Aspect in Common Semitic and Egyptian [ACSE]

Contents

1. Introduction : Hypotheses A and B

1.1 Among the more interesting problems in Semitic diachronic linguistics is the question of how, from a presumed common original, the differing verbal systems of the various languages evolved. Prior to the recovery of Akkadian it was generally assumed that the system of Classical Arabic, in its apparent 'purity', most closely resembled the original, so that the systems in other languages – for example Hebrew and Aramaic - were taken to originate in the 'Arabic = Semitic' system. However the verbal system of Akkadian, in its antiquity and with its apparently unique form-function patterns, substantially weakened the 'Arabic = Semitic' hypothesis and poses problems which have not been satisfactorily resolved. Nevertheless, despite its inability to account for the Akkadian data the 'Arabic = Semitic' hypothesis continues to have its adherents, not least because the alternatives have their own shortcomings.[1]

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[1] For a review of the various hypotheses see H. Fleisch, *Traité de philologie arabe* (1961-79), Vol.I, §126. See also E. Lipiński, *Semitic Languages – Outline of a Comparative Grammar [OCG]* (2001), §37/8, and S. Moscati et al, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages [ICGSL]* (1964), §16.28 – 16.31. In general,

1.2 The original number of terms in the Semitic aspect system, and their values, has long been the subject of investigation.[2] But while the differing conclusions drawn by investigators to some extent reflect the apparently irreconcilable evidence provided by the languages, another major difficulty has been the failure to recognise the limitations of 'induction' as a method of reasoning in diachronic linguistics, a dificulty compounded by a certain lack of precision in the names and definitions applied to the terms proposed for the system.[3] In an attempt to address the problems posed by the inductive method the present study utilises a 'hypothetical-deductive' approach, along the lines advocated by Popper, whereby a hypothesis is proposed which appears to fit the data, and evidence is then sought in the various languages to either support or weaken the hypothesis.[4]

1.3 Therefore as an initial hypothesis the set of aspect morphemes in Common Semitic is taken to have comprised at least three members, expressing elements which will be termed <singulative>, <non-singulative> and <stative>, and defined as follows;

1. <Singulative> aspect is taken to 'encode' an event which the writer or speaker views as having occurred once, or whose interest in an event that has not yet taken place is confined to a single potential occurrence. Whether the event has occurred, or will occur, more than once is taken not to be relevant;

2. <Non-singulative> aspect is taken to encode all events which the user cannot or does not wish to encode as

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Lipiński takes the Akkadian system to be primary whereas Moscati et al opt for an original based on the system in Classical Arabic.

[2] For an overview of the category of aspect in general see J. Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (1971), p313 ff. For research in Semitic see Moscati et al, *Introduction* p131 ff ; Fleisch, *Traité* Vol II §123, and Lipiński, *Outline*, §38.3 ff.

[3] An exception is F. Rundgren, *Das althebräische Verbum. Abriss der Aspektlehre* (1961), who bases his analysis on an initial distinction 'stative vs fientive' and then develops six sub-categories of the latter (§36). His theory is carefully worked out but seems implausibly complex.

[4] See for example K. R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (1972), p33 ff and especially p53. See also *On the Biradial Origins of the Semitic Triradical Root System (BOSTRS)* §1.3. It will be claimed that there is an element of circularity in such an approach to diachronic linguistics. But this is to misunderstand the hypothetical-deductive method, which sets out to refute rather than 'prove' a hypothesis, with the consequence that a hypothesis is supported only to the extent that it is not refuted. However it is only fair to add that in the context of an essentially probablistic study, as this is, total refutation is impossible.

<singulative>. Such events may be perceived as occurring more than once (iterative) or more generally persisting (durative);

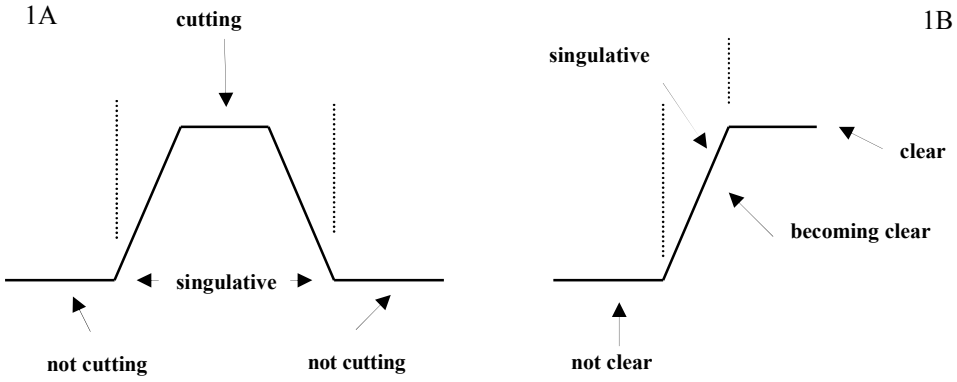
3. <Stative> aspect is taken to encode a situation that is viewed as unchanging, contrasting with an event - whether viewed singulatively or non-singulatively.

1.4 Events and states can be represented graphically as shown in Figure 1, from which it will be seen that there are two sub-types of event. In the first sub-type (Figure 1A), which could for example represent *she cut*, the final state (*not cutting*), stripped of all connotations and implications, is the same as the initial state, as far as the grammatical subject is concerned. In the other sub-type (1B), where the event is grammatically passive, the initial and final states are different. There is of course a potential logical relationship between the two sub-types which becomes more evident if *clarify* is substituted for *cut,* to give the parallelism:

he clarified x* vs *x became clear

Sections of the 'event lines' not included within the boundaries defining <singulative> would in principle be encoded by <stative> although, with the exception of the final state *clear* in figure 1B, these are not states which would normally be expressed in natural language.[5]

FIGURE 1 SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF SINGULATIVE ASPECT



1.5 For Figure 1A it should be emphasised that encoding <singulative> is taken to imply an absence of consequence or result, such that, for instance, this event could not be rendered by English *she has cut.*

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[5] **It is also possible to envisage an element <translative>, which would encode segments 'cutting' and 'becoming clear' of the event lines. This element is typically expressed in Semitic through active participle forms, marked for number and gender but not for person, and as such stand apart from full verb forms.**

Contrast with this the hypothesis that the principal aspectual distinction was between 'complete' and 'incomplete' action, where the former cannot logically exclude *she has cut*.[6] With regard to <non-singulative>, the simplest definition would be that it comprises an unmarked series of <singulative> events for, as already noted, in many contexts <non-singulative> may have 'iterative' or 'durative' connotation. On the other hand it would be quite possible for a language to have <iterative> and/or <durative> as members of its system of aspect, and it will later be argued that the evidence suggests that Common Semitic and Egyptian, and the language from which they are taken to descend, may indeed have possessed an element akin to <iterative>, which would of course have implications for the definition of <non-singulative>.

1.6 Comparative evidence suggests that <stative> aspect in Common Semitic and Egyptian was expressed by a form with suffixed subject pronouns, exemplified by the Akkadian permansive and Egyptian old perfective ; in this study such forms will be termed G_S (G-form suffixing). However, the discussion that follows will largely be confined to the elements <singulative> and <non-singulative>, which are postulated (in the simplest case) to have been expressed in Common Semitic by prefixing G-forms (G_P). Two hypotheses will be explored, the first of which (Hypothesis A) argues that Common Semitic exhibited the following two basic types of G_P form:

1. **An 'apocopate' form (denoted G_{PA}), displaying no overt aspect morpheme and having the general structure (for a 3fs form) **tinpur*, **tinpir* or **tinpar* This form is conjectured to have expressed <singulative> aspect;**
2. **An 'extended' form (G_{PE}), much as the G_{PA} form but with aspect morpheme suffixed either to the stem or to suffixed morphemes of gender/number. Conjectured to have expressed <non-singulative> aspect.**

Hypothesis A is explored in Section 2. The second hypothesis (B), explored in Section 3, proposes that Common Semitic made use of a G_{PA} form as defined above, but with <non-singulative> aspect expressed by a form with geminate second root morpheme, perhaps originating in a pre-Semitic reduplicated stem.

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[6] **For example Lipiński, *OCG*, §38.4, who takes the primary distinction to be between <perfective> and <imperfective>, where the former is expressed by Akkadian *iptaras* and the latter by *iparras*. This is anyway a rather odd proposal as there is no comparable form expressing <perfective> e.g. in Arabic or the N. Ethiosemitic languages ; moreover he fails to show that apparent occurrences in the N.W. Semitic languages are primary, rather than secondary innovations perhaps under the influence of Akkadian itself.**

This form is taken to have had the general structure (3fs) *_tinappur_, again with stem vowel variants in _i_ and _a_, and will be denoted G_{PG}.

2. Evidence for and against Hypothesis A

2.1 Literary Arabic

2.1.1 For strong roots, and leaving aside passive forms,[7] apocopate G_P forms in Arabic (_majzūm_) are constructed on templates (3ms) _yaqbur_, _yaqbar_ or _yaqbir_. Such forms are clearly G_{PA} in that, aside from gender/number morphemes suffixed to the 2fs, 3p, 2p and dual forms, no morpheme occurs after the final radical. G_{PA} forms are used in the following contexts:[8]

1. **Non-declarative constructions, e.g. jussive and cohortative (Vol. II, §17(a));**
2. **Negative declarative and imperative (Vol. II, §12, §17(b), §18);**
3. **Protasis and apodosis of conditional sentences expressing 'possible' conditions (Vol. II, §17(c)).[9]**

None of these expresses a singulative event which has definitely occurred ; this function is fulfilled in Arabic by the G_S form, which could be seen as at least a partial refuation of Hypothesis A (on the G_S form in Semitic refer to Section 7). But all three attested functions can be accommodated by the definition of <singulative> proposed in §1.3 above, albeit with varying degrees of confidence ; for instance the third application is somewhat problematic in that such general statements would at first sight appear to fit better with the definition of <non-singulative>. However, although conditional constructions in the individual languages display many idiosyncracies, the particular type expressing 'possible' conditions appears to be Common Semitic, for it also occurs at least in Hebrew and Akkadian (see below at §2.2 and §2.5). This particular use of the G_{PA} form is thus certainly ancient, and may have evolved through viewing such events as hypothetical, rather than specific, single events[10]

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[7] **The Arabic passive, and analogous forms in the other languages, are considered to be secondary innovations, albeit old, partly replacing, but to some extent replicating (or being replicated by), the various 'Afroasiatic' T- and N-forms (Lipiński, _OCG_ §41.43 ff).**

[8] **References to W. Wright, _A Grammar of the Arabic Language [GAL]_ (1962).**

[9] **For example, 'if I see him (which I may) I will tell him', as opposed to 'impossible', e.g. 'had I seen him (which I did not) I would have told him'.**

[10] **Egyptian also offers a degree of support for this conjecture. See A. Gardiner, _Egyptian Grammar_[3] _(EG)_ (1988), §150.**

2.1.2 For the moment ignoring 'subjunctive' forms (Section 5 below), there are two Arabic G-forms which are 'extended' in the sense defined in §1.3, namely the *muḍāri'* and 'energic' forms, the second of which consists of two sub-types. Active voice *muḍāri'* forms other than 2fs, 3p and 2p are built (for strong roots) on templates *yaqburu*, *yaqbiru* or *yaqbaru,* and thus differ from their *majzūm* equivalents in adding final *-u* to the stem. The 2fs, 3mp and 2mp forms also add final *–na*, such that the 3fp and 2fp *muḍāri'* endings are identical to those of the equivalent *majzūm* forms. The *muḍāri'* is used in the following contexts:[11]

1. **To signal a non-hypothetical situation where no particular event or state is envisaged;**
2. **When an event will occur in the future;**
3. **In conjunction with selected verbs in their *māḍī* (G_S) form to express:**
   - **(a) An event considered to be ongoing in past time;**
   - **(b) An event iterated in past time;**
   - **(c) The purpose of a singulative event in past time.**

2.1.3 Energic forms other than 2fs, 3mp and 2mp add either *-an* or *–anna* to the *majzūm* form.[12] The 2fs, 2mp and 3mp forms shorten final *ī* and *ū* of the *majzūm* and reduce *–anna* to *–nna* ; the 3fp and 2fp forms are fairly regular, except that the sequence *–na-anna* becomes *nānni.*[13] Energic forms are typically used under circumstances 1 and 2 above and commonly serve to emphasise the idea expressed by the equivalent *muḍāri'* form. But these forms also occur in certain kinds of conditional construction, commands, prohibitions, etc.,[14] although with the exception of conditional contexts the foregoing functions can all be readily reconciled with an original aspect term <non-singulative>.

2.1.4 'Subjunctive' 3p and 2p forms are identical to those of the equivalent *majzūm* forms so that, by comparison with the *muḍāri*, the subjunctive can be said to display an attenuated G_{PE} paradigm. This fact, together with the evidence from Ge'ez (§2.6 below) and the absence of clear evidence for a

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[11] **Wright, *GAL*, Vol II, §8 and §9. The 'historical present' usage cited by Wright is taken to be an innovation arising when temporal implications became superimposed on the original aspectual system.**

[12] **Wright, *GAL*, Vol. I, §97. The shorter form appears to be less common ; in the Qur'ān the longer version occurs almost without exception.**

[13] **Compare the dual forms, which end in *–nni*, e.g. (3p) *yaqtulānni*.**

[14] **Wright, *GAL*, Vol II, §20.**

morphologically analogous form in the other Semitic languages - with the very questionable exceptions of Ugaritic and the el-Amarna letters,[15] suggests that the Arabic subjunctive may have been an internal innovation originating in the *majzūm,* and thus perhaps of no great relevance for the history of G_P forms in Common Semitic.[16]

2.2 Biblical Hebrew

2.2.1 Leaving aside the Masoretic pointing, Hebrew G_{PA} forms can most readily be detected in forms on II-weak and III-weak roots, which in certain environments tend to be written without the second or third radical respectively. Such forms occur in the following contexts:[17]

1. **Definitely occurring, usually singulative, events in past-time narrative (*waw*-consecutive construction);**
2. **Certain non-declarative constructions, e.g. jussive and cohortative;**
3. **Negative imperative constructions;**
4. **Conditional constructions relating to possible conditions (*GKC*, §109 h/I, §159).**

Function 1 has no parallel in Arabic but obviously offers quite good support for hypothesis 'G_{PA} ⇔ <singulative>'. Functions 2 to 4 are shared with the equivalent Arabic forms and support or weaken the hypothesis to the same degree as the Arabic data. [18] But as in Arabic, a G_S form expressing <singulative> aspect is common in Hebrew, and could again constitute a partial refutation of Hypothesis A.

2.2.2 If it is correct to view the relevant Hebrew II-weak and III-weak G_P forms as structurally apocopate, it follows that equivalent forms where the weak radical is written may originate in G_{PE} forms even though, at first sight, there appears to be no evidence for a morpheme after the third radical other

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[15] **See the discussion of Ugaritic verb forms at §2.3 below and in Section 5.**

[16] **Cf. Lipiński, *OCG*, §39.5.**

[17] **See W. Gesenius, W. & E. Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*^{2} *[GKC]* (1966), §109.**

[18] **Some investigators have argued that because declarative and non-declarative G_{PA} forms display different stress patterns in the Masoretic text, stress in Common Semitic was phonemic; for example Lipiński, *OCG*, §25.8 and §38.2, and R. Hetzron, 'The Evidence for Perfect **y'aqtul* and Jussive **yaqt'ul* in Proto-Semitic', *JSS* 14 (1969), 1-21. This argument can be challenged on at least two grounds. Firstly, the reliability of the Masoretic pointing for the original pronunciation needs to be demonstrated rather than assumed (*OCG*, §7.5). Second, there are few if any contexts where declarative and non-declarative functions of the G_{PA} form could be confused and therefore it needs to be shown that the differing stress patterns are primary rather than secondary. However, the phenomenon of distinct stress patterns is admittedly widespread and may be ancient.**

than those of number and gender. There are however two phenomena in Hebrew that provide more solid evidence for hypothesis 'G_{PE} ⇔ <non-singulative>'. The first of these is a sporadic but not too uncommon final *n* attached to 2fs, 3mp and 2mp forms, although the first of these is much less common than the others. This *n* seems morphologically equivalent to the *-na* suffixed to the equivalent Arabic *muḍāri'* forms, is more common in poetry and is not infrequently paralleled by forms without *n*.[19]

2.2.3 The second phenomenon also involves phoneme *n,* but this time prefixed to 3ms and 3fs object pronominal suffixes and also very occasionally to 2ms and 2fs object suffixes. This construction can occur with all persons of the verb although in the case of the 2fs, 3mp and 2mp, the optional final *-n* of the verb is never found ; this contrasts with 1s suffix *-nī* which is occasionally added without loss of the final *n*.[20]

2.2.4 It has long been recognised that the contexts in which verb-final *n* and pronouns incorporating *n* occur are generally limited to those listed under 1 and 2 for the Arabic *muḍāri'* forms (§2.1.2) ; they do not occur in Hebrew contexts 1 to 4 above where clear examples of G_{PA} forms are found. Both types of G_{PE} form are traditionally explained as expressing emphasis and, in the case of the object-pronominal suffixes, as being related in some way to the Arabic energic forms (particularly the shorter version) where final *n* is retained before object suffixes.[21] This conjecture is supported by the el-Amarna texts where a number of possible energic singular forms occur with final *–una* (mostly Akkadian forms with apparently Canaanite suffixed morphemes).[22] In these forms also the *n* appears to be retained when followed by an object pronoun, for example *uš-ši-ru-na-ši* 'I will send it', with Akkadian object pronoun *–ši.*[23]

2.2.5 If morpheme *n* in the Hebrew object pronominal suffixes is indeed a fossil remnant of the final element in an original G_{PE} form it follows that many if not all Hebrew G_P forms having object pronouns

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[19] **See *GKC* §47m ff.**

[20] ***GKC* §60*e*. Variant pronominal forms such as *-ennu* (3ms) are taken to be secondary innovations, although they also occur in Ugaritic and Aramaic (§2.3 and §2.4 below).**

[21] ***GKC* §47*m*, §58i to l. and §61e**

[22] **See A.F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect used by Scribes from Canaan* (1996), Vol. II, p234ff. Rainey suggests apropos the el-Amarna texts (p236) 'that the indicative energic in *–una* must be the ancestor of the Hebrew...imperfect with accusative suffixes *-enhu*, *ennu*, etc'.**

[23] ***Canaanite*, p242. This form is interesting in two respects. Firstly, Arabic provides very little evidence for energic derived forms. Second, derived forms in Akkadian proper distinguish <singulative> and <non-singulative> by apophony rather than through an agglutinated morpheme (*-na*) as appears to be the case here.**

without *n* are probably G_{PA}. This conjecture is supported by verbs on weak roots, where apparent apocopate forms always occur with the shorter object pronoun and pronouns with *n* only occur with 'extended' verb forms, where the weak radical is retained. Whatever the correct explanation, these pronominal suffixes must either be grammatically conditioned, which although synchronically correct is diachronically very odd or, what seems more likely, the *n* was an original part of the verb form which become detached when, for whatever reason, in most contexts it became redundant as a grammatical marker.

2.3 Ugaritic

2.3.1 Being closely related to the Canaanite dialects, it might be anticipated that any Ugaritic evidence for hypothesis A would be similar in nature to that of Hebrew, particularly with regard to the distribution of III-weak forms and forms with a suffixed morpheme in *n*.[24] As will be seen, this is to some extent the case, but of all Semitic languages the Ugaritic data is perhaps the most difficult to interpret. This is partly because of the orthography which, aside from the general absence of vocalisation, appears not always to be consistent, and partly due to the poetical nature of the major texts.[25] Furthermore the metrical structure of Ugaritic poetry, with its preference for balanced *hemistichoi* exhibiting approximately the same number and length of syllables, not infrequently appears to result in different forms occurring in what is essentially the same context. Finally it must be suspected that, on occasion, a given form results from the application of particular rules of Ugaritic syntax, giving constructions which at first sight could be taken to refute the hypothesis under examination.[26]

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[24] **Lipiński (*OCG*, §5.1 ff) classes Ugaritic as a 'North Semitic' language but the evidence for so doing, rather than including it with the Canaanite languages, seems rather thin (§5.5). The second radical in Ugaritic verb forms on II-weak roots appears never to be written.**

[25] **The myths and legends in these texts were intended for oral recitation and the texts thus exhibit stylistic and linguistic devices typical of such a medium - repetition, the use of rather formulaic phrases, and a general tendency to exploit the resources of the language for dramatic effect. For texts see C.H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* (1947), Vol. II, p159 ff. For translations see C.H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature*, (1949) and H. L. Ginsberg, in J.B. Pritchard (ed), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts [ANET]* (1969), p129-155.**

[26] **The poetic texts are claimed to be significantly older than the prose texts and in consequence to have been less perfectly preserved; see for example D. Pardee, 'Ugaritic', in R.J. Woodward (ed), *The Ancient Languages of Syria – Palestine and Arabia*, (2008), p20. That the poetical texts are considerably older than the tablets on which they are**

2.3.2 In principle, the clearest evidence for Ugaritic G_{PA} forms should be provided by forms on III-weak roots in environments where, as in Hebrew, orthography omits the final radical.[27] Examination of the relevant forms suggests that they tend to occur in at least three of the four types of construction listed for Hebrew G_{PA} forms in §2.2 above, the exception being that there appears to be no example of a prefixing III-weak root in a conditional or other hypothetical construction.[28] Thus, in parallel with the Hebrew *waw*-consecutive construction there are many Ugaritic examples of type:

***wt'n btlt 'nt* 'the lady Anat spoke' (51-3.32)[29]**

where *t'n* is 3fs from III-weak root *'ny* 'speak'. Inspection of the concordance[30] demonstrates the formulaic nature of this type of phrase (commonly with 3ms form *wy'n*) and that most examples utilise an orthographic G_{PA} form. Examples in cohortative and negative-imperative contexts are:

***npš yḫ dnìl* 'with breath let Dn'l be quickened' (2AQHT-1.37)**

***bn àl tbkn*… 'my son, do not weep for me…' (125-25)**

The roots here are respectively *ḫwy* (Hebrew *ḫyy*[31]) and *bky*. Thus, with the exception of conditiomal constructions the Ugaritic examples reflect an original aspect element <singulative> to much the same extent as equivalent examples in Hebrew.[32]

2.3.3 Although G_{PA} forms tend to be the norm in such contexts, a difficulty arises in the not-infrequent cases where an orthographic G_{PE} form is apparently used to express <singulative> aspect, as for example:

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preserved is likely, but for the purposes of analysis textual corruption must be regarded as an explanation of last resort.

[27] Compare D. Sivan, *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language (GUL)*, 99.

[28] One clear conditional construction is *hm t'pn 'l qbr bny tškt'nn bšnt* 'if they (vultures) fly over my son's grave, rousing him from (his) sleep' (1AQHT-3.151). The likliest interpretation of these verbs, assuming they are to be read as masculine forms (subject *nšrm*), is that they are 3mp G_{PE}, perhaps vocalised **ta'apūn* and **tušakta'ānanu*.

[29] References are generally to the texts in volume II of Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* .

[30] R.E. Whitaker, *A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature* (1972), p492.

[31] Whitaker (*Concordance*, p258) lists the root under *ḫyy*, but many of his citations support *ḫwy*, as for example *àp ànk àḫwy àqht* (2AQHT-6.32), where *àḫwy* appears to be a D-form.

[32] Statistically, approximately 75 per cent of the examples on which this discussion is based support without difficulty the hypothesis 'G_{PA} ⇔ <singulative>'.

wy‘ny krt tù **‘Krt the noble spoke’ (125-24)**

G_{PE} forms on root *‘ny* are more the exception and, although in a poetical context a form requiring an English present tense cannot be entirely ruled out, it seems more likely that *y‘ny* is merely an orthographic variant of *y‘n*, both perhaps being vocalised **ya‘ni.* But where fewer forms of a verb are attested the situation is less clear. For example the concordance lists eight G_P forms on III-weak root *gly* ‘penetrate’, six of which occur in phrases similar to:

tgly dd ìl wtbù qrš mlk àb šnm **‘she penetrated/penetrates El’s field and entered/enters the pavilion of king Abi Shunem’ (51- 4.23, *ANET*, p133).**

where *tgly* is an orthographic G_{PE} form apparently expressing <singulative> aspect.[33] However the seventh occurrence (‘NT.VI-5.15) has G_{PA} form *tgl* in the identical phrase suggesting that, if *tgl* is not an error, all seven forms could in fact be G_{PA}, perhaps vocalised **yigli* or **tigli*. On the other hand there are also cases where an apparent G_{PE} form may in fact be a dual G_{PA} form, a possible example being:

àkr ymġy ktr wkss…. **‘then came Ktr and Kss…(2AQHT-5.28)**

where *ymġy* should perhaps be vocalised **yimġiyā.*[34]

2.3.4 For evidence of orthographic G_{PE} forms expressing <non-singulative> aspect, first consider forms without a post-root morpheme in *n*, and in particular forms on III-weak and III-aleph roots. As noted above, some III-weak forms orthographically G_{PE} occur in contexts where a form expressing <singulative> aspect would be predicted, but there are many more examples which are clearly analysable as <non-singulative> and thus parallel equivalent III-weak forms in Hebrew (and Arabic). For example, on roots *bky* ‘weep’ and *mġy* ‘reach’ :

àbky wàqbrnh… **‘I’ll weep and inter him…’ (1AQHT-3.140)**

rìšh lymġy àpsh **‘his head does not reach its (the throne) top’ (49-1.31)**

These forms should perhaps be vocalised **’abkiyu* and **lā yimġiyu* and can be contrasted with:

ybk làqht ġzr **‘he wept for the young man Aqht’ (1AQHT-4.173)**

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[33] Ginsberg and Gordon (*ANET* and *Ugaritic Literature*) here utilise the present tense, presumably on the ground that the *u* in *tbù* must follow its aleph and therefore that the verb cannot be G_{PA}.

[34] Ginsberg and Gordon take both this expression and the similar *qdš wamrr* to represent single individuals and thus translate the verb as 3ms G_{PE}. Compare *àkr tmġyn mlàk ym* ‘the messengers of Sea then arrive’ (137 30) where the verb is G_{PE}.

tmġ ln'm[y arṣ] dbr **'she came to the goodness of the land of Dbr' (67-6.28)**

perhaps vocalised **yibki* and **timġi*.[35] Orthographic G_{PA} forms rarely occur where a G_{PE} form might be predicted, although a possible exception is:

nġẓ qnyt ilm **'we entreat the creatress of the gods' (51-3.34)**

although *nġẓ* (root *ġẓy*) would fairly comfortably admit the jussive sense 'let us entreat'.

2.3.5 The feature of Ugaritic orthography whereby aleph is written in one of three ways, depending on the value of the accompanying vowel, is potentially instructive. It is usually assumed that the vowel represented by the sign always follows its aleph.[36] However in some cases the vowel must precede, as for example in *yìsp* 'he gathered' (root *àsp*), a G_P form where the sequence *'s* is almost certainly a consonant cluster. Moreover, if Ugaritic did indeed utilise G_{PA} forms the final phoneme in a 3ms form on a III-aleph root must (by definition) have been the aleph, in which case the vowel represented by the sign must again precede its consonant, e.g.:

yqrà mt bnpšh **'Mt called out to himself' (51-7.47)**

where *yqrà* clearly expresses <singulative> aspect, and morphologically is probably G_{PA} (perhaps vocalised **yiqra'*).[37] On the other hand there are examples such as:

ymlù lbh bšmḫt **'her heart filled with joy' ('NT-2.25)**

where the context is <singulative> and where (poetic licence aside) a G_{PA} form might be expected. But neither Arabic, Hebrew nor Akkadian supports *u* as the theme vowel of root *ml'* and thus on present evidence this and similar forms can only be explained by assuming that the vowel is final and that the forms are G_{PE}.[38]

2.3.6 Ugaritc verb forms with final *n* are of three types:

1. Singular forms lacking a pronominal suffix;

2. Forms with a pronominal suffix;

3. Plural and dual forms.

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[35] Ginsberg and Gordon almost invariably translate such forms by the English present tense.

[36] See for example C.H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual* (1955), §9.7.

[37] The signs for *ì* and *ù* would appear to be later additions to the alphabet, in which case the sign for *à* would originally have been vowel free ; it may be that in some instances this remains the case (Sivan, *GUL*, 9, 16-18).

[38] The Akkadian 3ms G_{PA} form is *imla*. The infinitives of such verbs are of the form *malū*, analogous to those of III-

Singular forms without a pronominal suffix are those classified as 'energic' by Sivan and Gordon.[39] But as with the el-Amarna letters, it is a triumph of the imagination to detect any energic sense in most of these forms,[40] particularly for example, in:

***àṯbn ànk wànkn* 'I will sit and rest' (2AQHT-2.12)**

where both forms are on weak roots (*yṯb* and *nwk*) and it seems more likely that G_{PE} marker *–n* is added to give more syllabic 'substance'. On the other hand, in:

***bkm tmdln 'r bkm tṣmd pḫl* 'weeping she saddles a donkey, weeping she harnesses a mule (1AQHT-2.57)**

***tmdln* displays the *–n* but *tṣmd* does not. The explanation may be metrical, *tṣmd* perhaps being a D-form.**

2.3.7 Although pronominal suffixes of form *–nn* suggest that <non-singulative> *-n* was followed by a vowel, as for example *štnn* 'she sets him' (1AQHT-2.59), there is almost no evidence for its value, although a possible exception is :

***ìqràn ìlm nàmm* 'I shall invoke / let me invoke the kindly gods' (52. 23)**

where Gordon and Sivan take *ìqràn* to be cohortative (perhaps **'iqra'ana*). But whether the *à* here marks the preceding or following vowel (or both) is unclear; compare the parallel form *ìqrà* (52. 1).[41]

2.3.8 Many forms with *n* occur in conjunction with a 3s suffix in *h*, although rarely with any other, a situation which again parallels that in Hebrew. Examples are:[42]

***àbky wàqbrnh* 'I'll weep and inter him…' (1AQHT-3.140)**

***ḫwy y'šr wyšqynh* '…gives a feast for the life-given and bids him drink' (2AQHT-6.31)**

As noted above 3s suffixes also occur as *–nn*, or simply *–n*, as:

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weak verbs.

[39] In addition to the examples cited, this discussion also draws on the following forms: *ymġyn* (1AQHT-4.170), *ybln* (2AQHT-5.12), *tmtkṣn* ('NT-2.23), *tḥspn* ('NT-2.38), *àrgmn* ('NT-3.75), *yqlṣn* and *ywpṯn* (51-3.12), *ttbn* (51-7.24) and *tmtn* (125-3). Note in respect of *ymġyn* that the word order S-O-V seems to attract final *–n* even where the event is clearly <singulative>; compare *'nt lbth tmġyn* ('NT-2.17).

[40] Sivan, *GUL*, p102; Gordon, *Manual*, §9.8; Rainey, *Amarna*, Vol. II, p234 ff.

[41] Gordon, *Manual*, §9.7; Sivan, *GUL*, p105 The form *ìqrà* is read **iqr'a* by Lipiński (*OCG*, §39.10), but where, in any Semitic language, does a three-consonant cluster occur in a G_P form?.

[42] Also *t'dbnh* (3AQHT-4.33), *yšllḫmnh* ('NT-1.5), *yšqynh* ('NT-1.8), *ištynh* (51-3.16), *ykllnh* and *y'msnh* (51-5.72), *t'šlynh*, *tbkynh* and *tqbrnh* (62-1.15).

tštnn lbmt ʻr **ʻshe places him on the donkey' (1AQHT-2.57)**

àštn bkrt ìlm àrṣ **ʻI'll place it in the [hollow] of the earth gods' (1AQHT-3.140)**

These may correspond to Hebrew suffix forms in *–ennu.*[43]

2.3.9 The third type of form with final *–n* comprises plural and dual forms which, in the former case at least, resemble Hebrew pausal forms. Examples are:

ʻl bt àbh nšrm trkpn **ʻabove her father's house vultures hover' (1AQHT-1.32)**

tntkn ùdmʻth km tqlm àrṣh **ʻhis tears pour forth like shekels to the ground' (KRT-28).**

tšàn ghm wtṣḫn **ʻthey (dual) raise their voices and cry' (KRT-267)**

Only the first of these is unambiguously <non-singulative>. Possible vocalisations are **tirkapūna*, **tunattikūna* (compare *ytk* in 1AQHT-2.82 which omits the first radical *n*), **tišša'āni* and **tiṣaḫāni.*[44]

2.3.10 If it is generally the case that a 3s suffix in *-nh* signals the presence of a G_{PE} form then it may be that verb forms which have only *h* as their suffix are G_{PA}, as for example:

ìmkṣh kd ʻl qšth **ʻI smote him (but for) his bow' (1AQHT-1.14)**

But the number of forms having only *h* as a 3s suffix is surprisingly low, although most are aspectually <singulative>. One obvious exception is:

ìbġyh btk ġry il spn **ʻI will reveal it in the midst of my mountain Godly Zaphon' (ʻNT-3.26)**

where *ìbġy* is morphologically G_{PE} and, in having apparently future reference, is aspectually <non-singulative>.

2.3.11 To summarise, where morphologically G_{PA} and G_{PE} forms can be identified with reasonable confidence, the hypotheses ʻG_{PA} ⇔ <singulative>' and ʻG_{PE} ⇔ <non-singulative>' are supported, but not without exception. There is a considerable grey area, relating particularly to III-weak and III-aleph forms, where verbs which appear to be morphologically G_{PE} are used in both <singulative> and <non-

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[43] **Compare also *tškṯann* [3mp with suffix *–n*] (1AQHT-3.151), *tbrknn* (2AQHT-1.24), *tʻnynn* (2AQHT-6.32), *tštn* (3AQHT-4.27 and 128-24), *tbqʻnn* etc. (49-2.26), *tštnn* (62-1.15), *ywsrnn* (127-25). Form *tlùàn* (KRT-33) displays suffix *–n* but is otherwise difficult to analyse (*GUL*, p103). Note that *–nh* never occurs with root *šyt* ʻplace', suggesting that some of these associations are merely conventional.**

[44] **Also the following plural forms: *tʻpn* (1AQHT-3.151), *ytnn* (2AQHT-5.26), yʻ*nyn* (ʻNT-4.49), *tqṯṯn utkṯin* (2-1.15), *tʻrbn* (5-9), *yʻtqn* (49-2.26), *yštn* (51-4.14), *tnġṣn* (68-17), *tikln* and *tqrṣn* (75-1.10), *tmtn* (125-105), *tbùn* (128-4.21), *tbkn* (128-5.12). Reasonably clear dual forms are: *tmġyn* and *tṣḫn* (1AQHT-2.89), *tmġyn* (49-1.31), *tmgnn* and *tġẓyn* (51-3.25), *tṣḫn* (52-42), *tqtnṣn* and *tldn* (52-51).**

singulative> contexts. Similarly, although most forms incorporating final or near-final *n* occur in <non-singulative> contexts, there are some whose context is <singulative> and would on occasion be better translated by a past tense. But although such data could be viewed as at least a partial refutation of Hypothesis A (along with the not-insignificant number of G_S forms apparently expressing <singulative> aspect – see Section 7) would it be reasonable to expect verbs in poetic and literary texts always to exhibit a rigid correlation with their postulated aspectual functions? Moreover, Gordon has drawn attention to cases where a text appears to consist of an assemblage of fixed phrases and, if this were a productive technique in Ugaritic poetry, it could account for at least some forms which are otherwise difficult to analyse.

2.3.12 'Scholarly' analysis of the Ugaritic verb tends to be rather traditional. Sivan, for example, divides prefixing verb forms into 'indicative and 'injunctive', each category consisting of three sub-divisions.[45] Thus for G-forms:

TABLE 2.1 UGARITIC VERB TYPES

Indicative		Injunctive	
Preterite	G_{PA}	Jussive	G_{PA}
Imperfect	$G_{PE(u)}$	Volitive	$G_{PE(a)}$
Energic	$G_{PE(un)}$	Energic	$G_{PE(an)}$

where the letters in brackets distinguish G_{PE} form variants. There are several problems which considerably weaken this formulation as a possible refutation of Hypothesis A :

1. **Sivan assumes that jussive and preterite are not only synchronically but also diachronically distinct forms. This analysis is presumably founded on the differing stress patterns marked by the Masoretic vocalisation of equivalent Biblical Hebrew forms (see the footnote to §2.2.1), and the fact that their synchronic grammatical functions appear irreconcilable. But it cannot be shown that in Ugaritic (or for that matter in Akkadian or other languages) preterite and jussive forms actually exhibited differing stress patterns nor that the differing patterns in Hebrew are not secondary.[46] This supposed grammatical irreconcilability can of course accounted for by the proposed aspect element <singulative>.**
2. **As has already been noted, the majority of supposedly 'energic' forms contain no such implication,[47] so**

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[45] ***GUL*, p98.**

[46] **This position *contra* Lipiński, *OCG*, §25.8 and §38.2.**

[47] **Sivan (*GUL*, p102) concedes that 'it is exceedingly difficult to identify such forms in Ugaritic'.**

that the indicative imperfect and energic forms can readily be collapsed into a single sub-division where the ending can be either *–u* or *–un* for singular and 1p forms (excluding 2fs), depending on context, metre or the presence or absence of a pronominal suffix.

3. **The distinction between indicative and injunctive energic forms seems to have been drawn mainly for purposes of symmetry ; there is little evidence for it in the data.[48] Almost the only potential evidence is the phrase *ìqràn ìlm n'mm* (52-23), translated 'let me invoke the goodly gods' by Sivan and 'I invoke the good gods' by Gordon.[49] This phrase should be compared with the almost identical *ìqrà ìlm n'mm* (52-1). Gordon's translation seems to imply the vocalisations **'iqra'un* and **'iqra'u* and Sivan's the vocalisations **'iqra'an* and **iqra'*. It seems impossible to tell which of these, if either, is correct. As there is little other evidence for the energic injunctive then, if Gordon is correct, the case for such a form is almost completely undermined.**
4. **Although there is no reason in principle to doubt the existence of a 'volitive' form in Ugaritic, perhaps as a secondary formation like the Arabic subjunctive, Sivan's evidence is again drawn entirely from verbs on III-aleph roots, and thus rests to a considerable extent on the claim that the vowel always follows its aleph. In consequence he analyses as volitive, forms which in all probability are declarative G_{PA}, as for example *wymẓà* (75-1.37). This verb is preceded by two which appear to be declarative (*yḥ* and *ymġy*, probably vocalised **yiḥi* and **yimġiyū*[50]), and even on Sivan's translation (which assumes that Ba'al is the subject) *wymẓà* is declarative, and therefore should perhaps be vocalised **yimẓa'*.[51]**
5. **In sum, there is no evidence that preterite and jussive forms were morphologically or phonologically distinct in Ugaritic, so that the two can readily be collapsed into the single category 'G_{PA} ⇔**

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[48] **'Since most of the examples in Ugaritic are not from verbs with third *aleph*, one cannot know if they are the energic of the injunctive or of the indicative' (*GUL*, p105).**

[49] ***GUL*, p105; *Ugaritic Language*, p59. In *Ugaritic Manual*, §9.7, Gordon translates these forms in the same way as Sivan. Sivan also refers to a form *yṣàn* which is not in Whitaker's concordance. Gordon contrasts forms *yspì* (121 2.10) and *ìspà* (49 5.20) on root *spà* 'eat'. Unfortunately the adjacent text is in both cases damaged. The *ì* of *yspì* is the more difficult for if, as seems likely, the theme vowel of a III-aleph root was *a*, the *ì* becomes inexplicable.**

[50] **The vocalisation **yimġū* might be expected for a G_{PA} form.**

[51] **A more convincing example is the form *ùbà* on root *bwà* 'enter' and contrasted with *ùbù*, cited in D. Pardee, 'Ugaritic' in R.J. Woodward (ed), *The Ancient Languages of Syria – Palestine and Arabia* (2008), p24. Pardee and Sivan (*GUL*, p105) vocalise *ùbà* as **'ubū'a*.**

<singulative>'. Likewise there is little convincing evidence for Sivan's volitive or for his energic injunctive, which latter should almost certainly be collapsed with the equivalent indicative forms. But nor is there good evidence for distinct indicative imperfect and energic forms, so that these four categories can without serious difficulty be collapsed into the single category 'G_{PE} ⇔ <non-singulative>' proposed in this study.

2.4 Old Aramaic

2.4.1 Of the range of functions for Biblical Hebrew G_{PA} forms set out in §2.2.1, the *waw*-consecutive construction in Old Aramaic[52] (OA) is attested only in *w's' ydy wy'nny* 'and I raised my hands and he answered me' in the Zakir inscription. Segert takes this to be a Canaanism (*AAG*, §6.6.3.3.2, p377), but the statement is formulaic and could well reflect an earlier stage of the language where such constructions were more common.[53] The form *wy'n-ny* (root *'ny*) is orthographically G_{PA}, although given the tendency in early Aramaic towards abbreviated orthography it does not necessarily follow that this is indeed a G_{PA} form.[54]

2.4.2 In contrast to Arabic and Hebrew there are in general relatively few morphologically apocopate II-weak and III-weak G_P forms in OA (*AAG*, §5.7.6.4.5), the majority of such verbs being morphologically G_{PE}. But as in Hebrew, an *-n* suffixed to the 2fs, 3mp and 2mp persons of Aramaic G_P forms marks the relevant forms as G_{PE},[55] so that G_{PA} forms only become apparent for verbs in 'jussive' constructions with a plural or feminine singular subject, where the final *n* is omitted.[56]

2.4.3 According to the Masoretic pointing, object pronominal suffixes in Biblical Aramaic (BA) are almost always prefixed by *inn*, *nn* or *n*. These occur typically in an 'imperfect' context, the only (rare) examples without *n* occurring in a 'jussive' context[57] ; this statement appears also to be true for OA

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[52] **The term 'Old Aramaic' is used as in S. Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik [AAG]*, (1975).**

[53] **It may be that other examples have been identified in the years since Segert published his work.**

[54] **Segert, *AAG*, §5.7.6.4.5, p288 and §5.7.6.9, p291.**

[55] **In this respect Aramaic resembles Arabic and Hebrew, although the *n* appears more consistently in Aramaic than in Hebrew. For Biblical Aramaic paradigms see F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic [GBA]* (1961), p60.**

[56] **See the summary at *AAG*, §5.7.1.1.9 (p266). The final *n* is always omitted in the Ya'udi dialect (*AAG* §5.6.4.7.2) so that in this dialect it is not possible to tell by inspection whether the relevant forms are G_{PA} or G_{PE}.**

[57] **Rosenthal, *GBA*, §175 and p71.**

generally and is reminiscent of the situation in Ugaritic (§2.3.9 above).[58] The Aramaic suffixes thus syntactically resemble those of Hebrew and Ugaritic and the associated verb forms can probably be similarly construed as G_{PE} and G_{PA} respectively. However, insofar as the data permits judgment, the object pronouns of OA differ generally from those of Hebrew and Ugaritic in having the *n(n)* element whatever the number and person of the suffix. As in Hebrew, the final *n* of the 2fs, 3mp and 2mp G_P forms is omitted before suffixed pronoun *n*(*n*).

2.4.4 According to Segert (*AAG* §7.5.4.1.1) 'jussive' (G_{PA}) forms can be used in the apodosis of conditional clauses, but no example is cited so it is not possible to tell whether these relate to 'possible' or 'impossible' conditions.[59]

2.4.5 To summarise, morphologically and functionally, Aramaic G_P forms can without difficulty be correlated with those of Hebrew and Arabic and therefore support the hypothesis under investigation more or less to the same extent as the data in the latter two languages. In general Aramaic verb forms stand closer to those of Arabic than Biblical Hebrew, in that the primary contrast is between a G_S form typically signalling an event in past time and a G_P form signalling events in all other time and aspect frames, except those expressed through participles. However, the repertoire of G_{PE} forms available to Arabic is not present in Aramaic, either because in all likelihood they never existed (e.g. the subjunctive form) or because they have for the most part coalesced to give a G_P paradigm comprising both G_{PA} and G_{PE} forms.

2.5 Akkadian

2.5.1 The obvious example of a G_{PA} form in Akkadian is the 'preterite', built on templates *iqbar*, *iqbir* and *iqbur*.[60] These forms are typically used in the following contexts:

1. **To express <singulative> events occurring in past time (*GAG* §79);**

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[58] But see the forms displaying suffixes without –*n* at *AAG*, §5.7.9.4.4 (p310). Most of these are cited without context so that, although *'ḫṣlk* 'I will rescue you' appears to be functionally <non-singulative> others may be G_{PA}.

[59] Recall that Hebrew G_{PA} (jussive) forms can occur either in the protasis or apodosis, or both, of 'possible' conditional clauses (*GKC*, §109 h/I and §159).

[60] For paradigms see W. von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik [GAG]* (1952; Supplement 1969), Verbalparadigmen, 9*. Excepting the 3fp and 2p forms this paradigm is almost identical to that of the Arabic *majzūm* (Wright, *GAL*, Vol. I, p298).

2. **Non-declarative constructions such as. jussive and cohortative (*GAG* §81);**

3. **Negative imperatives (*GAG* §81);**

4. **Conditional clauses (*GAG* §161).[61]**

In the first of these the use of the preterite resembles that of G_{PA} forms in Hebrew *waw-consecutive* constructions and also, albeit less clearly, G_{PA} forms in Ugaritic. The jussive, cohortative and negative imperative functions also parallel those of Hebrew and Arabic, while the fourth function parallels the use of the G_{PA} form in certain types of Arabic and Hebrew conditional clause. Thus none of these functions presents any new problem for hypothesis '$G_{PA} \Leftrightarrow$ <singulative>'.

2.5.2 Akkadian G_{PE} forms are the 'subjunctive' and 'ventive', which in the G-stem are typically formed respectively on templates *iqburu* and *iqburam*.[62] With its essentially directional sense the ventive is taken to be an Akkadian innovation, although note that in later texts the final *-m* tends to be omitted, giving a form morphologically reminiscent of the Arabic subjunctive. Subjunctive forms in the later Assyrian dialects are further characterised by lengthening of the *u* and the addition of final morpheme *ni* [63]; in Old Assyrian *–ni* is restricted to the 2p and 3p forms. Thus in certain respects the Akkadian G_{PE} subjunctive resembles G_{PE} forms in Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic. But syntactically, the Akkadian form is confined to subordinate clauses - relative clauses in particular, typically introduced by relative pronoun *ša*. The Akkadian subjunctive is also formed on the permansive and the present, in additon to the preterite[64] and thus, although the absence of evidence from other languages suggests that certain of these forms may be Akkadian innovations, the preterite subjunctive offers ambigous support for hypothesis '$G_{PE} \Leftrightarrow$ <non-singulative>'.

2.5.3 G_{PA} form *iqbur* contrasts primarily with 'permansive' (G_S) *qabir* and 'present' *iqabbar*, the functions of the latter resembling those of the G_{PE} forms of Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic and Ugaritic.[65] This form cannot be explained by Hypothesis A and is discussed under Hypothesis B.

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[61] **Unlike Arabic and Hebrew, where G_{PA} forms appear both in protasis and apodosis of 'possible' conditional constructions, in Akkadian they are confined to the protasis. Also in contrast to Hebrew and Arabic, Akkadian G_{PA} forms occur in the protasis of 'impossible' conditions (*GAG*, §161c, §162a).**

[62] ***GAG* §83 and §82 respectively.**

[63] ***GAG*, Verbalparadigmen 9* note 2.**

[64] ***GAG*, Verbalparadigmen 8* and 10***

[65] ***GAG*, §78.**

2.6 Geʿez

2.6.1 G_{PA} forms in Geʿez are confined to the 'subjunctive', conjugated on templates *yəqber* (transitive) and *yəqbar* (intransitive). These forms have jussive, cohortative and negative-imperative function, in common with the Arabic *majzūm*, but serve in addition to express purpose or result.[66] As with Arabic, none of these functions necessarily implies iteration or duration, so that the subjunctive form presents no serious problem for hypothesis 'G_{PA} ⇔ <singulative>'. In expressing purpose or result the Geʿez form is of course reminiscent of the Arabic subjunctive and, given that the Geʿez form is clearly G_{PA}, this functional match offers support for the conjecture, outlined in §2.1 above, that the Arabic subjunctive is a development of the G_{PA} form (*majzūm*) internal to Arabic.[67]

2.6.2 Geʿez exhibits no form interpretable as G_{PE} and certainly none with a final *n*-based morpheme. The Geʿez form used to express non-singulative senses has the structure *yəqabbər*, which both morphologically and functionally resembles Akkadian *iparras* and is therefore likewise discussed under Hypothesis B.

2.7 Epigraphic South Arabian

2.7.1 Being preserved in an unvocalised script, the Epigraphic South Arabian (ESA) evidence poses similar problems to those of Ugaritic. As with Ugaritic - and Hebrew - the most promising source of evidence for G_{PA} forms should in principle be verbs on III-weak roots. However there appear to be relatively few of these, although one clear example is:

***ly't 'dy 'twtm* 'may there come from Itwat'.[68]**

This construction is of course reminiscent of the 'optative' use of the Arabic G_{PA} form, a possible link that must be treated with caution since such forms, again as in Ugaritic, may be graphically rather than

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[66] A. Dillmann, *Ethiopic Grammar* (1907), §90.

[67] This presumed closeness between Ge'ez and Arabic is not supported by the differing 1st and 2nd person subject pronouns in the Arabic and Ge'ez suffixing verb forms. Also the Ge'ez G_{PA} form does not occur in conditional clauses (T.O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Classical Ethiopic (ICE)* (1978) §51.1, p231).

[68] Root *'ty*, cited from M. Höfner, *Altsüdarabische Grammatik (ASAG)* (1943), §64. See also N. Nebes and P. Stein, 'Ancient South Arabian' in R.D. Woodward (ed.), *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia* (Cambridge 2008), p157, who designate this example as 'Early Sabaic'.

morphologically inspired.[69]

2.7.2 Evidence for G_{PE} forms in the ESA dialects is provided by the common Sabaic phenomenon of verbs with one or more final *n*. According to Nebes and Stein, singular verbs of this type are formed on the pattern *yqtln* (3ms) and plural forms on *yqtlnn* (3md, 3mp).[70] **The former could without difficulty be vocalised **yiqtulun* but the latter is more problematic. But Höfner's discussion, and the comments of Nebes and Stein, indicate that *-nn* forms are almost entirely confined to Sabaic and thus may be a secondary innovation within that dialect ; however, Minaic 3fp form *tqtlnn* is also cited, although compare 3mp form *yqtlwn* in Qatabanic.**[71]

2.7.3 The ESA script does not mark gemination, so that sequence *–nn* must represent distinct morphemes. The *-w* of G_{PA} 3mp form *yqtlw* probably signals final *–ū* rather than a diphthong, and it is also likely that in the Qatabanian G_{PE} form *yqtlwn* final *–wn* is the standard Semitic masculine plural morpheme *–ūn*. Thus it is posssible that the latter morpheme is also represented by the first *n* in Sabaic sequence *-nn*. The function of the second *–n* then remains obscure, but could it be that the proposed G_{PE} singular marker **-un* has been replicated in the plural forms by analogy? This would suggest a vocalisation **yiqtulūnun*.[72]

2.7.4 Nebes and Stein state that over 75 per cent of the attested Sabaic prefixing verbs forms are of type *yqtln*, but also observe that 'in Early Sabaic (*yqtl*) is attested considerably more often than (*yqtln*)', although they do not indicate whether these patterns occur in similar or different contexts.[73] **They also state: 'the long form of the imperfect, seldom the short form, occurs in statements with present and future**

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[69] See A.F.L. Beeston, *Sabaic Grammar* (1984), §5.12.

[70] 'South Arabian', p155. See also Beeston, *Sabaic Grammar*, §5.7.

[71] Höfner, *ASAG*, §59 table 7; Nebes and Stein, 'South Arabian', p163. Höfner takes the Arabic system to be primary and attempts to analyse the ESA G_{PE} forms along the 'traditional' dimension 'imperfect' (her Table 6) vs 'energic' (Table 7). Although in respect of the patterning of its consonants the Minaean 3fp form in Table 7 certainly matches the Arabic 3fp energic form *taqtulnānni*, Höfner has to recognise (§60) that, as in Ugaritic, many forms in final *n* do not have 'energic' implication.

[72] Höfner (*ASAG*, §59) associates the second *–n* with that occurring in the infinitive of derived stems. See also Nebes and Stein, 'South Arabian', p158 and A.F.L. Beeston, *A Descriptive Grammar of Epigraphic South Arabian (DGESA)* (1962), §19.

[73] 'South Arabian', p156. Their description uses *f'l* as the base root.

reference', thus supporting, as far as it goes, hypothesis "G_{PE} ⇔ <non-singulative>". But as with Ugaritic there are difficulties, as for example in:[74]

> ***fygb'w*** *'dy hgrn n'ḍ wbnhw* ***fyḥṣrn*** *mlkn 'ls$_2$rh yhdb wd̲bn k̲ms$_1$hw....****wyqm'w whb'ln*** *hgrnhn* 'from there **they went** to the city of N'ḍ [and its environs]. Thence king I-Y along with part of his army **set out for**…Then **they destroyed and seized** both cities'.

There can be little doubt that these events are aspectually <singulative>. The first and fourth verbs (*fygb'w* and *wyqm'w*) are G_{PA} and as such support "G_{PA} ⇔ <singulative>". However although apparently in the same <singulative> context, *fyḥṣrn* is G_{PE}, which is difficult to explain unless the author wished to suggest that 'set out for' was a more protracted process requiring a <non-singulative> form. The fourth form *whb'ln* is infinitive and used in this way can be understood as an ESA innovation (Beeston, *DGESA*, §19-5).

2.7.5 Hypothesis "G_{PA} ⇔ <singulative>" is also supported by jussive and negative imperative constructions, as for example:

> *wl* ***yd̲bḥw*** *bn ms$_2$mnhm* 'and **let them offer** (an animal sacrifice) from both culitvated areas';
>
> *w'l* ***yhwfd*** *bh 'md w 'lbm* 'and neither vines nor *'lb* **shall be planted** there'. [75]

where *yhwfd* is a (passive?) S-form. On the other hand ESA clauses indicating possible conditions not uncommonly incorporate a G_{PE} form in final *–n*, and obviously as such do not support 'G_{PA} ⇔ <singulative>'.[76] Such constructions are of course reminiscent of Arabic conditional clauses incorporating an energic G_{PE} form (§2.1.3 above) and it may be either that both represent weakening or modification of the original use of a G_{PA} forms in such constructions or, more troubling for Hypothesis A, that the Arabic and ESA forms share a common origin.

2.8 Modern South Arabian

2.8.1 The Modern South Arabian (MSA) dialects display a number of G_P forms. Taking Mehri as an example, there are three G_{PA} forms associated with regular verbs, namely : an active subjunctive (3ms *yərkēz*), a passive/imperfect subjunctive (*yərkōz*) and an intransitive subjunctive/imperfect (*yət̲bōr*). The

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[74] **Cited from §4.4.2.2 in 'South Arabian' (p156)**

[75] **Nebes and Stein 'South Arabian', p157. But note that Beeston (*DGESA*, §21-9) draws attention to Sabaic G_{PE} forms used in jussive constructions.**

[76] **'South Arabian', p168; *DGESA*, §21-9.**

active subjunctive is paralleled by an imperfect form on pattern G_{VP} (3ms *yərūkəz*).[77] All three types then have a G_{PE} 'conditional' form, active *yərkēzən*, passive *yərkīzən* and stative *yəṯbīrən*.[78] As in Arabic (§2.2.1) the passive forms are taken to be a later innovation, a position supported by the fact that in most respects the passive conjugations parallel those of the presumably older intransitives.

2.8.2 Both in form and function the Mehri subjunctives are reminiscent of the equivalent Geʿez G_{PA} forms[79] and support or refute Hypothesis A to the same degree as the latter. In having final *-ən* the Mehri conditional forms are self-evidently of type G_{PE}. But, equivalent forms being absent from the other MSA dialects together with the fact that their use in Mehri is confined to the apodosis of 'impossible' conditional clauses (*TSM* §2.5.1.3.2.3), would suggest that they cannot be adequately explained by "G_{PE} ⇔ <non-singulative>".[80]

2.8.3 The diachrony of the G_{VP} active imperfect form (3ms *yərūkəz*) poses a particular problem. There are two competing hypotheses ; one that it originates in a form similar to Geʿez *yənaggər* or Akkadian *iparras* (see the following section), and the other that it represents a modification of a Semitic **yiqburu(n)* that has lost its final *n*. Cohen, for example, proposes for Śḥeri a sequence through which an original **yiktubu* could have evolved into the attested *ikóteb* (*ESVS* p73).

2.8.4 Others however argue (for example Lipiński, *OCG*, §38.5) that rather than originating in **yarkázu* or similar, Mehri *yərūkəz* originates in **yarákkaz* or similar. But Cohen points out (*ESVS* p75) that stressed vowels in Mehri are always long, whether in closed or open syllables, so that the long second syllable is more likely to be a secondary consequence of its taking the accent rather than arising through loss of a geminate consonant. Support for Cohen's interpretation is offered by Mehri forms on geminate and II-weak roots, which are difficult to explain on the basis of original forms equivalent to *yənaggər*. For example geminate 3ms imperfect *yədlūl* (subjunctive *yədēl*) has no vowel between first and second radical (cf. Geʿez *yədannən*), and in II-weak imperfect *yəmūt* (subjunctive *yəmēt*) the weak consonant is not

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[77] The 'v' in G_{VP} symbolises a long vowel within the root pattern.

[78] Data from Johnstone, *Mehri Lexicon* pages xxi/xxii. The passive subjunctive and imperfect are not absolutely identical but clearly share a common origin.

[79] See §2.6.1 above and J.C.E. Watson, *The Structure of Mehri (TSM)* (Wiesbaden 2012) §2.5.1.3.2.2.

[80] Recall that verb forms in final *-n* can occur in the apodosis of 'possible' conditional clauses in ESA (Nebes and Stein 'South Arabian' p168).

preserved (cf. Geʿez *yəmawwət*).

3. Evidence for Hypothesis B

3.1 The second possibility envisaged for expressing element <non-singulative>, alternative to morphemes suffixed to the triradical stem, is gemination of the second root morpheme (§1.5 above). In the Semitic languages there are three important prefixing forms with geminate second radical (type G_{PG}), namely ; the Geʿez and North Ethiosemitic 'imperfect' form *yənaggər*, the *iparras* form of Akkadian and the D forms (and their derivates) in the various languages.[81] In the N.W. Semitic and S. Ethiosemitic languages forms similar to *yənaggər* and *iparras* are attested only spasmodically, if at all,.[82]

3.2 The functions of Geʿez *yənaggər* are similar to those of the Arabic *muḍāriʿ* (for example) and to that extent support the "G_{PG} ⇔ <non-singulative>" strand of Hypothesis B. But the evidence of the MSA languages seems crucial here for if, as suggested at §2.8.3, the Geʿez and MSA subjunctives share a common origin, the same may well be true of the associated 'imperfect' forms. Thus if MSA imperfects originate in G_{PE} *yaktubu(n)* or similar (§2.8.3), the same could well be true also of the Geʿez imperfects, the latter having perhaps evolved along the lines *yaqtúlu* → *yəqātel* → *yəqáttəl*. In other words, despite assertions that N. Ethiosemitic imperfectives derive from a Common Semitic original with gemination of the second radical, they could perhaps better be viewed as a secondary and (relatively) late formation which should not be adduced as evidence for Hypothesis B.[83]

3.3 Akkadian *iparras* is also functionally reminiscent of the Arabic and Hebrew G_{PE} forms and hence could in principle be explained in the same way as proposed for Geʿez *yənaggər*. But *iparras* provides better evidence for Hypothesis B, in part because Akkadian G_{PG} forms on occasion display the same theme vowel as their associated G_{PA} forms, which is perhaps less likely to have occurred if *iparras* were a secondary formation.[84] But importantly, Akkadian subjunctive *iqburu* - a G_{PE} form - did not also evolve

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[81] **Similar forms also occur in Berber (See *Berber ; a Semitic Language? (BeSL)* §1.1) and Egyptian (§6.2.1 below).**

[82] **Arabic and Biblical Hebrew have a number of D-form verbs without an accompanying G form (Arabic approximately 4.0%, Hebrew 4.5%). Some of these may earlier have been accompanied by, or perhaps have originated in, a G form, but it is not impossible that others originate in some form analogous to *iparras*. See Lipiński, *OCG*, §38.7, Fleisch, *Traité*, Vol. II, §126p and Cohen, *ESVS* p65/9.**

[83] **Cohen (*ESVS* p67) also discusses the possibility that forms such as *yənaggər* result from the re-assignment of a (jussive) D form.**

[84] **The presence of theme vowels in G_{PG} forms is predicted by the rules propsoed for the evolution of these forms in**

into a G_{PG} form, as might have been anticipated had *iparras* also originated in a G_{PE} form. The Akkadian G_{PG} form thus seems more likely to be 'primary', rather than 'secondary' as proposed for the Geʿez form. But if this was the case it would appear to follow that G_{PE} and G_{PG} forms must at one time have co-existed in Common Semitic but that the latter were for the most part lost from languages other than Akkadian.

3.4 But this conclusion begs the question as to why two separate forms (G_{PE} and G_{PG}) should apparently have been used to express the same aspect element. However, note firstly that although element <non-singulative> can encode the semantic element [iterative], this sense of repetition could originally have been captured by exploiting the onomatopoeia of a reduplicating (pre-Semitic) biradical stem to give a prefixing (G_{PR}) verb of the form **ipurpur*. Then, if the stress patterning rules governing the triradicalisation of an original biconsonantal stem and augment are applied to a reduplicated biradical stem and its augment (refer to §8.6 in *MPSVS*), it can be argued that the resulting triradical form tends to display gemination in its second radical.

3.5 It is therefore proposed that *iparras* evolved from a reduplicating biradical form **ipurpur* plus augment, expressing an aspect element <iterative>, alongside a G_{PE} form expressing the other semantic components of <non-singulative>. As part of this evolution *iparras* is taken to have assimilated all (proto-) Akkadian reduplicating (G_{PR}) forms, for it is striking that Akkadian seems to be entirely lacking in reduplicated roots (*GAG* §108-10), in contrast to the other Semitic languages, where a number of unaugmented reduplicates appear to have been preserved more or less in their original form[85]. But this begs the question as to why Akkadian did not also preserve at least some such forms, especially as they are common enough in Sumerian, with which Akkadian was in close contact.[86]

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§8.6 of *Towards a Morphology of the pre-Semitic Verbal System (MPSVS)*. Nonethless it cannot be shown unambiguously that these vowels are primary rather than secondary, in the latter case having evolved by analogy with the associated G_{PA} forms.

[85] Biblical Hebrew also has very few (about 8, approximately 0.7% of the total). Arabic has rather more (about 2.8% of the total) and Egyptian about 5%. They appear to be considerably more common in Geʿez and perhaps also in Mehri (no statistical analysis carried out for either language). Note that the 'imperfect' of Geʿez reduplicating verbs is of the form *yəbadabbed*

[86] For Sumerian G_{PR} forms see D.O. Edzard, *Sumerian Grammar*, §12.4.3 (2003) ; is it conceivable that Sumerian reduplicating forms were the source of the Akkadian G_{PG} form? The conjecture that a G_{PR} form expressing <non-singulative> aspect was a feature of Common Semitic entails that, where preserved, the forms and functions of such

3.6 Further support for a G_{PG} form among the original repertoire of Semitic verbs is the widespread incidence of D forms in the various languages. By contrast, derived verbs in the Cushitic, Omotic and Chadic languages include no form equivalent to the D form (apart from loans) and neither apparently does Egyptian, suggesting that the D form could be seen a Semitic innovation, for which the likliest source would have been a G_{PG} form. But the differing vocalisations of the Akkadian G_{PG} and D_P forms is an obvious obstacle to such a proposal, such that if the latter indeed derives from the former the G_{PG} form must in certain contexts have adopted the vocalisation, say, of the S_P-form (cf. Akkadian *ušapris* vs *uparris*) ; such an account would of course require the associated D_{PA} and (suffixing) D_S forms to be subsequent innovations.

4. Hypothesis A Refuted?

4.1 The discussion in Section 3 suggests that, at least in the case of Akkadian *iparras*, Hypothesis B cannot be entirely refuted, but if so what then is the status of Hypothesis A? This section summarises and reviews the evidence.

4.1 G_{PA} ⇔ <Singulative>

4.1.1 To recapitulate ; <singulative> aspect is defined as encoding an event which the user views as having occurred only once, or whose interest in an event that has not yet taken place is confined to a single potential occurrence. Whether the event has actually occurred or will occur more than once is taken not to be relevant (§1.2 above). <Singulative> aspect is then postulated to have been expressed by a G_{PA}-type verb of typical form (3fs) **tinpur* (§1.5). Dividing the G_{PA} forms discussed in Section 2 into those whose functions are 'declarative', signalling an event which has definitely occurred, and those which are 'non-declarative', Table 4.1 summarises their distribution among the various languages. It will be seen that whereas jussive/cohortative and negative imperative functions are attested for G_{PA} forms in all the languages, declarative and conditional functions are rather less prominent.

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verbs at some time evolved to yield a suffixing form to express the associated <singulative> aspect.

TABLE 4.1 DISTRIBUTION OF PROPOSED G_{PA} FUNCTIONS

Language	Declarative	Non-declarative		
		Conditional (Possible)	Jussive/ Cohortative	Negative Imperative
Arabic		X	X	X
Hebrew	X	X	X	X
Ugaritic	X	?	X	X
Aramaic			X	X
Akkadian	X	X	X	X
Geʿez			X	X
MSA			X	X
ESA	X		X	X

4.1.2 In those languages where declarative <singulative> events are not expressed by a G_{PA} form a G_S form is utilised (Section 7). But despite the somewhat inconclusive nature of the evidence for the declarative and conditional functions of the G_{PA} form, and notwithstanding the fact that declarative and non-declarative functions are logically distinct, the likliest explanation for the phenomena summarised in Table 4.1 remains that they do indeed have their origin in a Common Semitic aspect element <singulative> and that hypothesis "G_{PA} ⇔ <singulative>" is the best morphological fit for the evidence.

4.2 G_{PE} ⇔ <Non-singulative>

4.2.1 <Non-singulative> aspect is defined as encoding all events which the user cannot or does not wish to encode as <singulative> and is postulated to have been expressed by a G_{PE} form (§1.2 and §1.5 above).

4.2.2 The conventional explanation for Hebrew, Ugaritic and ESA forms incorporating final *n* or *nn*, in the ways outlined in Section 2, is that they are in some way related to Arabic energic forms and that the absence of energic sense results from weakening of the original function.[87] But consideration of the data from first principles has suggested that something like the reverse may originally have been the case, namely :

1. **Suffixed *n* was integral to the original G_{PE} form, and formed part of the morpheme(s) marking <non-singulative> aspect;**
2. **Energic or pausal functions inferred from context originate in those of the original G_{PE} form and are diachronically secondary.**

Only in Arabic is the energic connotation clearly dominant in G_{PE} forms with final or near final *n*. There may be energic forms in the el-Amarna texts but 'there is no way to distinguish in the script between the

[87] **See for example *GKC*, §48 and §58 for Hebrew, and for Ugaritic, Sivan, *GUL* p102.**

indicative imperfect (G_{PE}) plural and the indicative energic plural'.[88] Thus in both Arabic and el-Amarna it is arguable that the *n*-based suffixed morpheme of energic forms (actual and putative) originates in the proposed marker of <non-singulative> aspect.[89]

4.2.3 In ESA the syntactic distribution of G_{PE} forms tends to be wider than in the other languages. Höfner partly explains this by assuming that the functions of the *n*-form were extended to replace a 'subjunctive' which had lost its distinctive morphological structure.[90] But of course this explanation, and indeed the problem it seeks to answer (the absence of a 'subjunctive' form), assumes that the situation in Arabic most nearly reflects the original verb morphology of Semitic. But if, as has been suggested above and is further discussed below, the Arabic subjunctive is a development internal to that language, the distribution of the ESA forms in final *n* would be more elegantly explained by proposing that this morpheme was originally part of the of the G_{PE} form used to express <non-singulative> aspect, and that its use was subsequently expanded to express such connotations as 'subjunctive'.

4.2.4 But the ESA G_{PE} form also occurs in the apodosis of 'possible' conditional clauses, which at first sight refutes one element of Hypothesis A, but on the other hand could simply (although not entirely convincingly) be explained as an extension of the use of the G_{PE} forms[91] The Mehri of Oman also displays 'conditional' forms in final *-ən*, employed in the apodosis of 'impossible' conditionals (Watson *TSM* §2.5.1.3.2.3), but as similar forms do not occur in any other MSA language it may well be an innovation in the Omani dialect ; compare also the use of the Arabic energic in the apodosis of 'possible' clauses (Wright, *GAL*, Vol II §19c).

4.2.5 The 3ms G_{PE} form in Common Semitic may therefore have been of the general form *$yinp(v_1)r-(v_2)n$.[92] With regard to the value of v_2, in Arabic and el-Amarna the vowel following the final radical in

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[88] Rainey, *Canaanite*, Vol. II p235. Like Sivan for Ugaritic (Table 1 above), Rainey attempts to distinguish between 'indicative' and 'injunctive' energics but can adduce almost no evidence in support of the latter (p263). As with Sivan, Rainey's overall scheme reflects more a desire for symmetry than respect for the evidence of the texts.

[89] For Arabic, this conclusion would of course imply that the final morpheme *-n(a)* of the relevant *mudāri'* forms and the energic morphemes have similar origins.

[90] Höfner, *ASAG*, p74. See also Nebes and Stein, 'South Arabian', §5.3.6, §5.4.1 (30B), §5.5, §5.6.1.

[91] Nebes and Stein, 'South Arabian' §5.3.6.

[92] Note that this form more closely resembles the shorter Arabic energic form with suffixed *-a/un* than the longer form in *-inna/unna*.

the 3s, 2ms, 1s and 1p forms of the G_{PE} form is *u*, whereas in the equivalent Arabic energic forms the vowel preceding the *n* is *a*.[93] The final vowel of the Akkadian 'subjunctive' is also *u* although, as noted at §2.5, the diachronic relationship between this form and G_{PE} forms in the other languages is not clear. The vowel preceding Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Aramaic *n*-type pronominal suffixes is that of the later Masoretic vocalisation. Thus, with the partial exception of the Arabic energic, in those cases where the vocalisation is contemporary with the documents themselves the value of v_2 is *u*. Therefore, if it is correct to understand the morphemes marking the Arabic energic forms as deriving from a suffixed morpheme expressing <non-singulative> aspect in Common Semitic, the post-radical vowel in the relevant forms may originally have been *u* and subsequently shifted to *a*.

4.2.6 As to plural G_{PE} forms, the hypothesis that *–ū* was the original 3mp/2mp marker in Semitic is strongly supported in the various languages,[94] so that the Common Semitic 3mp forms may have been (G_{PA}) **yinp(v)rū* vs (G_{PE}) **yinp(v)rūn*. The latter form does not fit easily with the Arabic energic forms but a possible explanation may be sought in the conjecture that a long vowel may on occasion be replaced by gemination (§3.2 above), so that the proposed form **yinp(v)rūn* could have become **yinp(v)runn(a)*. But it would then have to be assumed that the longer Arabic 3ms energic form *yaqtulanna* and its equivalents were formed by analogy with the 3mp/2mp forms and that the shorter 3mp energic form *yaqtulun* evolved by analogy with the shorter 3ms form and its equivalents.

4.3 Hypothesis C

4.3.1 On the basis of the discussion in Section 3 it is likely that Hypothesis B is at least partly valid and as such constitutes a partal refutation of Hypothesis A, in that the definition of <non-singulative> may be too general and need to be modified, at least to exclude events codified as <iterative>. But Hypothesis B alone cannot adequately explain the phenomena discussed under Hypothesis A and it thus seems inevitable that a further hypothesis, Hypothesis C, should be proposed to embrace the G_{PA}, G_{PE} and G_{PG} forms discussed above, namely :

$$G_{PA} \Leftrightarrow \text{<singulative>}$$

$$G_{PE} \Leftrightarrow \text{<non-singulative>}$$

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[93] **For the variant Arabic energic paradigms see Wright, *GAL*, Vol I p298. For el-Amarna see Rainey, *Canaanite*, Vol. II p228/34.**

[94] **See the table at Lipiński, *OCG*, p379.**

G_{PG} ⇔ <iterative>

4.3.2 But in proposing Hypothesis C it is important to note that if 'iterative' implications are stripped away from <non-singulative> there is a somewhat diminished content left to this element, unless it be founded on semantic element [durative], as a contrast to [iterative].

5. G_P Subjunctive Forms

5.1 As with the energic forms, it is unlikely that a subjunctive form would be proposed for Ugaritic and el-Amarna if it did not exist in Arabic. But even on this foundation the argument is not convincing. For instance, for el-Amarna Rainey is forced to conclude that the 'texts have not given us any conclusive evidence for the existence of a Canaanite *yaqtula* pattern', since 'the *-a* suffix almost always was attached to verbs which tend to be employed with the [Akkadian] ventive'.[95]

5.2 Ugaritic examples cited by Sivan in support of his 'volitive' form are of necessity on verbs with III-*aleph* roots, and his discussion assumes that the vowel signalled by the *aleph* always follows its consonant.[96] But, as is argued above (§2.3.5), unless verbs on such roots never occurred as singular G_{PA} forms there must be contexts in which the vowel precedes its *aleph* ; thus a 3ms G_{PA} form *yqrà* on root *qr'* could only have been vocalised along the lines *yiqra'*. Therefore if some of Sivan's examples can be equally interpreted as expressing <singulative> aspect, the evidence in support of his 'volitve' form becomes rather weak.

5.3 Thus, given the weakness of evidence for a subjunctive form other than in Arabic, and ignoring G_{PA} forms in other languages denoted by the same term, the subjunctive seems most likely to have been an Arabic innovation and is therefore taken not to have been part of the repertoire of verb forms in Common Semitic.

6. Aspect in Egyptian Verb Forms

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 It is generally accepted that there is a relationship between Egyptian and the Semitic languages in addition to their supposedly common 'Afroasiatic' heritage closer than, say, between Semitic and Cushitic.[97] Thus despite the undoubted problems, not least the limitiations of the largely non-vocalic

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[95] ***Canaanite*, Vol. II p262.**

[96] ***GUL* p104.**

[97] **See the introductory remarks in Lipiński, *OCG*, p24. Certain of the differences between Egyptian and Semitic**

hieroglyphic script, comparison of the Egyptian and Semitic verbal systems is a potentially instructive method of testing the hypotheses explored in the previous sections.

6.1.2 Egyptian verb forms[98] are based predominately d on triradical roots, although many have a first or third radical that can be understood at best as a weak consonant but which may simply have been a vowel, at least in the earlier stages of the language.[99] Egyptian also exhibits a good number of biconsonantal roots/stems, some of which are almost certainly of African ('Afroasiatic') origin although others may well be worn-down triconsonantals.[100] Nevertheless, comparison with the reconstructed verbal system proposed, say, for Lowland East Cushitic, suggests that the Egyptian system is predominantly Asiatic in nature, and therefore more likely to be related to that of Common Semitic.[101]

6.2 Outline of Egyptian Verb Morphology

6.2.1 Egyptian displays verb forms analogous to Semitic G-forms, the 'old perfective' for example bearing a clear morphological and functional resemblance to the Akkadian 'permansive' and therefore, in the notation used in this study, can be classed as G_S. Two other forms, which comprise the primary subject matter of this section, are denoted *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f*, where final *f* is in each case the 3ms subject

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become more explicable if a degree of relationship is postulated between Egyptian and the relevant African languages, especially Cushitic.

[98] This section draws primarily on Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar [EG]* and T.W. Thacker, *The Relationship of the Semitic and Egyptian Verbal Systems [RSEVS]* (1954). Compare the syntactically-based treatment in A. Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian : A Linguistic Introduction [AE]* (1995), 4.6.1 to 4.6.3.

[99] Gardiner, *EG*, §20. Loprieno takes the value of the character usually transcribed in English by *i* always to be /j/ (= /y/).

[100] Compare for example, Egyptian *'m* 'swallow' and *ḳm* 'not know' with Beḍawiē *'ām* 'eat' and *gam* 'not know' (assuming these are not Egyptian loans into Beḍawiē). Among nouns, Egyptian *sn* 'brother', for instance, has no Asiatic equivalent but is identical to Beḍawiē *san* and to cognate forms in other Cushitic languages and Chadic. Thacker is of the opinion that apparent biconsonantals are in fact II-weak triradicals with abbreviated orthography (*RSEVS*, p52ff). A sample of 848 roots, drawn from R.O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford 1962) and Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar*, yielded 112 biconsonantal (14 per cent of the total) and 25 geminate roots (3 per cent). In contrast, geminate roots in Arabic comprise about 7 per cent of the total.

[101] See for example section §2.5 in D.L. Appleyard 'Beja as a Cushitic Language'.

pronoun.[102] In marked contrast to the Semitic languages no Egyptian verb form has subject pronouns prefixed to the stem. All pronominal distinctions are made through suffixed pronouns, so that the *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f*, forms are respectively of morphological type G_{SA} (apocopate) and G_{SE} (extended). The orthography *śḏm.f* appears in fact to embrace at least three different forms, 'perfective', 'imperfective' and 'passive'. As is suggested for example by the 'mutable' verbs, the orthography *śḏm.n.f* probably also embraces an 'imperfective' form, but not apparently a 'passive' form.[103] A second and more common passive *śḏm.f* form, *śḏm.tw.f*, (*RSEVS* p318), is taken to be an Egyptian innovation, perhaps originating in the (African) suffixed *t*-based deriving morpheme, and is not here discussed further.

6.2.2 In the absence of any form resembling a Semitic G_P form Egyptian would initially appear to be of little use for testing the validity of the diachrony proposed above for the Common Semitic verbal system. A widely-held opinion is that Egyptian did originally exhibit prefixing verb forms resembling those of Semitic, but that the old system collapsed and was replaced by the *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f* forms.[104] Thacker, in contrast, observes that 'there is not the slightest trace of any such [prefixing] formation in the oldest-known inscriptions…The only possible conclusion is that Egyptian never at any stage in its history possessed a form with prefixed pronominal elements'.[105] Thacker's position is consistent with a major assumption underlying this study, namely that languages will almost always retain fossilised remnants of earlier structures, the corollary being that if there is no evidence for a structure then it is likely, although not certain, that the structure never existed.

6.2.3 Thacker is further of the opinion that the *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f* forms developed from an early form of the old perfective.[106] Gardiner on the other hand argues that they originate in a passive participle, conjugated by means of genitival pronominal suffixes, and in the case of the *śḏm.n.f* form also

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[102] For Egyptian paradigms see *EG*, §39 and §67.

[103] Mutable verbs are those where the stem phonemes are written differently, according to context (*EG*, §268). Geminate roots, for example, can be written with one geminate consonant or two, as in *qb.n.f* or *qbb.n.f*, the latter spelling perhaps reflecting doubling of the first geminate consonant (§269). See also *AE*, p79, *EG*, §410/13. The *śḏm.n.f* 'imperfective' form is taken to signal repetition or continuity (*EG*, §295).

[104] See for example Lipiński, *OCG*, p25 '….it stands to reason that Egyptian…lost the prefix-conjugation in prehistoric times'.

[105] *RSEVS*, p224. Compare section §4.1 in *MPSVS*.

[106] *RSEVS*, p234.

incorporating a dative *n*-based morpheme.[107] That these pronouns are related to the genitival suffixes is not disputed, but Gardiner argues that 'only on (the) theory [that the narrative *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f* forms must...be derived from the passive participles] can the use of the suffix-pronoun in the *śḏm.f* form be explained; it is a direct genitive...'. [108] But it would seem that the role of the suffixed pronouns in Egyptian became wider than that of their equivalents in Semitic. For, comparison of the Egyptian independent pronouns with equivalent Semitic forms suggests that, excepting the 1s form (Egyptian *ìnk*, cf. Akkadian *anāku*) and possibly the 1p form (Egyptian *ìnn*; Akkadian *nīnu*), the Egyptian forms have been modified by adding the equivalent suffix pronouns.[109] It would seem inescapable that when added to the independent pronouns the suffix pronouns must have lost their original genitival function, suggesting that these forms may have tended to become 'all purpose' personal pronouns, except in the case of the singular 'dependent' pronouns, where a different series is used.[110]

6.3 The Functions of the śḏm.f *and* śḏm.n.f *Forms*

6.3.1 In Middle Egyptian the active *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f* forms have a rather complex range of functions. In narrative, the *śḏm.n.f* form generally expresses an event occurring in past time and the *śḏm.f* form events which typically occur in present or future contexts.[111] At first sight therefore the *śḏm.n.f* form bears a functional resemblance to the G_{PA} form **yinp(v)r* proposed for Common Semitic (§4.1.1 above) and the perfective *śḏm.f* form appears approximately to parallel the proposed Common Semitic G_{PE} form **yinp(v)run* (§4.2.3).

6.3.2 But a number of features of the way in which the active *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f* forms are deployed merit further consideration. First of all Gardiner remarks : 'In Old Egyptian the non-geminating

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[107] ***EG*, §411. Gardiner conjectures that the *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f* forms evolved in parallel with or by analogy with the 'relative' form (*EG*, §380-389). His conjecture is carefully argued but not entirely convincing. For the final *w* characteristic of the passive participle, and occurring at least occasionally in the 'relative' form, appears to be entirely absent from the *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f* forms, with the occasional exception in the passive *śḏm.f* (*EG*, §420). It could also be that relative forms evolved from passive participles by analogy with *śḏm.f* and *śḏm.n.f*, rather than the reverse.**

[108] ***EG*, §411.1.**

[109] ***EG*, §64; Moscati et al, *Introduction*, §13.1.**

[110] ***EG*, §43. An alternative hypothesis could be that genitival suffixes were added to the independent pronouns by analogy with the verb subject pronouns.**

[111] **For the full functions of the *śḏm.n.f* form see *EG,* §411.2 and §414. For the *śḏm.f* form see *EG,* §450.**

['perfective'] *śḏm.f* is fairly frequent in past narration with verbs showing an object, but towards Dynasty VI the *śḏm.n.f* form can be seen gradually superseding it in this use'.[112] Secondly, in Middle Egyptian *n śḏm.f* is the 'common and normal negation of *śḏm.n.f* in past narrative' and 'a broad survey shows that the construction *n śḏm.n.f* is common in characterisations, statements of custom and generalisations of all kinds'.[113] Taken together, these phenomena suggest that the use of *śḏm.n.f* for past narration may not be original.[114]

6.3.3 Thus, having noted that the 'past-narrative' function of the *śḏm.n.f* form is reminiscent of that proposed for the G_{PA} form in Common Semitic, and that the present/future implications of the perfective *śḏm.f* form resemble those of the G_{PE} form, there is now the suggestion that at an earlier stage something like the reverse may have been the case, a conjecture further supported by the fact that the *śḏm.f* form generally 'contains no implication of repetition or continuity',[115] irrespective of its time frame, and as such could be interpreted as expressing aspect element <singulative>.[116] A further functional similarity between the 'perfective' *śḏm.f* form and the proposed Common Semitic G_{PA} form is that the former also is used in the protasis and apodosis of 'possible' conditional clauses, the use of the *śḏm.n.f* form in such clauses apparently being restricted to unfulfilled ('impossible') conditions, which could be a consequence of its original association with <non-singulative> aspect.[117]

6.3.4 The discussion in Section 2 above implies that the proposed original function of the G_{PE} form resulted in daughter forms in the Semitic languages coming to express events occurring in present or

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[112] ***EG*, §450.1. Aside from negatives, Gardiner gives no example of an *śḏm.n.f* form expressing other than past time. Certain forms in the Pyramid Texts could be interpreted as expressing future time, as for example *rd.n ḥrw* in lines 24c/d, which Faulkner translates as 'Horus has caused' but whose context would appear equally to permit 'Horus will cause'. See also Loprieno, *AE* p77.**

[113] ***EG*, §455 and §418 respectively.**

[114] **Note also the verb *wn* 'be, exist', where *wn* (*śḏm.f*) expresses past time or non-duration and *wnn* (*śḏm.n.f*) expresses future time or duration (*EG*, §107.1, §157).**

[115] ***EG*, §449.**

[116] **However, this characterisation of the function of the *śḏm.f* form cannot easily be reconciled with that postulated by Gardiner for the *śḏm.n.f* form, namely '...to present the verbal action as an incident, as something happening or occurring to someone, irrespective of time position.' (*EG*, §411.1).**

[117] ***EG*, §150/1. Compare the use of Arabic energic forms in 'future' conditional constructions.**

future time. Although this would appear to conflict with the *śḏm.n.f* form serving to signal events in past time, in many contexts the *śḏm.n.f* form not unexpectdly requires an English perfect tense in translation; in other words such events are not purely 'singulative', as defined in Section 1, but imply subsequent ongoing relevance. Thus on the strictest definition of the element <singulative>, *śḏm.n.f* forms requiring the English perfect must formally express <non-singulative> aspect (see Figure 1), and it could be that a further shift may then have taken place whereby the implication of 'ongoing relevance' would have been modified, or eliminated, such that the *śḏm.n.f* form came eventually also to express <singulative> aspect.

6.3.5 The morphology of the Egyptian G-forms therefore begins to look rather more interesting. First of all, suppose that the perfective *śḏm.f* form did indeed originally express aspect element <singulative> and that the *śḏm.n.f* form expressed <non-singulative>. The obvious next step is then to note the morpheme represented by *n* in the *śḏm.n.f* form and to recall that the (3ms) G_{PE} form postulated for Common Semitic is **yinp(v)run,* differentiated from the equivalent G_{PA} form by its final *n*-based morpheme (§4.2 above). Could phoneme *n* in the proposed Common Semitic G_{PE} form and that of the Egyptian *śḏm.n.f* form be one and the same? This question is further explored in Section 7 of *MPSVS*.

7. Semitic Suffixing Forms

7.1.1 In the Semitic languages, where declarative <singulative> events are not expressed by a prefixing form a suffixing form is utilised. But in Akkadian and Egyptian, G_S forms ('permansive' and 'old perfective' respectively), are largely confined to expressing events or states not involving an agent. This usage is generally taken to be original, such that Semitic suffixing forms expressing a sense requiring an agent are considered to be diachronically secondary,[118] and therefore not to refute the hypotheses under consideration here. This later usage perhaps evolved via an intermediate stage where suffixing forms came to express senses requiring an English perfect tense in translation.

7.1.2 The details of this evolution of course vary from language to language. For example, in Biblical Hebrew, suffixing and prefixing forms requiring an agent occur more or less equally, in rather complex

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[118] See for example Moscati et al, *Introduction*, §16.31. However, for Egyptian, Gardiner states that '...in an early lost stage of the Egyptian language, the old perfective was a freely used narrative tense with both active and passive meanings' (*EG*, §311) but then notes that this usage 'survives only in a few patently archaistic examples' and that generally 'the old perfective from….transitive verbs has passive meaning'. For paradigms see *EG*, §309 and *GAG* p8*. Compare also 'qualitative' verbs in Berber (*BeSL* §2.5)

syntactic structures, in a way which hardly occurs in the other languages. The general situation with regard to 'possible' conditional clauses utilising suffixing forms is also complex, not least because such clauses are logically ambiguous and so have become an area of considerable fluidity among the languages, a situation which tends to weaken any hypothesis proposed for their history, including the one explored here.[119].

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[119] But note that conditional constructions similar to those of Akkadian, Hebrew and Arabic also occur in Berber (*BeSL* §9.2) and in the Cushitic-Semitic language Beḍawiē (see *Beḍawiē as a Semitic Language* §3.2).

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Bibliographical Abbreviations

AAG	**SEGERT, S. Altaramäische Grammatik**
AE	**LOPRIENO, A., Ancient Egyptian : A Linguistic Introduction**
ANET	**PRITCHARD, J. B., (ed.), Ancient Near Eastern Texts**
ASAG	**HÖFNER, M., Altsüdarabische Grammatik**
DGESA	**BEESTON, A. F. L., A Descriptive Grammar of Epigraphic South Arabian**
EG	**GARDINER, A., Egyptian Grammar**
GAG	**SODEN, W. VON, Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik**
GAL	**WRIGHT, W., A Grammar of the Arabic Language**

GBA	**ROSENTHAL, F., A Grammar of Biblical Arabic**
GKC	**GESENIUS, W. & E. KAUTZSCH, Hebrew Grammar**
GUL	**SIVAN, D., A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language**
ICE	**LAMBDIN, T.O., Introduction to Classical Ethiopic**
OCG	**LIPIŃSKI, E., Outline of a Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages**
RSEVS	**THACKER, T.W., The Relationship of the Semitic and Egyptian Verbal Systems**
TSM	**WATSON, J.C.E., The Structure of Mehri**