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**Use of aspect-tense verbal  
forms in Akkadian texts  
of the Hammurapi period**

**(1792-1750 B.C.)**

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*To the memory of my mother*  
ADEL I. FURMANSKAYA (1916–1964),  
a classical archaeologist

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*Golda Kaplan*



## PREFACE

The conjugated forms traditionally named as the Present, Preterite and Perfect are the main components of the Akkadian aspect-tense verbal system. The existence of the Akkadian Perfect and the peculiarities of its usage had been the subject of lengthy discussion resulting in the section “Das Perfekt” in GAG 1952, § 80. The section was included into GAG 1995 without any serious changes.

When studying the Perfect in MA we came to the conclusion that the use of the Perfect in that dialect should have been explained a way different from that suggested by von Soden. Thus, the necessity arose to check anew the use of the Perfect at the earlier stages of the development of Akkadian. Typically, the frequency of the Perfect is different for texts of various genres. Our research of the Perfect was chiefly based on MA letters, legal and economic documents, and MA Laws. There are counterparts of such texts in OB as well, in which, however, the Perfect is used often enough only in letters, in the Laws of Eshnunna and in the Code of Hammurapi. In OB legal texts the Perfect occurs rarely (v. Huehnergard § 17.2; cf. Riftin).

For the synchronous analysis of the texts of different genres we have chosen the letters of Hammurapi and the Code of Hammurapi, since both the LH and the version of the CH that has come down to us on the stele, belong to the same period in Babylonian history, and probably come from the same source, namely, the offices of Hammurapi. During our work, when necessary, some other OB letters, and also LE were taken into account.

The Perfect being a component of the single aspect-tense verbal system, its usage was chosen to be studied along with that of the Present and Preterite in this work. When considered simultaneously Present forms and their English equivalents are underlined in broken line, Preterite forms — in one line and Perfect forms — in double line.

Footnotes' numbers most significant to the author are printed in bold.

Editions of the LH and of the CH referred to are as follows:

A. The LH (with the name of Hammurapi preserved, at least in part):

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| AbB 1     | F. R. Kraus. Briefe aus dem British Museum (CT 43 und 44). Leiden 1964, No 1.  |
| AbB 2     | R. Frankena. Briefe aus dem British Museum (LIH und CT 2—33). Leiden 1966, Nos. 1—44, 55—60, 76.                                 |
| AbB 4     | F. R. Kraus. Briefe aus dem Archive des Šamaš-ḫāzir in Paris und Oxford (TCL 7 und OECT 3). Leiden 1968, Nos. 1—42, 79—109, 166. |
| AbB 5     | F. R. Kraus. Briefe aus dem Istanbuler Museum. Leiden 1972, Nos. 135, 136, 137.  |
| AbB 8     | L. Cagni. Briefe aus dem Iraq Museum (TIM II). Leiden 1980, Nos. 19, 50, 53.   |
| AbB 9     | M. Stol. Letters from Yale. Leiden 1981, Nos. 32, 188—196.   |
| AbB 11    | M. Stol. Letters from Collections in Philadelphia, Chicago and Berkeley. Leiden 1986, Nos. 165, 166.                             |
| AbB 13    | W. H. van Soldt. Letters in the British Museum. Part 2. Leiden 1994, Nos. 5, 7-13, 15-25, 27-32, 35-36, 38-43, 46-48.            |
| ARM 2     | Archives Royales de Mari 2. Lettres diverses transcrites et traduites par Ch.-F. Jean. Paris 1950, No. 78.                       |
| ARM 6     | Archives Royales de Mari 6. Correspondance de Baḫdi-Lim transcrite et traduite par J.R. Kupper. Paris 1954, Nos. 51, 52.         |
| BB        | A. Ungnad. Babylonische Briefe aus der Zeit der Ḥammurapi-Dynastie. Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 6. Lpz. 1914, Nos. 4, 37, 45.    |
| Schileico | W. Schileico. Ein Brief Ḥammurabis aus der Kaiserlichen Ermitage zu St.Petersburg. OLZ 3. 1914, 112.                             |

Syria 19            G.Dossin. *Les archives épistolaires du palais de Mari*. Syria 19. Paris 1938, 105-126 (three LH: pp. 118-119), Nos. 1, 2, 3.

In the present work all the letters are quoted as they have been transcribed and transliterated by their editors.

B. The CH:

Borger            R.Borger. *Babylonisch-assyrische Lesestücke*. Roma 1963.  
Driver, Miles    G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles. *The Babylonian Laws*. Vol.II. Oxford 1955.  
Ungnad            A. Ungnad. *Keilschrifttexte der Gesetze Hammurapis*. Lpz. 1909.

In the present work only those parts of the CH are taken into consideration that have been preserved on the stele itself, they are: the Introduction, the Conclusion, §§ 1—65, 100—261, 263—282. In § 53 non-preserved part of the protasis has been omitted; in §§ 65, 133a non-preserved apodoses have been omitted as well. §§ 274, 275 are damaged, but the verbal forms have not suffered and the context can be easily implied.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

CH	the Code of Hammurapi
LB	Late Babylonian
LE	the Laws of Eshnunna
LH	the letters of Hammurapi
MA	Middle Assyrian
MB	Middle Babylonian
NA	Neo-Assyrian
NB	Neo-Babylonian
OA	Old Assyrian
OB	Old Babylonian
SB	Standard Babylonian
Pref.St	the Prefixal Stative
Prf	the Perfect
Prs	the Present
Prt	the Preterite
St	the Stative