⁵ He partly follows the lead of von Soden 1965.

form(s) with the grammatical meaning attributed (I believe, wrongly) by Streck 1995a to *iptaras*: “Vorzeitigkeit + Nachzeitigkeit” (p. 219),¹⁶⁶ that Akkadian at some stage loan-translated the said Sumerian form(s) employing the *-ta*-stems “im Leerlauf”, i.e. without exploiting their inner form but rather taking the *-ta*- infix as an arbitrary signifier.¹⁶⁷ Streck 1995a:221 n. 507 additionally observes: “Die Beantwortung der Frage, welche Sum. Verbalform(e)n das ist (sind), liegt leider außerhalb des Rahmens dieser Studie”.¹⁶⁸

Streck 1999:115 (following Streck 1995a:215–234 and Buccellati 1996) believes that “*iptaras* sei trotz seiner temporalen Funktion formal nicht nur historisch, sondern auch synchron-deskriptiv als Präteritum der *-ta*-Stämme zu klassifizieren”. I would suggest to correlate these insights of both scholars with another finding of M. P. Streck: in his opinion, *iptaras* is optional (= interchangeable with *iprus*) in all its environments and—in terms of meaning—is different from *iprus* only through a semantic markedness consisting in its two “Relationswerte” (Streck 1999:123), which latter are of course not vital for most linguistic messages to be understood.

Let us first address the problem that arises in connection with the views of M. P. Streck: how can a verbal lexeme (e.g. *pitrusu*) have a temporal grammeme (e.g. the “preterite” *iptaras*) which in some contexts (see 1.1) is also “synchron-deskriptiv” a different temporal grammeme of a different verbal lexeme, i.e. the two-“Relationswerte” past time grammeme of *parāsu*? If we take another example, the selfsame verb form *ussanniq* would mean—by way of this dialectics—“he was checked” and sometimes, “he has checked/he checked”. How are we then to describe the meaning of Dt verbs in terms of diathesis and voice as over against D verbs? I fear this approach will hardly make the synchronic description more clear and elegant.

Perhaps the more radical view of G. Buccellati (complete elimination of the temporal *t*-form from OB grammar) would have to be preferred as more consequent if it had any bearing on the actual OB language as we know it from texts.

I am not competent to start a general discussion on how to draw the line between inflectional and derivational morphology, still I think most

¹⁶⁶ Streck 1995a:220 thinks that the actual contribution of *iptaras* is “der Ausdruck der Nachzeitigkeit”, while the motivating *iprus* denotes “Vorzeitigkeit”. We have seen that the first claim has no support in OB texts.

¹⁶⁷ “Leerlauf” as a linguistic term was coined by Erwin Koschmieder.

¹⁶⁸ Streck 2003:110 restates that in his view no semantic continuity between the *t*-Perfect and the derivational *-ta*- infix has been discovered so far.

people will agree that a verb form (or, for that matter, any morphological marker) is inflectional rather than derivational if *at least* the following basic condition is fulfilled: the form in question does not stand by itself but is related to other elements of a semantic class (cf. the opposition of nominative and accusative cases in nominal morphology). This necessary condition will be in most cases also sufficient one if the following second-step conditions are fulfilled:

1) This form appears in the same linguistic environment as other elements of its class, and the alternation creates different meanings.

2) There are cases in which the use of this form is obligatory, i.e. it does not depend on the speaker's choice.

3) The previous condition presupposes that this form is productive, i.e. if necessary it can be built for most relevant lexemes.

If we now recapitulate some observations made in the present study from this perspective, we will get the following picture.

Within certain syntactic patterns, the Perfect has definable paradigmatic relations to the Preterite, Present, and Stative.

Against what is repeatedly claimed, the Perfect regularly appears in the same linguistic environment as the non-negated Preterite only in pre-present epistolary MC and in pre-present epistolary *šumma*-clauses, while legal protases are considered here a situation-conditioned variant of MC (the speaker delegates his vantage point to the observer). It is also worth noting that letters were a "productive" genre while legal collections were not.¹⁶⁹ The paradigmatic opposition of both tenses in pre-present MC was described in 2.2, and the same holds true for pre-present epistolary *šumma*-clauses. Thus, it is only in its prototypical use that the Perfect stands in opposition to the Preterite.

In TC the Perfect occurs in the same environment not with the Preterite but rather with the Present (3.1), and the same is true of future time CC.

The Perfect is the only verb form used as "epistolary past" in MC (this usage is also restricted lexically, 2.8) and the only verb form that can express a past fact in the context of deictic *inanna*.

The Perfect is used in the context of all semantic types of verbs, while derivational *t*-forms are not productive; they are also partly unpredictable in terms of lexical meaning.

¹⁶⁹ One wonders whether the nature of this near-identity is typological or "inter-textual". Streck 1998a shows some parallels between verbal usage in Sumerian and Akkadian laws but his treatment of this intriguing problem is far from exhaustive.

The double *t*-infixation (i.e. the explicit marking of the Perfect in the context of *t*-stems) is indeed rare (with Streck 1995a:215–234), but its occurrences cannot be explained away as instances of non-productive double-*t* stems. Thus, the Perfect of Gt *itūlu* “to lie down” is attested OB three times in typically *iptaras* positions, i.e. as the last predicate of protases YOS 10, 31 VIII 23 (*it-ta-ti-il*),¹⁷⁰ in CH § 156f (*it-ta-ti-il*); in CH § 130 (*it-ta-ti-il*) and § 155 ditto (the last one is quoted above as 80) there occurs the same expression *i-na su₂-ni-ša it-ta-ti-il-ma iṣ-ša-ab-tu-šu* where *it-ta-ti-il* is most probably a perfect, as explained above. It is possible to read this phrase as a hendiadys: “<if> they have seized him lying on her lap”. The view accepted in Streck 1998c:49 “Da der Gt-Stamm (= *itūlu*—S. L.) die Funktion des G-Stammes übernommen hat, muss zum Ausdruck des Perfekts ein Gtt-Stamm gebildet werden” implies circular reasoning.

This good attestation of Pf Gt *ittatil* (for other dialects, see AHW 407) as compared with relatively small number of OB forms of *uš-ta-tam-ḫi-ir* type (CH § 146 quoted as 81 above) makes one suggest that this evidence might be due to haplology, cf. a similar phenomenon in Arabic verbs of the stems V and VI when used in the Present-Future with a *ta*-prefix.¹⁷¹

Thus, we have no reason to doubt the inflectional nature of the Perfect.

Kouwenberg 1997:72ff. offers a hypothesis on the prehistoric Akkadian development of both *t*-stems and the *t*-Perfect from a derivational *t*-form denoting detransitivization. His idea is typologically orthodox (PASSIVE → RESULTATIVE → PERFECT) but requires assumptions unsupported by extant texts. Kouwenberg 1997:73 writes: “[I]t seems a plausible assumption that ... the stative is the successor of *iptaras* in its resultative function”. We have no cogent history of Semitic verb, still it is too daring to posit two waves of innovation in the field of resultative within East Semitic, even if one does not take into account the important comparative evidence in favour of pre-Akkadian and perhaps pre-Semitic origin of the suffix conjugation. As the evidence provided in this paper demonstrates, the actual use of the *t*-Perfect does not reduce “the salience of the action involved” (ibid. 72). Rather the contrary is the case (see 2.2

¹⁷⁰ From Metzler 2002:99 it looks like it is the only position where the Perfect is used in YOS 10, 31.

¹⁷¹ Still no haplology occurs in Akkadian when the *ta*-prefix is used, cf. e.g. *ta-ta-wi-i* [*tātawwī*] Pres. 2 fs *atwū* “to speak” Gilg. Meissner/Millard III 5’.

above).¹⁷² Kouwenberg 1997:73 claims that at a prehistoric stage of Akkadian *iptaras* had passive meaning, but the comparative evidence is against this claim, see below.

Zaborski 2004:170 thinks that *t*-“Perfect” existed already in Proto-Hamitosemitic. He supports his argument by what he estimates as lexicalized rests of *iptaras* in Arabic and by parallels from non-Semitic Afrasian languages, but see 2.6 above.

Anderson 1982:243 suggests that “[i]n Proto-Semitic there were two categories which were poised to shift towards Perfect uses. One was a result-stative ... The other carried the meaning ‘relevance of experience’. It was an ethical-dative form with infix *-t-*. In Akkadian it was this last which actually did shift”.

One can see that the current scholarly literature proposes no serious alternative to the view that the *t*-Perfect was created via grammaticalization of the derivational *-ta-* infix known to us, i.e. through an upgrade of its status. Anderson 1982 unfortunately presented some of the Akkadian evidence incorrectly, still I believe he did indicate a plausible semantic continuum between the derivational and the inflectional uses of the *-ta-* infix.

“Ethical dative” (sometimes called “dative of reference”)¹⁷³ as a grammatical label is a bit inconvenient for the description of verbal grammatical semantics, therefore I will instead use the term “medial (voice)” or “medium” in the sense of *medium indirectum* of the traditional Greek grammar: *πολλὰ μὲν ἴκ Τροίηντας ἔγειται κείμην ἰα κἀπ*: “Many beautiful treasures he is taking home (medium ἔγειται) from Troy” (Odys. X 40).¹⁷⁴

As is well known, the semantic feature opposing the transitive active to the transitive medium in older, especially pre-classical, Greek is a special relationship (of “dative of reference” kind) between the agent and the reported fact, while the actant structure is the same in both classes of

¹⁷² Kouwenberg 1997 follows Kuryłowicz 1972:61, whose view on the origin of *iptaras*, shaped by typological parallels with Germanic and Romance, is equally untenable.

¹⁷³ Rather than define it, I will quote a nice and well-known Latin example that clearly shows how this dative is “ethical” or “referential”: *quid mihi Celsus agit* (Hor.): “Pray what is Celsus doing?”

¹⁷⁴ Streck 2003:18 (linguistic introduction) uses a semantically identical term “indirekt reflexiv” to refer to the same function, his conclusion on Gt is as follows: “Das Akkadische kennt nur eine direkt-reflexive, aber keine indirekt-reflexive Funktion” (p. 105).

verbs.¹⁷⁵ In the words of Zerwick 1963:72: “[M]iddle voice represent<s> *the subject* as acting (or causing another to act) with respect *to himself* (the subject)”. Watkins 1969:116 posits a similar situation for a reconstructed stage of Indo-European: “Das entstehende Medium drückte ‘interne’ (auf das Subjekt bezogene) im Gegensatz zu “externer” (Aktiv)-Handlung und schließlich das Passiv aus, und dies ging so weit, daß jedes der beiden und beide zusammen systematisch als Flexionskategorien eingegliedert und nicht mehr als Derivationskategorien empfunden wurden”.

One can find numerous examples of this kind of medial use among the Gt-verbs collected in Streck 2003. An obvious case is the Gt of *šālu* “to ask”:

(87) *be-li₂ te₄-ma-am ga-am-ra-am li-iš-ta-al-šu-nu-ti*

Let my lord demand from them a complete report! (A frequent usage in OB.) *RA* 66 118 A.2801:23.

(88) *šu-ma ša da-ru-u₂ a-na-ku lu-uš-tak₂¹-nam*

A name that is eternal I shall establish ‘for ever’! *Gilg. Y.* 188.

This is the traditional interpretation of Gt *šakānu*, cf. AHW 1137b: “für die Dauer (hin)stellen usw (zT steigernd gegenüber G).¹⁷⁶ This unusual turn of thought reminds one an observation of Huehnergard 1997:393: “[T]he basic meaning of the [Gt] stem remains rather elusive; it seems, in fact, to be lexical, i.e., unpredictable, for each root, although a few general nuances can be observed ...”. It is likely that these traditionally singled out nuances—reciprocal, separative, (direct-)reflexive—have the medial sense as their common semantic denominator and can be easily shown to derive from the latter. In many languages of the world, e.g. in Russian and Spanish, all these senses (+ decausative, cf. numerous Akkadian Št-lexical verbs with both medial and decausative meanings) have common morphological or analytical markers.

¹⁷⁵ As numerous examples in Perelmuter 1977 show, the grammatical subject of Greek medial verbs is usually personal. Same is largely true of medial *t*-forms which I believe to have found in OB using criteria not related to the personal/non-personal nature of the subject, see presently.

¹⁷⁶ Römer 1971: 38, n. 3 tentatively suggests that *šitkunu* may have a medial meaning in OB and adds: “Ob im akkadischen Verbalsystem Verbalformen mit ‘medialer’ Bedeutung überhaupt möglich sind, wäre einmal zu untersuchen”.

One is tempted to look for medial *t*-forms among the perfects appearing in “atypical” syntactic contexts. The alleged perfects in causal clauses introduced by *aššum* and *ištu* (Leong 1994:215), i.e. coming up rather unexpectedly in a syntactically backgrounded context, might perhaps be interpreted as medial *t*-Preterites, e.g.

(89) *iš-tu a-we-el-tum il-ta-ak-ru-u₂ u₃ ši-bi-i-ša ti-šu-u₂ u₃ ni-i-ni pi₂-i ši-i-bi ni-iš-te-mu-u₂ ma-ḥa-ar a-ḥi-i-ka at-wa-a-am šu-ku-un-ma X(šⁱ)-bu-ut-ni i-ni-iq-bi*

Since the woman denied (it) [pret.?] and you have her witnesses (= witnesses against her), and we heard [pret.?] the testimony of the witnesses,—place a word (Edition: “make a deposition”) before your brother so that we could speak our testimony. AbB 9, 49:29–33.

In the dictionaries, Gt of *nakāru* and *šemû* are attested only in reciprocal meanings.

(90) *ša-ad-da-aq-d[i]-im LU₂ ša-ar-ra-qu₂ bi-ti ip-lu-šu-ma mi-im-mu-ia il-te-qu₂-u₂ i-na-an-na ap-pu-na-ma i-na qa₂-ti-šu-nu i-tu-ru [bi-t]i ip-lu-šu-ma LU₂ ša-ar-ra-qi šu-nu-ti aš-ša-ba-at ki-a-am iq-bi-a-am*

“Last year thieves broke into my house and took (for themselves) whatever I had. NOW (= I will tell you more)¹⁷⁷ moreover they *themselves* have broken into my house again: I have apprehended these thieves”. This is what he told me. AbB 13, 7–16.

il-te-qu₂-u₂ can be construed as separative Gt Pret., but (1) *leqû* is not strictly speaking a verb of movement, (2) Gt *leqû* is registered neither in AHw nor in Streck 2003, against what one could expect. Medial sense does suit the context.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ *i-na-an-na ap-pu-na-ma* appears in AbB 6, 131:19 in the context of a present.

¹⁷⁸ A. Goetze makes an attempt to oppose temporal and aspectual (i.e. derivational) values of the *t*-form. He distinguishes two meanings of what will be *t*-stems of OB verb: reflexive-reciprocal and separative (p. 323f.), and includes *leqûm* in his list of verbs building a *t*-infixing separative adducing as proof e.g. CH §§ 25, 34. Since separative sense is part of the lexical meaning of *leqûm*, it is perhaps

As mentioned above (2.1), the medial reading of certain *t*-forms used in the context of past time temporal adverbials is welcome both syntactically and semantically: AbB 1, 108:3–6 (*zunnû* “to make angry” in the context of *šaddaqdam* “last year”); 7, 62:7–10 *nazāqu* “to worry”; 1, 132: 4–6 *palāḫum* “to be afraid”.

By the same token, some “uncomfortably” placed *t*-forms of legal pro-
tases, e.g. those followed by clear-cut preterites, may be also recruited into the ranks of medial Gt preterites, provided this is admissible semantically. Cf. e.g. LE B IV:6–10:

(91) *šum-ma* GIR₃.NITA₂ *ša-pir*₆ ID₂ *be-el te-er-tim ma-la i-ba-aš-
šu-u*₂ SAG.IR₃ *ḫal-qa-am* GEME₂ *ḫa-li-iq-tam* GU₄ *ḫal-qa-am*
ANŠE *ḫal-qa-am* *ša* E₂.GAL-*lim* *u*₃ MAŠ.GAG.EN *iš-ba-at-ma a-
na Eš₃-nun-na*^{K1} *la ir-di-a-am i-na* E₂-*šu-ma ik-ta-la* U₄-*mi e¹-li¹*
ITI.1.KAM *u₂-še-te(!)-eq-ma* E₂.GAL-*lum šu-ur-qa-am it-ti-šu i-
ta-wu*

If a military governor, a governor of the canal system, or any person in a position of authority seized a fugitive slave, fugitive slave woman, stray ox, or stray donkey belonging either to the Palace or to a commoner, and did not lead (him/her/it) to Eshnunna but detained (him/her/it) in his house and allowed more than one month to elapse, the palace will/shall bring a charge of theft against him.

I am fully aware that this suggestion in its present form makes room for uncontrollable and partisan parsings. To make this proposal more convincing, I would have to produce examples of medial *iptarras*-forms occurring in the future contexts and perhaps examples of comparable forms for D- and Š-stems.

Another possibility to enlarge the medial *t*-class would be to look at the frequent Gt verbs of movement to see if for some contexts the medial intransitive interpretation looks better than the separative one. Provisionally, I suggest that the *t*-form within the well-attested phrase *ina X elû*, “to forfeit X”, is satisfactorily understood as a kind of *dativus incommodi*, even more so because the basic sense of the idiom may be rendered by G of *elû*

preferable to read *ilteqe* as medial Gt preterite or G perfect depending on the syntactic pattern.

too (cf. AbB 2, 87:9 quoted as 30 above, where two medial intransitives do appear).

Finally, for some of the contexts with Gt verbs, both intransitive and transitive, collected in Streck 2003, 53–65 under the key-word “Intensiv(?)”,¹⁷⁹ medial interpretation is quite viable and perhaps preferable to those given in the dictionaries. Streck 2003:109 rejects the medial interpretation as a possibility for Gt verbs of emotions and emotional speech acts because “bleibt der funktionelle Zusammenhang zwischen der intensiven(?) Funktion einerseits und der reziprok-reflexiv-(medio)passiven andererseits noch undeutlich”. The unity of different senses of a grammatical morpheme might indeed be opaque, but this is no reason to force the texts. Actually, “Intensiv(?)” hardly means much more than “unklarer Gebrauch”.

Thus the OB evidence¹⁸⁰ for some entries in Streck 2003 welcomes the medial reading, to mention but a few verbs: (128) *šimuru* “sehr(?) wütend, sehr(?) feurig sein”, (135) *itkudu* “sehr/immer(?) besorgt sein”, (136) *i’udu* “genau/immer(?) aufpassen, genau/immer(?) beachten”, (140) *atmuru* “[d]ie Bedeutung ist unklar, eventuell intensiv”.¹⁸¹

Now I will put forward a hypothesis on the etymology of *iptaras*. Grammatical descriptions report T-stems with reflexive and passive meanings to be well attested in Afrasian. E.g., Dolgopol’skiy 1991:94 mentions T-stems with both these meanings in several languages of the Cushitic branch, in particular in Beḷaue (cf. Rössler 1950:314). Rössler 1958:114, Aikhenvald–Militarev 1991:181 report both meanings for T-stem of epigraphic Lybian (Numidian). Porkhomovskiy–Stolbova 1991:364 mention in a matter of course way the T-stem(s) as a feature of proto-Afrasian.

It is perhaps important that Akkadian is the oldest attested Afrasian language that possesses a developed system of stems as a means of verbal derivation.

In Semitic, Gt/tG-derivatives with passive meaning are well attested mostly in the languages that lost their N-stem, i.e. first of all in Aramaic and Ethiopian Semitic groups. This shows that the passive voice as the

¹⁷⁹ (?) means that M. P. Streck does not find the “intensive” class of Gt verbs particularly persuasive.

¹⁸⁰ As quoted in the dictionaries and *apud* Streck 2003.

¹⁸¹ Streck 2003:60 states correctly: “*atmuru* folgt stets auf den Gt *iššû* und wird vom auf die Welt kommenden Kind gesagt”. When a person reciting lullaby addressed a new-born child with the words *lū tattašâm lū tātamar nūr šamšim*, the message was neither unclear nor “Intensiv(?)”. It was just medial, most probably for both *t*-form verbs.

most typical meaning of Gt/tG is not very old in the whole of Afrasian. Reciprocal and direct reflexive senses by definition include the passive meaning as part of their semantic structure, so the former two senses can hardly claim semantic priority. Therefore the diachronically primary meaning of the *t*-affix might be medial. Cf. Brockelmann 1908:535: “Aus der reflexiv-medialen Bedeutung entwickelt sich sehr oft, wie beim idg. Medium die passive”.¹⁸²

This medial *t*-form was at a certain point put to the service of expressing an explicit temporal relation of *past facts* to the speaker, thus creating a temporal structure typical for the PERFECT as explained above.¹⁸³

This attempt to find the etymology of the Perfect stands in continuity with von Soden’s richtungsändernde Funktion (cf. especially GAG § 92c, although the explanation offered in GAG § 80a and quoted above is perhaps not particularly lucky) and with Goetze 1936:332f., who suggested the development separative > (medium/reflexive?) > temporal *t*-form and allowed for the decisive influence of the Sumerian prefix **ba** in its separative function on the emergence of the new “productive formation”. Still von Soden 1965:104 (as quoted above) correctly observes that the separative can hardly be the original meaning of the *t*-form(s).

5. Concluding observations

A. Synchronically, this study has proved that the primary meaning of the Perfect can be described as “now extended past-wise” ($T^S \{ T^F \}$): the Perfect denotes (1) a past fact (2) possessing a resultative component (3) that is temporalized at the moment of observation coinciding with the coding time. This meaning can be labelled “present perfect” (PP).

¹⁸² See a discussion of the primary meaning of Gt in Streck 2003:103–110, with a review of previous scholarship. Streck 2003 reaches no unambiguous conclusions in the matter, still he thinks that “ist im historischen Akkadischen indirekt-reflexiver bzw. medialer Gt gar nicht belegt and daher wohl auch Urakkadisch nicht anzunehmen” (p. 109 n. 58).

¹⁸³ In this connection there arises an important question: “Why is it that the G Perfect/Gt preterite and N Perfect have the stem vowel of the Present, while the corresponding Š- and D-formations have the stem vowel of the Preterite?” This evidence may point to the derivation of the Perfect from a present-tense *t*-form.

These three elements of grammatical semantics are equally essential. Let us consider, by way of contrast, the following utterances:

at-ta-na-ag-gi-iš ki-ma ha-bi-lim qa₂-ba-al-tu še-ri: “I kept wandering like a criminal in the midst of the steppe”. Gilg. Meissner/Millard II 11’.

ur₂-ta-ḥa-mu ki-la-al-lu-un: “They kept fondling one another”. Gilg. P. 44.

Pres. Gtn *attanaggiš* and Pres. Dt *urta*”*amū* denote facts that are probably past (it depends on our opinion on the nature of the epic narrative) but that can reach no intrinsic results and are not viewed from an “external” observation point because their location in time is provided from inside the narrative.

The primary meaning of the Perfect manifests itself in two syntactic patterns: pre-present main and *šumma*-conditional clauses. Legal CC also belong here because OB legal sentence is a speech genre text-grammatically identical to OB letter despoiled of all its Ich- and Du-deictic elements. This is the case of secondary deixis: the deictic field is completely controlled by the fictitious observer who suppresses any alternative personal point of view. For this reason the assumed shift of deictic centre from coding time to decoding time has no drastic consequences for the meanings of verbal tenses, at variance with the case of EPf.

All the other meanings of the Perfect can be shown to derive from the primary meaning.

1. EPf is derived from the prototypical meaning by way of Du-deictic translation: EPf denotes a fact possessing a resultative component that is temporalized at the moment of reading.

In letters, both PP and EPf meanings of *iptaras* are shifter or (with Reichenbach 1947:287) “token-reflexive”. In legal protases, the meanings of *iptaras* and *iparras* are so to speak “quasi-shifter” because the egocentric linguistic elements of legal sentences provide no information as to the observer’s position in time and space.

2. The Perfect in future time TC and CC denotes a future fact possessing a resultative component that coincides with the MC fact. In this usage, the Perfect supplies a point of reference for the MC fact and is relative “future perfect”. This meaning is also derived from the primary one by cancelling its shifter component and placing the resultative component in a new semantic environment.

3. The anti-PERFECT reading of negated *iptaras* is also derived from its primary meaning.

Thus, the synchronic semantic invariant of the Perfect is perfective (or “resultative”) anteriority.

As for the question addressed in § 1 of the present study, “Did OB possess absolute tenses?”, it needs more research, but for the moment I feel that B. Landsberger was perhaps not far off the mark when he suggested in 1926 that it was (what we now call) the *t*-Perfect that introduced the egocentric temporal element into the Akkadian verbal system: “In dem ausgebildeten akkadischen System dient der Punktual zugleich zur Bezeichnung des Anfangs- und des Endpunktes einer dauernden Handlung ... Beim Durativ gibt es keinen Unterschied der subjektiven Zeitstufen ... So war es ursprünglich auch beim Punktual; dagegen ist hier die Dreistufigkeit der subjektiven Zeit sekundär erreicht durch ... Infigierung eines *t*...” (Landsberger 1926:361). It seems a priori plausible that the appearance of a new and speaker-oriented finite form changed the layout of the verbal system and influenced the meanings of the other three verb forms with which, as we have seen, the Perfect created a whole net of relations.

B. Diachronically speaking, one can observe that the Perfect and the ventive crossed their paths and partly changed places in the early history of Akkadian. The starting-point of semantic development of the Perfect as outlined above in § 4 is the end-point of ventive’s development.

The ventive was originally a means of verbal spatial orientation (with Kouwenberg 2002), i.e. it expressed the movement towards the speaker’s locality (“here/hierher”) as linguistically “natural” spatial deictic centre. It is likely (with Edzard 2003:175) that its centripetal force developed under Sumerian influence, while the original “energicus” meaning of this morpheme was lost in Akkadian in pre-historical times, though it is perhaps worth-while to look for its rests in the extant texts. One suspicious context is the ventive as a “linking morpheme” between the verb and third person object pronominal suffixes, although this usage might prove not directly derived from “energicus” but rather from later meanings of the ventive, see presently.

Further development of the ventive took two parallel routes – deictic transfer of directional meaning and penetration into the domain of personal deixis.

In OB, the spatial deictic force of the ventive as used with the verbs of movement was regularly transferred to the second person and quite often—to the non-participant in the speech event (numerous examples of the latter shift are to be found in texts quoted in this paper).

There also occurred the “personification” of the allative marker, a semantic development attested elsewhere in the languages of the world: “here” → “to me”. This shift did not entail the loss of the original directional meaning, consequently the ventive became a means of both spatial and personal deixis.

The “personal” use of the ventive is proper for the “dative” verbs, i.e. verbs possessing valency slots for both the second and third actants. Again, this usage extended from the first to second and third person dative arguments.

Projection of both directional and personal uses of the ventive from the speaker to the addressee constitutes an isogloss with the synchronic polysemy of the Perfect (cf. EPf).

The final step was a transition from the realm of personal deixis to that of the voice and actant structure: the ventive developed the meaning of indirect reflexive: “to me” → “(as) for me”, again extending this use from the speaker to the addressee and to the “third person(s)”. This semantic shift probably happened in historical times. In OB letters of Hammurapi period, this meaning of the ventive is perhaps less frequent than the former ones, but it features in narrative texts, e.g. in OB Gilg.

(92=88) *šu-ma ša da-ru-u₂ a-na-ku lu-uš-tak₂[!]-nam*

A name that will be eternal I shall establish <for myself>!

Gilg. Y. 188.

(93) *aš-ši-a-šu-ma at-ba-la-aš-šu a-na ši-ri-ki*

I picked it up and carried it to you. Gilg. P. 14.

In the last example, the ventive on the first verb can hardly be explained by attraction; the second verb, if *wabālu*, is an example of narrative “compositional” perfect current in OB Gilg., ditto in the following example.

(94) *it-ti-lam-ma i-ta-mar ša-ni-tam*

He lay down, and he saw another (dream). Gilg. P. 24.

The indirect reflexive (or “medial”) sense is lexicalized in *itūlu* by its Gt shape¹⁸⁴ and actualized by the ventive.

This is a recognizably “medial” use extending to intransitive verbs. If it turns out that this medial use of the ventive is considerably more common in OB narrative texts than in contemporary letters, it may be viewed as a narrative projection of the ventive.

Still, cf. *a-na GN šu-pu-ur-ma li-wa-aš-še-ru-nim* “write to GN so that they release (them)”, ARMT 5, 9:17–19 quoted as (53) above. Ironically enough, this ventive may be read as “separative” but it is actually medial.

For the *t*-infix form, medium is probably its primary meaning. It is the source of both its individual derivational meanings (reciprocal, passive, direct reflexive, decausative) in Akkadian (and perhaps in other Semitic languages) and of the Perfect as inflectional and primarily deictic verbal category.

In terms of historical semantics, the original PS (and Proto-Afrasian?) *t*-form split in Akkadian into derivational and inflectional markers, the derivational sense being the only one in other Semitic languages. This peculiar Akkadian development is possibly due to Sumerian influence, as it was repeatedly conjectured since the beginning of the study of this problem.

The ventive, whose Semitic origin probably lies in the domain of Aktionsart,¹⁸⁵ developed—also in a unique way most likely due to Sumerian adstrat—deictic grammatical meanings (both spatial and personal) and, without losing them, acquired a sense virtually synonymous to that of the ancient *t*-form.

¹⁸⁴ The parsing of this form is with Metzler 2002:422 and against Huehnergard 2002:182 (perf. of *niālum*).

¹⁸⁵ Whatever be the actual meaning of “energicus”, I am hesitant to understand as an expression of objective modality.

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