

# Performatives in Biblical Aramaic

ALEXANDER ANDRASON\* and HANS LANGE

Department of Ancient Studies, Stellenbosch University, 7602, South Africa

Received: October 15, 2020 • Accepted: March 17, 2021

© 2021 Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest



---

## ABSTRACT

This article analyses Biblical Aramaic (BA) performatives within a prototype approach. The authors demonstrate that BA performatives largely comply with the crosslinguistic prototype and its grammatical and extra-grammatical features. Crucially, although the two ‘tenses’ used, Suffix Conjugation (SC) and Active Participle (AP), exhibit similar frequency in performatives, they differ in distribution: the performative SC is more conventionalised/archaic/typical of Ezra while the performative AP is more productive/innovative/typical of Daniel. These differences reflect the gradual replacement of SC by AP in performatives due to the profound advancement of the two ‘tenses’ along their respective grammaticalisation paths: the resultative and imperfective paths.

---

## KEYWORDS

Semitic languages, Biblical Aramaic, performative, suffix conjugation, participle, prototype, grammaticalisation

---

\* Corresponding author. E-mail: andrason@sun.ac.za

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Despite a recent interest in performatives in (North West) Semitic scholarship (Khalil and McCarus 1999; Rogland 1999; 2000; 2001; 2003a; Weninger 2000; Sanders 2004; Procházka and Bsees 2011; Andrason 2012; Bhayro 2013; Morrow 2017), no study has thus far dealt systematically with this grammatical category in Biblical Aramaic (BA). The present article fills in this gap: it focuses on performative utterances attested in the Aramaic parts of the Hebrew Bible and offers a comprehensive analysis of their grammatical means of encoding. Specifically, in light of the diachronic drift posited in scholarship (Rogland 2003b: 427) according to which the suffix conjugation (SC) has gradually been replaced by the active participle (AP) as the main verbal form used in performatives in the North West Semitic language family, we aim to answer the following research question: to what extent has AP supplanted SC in its performative function in Biblical Aramaic.

In order to answer this question, we will review all cases of performative utterances in the Aramaic sections of the books of Ezra and Daniel. We will analyse their grammatical characteristics in detail, paying critical attention to the properties of verbs employed – whether finite or semi-finite – with the aim to determine distributional patterns governing the use of the different constructions. The analysis itself will be developed within a prototype approach to performatives – our original synthesis of the previous works on performatives conducted by Searle (1989), Dahl (2008), and Andrason (2012), and a cognitive (Janda 2015) and typologically-driven (Brown and Chumakina 2013) method of dealing with linguistic categorisation.

The article will be structured as follows: in section 2, we familiarize the reader with the previous studies on performatives in Biblical Aramaic and closely related North West Semitic languages, and present the main aspects of the theoretical approach that guides our analysis in the subsequent parts of the paper. In section 3, we introduce our empirical evidence. In section 4, we evaluate the results of this evidence within the adopted framework. In section 5, we formulate conclusions and suggest possible topics for future research.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Literature Review

Performatives have recently attracted some – still limited – attention in BA scholarship. Although performatives feature in works published by Rogland (2001; 2003b), Gzella (2004; 2007), Li (2009), and Andrason, Hornea and Joubert (2019),<sup>1</sup> their discussion is fragmentary and often superficial. Crucially, BA scholarship lacks a comprehensive and holistic study of performative utterances, their analysis being instead dispersed across papers and books devoted to other grammatical phenomena.

<sup>1</sup> BA performatives were first mentioned by Kutscher (1969: 148–151) and Mayer (1976: 187, 190–191). The first specific reference to two examples that modern scholars subsequently viewed as performative uses of AP, had been made by Bauer and Leander (1927 [1969]) and Rosenthal (1961). In these publications, the performative AP is labelled as ‘das reine Präsens’ (Bauer and Leander 1927 [1969]: 290) and ‘immediate present’ (Rosenthal 1961: 55).



While discussing the use of performatives in Biblical Aramaic, scholars have noted that two classes of verbal grammatical constructions – or grams – are attested in these types of utterances, namely SC and AP. The performative SC has briefly been discussed by Gzella (2004: 210–211), and subsequently analysed slightly more thoroughly by Li (2009: 25–27) and Andrason, Hornea and Joubert (2019: 74–77) in the books of Daniel and Ezra, respectively.<sup>2</sup> Scholars discerned two (or three) subtypes of SC that feature in performatives: SC-active (Gzella 2004: 210; Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 75) and SC-passive (i.e. Pe'il) which in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular – the only person attested in performative utterances – is morphologically indistinguishable from the Passive Participle (PP) (Gzella 2004: 211–212; Li 2009: 26–27; Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76–77).<sup>3</sup> The use of AP in performatives has been treated even more superficially (Rogland 2001: 249; 2003b: 426–427; Gzella 2004: 211–212; 2011b: 580; Li 2009: 51–52).<sup>4</sup> The discussion is generally limited to citing or restating previously proposed examples and to briefly examining their status within the performative category. That is, while some view the suggested cases as performatives (Rogland 2001; 2003b; Gzella 2004), others cast doubts on their validity (Li 2009: 52).

The use of SC and AP in performative utterances is widely attested in other Ancient and Classical North West Semitic languages: Canaano-Akkadian (Pardee and Whiting 1987), Ugaritic (Pardee and Whiting 1987; Sanders 2004; Tropper 2012), Biblical Hebrew (Rogland 2000; 2003a; 2003b; Andrason 2012), Imperial/Official Aramaic (Hug 1993; Muraoka and Porten 1998; Rogland 1999: 277–278; Morrow 2017),<sup>5</sup> Qumran Aramaic (Rogland 1999), and Classical Syriac (Rogland 2001). Scholars agree that the variation between SC and AP reflects a diachronic drift whereby AP gradually replaced SC as the preferred verbal construction employed for performative purposes (Rogland 2003b: 427; see also Rogland 1999: 277–278; 2001: 249; Sanders 2004: 181; Gzella 2007: 94). In older languages – spoken at 'pre-Christian stages of NWS' in Gzella's words (2011a: 442) – such as Canaano-Akkadian (Pardee and Whiting 1987: 13–16), Ugaritic (Pardee and Whiting 1987: 5–12; Sanders 2004: 171–178, 181; Tropper 2012: 714), Biblical Hebrew (Rogland 2000; 2003a: 115–130; Andrason 2012: 31–38), and Imperial/Official Aramaic (Hug 1993: 116–117; Muraoka and Porten 1998: 193–194; Rogland 2003b: 423; Gzella 2004: 205–215; 2007: 93–94; 2011b: 580; Morrow 2017: 22), SC was the only verbal form used in performative utterances. In contrast, in later languages such as Classical Syriac (Rogland 2001: 249) and Mishnaic/Rabbinic Hebrew (Azar 1999: 17), performative utterances typically hosted AP. To be precise, in Syriac, both SC and AP are attested in performatives. However, only AP is employed productively, while the uses of SC are 'mechanical' translations of the BH performative SC (Rogland 2001: 245).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in Mishnaic/Rabbinic Hebrew, the use of SC in performative utterances

<sup>2</sup> The use of SC for performative purposes in Biblical Aramaic was noted earlier by Kutscher (1969: 148–151) and Mayer (1976: 190–191).

<sup>3</sup> Gzella (2004) favours the interpretation in terms of PP, while Li (2009) and Andrason, Hornea and Joubert (2019) interpret such cases as ambiguous, treating them as instances of the SC-passive.

<sup>4</sup> A few examples have been cited by Mayer (1976: 190).

<sup>5</sup> Bhayro (2013) suggests that the performative AP may have been present in early Aramaic documents from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE (Wadi Murabba'at) and even 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE (Elephantine). For possible cases of the performative AP in early Aramaic texts from Egypt consult also Rogland (2003b: 427).

<sup>6</sup> A phenomenon that is similar in principle may be observed in (Aksumite) Gə'əz (Weninger 2000: 99). In Gə'əz, SC is used productively in performative utterances. Although the prefix conjugation (PC) may also convey a performative function, such cases seem to result from the influence of the Greek language, i.e. the use of the Greek present in the source texts. They apparently attest to a mechanical translation rather than a realistic language use (ibid.).



has generally been abandoned (Rogland 2003a: 128), the performative SC being almost entirely replaced by AP (cf. Mishor 1983: 36 and Pérez Fernández 1992: 186).<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, in Qumran Aramaic – which ‘fill[s] in the considerable gap between [Imperial/]Official Aramaic and Classical Syriac’ (Rogland 1999: 278) – both constructions, i.e. SC and AP, are used in performative utterances. AP seems to be preferred while SC probably constitutes a ‘linguistic fossil’ (ibid. 280; see also Rogland 2003b: 424, 426).<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2. Framework – A Prototype Approach to Performatives

In the present paper, we use a prototype model of the category of performatives. This model – original in scholarship – draws on a cognitive (see Janda 2015) and typological (Brown and Chumakina 2013) approach to linguistic categorisation and non-essentialist approaches to performatives formulated previously in philosophy (Searle 1989) and language science (Dahl 2008; Andrason 2012).

The crucial element of the category of performatives is the prototype – an ideal exemplar characterized cumulatively by a set of properties that have been identified through an empirical and rational method. The empirical foundation of the prototype refers to the crosslinguistic regularity of certain features exhibited by grammatical constructions usually classified as members of the performative category. The rational foundation refers to the saliency of certain features exhibited by such performative constructions, i.e. distinctiveness from the features associated with other, non-performative categories, especially the opposite ones, such as constatives and/or declaratives.

There are seven features that can be ascribed to the prototype of a performative. These features can be grouped into two sets: extra-grammatical and grammatical. Although, as will be explained below, both sets are related – the former set prompting the latter – we see them as distinct since they can be manifested in language-specific performatives differently.

As far as extra-grammatical (E) properties are concerned:

- (E-1) A prototypical performative constitutes a simultaneous ‘performance’ (Searle 1989: 539). That is, its pronunciation brings about a novel – unique and immediate – modification of the state of affairs in the world (Austin 1962: 60; Dahl 2008: 12). For instance, a meeting is opened, a war begins, two people are married (Searle 1989).
- (E-2) In order for this change to occur, the performative must be accompanied by a conventionalized procedure. In fact, the pronunciation of a specific performative ‘ritual phrase’

<sup>7</sup> The use of AP in performative contexts is also attested in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE Hebrew of Bar Kosiba letters (Gzella 2007: 92–93).

<sup>8</sup> A similar diachronic variation is attested in Arabic. In Classical Arabic, performatives typically make use of SC (Reckendorf 1921: 11; Wright 1964: 1; Kienast 2001: 331–332). In contrast, in modern dialects, PC is ‘regularly’ found (Gzella 2007: 94). Modern Standard Arabic offers a more complex pattern. The performative verbal form ‘par excellence’ is PC (Khalil and McCarus 1999: 18). The performative SC is also present albeit to a much lesser extent than PC. Additionally, the passive participle and the verbal noun are sometimes used in performative contexts (ibid. 10, 13–14, 18). The Arabic language of the 7<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c. CE papyri from Egypt attest to a usage that is equally complex. Both SC and PC are grammatical in performative utterances although each of them tends to favour different subtypes of performatives (Procházka and Bsees 2011: 299).



(Searle 1989: 548) by an adequate person is critical for the procedure to be successful (Austin 1962: 5; Searle 1989: 548; Dahl 2008: 12).

- (E-3) A prototypical performative is ‘self-guaranteeing’ (Searle 1989: 539). The speaker is not dishonest or mistaken in the meaning of their act but intends what the proposition communicates (Searle 1989: 544; Dahl 2008: 12).

As far as grammatical (G) properties are concerned:

- (G-1) A prototypical performative exploits grammatical constructions – whether at a sentence, clause, or phrase level – that overtly communicate the uniqueness of change of state. Typically, it draws on verbal or semi-verbal constructions that are associated with aspectual or taxis values implying a change of state and that express events that are bound, complete(d), and punctiliar. This especially involves two clusters of verbal grams: (a) perfects, perfectives, and resultatives and (b) ‘old’ presents.<sup>9</sup> Inversely, a prototypical performative would not tolerate constructions that are *limited* to expressing duration (continuity) and repetition (iterativity and habituality; Bybee and Dahl 1989; Dahl 2008: 11–12; Andrason 2012; see also Fortuin 2019: 40–41; 43–44, 46–47).
- (G-2) A prototypical performative overtly communicates the immediacy of the event, explicitly indicating that the act ‘take[s] place at speech time’ (Dahl 2008: 10) and is concurrent with its very pronunciation – the change happens ‘now’ and ‘here’. Two types of constructions tend to be used to grammatically encode the spatial and temporal immediacy of the performative event: (a) phrasal expressions such as *hereby* in English, *hér með* in Icelandic, *niniejszym* in Polish, *por lo/la/el presente* in Spanish; and (b) verbal forms that are compatible with the idea of simultaneity with the speech time, e.g. present tenses, present perfects, and grams built around present-tense auxiliaries (Searle 1989; Dahl 2008: 10–12; Andrason 2012).<sup>10</sup>
- (G-3) In a prototypical performative, the agent controlling the situation is overtly identified as the logical and grammatical subject argument (Dahl 2008: 9). It is expressed by the

<sup>9</sup> To be precise, ‘the genuine completed (or perfective) meaning in a present time frame is cognitively impossible’ (Andrason and Dłali 2017: 157–158) because, as correctly noted by Bybee (1994: 236), ‘a situation being presented as in effect at the moment of speech cannot at the same time be presented as bounded’. Indeed, ‘there can be no “present perfective”’ (ibid.) and morphological perfective presents are usually reanalysed as other grammatical categories. Nevertheless, three exceptions are attested: historical presents (i.e. presents used to narrate past events), sport commentaries (i.e. presents used in narration of ongoing events), and performatives (Bybee 1994: 236; Andrason and Dłali 2017: 158; see also Comrie 1976: 82–83 and Dahl 1985: 81). These senses typify presents that are historically advanced along their grammaticalisation path, i.e. those that are not limited to progressive or iterative meanings (regarding the concept of a grammaticalisation path, see section 4). Overall, most scholars agree that there is a strong link between performatives and (some type of) a perfective aspectual domain conveyed by language-specific resultatives, perfects, perfectives, past, or presents (Dahl 1985; Bybee 1994: 236; Bertinetto 2001: 185; Bary 2009; 2012; Meeuwis, De Wit and Brisard 2015; Andrason and Dłali 2017: 158; see section 4); see also Fortuin 2019: 2–3, 40–41, 43–44).

<sup>10</sup> The features (G-1) and (G-2) are grammatical consequences of the extra-grammatical feature (E-1).



1<sup>st</sup>-person pronoun (usually singular but also plural) or encoded on the verb itself through 1<sup>st</sup>-person inflectional/agreement affixes.<sup>11</sup>

- (G-4) A prototypical performative is self-referring (Searle 1989: 544; Dahl 2008: 9). It lexically denotes the act aimed by the utterance (Searle 1989: 539; Dahl 2008: 12). That is, 'saying 'I hereby  $\phi$ ' is precisely to perform the act of  $\phi$ -ing' (McMyler 2011: 123). This lexical self-reference is usually achieved by specific (tautological) performative verbs although other categories or lexical classes such as participles, adjectives, and nouns – all of them necessarily of a content-lexicon type – are also possible.<sup>12</sup> Traditionally, five types of performative verbs – or more broadly understood performative domains – are distinguished: (a) verdictives, which are used to announce verdicts or express approval; (b) exercitives, which are used to exercise power by appointing, warning, or advising; (c) commissives, which are used to promise and undertake something; (d) behabitives, which are used to apologize, curse, and condole; and (e) expositives, which specify the role of the utterance in the conversation by affirming or denying (Austin 1962: 152–161).<sup>13</sup>

The prototype outlined above structures the category of performatives, functioning as its principal point of reference. It is from the prototype that the 'categoriality' of all the other members – i.e. the categorial position of performatives attested in specific languages – can be estimated. Members that comply with all or most prototypical features are canonical. They are located in the centre of the category as the prototype itself or in its close vicinity. Members that comply with some or few features are less canonical and non-canonical, respectively. They occupy positions further away from the category's nucleus. Overall, category cannot be equalled with the prototype – it is rather a network of all possible members that vary in their extent of canonicity. All such members belong to the category although their categorial inclusion is different. As a result, belonging to the performative category becomes a question of degree instead of constituting a binary relation of inclusion and exclusion (cf. Janda 2015).

Indeed, several prototypical properties listed above are sometimes absent in real-world performatives. With regard to the feature (E-2), special phrases need not be entrenched as necessary and unchangeable parts of rituals. While the act of marrying or divorcing people may in some cultures require the pronunciation of an utterance strictly determined by law, this is not the case of several performatives uttered in informal contexts. For example, one may bestow someone with a gift without naming it overtly (i.e. the performative utterance is not a necessary condition for the state of affairs to be altered) and by using a variety of synonymous expressions (i.e. one may use the expression 'I give it to you' or many other similar expressions; Searle 1989: 548). With regard to the feature (E-3), the speaker may pretend the act that is taking place. The expression

<sup>11</sup> This feature is a grammatical consequence of the extra-grammatical feature (E-2).

<sup>12</sup> This feature is a grammatical consequence of the extra-grammatical feature (E-3). Among the various content-type lexical classes, we propose the following hierarchy of performativity or increasing compatibility with performatives: nouns > adjectives > participles > verbs. Verbs and participles are more likely to be encountered in performatives because of their inherent dynamic process-like character.

<sup>13</sup> This is only one of the many possible taxonomies of performative domains. The goal of all such taxonomies is purely heuristic. They help us to deal with inherently messy reality by grouping together meanings that are not entirely identical and thus by artificially dividing the entire performative meaning-space into seemingly discreet separated sub-classes. Sometimes, other grammatical features typical of performatives are postulated, e.g. positive polarity (Rogland 2003a) and indicative mood.



could still count as a performative although no actual change has happened – the change has only occurred in ‘a possible world’. Similarly, the grammatical features (G-1), (G-2), (G-3), and (G-4) may entertain less canonical profiles by being less explicit or less exemplary. For instance, an expression comparable to *hereby* is often absent, with the immediacy of the event only being encoded by the verbal forms used. Sometimes, even the verbal form used may be (remote) past tenses no longer employed as a regular expression of simultaneity with the speech act (see Andrason 2012) or progressives (Fortuin 2019). The actor need not be encoded as the 1<sup>st</sup>-person subject argument (e.g. it can be expressed as an adjunct phrase in statal passives) or it may be absent entirely (e.g. passive participles can be used impersonally on their own; Dahl 2008; Andrason 2012).

Given the framework described above, the strategy underlying our research will consist of the following: We will examine the performative utterances identified in Biblical Aramaic (see next section) with regard to their compliance with the extra-grammatical and grammatical properties associated with the prototype of a performative.<sup>14</sup> This will allow us to establish the extent of canonicity of BA performatives and determine the rules conditioning the use of the two verbal grams employed, i.e. SC and AP.

### 3. EVIDENCE

The evidence presented in this section draws on a database that has principally been compiled by reviewing the text of the Aramaic parts of the books of Ezra and Daniel. This source-language research was accompanied by two further strategies leading to the identification of performative utterances in Biblical Aramaic: (a) the examination of the scholarly literature dedicated to BA and NWS performatives and (b) searches of prototypical grammatical features that are expected to appear in explicit performatives (e.g. the adverbial *hereby*) in more than fifty English translations. As a result of this preliminary study, we selected 19 candidates for performatives in Biblical Aramaic that were subsequently tested for the properties associated with the prototype of performatives introduced in section 2.<sup>15</sup> In the present part of the article, we describe the results of these tests.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In the analysis of BA performative utterances, we will ignore the third extra-linguistic prototypical properties of performatives, i.e. their self-guaranteeing and sincere character (E-3). We assume that, in all BA examples, the speaker is not dishonest or mistaken but intends what the proposition expresses.

<sup>15</sup> As will be evident from the following discussion, although not all our examples are recognized as performatives by *all* scholars and reflected as such in *all* biblical translations, all of them are classified as performatives by, at least, some influential grammarians or linguists and are rendered performatively in some – often many – equally influential translations. Furthermore, although Gzella (2004) and Li (2009) – who are, together with Rogland, the most relevant scholars in the discussion of BA performatives – propose alternative, i.e. non-performative, interpretations of some of our examples, they also acknowledge the performative reading of these cases as one of the possibilities. In this section, we will mention all such discrepancies in the analyses put forward in scholarship and the divergent renderings offered in biblical translations.

<sup>16</sup> In this article, we treat Biblical Aramaic as a corporalect, i.e. a language system limited to a particular corpus of texts. Certainly, Biblical Aramaic is related to Imperial Aramaic which was used in the Achaemenid administration and is attested in epigraphic texts outside the Bible. Despite this relationship – without doubt a complex one – and acknowledging the advantages of expanding any analysis from Biblical Aramaic to other related Aramaic varieties, we are convinced that Biblical Aramaic can be researched in its own right as has been done by several scholars regardless of the problem studied and the extent of the available material (see the discussion of the limitations of our article in section 4).





### 3.1. Suffix Conjugation

There are nine cases of the performative use of SC in the Aramaic parts of the Hebrew Bible. Only three roots are exploited: *šym* (6x), *šlh* (2x), and *yd'* (1x). Two types of constructions are present: active SC, the so-called Q<sup>tal</sup> (3x), and its passive variant found only in the Qal stem, the so-called Pe'il (6x), which, as has been mentioned above and will be discussed in detail below, is morphologically undistinguishable from the Qal PP in the performative utterances. The majority of such performative instances of SC are attested in the Book of Ezra (7x), while examples from the book of Daniel are scarce (2x). The difference between the two books is not only quantitative but also qualitative. The performative cases found in Ezra attest to all morphosyntactic types and roots listed above. In contrast, in the cases found in Daniel, only one root (*šym*) and one morphosyntactic variant (Pe'il/PP) are attested.

The first cluster of cases involves the active type of SC – Q<sup>tal</sup> (1.a-b). In the three cases attested – all of which, as explained above, appear in the book of Ezra – three different roots are employed: *šlh* 'send' (1.a), *yd'* 'know' (1.a), and *šym* 'put' (1.b).

- (1) a. Ezra 4:14<sup>17</sup>  
*kə'an kāl-qōbēl dī-məlah hēkəlā' məlahnā', wə'arwaṭ malkā', lā' 'ārik lanā'*  
*ləmeḥēzē' 'al-dənāh, šəlahnā' wəhōḏa' nā' ləməlkā'*  
 'Now, because we have eaten the salt of the palace (i.e. have been in the service of the palace / are loyal to the king) and it is not proper for us to see the king's dishonor, because of that, we (send and) inform the king [<sup>4:14</sup> that...]
- b. Ezra 6:12  
*wēlāhā' dī šakkin šəmēh tammāh yəmaggar kāl-melek wə'am dī yišlah yəḏēh*  
*ləhašnāyāh ləḥabbālāh bēt-'ēlāhā' dēk dī bīrūsəlem 'ānāh ḏārəyāwēs šāmēt tə 'ēm*  
*'āsəparnā' yit'āḥid*  
 'May the God who has established his name there overthrow any king or people that shall put forth a hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, decree; let it be done with all diligence.'

Example (1.a) comprises two SC verbs: *šəlahnā'* 'we send' (a Qal form) and *hōḏa' nā'* 'we inform' (a Haph'el form of the root *yd'* 'know'). Given that both verbs are inflected in the same TAM categories, share their person markers and subject referents (being inflected in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular and coindexed with Shimshai and Rehum, the authors of the letter and representatives of the other officials and the king's servants in Trans-Euphrates), exhibit a unitary positive polarity value, fall under the scope of the single operator *kə'an* 'now', and occur in a contiguous position, being only separated by the pseudo-connector *wə* and the disjunctive accent *ṭiphā'*,<sup>18</sup> the entire sequence *šəlahnā' wəhōḏa' nā'* has been viewed as a (less canonical) serial verb construction 'we let the king know' (Andrason and Koo 2020: 24–25). Accordingly, the second verb in this sequence, i.e. *hōḏa' nā'*, functions as a major verb – it specifies the lexical type of the event expressed, name-

<sup>17</sup> In all examples, the respective performative predicates will be marked in bold. The style of our transliterations draws on the style used by Lambdin (1971; see especially pages xv–xxviii). In general, all letters/characters are represented except *yod* and *waw* when indicating vowel length. In such cases, the symbols *i*, *ē*, *ō*, and *ū* are employed.

<sup>18</sup> The pseudo-connector *wə* is homophonous with the conjunctive coordinator widely used in Biblical Aramaic (Andrason and Koo 2020).





ly, informing the king. The first verb, i.e. *šəlahnā*<sup>19</sup>, is the minor verb that modifies the major verb in a broadly understood modal (e.g. ‘in writing’) and/or valency-related (e.g. ‘have (someone) inform someone else’) manner (Andrason and Koo 2020: 25). Since serial verb constructions are characterized by mono-eventhood and mono-predicativity (i.e. they express a single event and function as a single predicate; Aikhenvald 2006; 2018), the compliance of *šəlahnā* and *hōda‘nā* in (1.a) with the seven canonical performative features will be examined jointly.

With regard to the extra-grammatical features associated with the prototype of performatives, the act of uttering the expression *šəlahnā wəhōda‘nā* in (1.a) modifies the state of affairs of the world. The speakers make it evident how their utterances fit into the course of the conversation – they officially inform the king Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:14) about the Jews rebuilding Jerusalem (Ezra 4:12–13) (E-1). This modification is unique and immediate. It takes place at the very moment of pronouncing the expression *šəlahnā wəhōda‘nā*. Although this performative utterance features in official correspondence between the subjects and their king, in which the former expresses a complaint regarding Jerusalem Jews, the expression cannot be regarded as a ritual phrase critical for the procedure to be successful (E-2). First, to convey information to the monarch other construction types could be employed, e.g. a construction built around the active participle of the root *yḏ* ‘know’ (Ezra 4:16; see example 6.a in section 3.2) or a construction built around the PP of the root *yḏ* and an inflected form of the verb *hāwāh* ‘be’ (i.e. *yəḏtā leḥēwē ləṁalkā* ‘may be known to the king’ in Ezra 4:12, 4:13).<sup>19</sup> Second, more importantly, constructions such as *šəlahnā wəhōda‘nā* or similar do not constitute necessary conditions for bringing news to superiors – in this case, the king – and thus reality to be changed. It is likely that the pertinent information might have been conveyed to Artaxerxes without the use of any explicit performative expression.

With regard to its grammatical features, the performative utterance in (1.a) contains a verbal construction, namely Q<sup>tal</sup>, that overtly communicates the aspectual value of perfectivity and/or completion (G-1). In Biblical Aramaic, Q<sup>tal</sup> typically (although not exclusively) expresses punctiliar, bound, and complete actions and activities. These semantic domains are inherent to the two prototypical uses of Q<sup>tal</sup>: perfect and perfective (Li 2009; Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019). Q<sup>tal</sup> is also compatible with a present (i.e. concurrent to the speech time) temporal sphere (G-2). Indeed, this gram is the main means of conveying the meaning of a present perfect, in which the ideas of current relevance and present time frame are in focus (Li 2009; Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019). Additionally, in (1.a), the concurrence of the performative act to the speech time is overtly encoded by the adverbial *kə‘an* ‘now’, the scope of which extends to the entire serial verb construction, and thus its two verbal components. Interestingly, Bauer and Leander (1927 [1969]), Mayer (1976), and Gzella (2004: 210) make this present-ness overt by introducing the

<sup>19</sup> One could perhaps include *yəḏtā leḥēwē ləṁalkā* in Ezra 4:13 and similar cases into the set of BA performatives and view them as highly non-canonical members of the category. Indeed, Gzella (2004: 211), regards this example as ‘ein uneigentliches Beispiel’ of performatives. He proposes that this expression, translated as ‘es sei dem König kund’, is used instead of a more canonical performative, e.g. ‘hiermit tun wir dem König kund’ (see *məhōda‘in ‘ānahnāh ləṁalkā* used in Ezra 4:16; see example (6.a) in section 3.2). As, except for Gzella, Ezra 4:13 has not been viewed as a performative in scholarship, and in our approach this example could only be classified as highly non-canonical (see, for instance, the modal verb used, 3<sup>rd</sup> person inflection, the lack of the encoding of the agent controlling the event), we do not include it in our review.



canonical performative adverbial *hiermit* ‘hereby’ to their translations.<sup>20</sup> The agents who control the event of informing the king in writing are overtly identified as the 1<sup>st</sup>-person plural subject arguments encoded in the inflections of the verbs *šəlahnā* and *hōda‘nā* (G-3). As mentioned above, these subject inflectional markers refer to Shimshai and Rehum, the authors of the letters and representatives of people of the Trans-Euphrates province (cf. Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 75). Lastly, the act of making the information known to the king is self-referring (G-4). It is tautologically named since stating that ‘we (hereby) inform’ (*hōda‘nā*) is precisely to perform the act of informing (cf. McMyler 2011: 123). Crucially, the Haph’el verb *hōda* ‘inform, make known’ – which as explained above, is the main verb in the serial verb construction denoting the lexical type of action being performed – is one of the canonical performative predicates, specifically, expositive ones. Expositives tell, state, affirm, deny, ask, answer, and inform – that is, they ‘expound views, conduct arguments, clarify usages and stipulate how the utterance is related to the course of argumentation’ (Andrason 2012: 32 following Austin 1962: 160–161).<sup>21</sup>

Example (1.b), which contains another Q<sup>et</sup>al form, i.e. *šāmēt* lit. ‘I put’, is slightly different. In his speech, King Darius condemns any one of his subjects who would oppose ‘the house of God in Jerusalem’. The royal decree makes this injunction a law, thus modifying reality in a unique and immediate manner, concurrently to being uttered (E-1). In general, issuing a decree tends to constitute a formalized and conventionalized procedure which, to be felicitous and binding, must include some type of a fixed formula (E-2). In (1.b), a person bestowed with necessary powers (e.g. the king) pronounces such a necessary formula, stating that a certain act will henceforth be legally binding (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76). As will be evident from our discussion below, new laws are typically communicated in Biblical Aramaic by a construction built around the verb *šām* ‘put’ and the argument *ṭə‘ēm* ‘decree’, similar to (1.b).<sup>22</sup> Example (1.b) also exhibits most of the grammatical characteristics typical of overt performatives. Similar to (1.a), (1.b) contains the Q<sup>et</sup>al gram (*šāmēt*) which, as explained above, is the typical manner of encoding the perfective and completive aspect in Biblical Aramaic (G-1), being also compatible with a present time frame. It thus overtly locates the performative act in (1.b) as happening in the moment of speech (G-2) (ibid. 75). In some modern renderings, this concurrence to the speech is made even more explicit by introducing the performative adverbial *hereby* (e.g. *I, Darius, {hereby} decree*; Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76).<sup>23</sup> The performing subject who controls the situation and is bestowed with the necessary authority to carry out the act is explicitly identified by the 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular verbal inflection (*šāmēt* ‘I put’) coindexed with the personal pronoun

<sup>20</sup> See *wir senden [hiermit] Nachricht* (Bauer and Leander 1927 [1969]: 351); *daher benachrichtigen wir hiermit den König* (Mayer 1976: 190); and *Deshalb lassen wir hiermit den König benachrichtigen* (Gzella 2004: 210). However, similar performative adverbials are missing in the fifty biblical translations consulted by us (see for instance CEV, ESV, KJ21, LEB, NET, NIV, NLT, NRVS, and Lutherbibel 2017).

<sup>21</sup> Overall, the performative nature of the verbs *šəlahnā* *wəhōda‘nā* in (1.a) has, more or less explicitly, been recognized by most scholars. This includes Bauer and Leander (1927 [1969]: 351), Mayer (‘daher benachrichtigen wir hiermit den König’; 1976: 190), Gzella (2004: 210), Andrason, Hornea and Joubert (‘we send [and] we inform / make know’; 2019: 75), and Andrason and Koo (‘we send and inform the king’; 2020: 24–25). SC in Ezra 4:14 has also been rendered performatively in several influential translations, in both English (e.g. ESV, KJV 1990, LEB, NET, NIV, NRVS) and German (Lutherbibel 2017).

<sup>22</sup> It also should be noted that the performative SC in (1.b) comes at the end of a sequence of laws that are encoded through an even more formal and conventionalized construction, i.e. the *passivum majestatis* variant of the active expression *šām ṭə‘ēm* discussed here (see examples (3.b–c) from Ezra 6:8 and 6:11 that will be analysed below).

<sup>23</sup> However, performative adverbials similar to *hereby* are missing in all biblical translations that we have consulted.



(‘*ānāh* ‘I’) and the proper name (*dārəyāwēs* ‘Darius’) (G-3). As in (1.a), the self-reference of the performative in (1.b) is achieved by the use of a predicate that denotes the act being performed in a tautological manner. That is, Darius saying that he issues a decree (*šāmet ʔə‘ēm*) is the decree itself (G-4). The construction *šām ʔə‘ēm* ‘to make a decree’ falls into the category of exercitive (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 75). Exercitives are used to exercise power and rights by determining that something should be so, specifically by appointing, nominating, ordering, and commanding (Austin 1962: 154–156).<sup>24</sup>

The other class of performative uses of SC involves a passive variant of this construction, i.e. the Pe’il gram. Given that all such cases concern the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular and that this inflectional form of Pe’il is morphologically identical to the masculine singular of PP – from which Pe’il has historically been derived – all these performative examples of SC can also, although less likely, be interpreted as containing PPs.<sup>25</sup>

The most canonical performative use of Pe’il/PP is found in example (2) below which exemplifies the act of issuing royal decrees:

(2) Ezra 7:21

*ūminnī ‘ānāh ‘artaḥsast’ malkā šīm ʔə‘ēm ləkāl gizzabrəyyā di ba‘ āḇar nahārāh di kāl- di yiš’ ālenkōn ‘ezrā kālḥānāh sāḇar dātā di-’ēlāh šəmayyā ‘āsəpərnā yiṭ’ āḇid*  
 ‘I, king Artaxerxes, issue a decree to all the treasurers who are (in the province) beyond the (Euphrates) River that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, may request of you, it shall be done diligently.’

Extra-grammatically, the pronunciation of the utterance by the king Artaxerxes modifies the state of reality. A new law is established: the obedience to the priest Ezra is made mandatory (E-1). This modification takes place at the speech time and binds the king’s subjects immediately. Crucially, the pronunciation of the formula involving the term *šīm ʔə‘ēm* ‘issue a decree’ may have been a necessary condition of a new order to be established as legally binding (E-2). While in non-performative contexts, whether in narrative (e.g. Ezra 5:13, 6:1) or direct speech (Ezra 5:9), an active construction is typically employed with the meaning ‘issue a decree’ (although passive can also appear; see Ezra 4:19), in performative contexts, the opposite is true and its passive variant is much more common.<sup>26</sup> This tendency of *šīm ʔə‘ēm* to appear in performative contexts suggests its

<sup>24</sup> The expression *šāmet ʔə‘ēm* in Ezra 6:12 is viewed as performative by Andrason, Hornea and Joubert (2019: 75). It has also been read performatively by several English and German translations, e.g. CEV, ESV, KJV 1990, LEB, NET, NRSV, and Lutherbibel 2017. However, this use is not recognized as performative by Gzella (2004), Mayer (1976), and Rogland (2001; 2003a). This example may indeed be more problematic as the possible performative expression appears at the end of a letter. The presence of the verbal form *šāmet* could be explained as a ‘summary’ of the content of the letter, thus relating a past event rather than an event concurrent with the time of speech (see footnote 29 below).

<sup>25</sup> This uncertainty as to whether this form should be interpreted as a SC Pe’il or PP has been noted in scholarship (see Mayer 1976: 191, Gzella 2004: 211, Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76). This fact, however, has no critical bearings on the interpretation of these examples as performatives. The important fact is that the interpretation of these cases as constatives and thus as genuine present perfects (‘I have issued’) or past tenses (‘I issued’) is significantly less likely (cf. however Gzella 2004: 211; Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76).

<sup>26</sup> Although both active (see 1.b discussed above) and passive constructions are used, the latter are by far more common being attested six times (see also 3.a-d, and 4). Similar to Biblical Aramaic, the passive construction is not restricted to performative contexts in the epigraphic corpus of Imperial Aramaic and the Bactria correspondence.



more special, i.e. marked and formulaic, character.<sup>27</sup> Arguably, *šim tǝ'ēm* is a *passivum majestatis* construction characteristic – albeit not limited to – of royal decrees (see Kutscher 1969) and constitutes one of the necessary steps in a law-making process, without which the entire procedure would be fallacious (cf. Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76). Overall in (2), the procedure is fulfilled (ibid.): the king is imbued with the authority to promulge laws and a particular conventional expression is pronounced.<sup>28</sup>

Grammatically, the performative in (2) makes use of a verbal form that expresses the nuance of completion and/or perfectivity (G-1). The TAM semantic potential of the Pe'il form overlaps with that of the active Q'etl, with perfectal and perfective senses constituting the main bulk of its uses. Additionally, Pe'il allows for a resultative proper interpretation in which completion and termination of the prior action leading to the current state are profiled (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76). This completive nuance is also patent if the form *šim* is analysed as PP, thus functioning as a resultative proper gram. As for the overt encoding of the present-ness of the event expressed (G-2), this property of the performative in (2) is more evident than was the case of the active Q'etl. This stems from the fact that both Pe'il and PP entertain a much stronger link with a present temporal sphere concurrent to the speech time, because, as explained above, they allow for resultative present uses (e.g. 'x is done'). This present-ness is rendered overtly in some translations by means of the adverb *now* (NIV) or the canonical performative adverbials such as *hereby* in English (TBL, NLT, MSG; see also Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76) and *hiermit* in German (Mayer 1976: 191). Even though the passive structure is used, the agent fully controls the action and explicitly identifies himself by means of three elements: firstly, by the prepositional phrase *minnī* 'from/by me' containing the 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular pronominal suffix; secondly, by the independent 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular subject pronoun 'ānāh 'I'; and thirdly, by the proper name 'ar-taḥšast' malkā' 'the king Artaxerxes' used in apposition to the 1<sup>st</sup>-person independent pronoun (G-3) (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76). The performative utterance is self-referring: the king Artaxerxes tautologically means the act that he is performing, i.e. issuing a decree (G-4). As explained in the discussion of example (1.b), the expression *šym tǝ'ēm* 'issue a decree' (in this case, its passive variant *šim tǝ'ēm*) is best classified as exercitive (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> The term 'formulaic' refers to the association with a performative ritual phrase. Indeed, the expression *šim tǝ'ēm* is attested in epigraphic Imperial Aramaic, being typical of any high rank official addressing his inferiors (see Folmer 1995). This would be consistent with our analysis.

<sup>28</sup> This *passivum majestatis* construction might itself have been developed under Persian influence (Kutscher 1969; Li 2009).

<sup>29</sup> This example (Ezra 7:21) has been identified as performative in several studies and translated as such, e.g. 'von mir ergeht Befehl, dass > ich befehle hiermit' (Mayer 1976: 191), 'von mir ist ein Befehl erlassen' (Gzella 2004: 211), and 'I decree' (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76). It is also rendered as an explicit (active) performative utterance in the following English translations: ERV, GW, GNT, TLB, MSG, NOG, NIRV, NLT, VOICE. It should nevertheless also be noted that example (2) as well as examples (3.a-d) and (4) below, form part of letters that are quoted verbatim in larger narrative passages. This fact and the current understanding of the administrative or bureaucratic practices of the Achaemenid empire (see Tavernier 2018) may shed some doubt about the true performativity of the expression *šim tǝ'ēm* in all these examples (see Gzella 2004: 211). Even though the Achaemenid bureaucracy and administration was deeply multilingual, the ruler certainly did not promulge laws or give orders in Aramaic. This was done in Old Persian. That oral speech formulated in Old Persian was subsequently written down and translated, e.g. into Aramaic (see Tavernier 2018). This means that the verbal form in Aramaic, in this case the SC, found in the letters could potentially be used to restate the king's orders. It would thus convey a past sense instead of being employed performatively. The embedding of these examples of SC in the



Another cluster of performative uses of Pe'il/PP involves four nearly identical examples in which the expression *šim tə'ēm* 'issue a decree' is employed again (3.a-d):

- (3) a. Dan 3:29  
*ūminni šim tə'ēm di kāl-'am 'ummāh wəliššān dī-yē' mar šlh 'al 'ēlāhāhōn dī-šadrak mēšaḳ wa'ābēd nəgō' haddāmin yiṭ'ābēd ūbaytēh nəwālī yištawwēh kāl-qōbēl dī lā 'itay 'ēlāh 'āhōrān dī-yikkul ləhaššālāh kiḏnāh*  
 'So I issue a decree that every people, nation and tongue that says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego shall be dismembered and their houses will be reduced to a rubbish heap, because there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.'
- b. Ezra 6:8  
*ūminni šim tə'ēm ləməḏ dī-ta'abdūn 'im-šābē yəhūdāyē' illēk ləmiḥnē' bēṭ-'ēlāhā' dēk ūminniksē malkā dī middat 'ābar nahārāh 'āsəparnā' niṭqəṭā' tehēwē' miṭya-hābā' ləgubrayyā' illēk dī-lā' ləbattālā'*  
 'And I issue a decree what you shall do with these elders of the Jews to rebuild this temple of God. From the royal treasury (coming) from the taxes of the province beyond the (Euphrates) River, the cost is to be completely given to these men, so that there is no interruption.'
- c. Ezra 6:11  
*ūminni šim tə'ēm di kāl-'ēnāš dī yəhašnē' piṭṭāmā' dənāh yiṭnəsaḥ 'ā' min-baytēh ūzəqīp yiṭməḥē' ālōhī ūbaytēh nəwālū yiṭ'ābēd 'al-dənāh*  
 'And I issue a decree that if any man changes this command a beam shall to be pulled out from his house and he will be raised up and impaled on it, and his house will be made a rubbish heap because of this.'
- d. Ezra 7:13  
*minni šim tə'ēm di kāl-miṭnaddab bəmallūṭi min-'ammāh yiśrā' ēl wəkāhānōhī wələwāyē' limhāk līrūšəlem 'immāk yəhāk*  
 'I issue a decree that anyone in my kingdom, from the people of Israel and even its priests and Levites, who volunteers to go up to Jerusalem with you, may go.'

As far as their extra-grammatical profiles are concerned, these four cases of the performative Pe'il/PP are very similar to example (2) introduced above. They concern decrees issued by kings: Nebuchadnezzar (3.a), Darius (3.b-c), and Artaxerxes (3.d). Each time, a decree modifies reality, establishing a new law: punishment for disobedience against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (3.a), the payment to the elders of the Jews (3.b) and a harsh punishment for non-compliance with it (3.c), and the permission for Jews to go to Jerusalem (3.d). Each such change is

larger narrative passage may furthermore have warranted relative freedom in the use of and navigation between different reference times. This would again create some grounds for the past-tense reading of the constructions that are analysed by us (and many scholars) as performatives. While such ambiguities are unavoidable in old texts and languages with no available native speakers and alternative non-performative interpretations are indeed possible, the understanding of all these examples as performatives is, in our opinion, by far, the most plausible. The discussion of the grammatical and extra-grammatical features of each of the cases provided in this section demonstrates this clearly.



unique and immediate: the new law became valid concurrently with (the termination of) the speech. As was the case with (2), the passive constructions used to modify reality in (3.a-d) are likely ritual phrases (*passivum majestatis*), necessary parts of a conventionalized law-making procedure. As the acting agents, i.e. the monarchs who are bestowed with legal powers, pronounce the adequate formulae, the three procedures are felicitous.

Similar to example (2) discussed previously, performative utterances in (3.a-d) exploit grammatical constructions that overtly communicate the uniqueness of change of state (G-1) and its concurrence to the speech time (G-2). That is, as explained above, the ideas of perfectivity and/or completion are inherent to Pe'il (in its resultative, perfectal, and perfective uses) and PP (in its resultative use), and both Pe'il and PP are also compatible with a present time frame (in their perfectal and/or resultative uses). Although the performative adverbial of a *hereby*-type is absent in the BA text, it is introduced into several translations. To be exact, (a) *hereby*: Dan 3:29 (NET, TLV), Ezra 6:8 (GNT, HCSB, ISV, MSG, NET, NIV, NIVUK, NLT), Ezra 6:11 (ISV, NET), and Ezra 7:13 (ISV, MSG); (b) *herewith*: Dan 3:29 and Ezra 6:8 (CJB) (see also Mayer 1976: 191 who in his rendering of the four cases employs the German equivalent *hiermit*). Despite the verb itself being inflected in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular passive, the agent who fully controls the procedure overtly identifies himself as the doer by means of the prepositional phrase *minnî* 'from/by me' that contains the 1<sup>st</sup>-person pronominal suffix. However, contrary to (2), the independent subject pronoun and a proper noun coindexed with the agent are not used, which suggests the slightly lower compliance of these examples with the prototype of a performative. Analogous to (2), the verb used (i.e. the passive variant of *šîm tã'ēm* 'issue a decree') is self-referring of an exercitive type (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76). Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Artaxerxes saying that they issue a decree equals the decree itself.<sup>30</sup>

In example (4) below, the king Darius writes to the peoples living in his land and commands that the God of Daniel should be revered and feared throughout the kingdom. The extra-grammatical and grammatical properties of this performative usage are nearly identical to those described above for (3.a-d). Extra-grammatically: reality is changed – a new decree becomes binding; the change is unique and immediate – the law is given and becomes valid at the moment of its utterance (E-1); the procedure is conventionalized and contains a routine phrase – the *passivum majestatis* expression *šîm tã'ēm* is likely a necessary condition for the law to be promulgated (E-2). Grammatically: the verbal forms used (i.e. Pe'il or PP) are compatible with both the semantic domains of perfectivity/completion and a present (speech) time frame (G-1 and G-2); an adverbial of a *hereby*-type is absent (it is however introduced into some translations, e.g. ISV); the utterance is self-referring containing an exercitive predicate, i.e. *šîm tã'ēm* 'issue a decree' (G-4). The only difference between (4) and (3.a-d) discussed above concerns the manner with which the agent controlling the event is introduced to the sentence (G-3). While in (3.a-d), this is achieved

<sup>30</sup> The SC form in Dan 3:29 has been read performatively by Li (2009: 27) and Gzella (2004: 211). They translate it as 'a decree has been issued by me' (Li also allows for a present perfect interpretation 'I have made a decree') and 'von mir ist ein Befehl erlassen', respectively. The SC forms in Ezra 6:8, 6:11, and 7:13 have been analysed as performatives by an even larger group of scholars, namely: Mayer (see 'von mir ergeht Befehl, dass > ich befehle hiermit'; 1976: 191), Gzella (2004: 211), and Andrason, Hornea and Joubert (see 'I decree'; 2019: 75–76). These examples are also rendered as explicit performatives in many influential translations. To be exact, Daniel 3:29: KJ21, CSB, CEB, ERV, ESV, EXB, GNV, GW, GNT, HCSB, ISV, TLB, MSG, MEV, NET, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, TLV; Ezra 6:8: KB21, CSB, CEB, CJB, ERV, ESV, GNT, HCSB, ICB, ISV, LEB, TLB, MSG, MEV, NET, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, TL. Ezra 6:11: CSB, CEB, CJB, ERV, GTN, UCSB, ISV, LEB, NCV, NET, NIV, NLV, NRSV, TLV; and Ezra 7:13: KJ21, CSB, CEB, CJB, ESV, GNT, ISV, LEB, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV.





by means of the prepositional phrase *minnī* ‘from/by me’, in (4), the expression *min-qōḏāmay* ‘from me’ (lit. from before me) is used. Its syntactic role is, however, fully analogous to *minnī*. That is, *min-qōḏāmay* identifies the agent (doer) of a passively construed event and, by means of the 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular pronominal suffix, coindexes it with the speaker himself.<sup>31</sup>

- (4) Dan 6:27  
*min-qōḏāmay šim tə’ēm dī bākā l-šā lṭā n malkūtī lehēwōn zā’ā’in wəḏā ḥālīn min-qōḏām’ēlāhēh dī dāniyē’l*  
 ‘I issue a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom (people) shall be trembling and fearing the God of Daniel...’

The remaining example of SC used in a performative function is found in Ezra 7.14 (see 5 below). This case involves the root *šlh* ‘lit. send’.

- (5) Ezra 7.14  
*kāl-qōḇēl dī min-qōḏām malkā wəšib’at yā’ ātōhī šālīh ləbaqqārā’ al-yəhūd wəlirúšəlem bəḏāṭ’ēlāhā dī bīdāk*  
 ‘You are authorized by the king and his seven advisors to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of your God which is in your hand.’

Example (5) belongs to a series of instructions given by Artaxerxes to Ezra. In the first cluster of orders, which include example (5), the king and his seven officials (most likely the ‘seven princes of Persia and Media’; cf. Esther 1:14) instruct Ezra to carry out an investigation concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Although this investigation is unspecified, it is followed by a sequence of specific commands: Ezra is requested to take the silver and gold given by the king to the God of Israel in Jerusalem as well as the silver and gold collected through donations in Babylon, buy a series of goods appropriate for offering, make the offering to the God of Israel, and keep the rest of the silver and gold for himself (Ezra 7:15–20). This sequence follows a command expressed in Ezra 7:13 (see example 3.d above) and precedes another order in Ezra 7:21 (see example 2). Like all such commands found in this fragment, the utterance in (5) constitutes a simultaneous performance that brings about a unique and immediate change in the world. In this case, concurrently to the king’s speech, Ezra is authorized to conduct his investigation (E-1). This modification takes place due to the pronunciation of the expression *šālīh* ‘...is authorized (lit. is sent)’, most likely a common phrase in these types of orders. As in examples (2), (3.a-d), and (4), a *passivum majestatis* form is employed, one of several used in this passage (see again the passive expressions built around the verb *šām* in Ezra 7:13 (3.d) and Ezra 7:21 (2)). However, as (5) is not a decree *sensu stricto* but rather an endorsement to Ezra’s mission, its conventionalisation is probably lower than that of the other decrees encoded by means of *šām tə’ēm* (E-2). In any case, the procedure is felicitous: ‘the king and his officials have the authority to send (or instruct) Ezra to inquire about

<sup>31</sup> Daniel 6:27 has been understood as performative by Mayer (1976: 191), Gzella (2004: 211), and Li (2009: 27). Meyer (1976: 191) translates it with an explicit performative, i.e. as ‘ich befehle hiermit’. Note that Li (2009: 27) again allows for a present perfect interpretation (‘I have made a decree’). The expression *šim tə’ēm* in Daniel 6:27 is also rendered with an explicit performative utterance in a number of influential translations, e.g. KJ21, CSB, CEB, CEV, ESV, GNV, GW, GNT, HSCB, TLB, MSG, MEV, NIV, NLT, NRSV.





Judah and Jerusalem [and] Ezra is a scholar that is well educated in the Law of the God of Israel, and currently serves as a mediator for the king' (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76–77).

Similar to the previous examples, the uniqueness or the perfectivity/completion of the act (G-1) and its concurrence to the speech time and thus present-ness (G-2) are fully reflected in the grammatical material employed. This involves the verbal forms used, i.e. Pe'il/PP, of which the aspectual and temporal properties were discussed in examples (2), (3.a-d), and (4) above. As in these examples, the performative adverbial of a *hereby*-type is absent in (5). It is however introduced in some translations (see TLB, MSG, NLT, as well as Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 77). In further similarity to (2), (3.a-d), and (4), although the construction is passive, the agent controlling the event is explicitly mentioned, i.e. *malkā' wəšib' at' yā' ātōhī* 'the king and his seven advisors'. Nevertheless, contrary to (2), (3.a-d), and (4), as well as (1.a-b), the markers of 1<sup>st</sup> person singular or plural, which are inherent to the performative prototype, are absent (G-3). The performative in (5) is self-referring (G-4). This self-reference is achieved by a tautological predicate that lexically denotes the act intended by the utterance, specifically, the exercitive verb *šalah* 'instruct' (Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019: 76). In this example, the verb *šalah* is not used in an 'epistolary' manner even though in its literal sense this root means 'send'. Indeed, the speaker does not imply a mere act of sending, equivalent to 'I (hereby) send the letter'. Instead, he gives instructions to the interlocutor (cf. NLT and TLB 'I [...] instruct you; NET and EXB: *You are authorized*'), allowing him to conduct his investigation. Accordingly, this usage of SC is not an example of an 'epistolary perfect/tense'. SC is rather used in a performative function.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.2. Active Participle

The other verbal gram that appears in performative utterances in Biblical Aramaic is AP. The performative AP is attested nine times. Six different roots are exploited: *yd'* (2x), *'mr* (2x), *šbh* (2x), *yd'* (1x), *rwm* (1x), and *hdr* (1x). Most cases are found in the book of Daniel (7x), the remaining two being attested in Ezra.

Examples (6.a-b) below contain two cases of the performative AP of the root *yd'* 'know'. Both are found in Ezra, which exhausts the use of the AP in this book.

- (6) a. Ezra 4:16  
*məhōdā 'in 'ānahñāh ləmallā' dī hēn qiryāṭā' dāḱ tiṭbənē' wəšūrayyāh yištaḱlālūn lāqōbēl dənāh ḥālāq ba'āḇar nahārā' lā' 'itay lāḱ*  
 'We inform the king that if this city is built and the walls are completed, then you will have no portion in the province beyond the (Euphrates) River'
- b. Ezra 7:24  
*ūlākōm məhōdā 'in dī kāl-kāhānāyā' wəlēwāyē' zammārayyā' tārā' ayyā' nātīn-ayyā' ūpālāḥē bēt' ēlāhā' dənāh mindāh ḥlō wahālāḱ lā' šallit ləmirme' 'ālēhōm*

<sup>32</sup> Ezra 7:14 has been analysed as a performative by Andrason, Hornea and Joubert (2019: 76–77). It has also been rendered by explicit active performative constructions in several English translations (e.g. ERV, GW, GNT, TLB, MSG, NOG). See an explicit performative utterance in NLT: 'I and my council of seven hereby instruct you to ...'. Furthermore, although many other translations prefer to express this performative utterance through resultative (passive) constructions, e.g. *You are sent* (NIV, NRSV) or *You are authorized* (NET), their value is still performative.



‘We also inform you that it is not allowed to impose this tax, tribute, or toll on anyone of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, the servants of the temple of God, or other servants of this house of God.’

Example (6.a) is the continuation of a report that Rehum and Shimshai give to the King Artaxerxes. The beginning of this report, which contains complaints against the Jews, has been discussed in example (1.a) (Ezra 4:14) where the active Q<sup>tal</sup> SC form of the same root *yd*<sup>c</sup>, i.e. *hōḏa‘nā’*, is used. (6.a) contributes to the report with a warning related to the consequences of the activities conducted by the Jews (i.e. rebuilding Jerusalem) – the potential loss of control of the king over the city and the whole Trans-Euphrates province. Accordingly, the extra-grammatical properties of this performative utterance are the same to those discussed for (1.a) above. That is, the act modifies the state of affairs of the world in a unique and immediate manner (E-1) and the pronunciation of the performative expression *māhōḏa‘in* is not a fully routinized part of the informing procedure (E-2). The king could be informed by making use of other performative constructions (see, e.g. SC *hōḏa‘nā’* employed two verses earlier in v. 14) or without any overt introductory performative.

The context of example (6.b) is different. Now, it is the king Artaxerxes who informs his subjects, specifically the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates, regarding the mission of Ezra. This performative use of AP continues a series of performatives employed earlier in Ezra 7 in v. 13 (see example 3.d) and v. 14 (see example 5), both directed to Ezra himself, as well as v. 21 (see example 2), which is directed to the treasurers. In all of these cases (i.e. Ezra 7:13, 14, 21), performative predicates are encoded in the passive SC, i.e. Pe’il/PP. Having issued several decrees (v. 13 and 21) and instructions (v. 14), Artaxerxes informs of the prohibition regarding the impositions of taxes (v. 24). Even though, similarly to (6.a) above, the root *yd*<sup>c</sup> is used and the utterance brings a unique and immediate change on the global stage (i.e. the subjects now know that certain actions are forbidden), (6.b) may exhibit a slightly higher degree of routinisation. Its usage is more formal: it concerns legal matters, forms part of an official decree, and, as mentioned above, is formulated by the king himself. This would be in agreement with the (highly) routinized procedures expressed through *passivum majestatis* forms in preceding verses 13, 14, and 21.

From a grammatical perspective, examples (6.a-b) share certain similarities. To begin with, although, in both cases, specific performative adverbials of the *hereby*-type (or any other temporal adverbs equivalent to *now* in English) are absent,<sup>33</sup> the present-ness of the event and its concurrence to the speech act are encoded by the verbal forms used, i.e. AP. In Biblical Aramaic, AP functions as the main expression of the present tense, whether actual (progressive) or general (habitual) (Li 2009) (G-2). The uniqueness of the action and, thus, its completion/perfectivity are also coherent with the prototype of a performative. In Biblical Aramaic, AP is not only used as an ‘imperfective’ present (progressive or habitual), it is also widely employed in the function of a historical present in narrative. In that role, it expresses punctiliar, bound, and complete events and constitutes a more vivid equivalent to the narrative proper form Q<sup>tal</sup> – the difference between the two grams in this particular usage being mostly related to the focality of an event. This demonstrates that, at least in some contexts, AP was compatible with the perfective construal

<sup>33</sup> The adverbs *hereby* or *herewith* are however introduced into some translations, e.g. CJB. Such performative adverbials are also used by Rosenthal (1961: 55) in his rendering of Ezra 4:16: ‘we (hereby) inform the king’ as well as Gzella (2004: 210) ‘Wir tun hiermit dem König kund’.



of a situation, therefore being suitable for a performative use (G-1). The agents controlling the respective acts in (6.a-b) are encoded by the masculine plural inflections hosted by the predicative participles *məhōdā 'in*. In (6.a), this inflectional suffix is coindexed with the independent 1<sup>st</sup> person plural subject pronoun *'ānahñāh* 'we' used immediately after AP. It also refers back to the 1<sup>st</sup>-person plural subject of the same root inflected in SC in verse 14 (where it forms part of the larger serial verb construction *šəlahñā' wəhōdā 'nā'*; see example 1.a in section 3.1), i.e. Rehum and Shimshai. In (6.b), the plural inflectional suffix hosted by AP is not accompanied by the 1<sup>st</sup>-person subject pronoun or proper noun coindexed with the agent. However, this participial inflection seems to be correlated with the 1<sup>st</sup>-person pronoun and a proper noun that accompanies it, i.e. *'ānāh 'artaḥšast' malkā'* 'I Artaxerxes', found in v. 21 (see example 2). The marking of the performative AP would thus constitute a case of *pluralis majestatis* (G-3).<sup>34</sup> Lastly, although the two examples use a tautological performative verb that makes the speech act self-referring – i.e. the Haph'el stem of the root *yḏ* 'know' – the exact semantics of this verb are different. The interpretation of the predicate *məhōdā 'in* in (6.a) is expositive, fully equivalent to its use two verses earlier in v. 14 (1.a), i.e. 'inform'. The reading of the same form *məhōdā 'in* in (6.b) is fuzzy. On the one hand, it can be understood in terms of exposition, i.e. 'we inform'. On the other hand, it communicates an exercise of power and rights by determining what should not be done, thus approximating an exercitive use.<sup>35</sup> Certainly, the king is not only informing but also pronouncing some type of command.<sup>36</sup>

The remaining seven cases of the performative AP are found in the book of Daniel. In two instances, the root *'mr* 'say' is used:

- (7) a. Dan 3:4  
*wəḱāṛōzā' qārē' bəḥāyil ləḱôn 'āmārīn 'aməmayyā' 'ummayyā' wəliššānayyā'*  
 'The herald proclaimed aloud: "It is commanded to you, oh peoples, nations, and languages (that when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, trigon, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, you will bow down and pay homage to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has erected)."<sup>37</sup>
- b. Dan 4:28  
*'ōḏ milləṭā' bəḫūm malkā' qāl min-šəmayyā' nəḫpāl lāḱ 'āmārīn nəḫūḱadnəššar malkā' malkūtāh 'āḏāṭ minnāḱ*  
 'While these words were still in the king's mouth, a voice came down from heaven: "It is announced to you, King Nebuchadnezzar, your kingdom has departed (i.e. been removed) from you!'

<sup>34</sup> The participial inflection may also refer to the plural referent in v. 23, i.e. *malkā' ūḇənōhi* 'the king (i.e. Artaxerxes) and his sons'.

<sup>35</sup> Indeed, translations oscillate between an expositive interpretation (e.g. *we inform, we certify, we notify*) and an exercitive reading, e.g. 'you must [...] know' (CEB), 'we give you [...] to understand' (DRA), and especially 'I [...] declare' (TLB, NLT).

<sup>36</sup> Ezra 4:16 and 7:24 have been recognized as performatives by a number of scholars: Rosenthal ('we (hereby) inform the king'; 1961: 55), Meyer ('wir tun hiermit dem König kund'; 1976: 190) Rogland ('We notify the king that' and 'We also notify you that'; 2001: 249; 2003b: 426), Li (2009: 52), and Gzella ('Wir tun hiermit dem König kund'; 2004: 210; 2007: 94). Rogland (2003b: 426) and Li (2009: 52) also acknowledge the possibility of the interpretation of these two examples as 'actual' and/or 'ongoing' presents.

<sup>37</sup> The text in the parentheses comes from the NET Bible translation of verse 3:5.



The use of the AP of the verb *'mr* in (7.a) constitutes a canonical performance – unique and simultaneous (E-1). The herald makes a proclamation concerning a golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has erected. The king's subjects are instructed to worship the statue on their knees (v. 3:5); otherwise they will be thrown into the fire (v. 3:6). Accordingly, a new order is given to all people and their reality changes concurrently to the herald's speech. They must comply or they will be executed. The utterance is accompanied by a conventionalized procedure: the herald announces the will of the monarch in front of the people and employs the specific performative expression *lākôn 'āmārîn* lit. 'to you they say' (i.e. 'it is commanded to you'; see the next paragraph), which was likely a common ritual phrase, although probably not compulsory for the procedure to be successful (E-2). In the other example involving *'mr*, i.e. (7.b), King Nebuchadnezzar is proud of himself and the residence that he built in Babylon. Before finishing his self-centred speech in which Nebuchadnezzar admires his strength and honour, a voice comes from heaven and announces to the king that he will lose his kingdom (v. 28), and that he will be exiled and live with wild animals for seven years (v. 29). Contrary to (7.a), the AP of *'mr* does not introduce a command. It rather constitutes an announcement of a fact (i.e. the loss of the kingdom) and inevitable fate the king will face (i.e. life in exile). Crucially, concurrently to the heavenly voice's message, the king's destiny is sealed – his reality is modified in a unique manner (E-1). The procedure is adequate for the performative to be successful. The voice from heaven has the authority over the king's life and his possessions. However, the expression *lāk 'āmārîn* lit. 'to you, they say' (i.e. 'it is announced to you') need not be a ritual phrase necessary for the act to be successful. Indeed, if it was not pronounced, the prophesizing effect of this verse and the following verses would be identical (E-2).

The grammatical properties of (7.a) and (7.b) are similar, although not identical. To begin with, as in (6.a-b) above, the grammatical construction used in (7.a) and (7.b), i.e. AP, overtly communicates the immediacy of the event, indicating that it occurs at speech time (G-2). The performative adverbial of a *hereby*-type or any temporal adverb indicating present-ness, comparable to *now* in English, are absent. They are, however, introduced into translations (e.g. *hereby* in NET; *hiermit* in Bauer and Leander 1927 [1969]: 290 and Gzella 2004: 210; see also *here* in NIRV). As explained during the analysis of (6.a-b), AP is also compatible with the perfective construal of a situation, as it is not limited to progressive, iterative, and habitual contexts (G-1). Contrary to (6.a-b), in both (7.a) and (7.b), the agents controlling the situation (i.e. the king and God, respectively) are not overtly identified as the grammatical 1<sup>st</sup> person subject argument (G-3). To be exact, the verb *'mr* is used impersonally in (7.a-b), i.e. in the so-called impersonal passive (Li 2009). This construction – usually exhibiting 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural marking in finite verbs and the masculine plural form in participles – roughly approximates the impersonal constructions with *on* in French and *man* in German. Indeed, (7.a-b) are rendered as *euch befiehlt man* by Gzella (2004: 210) while (7.b) is translated as *euch sagt man* by Bauer and Leander (1927 [1969]: 290). Lastly, both utterances are self-referring making use of tautological performative verbs that lexically denote the act being performed. However, the specific acts named by *'mr* are distinct. In (7.a), the verb *'mr* is used in an exercitive manner. Through the intermediacy of a herald, the king exercises his power and communicates specific orders to his subjects. In (7.b), the heavenly voice both announces (by making clear the role of the utterance in the conversation and communicating God's decision)



and exercises power (by stipulating and warning the king what will happen to him). It thus exhibits a blended expositive-exercitive character.<sup>38</sup>

Example (8), which is extracted from Daniel 2:23, contains two AP forms used performatively. These forms are derived from the Haph'el of the root *yḏ* 'thank' and the Pa'el of the root *šbh* 'praise'.

(8) Dan 2:23

*lāk* 'ēlāh 'ābāhāti *məhōdē* 'uməšabbah 'ānāh dī hākmatā 'ūgəbūrātā yəhabt lī ūkə'an hōda'tani dī-bə'ēnā minnāk dī-millaṭ malkā hōda'tenā

'O God of my ancestors, I thank you and praise you, for you have given me wisdom and power and have now revealed to me what we asked from you; for you have revealed to us the king's dream (lit. matter).'

The use of the performative AP in example (8) forms part of Daniel's direct speech in which he praises God (vs. 20–23) after revelations he experienced in a night vision (v. 19). The expression *məhōdē* 'uməšabbah 'ānāh equals a performance of the acts of thanking (*məhōdē*) and praising (*məšabbah*) that are simultaneous and complete(d) with the respective words being uttered – the change in reality thus being immediate and unique (E-1). Both expressions are ritual phrases critical for the acts of thanking and praising to be successful. Especially, the pronunciation of some types of thanking expression, such as *məhōdē*, is necessary for the social routine of thanking to be carried out (E-2). From a grammatical perspective, the temporal and aspectual properties related to the present-ness (concurrence to speech time) and perfectivity (the events being bound, complete(d), and punctiliar) are fully analogous to those discussed for the examples (6.a-b) and (7.a-b) discussed above. Both properties are expressed by the AP – a form compatible with present and perfective contexts (G-1 and G-2). Present-time or *hereby*-type adverbials are absent.<sup>39</sup> The agent controlling the situation – the 1<sup>st</sup> person – is expressed overtly by the independent subject pronoun 'ānāh 'I, referring to Daniel. The inflections of the participial forms *məhōdē* and *məšabbah* themselves, i.e. the masculine singular marking, also refer to the acting subject – Daniel (E-3). Lastly, both acts are self-referring. The verbs are used tautologically and indicate the types of acts aimed at: thanking (*məhōdē*) and praising (*məšabbah*). Both verbs belong to the behabitive class of performatives. They denote acts that form part of social behavioural routines

<sup>38</sup> This fuzziness is visible in the following translations in which both expositive (*say* and *here is*) and exercitive (*listen* and *has been ordered*) elements are used: *listen to what I say* (GNT), *here is what has been ordered concerning you* (NIRV).

Overall, Dan 3:4 and/or 4:28 have been viewed as performatives by most scholars, namely, Bauer and Leander 1927 [1969]: 290, Meyer (1976: 190), Rogland (2001: 249; 2003b: 426), Gzella (2004: 210; 2007: 94), and Li (2009: 52). Meyer (1976: 190) and Rogland (2003b: 426–427) translate these examples by explicit performatives: 'man befiehlt euch hiermit' (see also 'Euch befiehlt man hiermit' in Gzella 2004: 210) and 'You are commanded' / 'to you it is spoken', respectively. Dan 3:4 is also regularly rendered by passive performative constructions in English translations, e.g. *it is commanded* (e.g. KJ21, LEB, WEB), *you are commanded* (e.g. CSB, ERV, NIV, NRSV), *you are ordered* (CJB). Dan 4:28 is also commonly translated with performative passives in English, e.g. *is spoken* (KJ21, ESV, RSV), *is announced* (EHV), and *is declared* (ISV, LEB, NRSV). It should be noted that according to Li (2009: 52) the root 'mr has a special, i.e. formulaic, flavour in Biblical Aramaic.

<sup>39</sup> They are also absent in the fifty English translations consulted by us.



such as welcoming, apologizing, blessing, congratulating, condoling, and cursing (Austin 1962: 159–160).<sup>40</sup>

The last example contains three performative AP forms (see 9 below). One of them is derived from the Pa'el of the root *šbh* 'praise' similar to (8) discussed above; the other two are derived from the Polel of the root *rwm* 'exalt, extol' and the Pa'el of the root *hḏr* 'glorify, honour'.

(9) Daniel 4:34

*kə'an 'ānāh nəbūkaḏnešsar məšabbah ūmərômēm ūmahaddar ləmelek šəmayyā' dī kāl-ma'ābāḏōhī qəšōt wə'ōrəḥātēh dīn wəḏī mahləkin bəḡēwāh yākil ləhašpālāh*

'Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify the King of heaven, for all his acts are truth (i.e. right) and his ways are justice (i.e. just) and for he is able to bring down those who walk in pride.'

The series of the three performative AP forms in (9) appears at the end of a piece where Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which also includes the warning concerning the king's fate (see example 7.b above). In agreement with what was announced, Nebuchadnezzar was expelled from human society (v. 30). Now, the monarch realizes his faults, looks up to the heavens, and his reason and sanity are restored (v. 31–33). Having understood all of this, Nebuchadnezzar praises (*məšabbah*), exalts (*mərômēm*), and glorifies (*mahaddar*) God. The three uses of AP constitute performances that are concurrently completed with their pronunciation (E-1). Similar to performatives in (8) discussed above, the AP forms used in (9) are ritual phrases. They are critical (if not necessary) for the procedures of praising, exalting, and glorifying to be successful (E-2). As far as their grammatical properties are concerned, the three performative uses of AP in (9) are also nearly identical to those in (8). As explained throughout this section, AP is compatible with a present (speech) time frame (which is its prototypical function) and a perfective construal of an event (typical of its historical present uses) (G-1 and G-2). Significantly, the performative sequence is headed by the temporal adverbial *kə'an* 'now' (see 'in diesem Moment'; Gzella 2004: 212) that operates over the three APs jointly. The agent controlling the act is expressed by the 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular pronoun 'ānāh 'I' referring to the king Nebuchadnezzar – the subject of the three APs inflected in their masculine singular forms (G-3). The three performatives are also self-referring. They denote the specific acts they intend by means of the respective tautological performative verbs. As in (8), the three verbs belong to the class of behabitives (G-4).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> The two expressions in Dan 2:23, i.e. *məhōḏē* and *məšabbah*, have been viewed as performatives by Rogland (2003b: 426; see his translation 'I thank you and praise you'). Li (2009: 52) considers them as potential performative cases although he also admits the possibility of an interpretation in terms of 'actual' and/or 'ongoing' present. Two interpretations are also acknowledged by Gzella (2004: 212): a performative 'hiermit lobe ich dich' or a general present with Daniel always praising God. The verbs *məhōḏē* and *məšabbah* in Dan 2:23 are also regularly rendered by active simple present tenses in English translations, which suggest a more performative than progressive interpretation (e.g. KJ21, CSB, CJB, ERV, GW, LEB, NET, NIV, NLT, and NRSV).

<sup>41</sup> The three APs in Dan 4:34 have been analysed as performatives by Rogland (2003b: 426), who classifies them as 'performative participles' and translates performatively as 'I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, extol and honor the King of heaven' (ibid.). Li (2009: 52) recognizes this possibility although he also notes that the examples are debatable as they could be interpreted as an 'actual' or 'ongoing' present. Gzella (2004: 212) considers these cases as uncertain with two possible interpretations, namely performative and progressive/general present. His translation is however fully compatible with a performative interpretation 'Nun preise, erhebe, verherrliche ich' (2004: 211). Significantly, nearly all English translations render these APs as active performative present tenses (e.g. KJ21, CSB, ERV, GW, LEB, NET, NIV, NLT, and NRSV).





## 4. DISCUSSION

The evidence presented in section 3 demonstrates that most of the BA performatives examined in this study are canonical. All analysed examples are true performances – unique and immediate (E-1). Although all are accompanied by accurate procedure, only some are genuine ritual phrases, critical for the procedure to be successful. The most routinized performatives pertain to formal legal decrees and less formal social practices, e.g. thanking (E-2). All performatives host grammatical constructions – to be exact, finite (SC) or semi-finite (AP) verbs – that overtly communicate or are compatible with the uniqueness of a change (i.e. its completive/perfective aspect) (G-1) and its immediacy or the present-ness of the event (i.e. its concurrence with speech time) (G-2). Present-ness is only sporadically expressed by a temporal/performative adverbial (*kə'an* ‘now’). The party controlling the act is usually identified as the 1<sup>st</sup>-person referent, predominantly singular, although also plural. Its grammatical role is subject in active constructions and agent in passive constructions. The 1<sup>st</sup>-person may be encoded by the verb itself through inflectional affixes or expressed through the independent subject pronoun. However, in a few cases, the 1<sup>st</sup>-person subject must be recovered from the context or is entirely absent – the performative making use of an impersonal passive construction (G-3). All performative examples are self-referring. This self-reference is achieved by tautological performative verbs that lexically denote the acts intended: expositives, exercitives, or behabitives (G-4).

The overall frequency of SC and AP in performative utterances is comparable: SC is attested 10 times (53%) while AP is attested 9 times (47%). However, our study enables us to discern two types of distributional differences in the performative use of SC and AP: those related to general linguistic properties of the text and those depending on the respective text's age, and thus diachrony. This suggests that, although in some performative contexts, SC and AP may be relatively synonymous, the two constructions exhibit certain preferences for featuring in determined types of performatives – thus, their respective selection is motivated.

SC tends to be used in more formal and routinized situations. In a majority of cases involving the performative SC, the king is addressing his subjects (7x). The inverse situation, i.e. subjects addressing the king, is attested sparsely (2 cases found in a single serial verb construction). SC is typically used in exercitives (7x), while its usage in expositives – the other performative type attested – is rare (2 cases found, again, in a single serial verb construction). The behabitive uses of SC are unattested. Between the two SC variants, the passive one (7x) is more common than the active one (3x). The passive SC is entirely limited to formal, routinized, and exercitive contexts (i.e. situations in which the king communicates new laws to his subjects) and is only employed with two roots (note that 6 of the 7 cases of the performative passive SC exploit the same verb, i.e. *šim*). Although less common, the active SC seems to be slightly more diverse from a qualitative perspective. Apart from being found in the exercitive context typical of the passive variant, it is also used in expositives in which subjects address the king. In the three cases attested, three different roots are employed.

AP is compatible with a greater variety of performative contexts. It is used when the king addresses God (5x) or (also via a herald) his subjects (2x), and, inversely, when subjects (1x) or a voice from heaven (1x) address the monarch. Importantly, AP is widely used outside highly routinized official legal formulae. AP is also found in a larger number of types of performative utterances, attesting to not only exercitive and expositive uses but also behabitive ones. Indeed,





the use of AP in behabitive utterances is the most common (5x), while its use in expositives (2x) and exercitives (2x) is less frequent.<sup>42</sup>

This apparent qualitative diversity of the performative AP and its more common usage in less formal contexts suggest the relative productivity of these types of performatives. In contrast, due to its more formal and routinized character and a lesser variation of the roots employed, the performative use of SC seems to be less productive. All of this implies that the use of AP in performatives is an innovation, possibly more closely related to the colloquial language, while the use of SC in performatives is a retention, more characteristic of the older layer of the language. The performative AP would thus be a younger construction while the performative SC would be an older construction.

This diachronic result derived from the different distributions and linguistic properties of performative utterances containing SC and AP is corroborated by another type of difference conditioning the presence of these two verbal constructions in performatives. In the book of Ezra, which is the older text, probably dated from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE or even earlier (Beyer 1986: 19; Kaufman 2005: 115; Gzella 2011b: 583), the performative SC is attested eight times (80%), while the performative AP is only found twice (20%). Significantly, for SC, the active and passive types and the three roots are attested. For AP, only one root is exploited. This picture changes radically in the book of Daniel, which is a younger text dated from the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE, although its nucleus may be slightly older (Beyer 1986: 19; Gzella 2004: 41–45; 2011b: 583; Kaufman 2005: 115). In Daniel, the performative AP is more common (7x – 78%) than its SC counterpart (2x – 22%). For AP, seven roots are attested, while for SC, only a single root and the passive variant are attested.

The above results – both the distinct distributions of SC and AP and their dissimilar tendency to be used in texts of distinct ages – are consistent with the diachronic drift observed in North-West Semitic languages, whereby AP has gradually replaced SC in performative utterances (Rogland 2003b: 427; see also Rogland 1999: 277–278; 2001: 249; Sanders 2004: 181; Gzella 2007: 94). Our study demonstrates that in Biblical Aramaic this replacement is, overall, in its intermediate phase, being similar to – although somewhat less advanced than – the analogous replacement attested in Qumran Aramaic (Rogland 1999: 278; 2003b: 424, 426). Given the distinct chronology of the main BA texts, the substitution of the performative SC with its AP counterpart is, as expected, significantly more evident in Daniel than Ezra.

We propose that the replacement of SC by AP in a performative function in Biblical Aramaic – and, more generally, the entire North-West Semitic branch of languages – is not accidental. It stems from the advancement of SC and AP along their respective grammaticalisation paths and the inverse dynamic relationship these two paths entertain with performatives according to crosslinguistic studies.

It has recently been proposed (Andrason 2012; Andrason and Dlaki 2017) that the performative domain entertains an inverse relationship with grams travelling the resultative and imperative paths – the two grammaticalisation paths that host two clusters of verbal constructions typically used in performative utterances.<sup>43</sup> As far as resultative-path grams are concerned, their

<sup>42</sup> Clear expositive and exercitive uses are attested one time each. Furthermore, in two cases, a shared expositive-exercitive value is present. Hence the total value is 2x for each type.

<sup>43</sup> A grammaticalisation path specifies the order of meanings gradually added to (and lost in) the semantic potential of specific types of constructions. It thus encapsulates the most likely (and to an extent universal) scenario(s) of the development of such constructions (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994; Andrason 2016). The resultative path leads from present resultative and completive constructions to present perfects, next to perfective pasts, and



compatibility with the performative function ‘decreases with the advancement along the path’ (Andrason and Dlali 2017: 150). To be exact: (a) resultative proper constructions are widely compatible with performative utterances; (b) the use of present perfects and young anteriors for performative purposes is more restricted; (c) the presence of old anteriors and canonical past tenses (especially, remote narrative pasts) in performative contexts is either highly limited and unproductive, or entirely ungrammatical (Andrason 2012; Andrason and Dlali 2017: 151–152). As far as imperfective-path grams are concerned, the tendency is opposite – ‘the compatibility with the performative function increases with the advancement along the path’ (Andrason and Dlali 2017: 150). Specifically: (a) young imperfective grams, i.e. constructions limited to either progressive-continuative or iterative-habitual uses are generally incompatible with performative contexts (cf. Fortuin 2019); (b) in contrast, older grams that span the entire length of this grammaticalisation path and thus function as general present tenses with gnomic and historical-present uses fully entrenched are widely exploited in performative utterances (Andrason and Dlali 2017: 151).

The inverse relationship of the resultative and imperfective paths with performatives is likely related to the temporal and aspectual properties that are inherent to the performative function on the one hand, and the meanings (or semantic domains) available in the distinct portions of these two grammaticalisation drifts. As explained in Section 2, performative acts are concurrent with the speech and the change triggered by them is immediate and unique (Austin 1962: 60; Searle 1989: 539; Dahl 2008: 12). Therefore, prototypical performative utterances tend to exploit grammatical constructions that communicate the immediacy of the event or its concurrency with speech time (Dahl 2008: 10) and the uniqueness of that change effected, i.e. its boundness, punctiliarity, and termination, and thus completion and/or perfectivity. The location of the domains of present-ness and completion/perfectivity, typical of performatives, along the resultative and imperfective paths is, roughly, opposite. The resultative path is compatible with a present temporal sphere and the time frame that is concurrent to the speech, only in its initial section. Constructions that travel this grammaticalisation path gradually allow for more explicit definite past uses, thus becoming more temporally distant from the speaker’s present. Additionally, towards the end point of the resultative path, the bound, complete(d), and punctiliar reading of a gram – and thus its aspectual nuance of completion or perfectivity – is also weakened as simple pasts tend to tolerate (at least certain) durative uses (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994; Andrason 2014; 2016). With regard to the imperfective path, although the domain of present-ness is equally spread along the entire length of this grammaticalisation scenario, perfective nuances are only available in its final section. That is, constructions that travel the imperfective path gradually cease to be limited to the various types of imperfectivity, i.e. un-boundness and duration, and acquire the few ‘perfective-like’ senses available along the path: historical present and the so-called sport-commentary present, as well as performative (Bybee 1994: 236; Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994; Andrason and Dlali 2017: 158).

The situation attested in Biblical Aramaic fully complies with the inverse diachronic entanglement of performativity and the advancement along the resultative and imperfective paths. SC and AP found in Biblical Aramaic (as well as the other North-West Semitic languages) are defined as grams travelling the resultative and imperfective paths, respectively (Li 2009; Andrason 2013; Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019). Importantly, in Biblical Aramaic and the chron-

---

subsequently to general, increasingly more remote, past tenses. The imperfective path leads from progressives to continuous grams, and subsequently by becoming compatible with iterative, habitual, and durative senses to general present tenses (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994; Bertinetto and Lenci 2010; Andrason 2014; 2016).



ologically posterior languages of the North-West Semitic family, SC has greatly advanced along its grammaticalisation paths if compared with Canaano-Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Biblical Hebrew (Li 2009; Andrason 2013, Andrason and Vita 2017). To be exact, SC has gradually ceased to be used as a resultative proper and young anterior (i.e. a present perfect with limited definite past uses) and evolved into an old anterior: a gram that has generalized both present perfect and definite past uses, including remote and narrative, as well as perfective and durative (Li 2009; Andrason 2013; Andrason, Hornea and Joubert 2019). Similarly, AP has significantly advanced along its own grammaticalisation development – the imperfective path – being generalized as the main expression of the present tense in all its sub-types, including the historical present (Li 2009; Andrason 2013). These two evolutionary drifts that have been experienced by SC and AP in Biblical Aramaic, and that have been carried further in later North-West Semitic languages, have created favourable grounds for the decreasing compatibility of SC with performatives on the one hand, and the inversely increasing compatibility of AP, on the other hand. As predicted by the theory, a highly advanced gram of the resultative path such as SC has weakened (and subsequently lost) its ability to feature in performative utterances, while the highly advanced gram of the imperfective path such as AP has acquired this type of usage.

While the present paper corroborates the expected replacement of SC by AP in performative utterances, suggesting that this drift is in its intermediate phase in Biblical Aramaic, our results should be nuanced and understood in their scholarly context. On the one hand, the 19 performative examples – some of which are still debatable – constitute a very limited corpus. The generalization power of such a corpus is incomparable with results generated by large and representative corpora. Therefore, and in line with our understanding of Biblical Aramaic as a corporalect rather than as a language system typical of a group of speakers (see section 3), we make no claims as to the grammatical properties exhibited by an actual variety (or varieties) underlying the biblical text. On the other hand, the ‘corporalectal’ orientation of this article and the limited number of cases analysed do not invalidate our research, as they do not do so for all the other studies dedicated to ancient languages characterized by artificial (i.e. non-representative and accidental) and restricted corpora. Indeed, as demonstrated by a considerable body of articles dedicated to old Semitic languages such as Canaano-Akkadian, Ugaritic, Biblical Aramaic, and even Biblical Hebrew, linguistic phenomena can successfully be analysed, and generalization proposed despite the limited number of examples and the use of non-representative corpora. The Semitic scholarship of performatives constitutes a case in point as it has principally been advanced by works in which a few examples from specific types of texts are studied, e.g. 40 in Biblical Hebrew (Andrason 2012), 17 in Classical Syriac (Rogland 2001), 11 in Qumran Aramaic (Rogland 1999), 5 in Ugaritic (Pardee and Whiting 1987; Sanders 2004), 2 in an early Aramaic Wadi Murabba’at document and an Elephantine letter (Bhyaro 2013), and 2 in the Hebrew Bar Kosiba Letters (Gzella 2007). Therefore, although the number of performative instances in Biblical Aramaic is not impressive and any generalisations can only be tentative in nature, we are convinced that, similar to other studies on ancient Semitic performatives, our conclusions remain valid.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The present article studied performative utterances in Biblical Aramaic within a prototype approach to performativity. The evidence demonstrates that most performatives are canonical com-



plying with all, or most, properties associated with a prototypical performative. Specifically: they function as unique and immediate performances; use verbal forms that encode or are compatible with this uniqueness (completion or perfectivity) and immediacy (present-ness or concurrence with speech time); and are self-referring by hosting tautological performative verbs. Two features that are sometimes violated are: the status of a performative expression as a ritual phrase compulsory for the act to be successful; and the presence of the overt 1<sup>st</sup>-person subject or agent controlling the event. One trait typical of a performative prototype is usually absent: the use of adverbials of a *hereby*-type.

The two verbal forms used in performatives, i.e. SC and AP, tend to favour distinct contexts. SC has a more formal and routinized character and exhibits a lesser variation of roots. AP is less formal and routinized and exhibits a greater diversity of roots. Therefore, the performative SC may be viewed as a less productive and older construction, while the performative AP seems to be a more productive and younger construction. This distributional profile is corroborated by the preference of SC and AP to be used in the books of Ezra (older) and Daniel (younger), respectively. This is, in turn, consistent with the diachronic tendency permeating North-West Semitic languages where AP has gradually replaced SC in performative utterances. In Biblical Aramaic, this replacement is in its intermediate phase.

We propose that the replacement of SC by AP in a performative function is not accidental but stems from the advancement of SC and AP along their respective grammaticalisation paths and the inverse dynamic relationship these two paths entertain with performatives. SC, an advanced resultative-path gram, gradually limits its compatibility with performative utterances, whereas for AP, an advanced imperfective-path gram, this compatibility increases.

## REFERENCES

- AIKHENVALD, Alexandra 2006. 'Serial verb constructions in typological perspective.' In: Alexandra AIKHENVALD and Robert M.W. DIXON (eds.) *Serial Verb Constructions: A Cross-linguistic Typology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1: 1–68.
- AIKHENVALD, Alexandra 2018. *Serial Verbs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ANDRASON, Alexander 2012. 'Making it sound – Performative *qatal* and its explanation.' *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12/8: 1–58.
- ANDRASON, Alexander 2013. *El sistema verbal hebreo en su contexto semítico: Una visión dinámica*. [The Biblical Hebrew Verbal System in its Semitic Background: A Dynamic Perspective.] Estella: Verbo divino.
- ANDRASON, Alexander 2014. 'From resultatives to present tenses – Simultaneous path of resultative constructions.' *Italian Journal of Linguistics* 26/1: 1–58.
- ANDRASON, Alexander 2016. *A Complex System of Complex Predicates: Tense, Taxis, Aspect and Mood in Basse Mandinka from a Grammaticalisation and Cognitive Perspective*. (PhD thesis; Stellenbosch University, South Africa)
- ANDRASON, Alexander and Mawande DLALI, 2017. 'Tense and aspect of performatives in Xhosa.' *South African Journal of African Languages* 37/2: 149–161.
- ANDRASON, Alexander, HORNEA, Irina and JOUBERT, Marcus 2019. 'The Q<sup>c</sup>TAL form in the Aramaic of Ezra – A grammaticalization perspective.' *Archiv Orientalní* 87: 59–98.
- ANDRASON, Alexander and Bonsam KOO, 2020. 'Verbal serialization in Biblical Aramaic.' *Altorientalische Forschungen* 47/1: 3–33.



- ANDRASON, Alexander and Juan-Pablo VITA, 2017. 'The YQTL-Ø "preterite" in Ugaritic.' *Archiv Orientalní* 85/3: 345–87.
- AUSTIN, John 1962. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- AZAR, Moshe 1995. *The Syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew*. Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language.
- BARY, Corien 2009. *Aspect in Ancient Greek. A Semantic Analysis of the Aorist and Imperfective*. Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit.
- BARY, Corien 2012. 'The Ancient Greek tragic aorist revisited.' *Glotta* 88: 31–53.
- BAUER, Hans and LEANDER, Pontus 1969 [1927]. *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*. Hildesheim: Georg Olms.
- BERTINETTO, Pier 2001. 'On a frequent misunderstanding in the temporal-aspectual domain: the 'perfective-telic' confusion.' In: Carlo CECCHETTO, Gennaro CHIERCHIA and Maria Teresa GUASTI (eds.) *Semantic Interfaces*. Stanford: CSLI Publications, 1–177.
- BERTINETTO, Pier and Alessandro LENCI, 2010. 'Iterativity vs. habituality (and gnomic imperfectivity).' *Quaderni del Laboratorio di Linguistica della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 9/1: 1–46.
- BEYER, Klaus 1986. *The Aramaic Language. Its Distribution and Subdivisions*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.
- BHAYRO, Siam 2013. 'On performatives in Aramaic documents.' *Aramaic Studies* 11: 47–52.
- BROWN, Dustan and Marina CHUMAKINA, 2013. 'What there might be and what there is: An introduction to canonical typology.' In: Dustan BROWN, Marina CHUMAKINA, and Greville CORBETT (eds.) *Canonical Morphology and Syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–19.
- BYBEE, Joan 1994. 'The grammaticalization of zero: Asymmetries in tense and aspect systems.' In: William PAGLIUCA (ed.) *Perspectives on Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 235–254.
- BYBEE, Joan, Revere PERKINS and William PAGLIUCA 1994. *The Evolution of Grammar*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- BYBEE, Joan and Östen DAHL 1989. 'The Creation of Tense and Aspect Systems in the Languages of the World.' *Studies in Language* 13/1: 51–103.
- COMRIE, Bernard 1976. *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- DAHL, Östen 1985. *Tense and Aspect Systems*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- DAHL, Eystein 2008. 'Performative Sentences and the Morphosyntax-Semantics Interface in Archaic Vedic.' *Journal of South Asian Literature* 1/1: 7–27.
- FOLMER, Louise. 1995. *Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period. A Study in Linguistic Variation*. PhD thesis. Rijks Universiteit Leiden, Netherlands.
- FORTUIN, Egbert 2019. 'Universality and language-dependency of tense and aspect: Performatives from a crosslinguistic perspective.' *Linguistic Typology* 23/1: 1–58.
- GZELLA, Holger 2004. *Tempus, Aspekt und Modalität im Reicharamäischen*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- GZELLA, Holger 2007. 'The use of the participle in the Hebrew Bar Kosiba letters in the light of Aramaic.' *Dead Sea Discoveries* 14/1: 90–98.
- GZELLA, Holger 2011a. 'Northwest Semitic in general.' In: Stefan WENINGER (ed.) *The Semitic Languages. An International Handbook*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 425–451.
- GZELLA, Holger 2011b. 'Imperial Aramaic.' In: Stefan WENINGER (ed.) *The Semitic Languages. An International Handbook*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 574–586.
- HUG, Volker 1993. *Altaramäische Grammatik der Texte des 7. und 6. Jh.s v. Chr.* Heidelberg: Orientverlag.
- JANDA, Laura 2015. 'Cognitive linguistics in the year 2015.' *Cognitive Semantics* 1: 131–154.
- KAUFMAN, Steven 2005. 'Aramaic.' In: Robert HETZRON (ed.) *The Semitic Languages*. London: Routledge, 114–130.



- KHALIL, Aziz and Ernest MCCARUS 1999. 'Arabic performative verbs.' *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik* 36: 7–20.
- KIENAST, Burkhart 2001. *Historische semitische Sprachwissenschaft*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- KUTSCHER, Edward 1969. 'Two 'passive' constructions in Aramaic in the light of Persian.' In: Zeev BEN-HAYYIM, Aharon DOTAN and Gad SARFATTI (eds.) *Proceedings of the International Conference on Semitic Studies Held in Jerusalem, 19–23 July 1965*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 132–151.
- LAMBDIN, Thomas O. 1971. *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.
- LI, Tarsee 2009. *The Verbal System of the Aramaic of Daniel*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- MAYER, Werner 1976. *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen Gebetsbeschwörungen*. Rome: Biblical Institute.
- MCMYLER, Benjamin 2011. 'Believing what the man says about his own feelings.' In: Martin GUSTAFSSON and Richard SØRLI (eds.) *The Philosophy of J. L. Austin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 114–145.
- MEEUWIS, Michael, Astrid DE VIT and Frank BRISARD 2015. 'Performatives and (im)perfective aspect.' In: *Abstracts of the 15<sup>th</sup> International Pragmatics Conference. Antwerp, Belgium. 26–31 July 2015*, 572.
- MISHOR, Mordechai 1983. *The Tense System in Tannaitic Hebrew*. (D.Phil. dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
- MORROW, Amanda 2017. 'I hate my spouse: The performative act of divorce in Elephantine Aramaic.' *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 43/2: 7–25.
- MURAOKA, Takamitsu and Bezalel PORTEN 1998. *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*. Leiden: Brill.
- PARDEE, Dennis and Robert WHITING 1987. 'Aspects of epistolary verbal usage in Ugaritic and Akkadian.' *BSOAS* 50/1: 1–31.
- PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, Miguel 1992. *La lengua de los sabios I. Morfosintaxis* [The Language of the Wise]. Estella: Verbo Divino.
- PROCHÁZKA, Stephan and Ursula BSEES 2011. 'Performatives in Arabic administrative speech.' In: Stefan PROCHÁZKA, Lucian REINFANDT and Sven TOST (eds.) *Official Epistolography and the Language(s) of Power. Proceedings of the First International Conference of the Research Network Imperium & Officium*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 293–300.
- RECKENDORF, Hermann 1921. *Arabische Syntax*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.
- ROGLAND, Max 1999. 'A note on performative utterances in Qumran Aramaic.' *Revue de Qumrân* 19: 277–280.
- ROGLAND, Max 2000. 'The Hebrew "Epistolary Perfect" Revisited.' *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 13/2: 194–200.
- ROGLAND, Max 2001. 'Performative Utterances in Classical Syriac.' *Journal of Semitic Studies* 46: 243–250.
- ROGLAND, Max 2003a. *Alleged Non-past Uses of Qatal in Classical Hebrew*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- ROGLAND, Max 2003b. 'Remarks on the Aramaic verbal system.' In: Martin BAASTEN and Wido VAN PEURSEN (eds.) *Hamlet on a Hill*. Leuven: Peeters, 421–432.
- ROSENTHAL, Franz 1961. *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
- SANDERS, Seth 2004. 'Performative utterances and divine language in Ugaritic.' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 63/3: 161–181.
- SEARLE, John 1989. 'How performatives work.' *Linguistics and Philosophy* 12/5: 535–558.
- TAVERNIER, Jan 2018. 'Multilingualism in the Elamite Kingdoms and the Achaemenid Empire.' In: Jens BRAARVIG and Markham GELLER (eds.) *Multilingualism, Lingua Franca and Lingua Sacra*. Jena/Berlin: Edition Open Access / Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge, 307–320.
- TROPPER, Josef 2012. *Ugaritische Grammatik*. 2 ed. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- WENINGER, Stefan 2000. 'On performatives in classical Ethiopic.' *Journal of Semitic Studies* 45: 91–102.
- WRIGHT, William 1964. *A Grammar of the Arabic Language. Vol. 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

