

A SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTION WITH THE VERB *alāku* “GO” IN CANAANO-AKKADIAN

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Summary: A Serial Verb Construction with the Verb *alāku* “Go” in Canaano-Akkadian

This paper examines the categorial status of Canaano-Akkadian biverbal sequences built around the motion verb *alāku* “go” and their possible inclusion in the category of Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs). The evidence demonstrates that SVCs with *alāku* can at best be categorized as non-canonical and their overall grammaticalization is low. As a result, Canaano-Akkadian may be viewed as the least advanced along the grammaticalization cline of verbal serialization posited for (North-West) Semitic languages.

Keywords: Serial verb constructions – Semitic – Canaano-Akkadian – Morpho-syntax – Typology

Resumen: Una construcción verbal serial con el verbo *alāku* “ir” en canaano-acadio

Esta publicación examina el estado categorial de las secuencias biverbales canaano-acadias construidas alrededor del verbo de movimiento *alāku* “ir” y su posible inclusión en la categoría de Construcciones de Verbos en Serie (SVC). La evidencia demuestra que los SVC con *alāku* pueden, en el mejor de los casos, clasificarse como no canónicos y su gramaticalización general es baja. Como resultado, el canaano-acadio puede ser visto como el menos avanzado a lo largo de la línea de gra-

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maticalización de la serialización verbal postulada para los idiomas semíticos (del Noroeste).

Palabras clave: Construcciones de Verbos en Serie – Semítico – Canaano-acadio – Morfositaxis – Tipología.

INTRODUCTION

The present article is dedicated to biverbal sequences built around the verb *alāku* “go, come” that are attested in the language of the Canaanite El-Amarna letters (14th c. BCE) usually referred to as Canaano-Akkadian (C-A).¹ Specifically, I examine the categorial status of such sequences and their possible inclusion in the category of Serial Verb Constructions (SVC). By making use of a typological prototype-driven approach to verbal serialization,² I will test the selected C-A biverbal sequences for their compliance with the properties postulated as inherent to the SVC prototype, ultimately determining the extent of their overall canonicity. This will in turn enable me to locate Canaano-Akkadian on the grammaticalization path of verbal serialization that traverses (North-West) Semitic languages.³

¹ Izre’el 2005; 2012; Andrason and Vita 2014. Canaano-Akkadian exhibits a mixed East and North-West Semitic profile (Andrason and Vita 2014: 165). The genuine Canaanite element surfaces through mixed forms and direct glosses (Izre’el 2005; 2012: 171–172; Andrason and Vita 2014; Wilson-Wright 2019: 509). Given this mixed profile, Canaano-Akkadian is classified as a hybrid language, mixed language, interlanguage, Akkadographic Canaanite, or a dynamic combination of properties present in pidgins, *koinai*, mixed languages, and jargons (for a succinct presentation of the views regarding the linguistic status of Canaano-Akkadian consult Andrason and Vita 2014).

² Crowley 2002; Aikhenvald 2006; 2018; Dixon 2006; Bisang 2009; Andrason 2018.

³ Andrason and Vita forthcoming; Andrason and Koo forthcoming.

To achieve its goal, the article will be structured as follows: in the next section (**BACKGROUND**) I will familiarize the reader with the framework underlying my research and the scholarly literature dedicated to SVCs in Canaano-Akkadian and North-West Semitic languages more generally. Subsequently, I will present the possible cases of SVCs in Canaano-Akkadian (**EVIDENCE**). Afterwards, this evidence will be evaluated within the adopted framework (**DISCUSSION**). Lastly, I will summarize my results and suggest possible lines of future research (**CONCLUSION**).

BACKGROUND

Framework

The prototype of an SVC is defined by a set of semantic, phonological, morphological, and syntactic properties⁴ that demonstrate both the grammatical cohesiveness and non-cohesiveness of this construction.⁵

The properties listed below are non-cohesive (NC).⁶ They attest to a less unitary character of SVCs in comparison to synthetic tenses, complex predicates, and many other verbal categories:

- NC-1 the construction consists of two verbs: V_1 and V_2 ;
- NC-2 V_1 and V_2 are finite—they are inflected in person, number, and gender (PNG) and tense, aspect, and mood (TAM)—;⁷
- NC-3 V_1 and V_2 can be used outside the constructional serialized pattern as main lexical verbs “in their own right”.⁸

⁴ Crowley 2002; Aikhenvald 2006; 2018; Dixon 2006; Bisang 2009.

⁵ Andrason 2018a; 2018b.

⁶ Crowley 2002; Aikhenvald 2006: 1, 4–5; 2018; Dixon 2006: 339, 344; Meakins 2010: 3, 23; Bisang 2009: 792, 795; Andrason 2018a; 2018b: 21–22.

⁷ Inversely, the construction does not make use of nominal (verbal noun), adjectival (participle), adverbial (gerund), or other non-finite (infinitive) verbal forms.

⁸ Crowley 2002: 12.

The following ten properties are cohesive.⁹ They demonstrate the unitary constructional character of SVCs:

- C-1 V_1 and V_2 are not linked by clause-combining markers in terms of subordination, complementation, consecutivization, relativization, or coordination;
- C-2 V_1 and V_2 occur contiguously with no argument or adjunct elements separating the two verbs;
- C-3 V_1 and V_2 do not project different subject arguments; rather, the subject referents of both verbs coincide and so does their PNG inflectional marking;
- C-4 SVCs disallow duplicate roles; as a result, V_1 and V_2 do not project two object arguments separately;
- C-5 V_1 and V_2 do not exhibit two different polarity values; instead, the polarity value of an SVC is unitary;
- C-6 V_1 and V_2 do not fall under the scope of separate and duplicate operators of time, place, manner, and instrument;
- C-7 V_1 and V_2 do not exhibit conflicting TAM markers and, if analyzed literally, do not yield conflicting TAM interpretations;
- C-8 an SVC is treated in a unitary manner, *i.e.* as a holistic construction, in questions, answers to questions, and replies;
- C-9 an SVC expresses a single event rather than two events, whether consecutive or simultaneous, each conveyed separately by V_1 and V_2 ;¹⁰

⁹ Aikhenvald 2006: 1–4, 6–12, 37; 2018; Dixon 2006: 339, 344; Bisang 2009: 792–798, 801–806, 811; Andrason 2018a: 581–582; 2018b: 21–22.

¹⁰ SVCs also exhibit certain cohesive phonological properties. SVCs disallow comma intonation, contouring, or any type of bi-clausal phrasing (Aikhenvald 2006: 7–8; Dixon 2006: 339; Bisang 2009: 797). Given the nature of Canaano-Akkadian, these properties cannot be tested and will hence be omitted.

- C-10 V_1 and V_2 contribute to the semantic interpretation unevenly. One verb (a major verb) expresses the lexical type of action concerned. The other verb (a minor verb) is lexically bleached and nuances the semantics of the action expressed by the major verb in terms of direction, aspect, modality, valency (increasing or decreasing), comparison, etc.¹¹

Previous Research on SVCs in Canaano-Akkadian and Related Languages

The phenomenon of verbal serialization in general and with regard to the verb *alāku* specifically, has not been researched in Canaano-Akkadian thus far. No reference to SVCs is made in grammars and grammatical analyses of Canaano-Akkadian,¹² dictionaries,¹³ and in translations of Canaano-Akkadian letters and their commentaries.¹⁴ Sporadically, the peculiar nature of biverbal sequences with *alāku* is noticed—such structures being however classified not as SVCs but rather as adverbs.¹⁵

¹¹ The specific cohesive features listed above demonstrate the three abstract features associated with the prototype of SVCs, *i.e.* mono-predicativity, mono-clausality, and mono-eventhood (Aikhenvald 2006: 3–7, 10–12; Bisang 2009; Andrason 2018a).

¹² Sivan 1984; Rainey 1996b; 1996c; Izre’el 2005; Korchin 2008; Tropper and Vita 2010; Wilson-Wright 2019.

¹³ Knudtson 1964 [1915]; CAD A.1; AHW.

¹⁴ Moran 1992; 2003; Rainey 2015a; 2015b.

¹⁵ Dellaire 2014: 176. H. Dellaire (2014: 204) dedicates one short paragraph to what she calls “parallel/hendiadys” in Canaano-Akkadian, *i.e.* structures in which two verbs are used in parallel and represent a single event. The only example she provides (EA 19.31–32) cannot be viewed as an SVC according to the definition adopted in this paper. Moreover, this example does not reflect a Canaano-Akkadian usage because EA 19 is a letter from a Hurrian king of Mitanni.

In contrast to the scarcity of studies on verbal serialization in Canaano-Akkadian, SVCs—which especially in older literature have also been referred to by the terms such as hendiadys, pseudo-coordination, parataxis, Koppelung, or adverbials—have been researched relatively extensively in ancient and/or classical North-West (including Canaanite) and East Semitic languages. Specifically, in Biblical Hebrew,¹⁶ Ugaritic,¹⁷ Biblical Aramaic,¹⁸ Jewish-Babylonian Aramaic,¹⁹ Samaritan Aramaic,²⁰ Syriac,²¹ Mandaic,²² and Akkadian.²³ Overall, SVCs constitute a relatively pervasive component of old and/or classical Semitic languages to which Canaano-Akkadian is closely related or, given its mixed East-West profile, on which it draws. As a result, it is likely that Canaano-Akkadian too would exhibit (some types of) SVCs.

My own studies of SVCs in Semitic²⁴ demonstrate that albeit pervasive, SVCs are not evenly grammaticalized in all (North-West) Semitic languages. In general, the serializing status of a given language increases with its (*i.e.* that language's) chronological advancement—the more recent a language is the more canonical its SVCs are, and the larger the number of serializing patterns which are ex-

¹⁶ Lambdin 1971: 238–240; Dobbs-Allsopp 1995; Chrzanowski 2011; Dellaire 2014: 47–52. Minor verbs used in SVCs in Biblical Hebrew are again analyzed by Dellaire (2014) as adverbs; Andrason 2019a.

¹⁷ Tropper 2012: 895–896; Andrason and Vita forthcoming.

¹⁸ Bauer and Leander 1969 [1927]: 299, 351; Andrason and Koo forthcoming.

¹⁹ Bar-Asher Siegal 2016: 269–272.

²⁰ Vilsker 1981: 84.

²¹ Nöldeke 1904: 272–276; Arayathinal 1957–1959: 356–357.

²² Nöldeke 1875: 441–445; Macúch 1965: 449–451.

²³ Kraus 1987; Huehnergard 2005: 125–126; Streck 2014: 135–136; see also Kouwenberg 2011: 148. SVCs have also been studied in Arabic varieties (Hussein 1990; Versteegh 2008; 2009).

²⁴ Andrason 2019a; Andrason and Vita forthcoming; Andrason and Koo forthcoming.

ploited. As explained at the beginning of this paper, the El-Amarna letters date from the 14th century BCE.²⁵ Canaano-Akkadian is thus older than Ugaritic, which offers “the oldest sizeable corpus of texts in a Northwest Semitic language”²⁶ written in the 13th and 12th centuries BCE,²⁷ and Biblical Hebrew, which spans several centuries²⁸ ranging from the 11th–10th centuries BCE (Archaic Biblical Hebrew) to the 5th–4th centuries BCE (Late Biblical Hebrew) with the main bulk of available texts composed between 1000 and 550 BCE (Standard Biblical Hebrew).²⁹ Consequently, one expects the grammaticalization of SVCs in Canaano-Akkadian to be lower than in Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew. Given that the motion verbs “go” and “come” occupy the highest position on the serialization hierarchy, being serialized most frequently and most rapidly,³⁰ they are more likely to be encountered in a language whose serializing nature is hypothetically lower than verbal serialization exhibited by other closely related languages. The present study analyzes the canonicity of SVCs built around the motion verb *alāku* “go, come” in Canaano-Akkadian—one of the most typical verbs used in SVCs in North-West Semitic, whether Biblical Hebrew³¹ or Ugaritic.³²

²⁵ Andrason and Vita 2014: 156; Wilson-Wright 2019: 509.

²⁶ Pardee 2011: 460.

²⁷ Tropper and Vita 2019: 482.

²⁸ Rubin 2010: 17–16.

²⁹ Steiner 1997: 146; Rubin 2010: 16; Edzard 2011: 481. Some books or their parts date from the 3rd–2nd centuries BCE and the early Hellenistic period.

³⁰ Foley and Olson 1985; Crowley 1987; Aikhenvald 2006: 47–48.

³¹ Chrzanowski 2011; Andrason 2019a.

³² Andrason and Vita forthcoming.

EVIDENCE

In the Canaano-Akkadian corpus of the El-Amarna letters as edited by A. Rainey,³³ there are four cases in which the C-A verb *alāku* “go, come” occurs in biverbal sequences that could potentially be classified as SVCs of some, at least minimal, canonicity extent. These cases are: EA 102:15, 114:28–29, 294:32–33, and 306:13.

In all those examples, the biverbal construction with *alāku* attests to the three non-cohesive features associated with the SVC prototype. First, the construction makes use of two verbs with *alāku* invariably appearing as the first component (V_1) in the chain (NC-1). Second, V_1 and V_2 are finite and bear PNG and TAM inflectional markers (for details of the inflections see further below in this section). Inversely, in none of the examples does the biverbal construction with *alāku* exploit non-finite patterns built around verbal nouns, infinitives, or participles (NC-2). Third, the verbs employed in such bi-verbal sequences are also used outside that constructional pattern in C-A texts, thus entertaining the role of a main lexical verb (NC-3). This is true of the four V_2 verbs that arguably function as major verbs in the biverbal construction with *alāku*: *izuzzu* “stay, stand, position oneself,”³⁴ *hanû* “plead, urge,”³⁵ *arādu/urrudu* “serve,”³⁶ and *dagālu* “look (at), see, show reverence to.”³⁷ More importantly, the potential minor verb *alaku* can also appear in non-constructional uses, exhibiting its lexical value “go,” “come,” “come forth,”³⁸ as well as a range of other meaning extensions arising from those allative senses.³⁹

³³ Rainey 2015a; 2015b.

³⁴ Rainey 1996b: 53, 206–208; 2015b: 1284; Tropper and Vita 2010.

³⁵ CAD H: 83.

³⁶ CAD A.2: 220; Rainey 1996b: 148; 2015b: 1277.

³⁷ CAD D: 21; Rainey 1996b: 52; 2015b: 1279; Tropper and Vita 2010.

³⁸ Rainey 1996b: 51; 2015b: 1276; Tropper and Vita 2010.

³⁹ See Knudtzon 1964 [1915]; CAD A.1; AHW.

Compliance with the three non-cohesive properties on its own does not demonstrate the serializing status of the biverbal construction with *alāku*. Indeed, the same non-cohesive features are also typical of clause combining, *e.g.* coordination, subordination, relativization, or consecutivization. Equally—or even more—crucial for the inclusion of a biverbal pattern in the SVC category is its compliance with the cohesive profile associated with the prototype of SVCs. In the following parts of this section, I will examine the grammatical cohesiveness of the sequences with *alāku* identified as potential SVCs. Specifically, I will test their compliance with the ten cohesive properties typical of SVCs. This will enable me to determine whether the biverbal structures with *alāku* constitute cases of SVCs—either canonical or non-canonical—or, instead, whether there are sequences composed of two separate clauses.

EA 102:15⁴⁰

- (1) *a-lik-mi i-zi-iz a-na URU Šu-mu-ur / ʾaʾ-di ka-ša-ʾdiʾ-ia*⁴¹
Go and stay (take up position) in Šumur until my arrival⁴²

Example (1) is extracted from a letter written by Rib-Hadda, the ruler of the Cananean town of Byblos to the Egyptian commissioner Yanḥami. Rib-Hadda complains about Yanḥami's delay in arriving with help.

The components of the biverbal construction in (1), *i.e.* V₁ (*alik*) and V₂ (*iziz*) are not linked by clause-combining markers. Instead, they are joined asyndetically (C-1). V₁ and V₂ are contiguous with no arguments or adjunct elements placed between them (C-2).

⁴⁰ The transliterations found in examples (1–4), follow Rainey (2015a; 2015b).

⁴¹ EA 102:15–16.

⁴² Rainey 2015a: 557; similar Moran 1992: 175 and Dellaire 2014: 176.

The referent of V_1 and V_2 , *i.e.* the recipient of the orders given, is the same—Rib-Hadda, who quotes the command directed to him by Yanḫami. The PNG inflections of V_1 and V_2 coincide. In both cases, the verbs are inflected in the 2nd person singular (C-3). V_1 and V_2 do not project duplicate roles. That is, the biverbal construction analyzed here does not contain two different internal object arguments, each being governed by one of the two verbs individually (C-4). The polarity value of V_1 and V_2 is unitary, *i.e.* positive—Rib-Hadda must perform a determined action (C-5). V_1 and V_2 do not fall under the scope of separate operators of time, place, manner, or instrument. The locative operator *a-na* URU *Šu-mu-ur* “to/in Šumur” seems to apply to both verbs and thus to the construction holistically. The temporal operator *adi kašādiya* “until my arrival”⁴³ may be interpreted as operating over the entire biverbal structure or as applying to V_2 only (C-6). V_1 and V_2 do not exhibit conflicting TAM markers. Both verbs are inflected in the Imperative: *alik*⁴⁴ and *iziz* (from the irregular *izuzzu*).⁴⁵ If taken literally, the TAM interpretation of V_1 and V_2 is also analogous—both verbs function as expressions of directive modality, fully congruent with their imperative marking (C-7). The biverbal structure in (1) is not treated in a unitary manner in a reply that follows in verses 17–19. That is, after quoting Yanḫami’s speech, Rib-Hadda explains that due to hostilities, he was unable to go: *ù ú-ul i-le-’hé’! a-la-[ka]m*⁴⁶ “I was/have been unable to go.”⁴⁷ Accordingly, the speaker does not employ the other component of the biverbal sequence, the verb *izuzzu* “stay, position oneself.” Only the first component is present, *i.e.* the verb *alāku*, which is used in its literal allative sense (C-8). The eventhood of V_1 and V_2 may be inter-

⁴³ Rainey 2015a: 1146.

⁴⁴ See Rainey 1996b: 267.

⁴⁵ Rainey 1996b: 268.

⁴⁶ Rainey 2015a: 556.

⁴⁷ Moran 1992: 175; Rainey 2015a: 557.

preted in two manners. V_1 and V_2 can be understood as indicating two consecutive events: first “go” and next “stay.” This reading is possible because the recipient of the order needs to travel to Šumur—another town in Canaan. Alternatively, V_1 and V_2 can form a single event (C-9). Under the latter interpretation, V_2 functions as a major verb—it expresses the central event and exhibits its full lexical value, *i.e.* staying in one place. In contrast, V_1 functions as a minor verb—it is lexically bleached and modifies the action expressed by the major verb. When used as minor verbs in SVCs across languages, motion verbs such as “go” and “come” tend to grammaticalize, at least, one of the three types of meanings: (a) habituality and continuity; (b) inception and ingression; and (c) emphasis, urgency, and intensity.⁴⁸ The same range of meaning is exhibited by motion verbs used in SVCs in Semitic languages: Ugaritic,⁴⁹ Biblical Aramaic,⁵⁰ and Arabic.⁵¹ Given the imperative context of this example, where the pharaoh orders Rib-Hadda to take up position in Šumur, habitual/continuous and inceptive/ingressive meanings are unlikely. More plausible is the reading of *alāku* in terms of emphasis, urgency, and intensity added to the command. This analysis would be compatible with H. Dellaire’s⁵² reading of this example and her categorization of the Imperative of *alāku* as an adverb. It would also conform with the semantic interpretation of minor verbs derived from motion and postural verbs in imperatives in other Semitic languages.⁵³

Overall, the sequence *alik iziz* can be viewed as a non-canonical SVC. Most features, specifically seven, are fulfilled (C-1-7). One

⁴⁸ Aikhenvald 2006; 2018; Andrason 2018b.

⁴⁹ Andrason and Vita forthcoming.

⁵⁰ Andrason and Koo forthcoming.

⁵¹ Hussein 1990: 349–351.

⁵² Dellaire 2014: 176.

⁵³ Andrason 2019a; Andrason and Vita forthcoming; Andrason and Koo forthcoming.

feature (C-8) is violated. The compliance with one other feature (C-9) is ambiguous: the mono-eventhood of *alik iziz* is possible, although bi-eventhood is also admissible. Under a mono-event interpretation, the modal reading of V_1 in terms of emphasis, urgency, and intensity is the most plausible (C-10). As a result, the translation “go stay”—with two verbs used asyndetically and with no comma between them—proposed by Dellaire⁵⁴ seems more accurate than less cohesive renderings: asyndetic with a comma (“Go, stay”)⁵⁵ and syndetic with the linker “and” (“Go and stay”).⁵⁶ Such an asyndetic translation with the English verb *go* can be viewed as accurate since in English the verb *go* yields less canonical SVCs, particularly pervasive in imperatives.⁵⁷

EA 114:28–29

- (2) ...*a-nu-ma i-ti-lik* / ‘*ù*’ ‘*ah*’(?)*-ta-ni* ‘ÉRIN’. ‘MEŠ’ *a-na* /
[*na-ša-ri-š*]*i*...⁵⁸
Now **I went and I urged** the troops to [guard i]t⁵⁹

Example (2) is extracted from a letter in which Rib-Hadda on the one hand reports the hostilities suffered from the hand of Yapa’-Haddi and Aziru, and on the other hand, renews his plea to the pharaoh to send the troops. In the passage relevant for the *alāku* construction, Rib-Hadda addresses the pharaoh concerning the town of Šumur.

⁵⁴ Dellaire 2014: 176.

⁵⁵ Moran 1992: 175; 2003: 65.

⁵⁶ Rainey 2015a: 557.

⁵⁷ Pullum 1990; Haspelmath 2016: 298; see also Li 2015.

⁵⁸ EA 114: 28–30.

⁵⁹ Rainey 2015a: 607; see also 1996a: 79; 1996c: 93; similar CAD H: 83; Moran 1992: 188; see however Rainey 1996b: 85–86, 234: “I was going up and exhorted.”

The biverbal construction in (2) makes use of a clause combining marker *u* to link V_1 and V_2 (C-1). In Canaano-Akkadian, *u* is the most common clause-combining element and entertains a wide range of clause-combining functions—much larger than its cognate in Standard Akkadian⁶⁰ but similar to that found in North-West Semitic languages—. To be exact, *u* can introduce coordinated clauses,⁶¹ including those expressing succession,⁶² result, causal, and purpose clauses,⁶³ temporal clauses,⁶⁴ adversative clauses,⁶⁵ as well as relative clauses.⁶⁶ The two verbal components in (2) occur contiguously without any argument or adjunct element intervening between them. The element *u* does not count as separating V_1 from V_2 (C-2). The subject referents of V_1 and V_2 coincide, both being coindexed with the author of the letter—Rib-Hadda. Both verbs are also marked by analogous PNG endings—the 1st person singular of the common gender (C-3). The verbs do not govern duplicate internal arguments. The object argument 'ÉRIN'. 'MEŠ', *i.e.* *šābu* “troops,” is projected by the valency pattern inherent to V_2 (C-4). The sequence exhibits a unitary polarity value. This value is affirmative—the event(s) occurred (C-5). V_1 and V_2 do not fall under the scope of duplicate operators or adjuncts—. No operators of time, place, manner, and instrument are attested. The two operators that are present are not duplicated. The pragmatic particle (discourse marker) *anumma* “now” has both V_1 and V_2 , and thus the entire biverbal sequence, under its scope. The infinitival adjunct expressing the goal or objective *a-na* [*na-sa-ri-š*]i (*ana našārīši*) “to guard it” may also be understood as operating over V_1 and V_2 , or al-

⁶⁰ Rainey 1996c: 100.

⁶¹ Rainey 1996c: 97–100; Izre’el 2005: 69–70; Tropper and Vita 2010: 119–121.

⁶² Rainey 1996c: 105–106.

⁶³ Rainey 1996c: 101–102.

⁶⁴ Rainey 1996c: 106.

⁶⁵ Rainey 1996c: 107.

⁶⁶ Rainey 1996c: 101.

ternatively over V_2 only (C-6). According to most collations and morpho-syntactic analyses, V_1 and V_2 do not exhibit conflicting TAM markers and, hence, if analyzed literally, conflicting TAM interpretations.⁶⁷ The two verbs are apparently inflected in the Gt Preterite: *ītilik*⁶⁸—this form exhibits the highly unusual *ti* instead of *ta* (compare *attalak* typical of Standard Akkadian), a possible Assyrianism⁶⁹—and *ahtani*.⁷⁰ If taken literary, V_1 and V_2 have the same TAM interpretation, indicating punctiliar past events (C-7). However, if Rainey’s⁷¹ analysis is correct and V_1 is *i-te₉-lu*, i.e. the Gt Imperfect 1st common singular of the verb *elû* “go up, ascend,” the example in question would not attest to the identical TAM marking and interpretation. The sequence would read “I was going up and I exhorted”—with V_1 exhibiting a progressive-past value typical of the Imperfect, and V_2 exhibiting a perfective-past value typical of the Preterite.⁷² The criterion relative to questions, answers, and replays cannot be tested (C-8). The actions expressed by the two verbs can be interpreted as two consecutive events—Rib-Hadda went and next he urged. Indeed, the change of the location is presupposed as the subject had most likely been located in Byblos from where he travelled to Şumur. The biverbal sequence can however be also interpreted as a single event (C-9).⁷³ In that case, the verb *alāku* need not be interpreted literally with its lexical value but may instead function

⁶⁷ CAD H: 83; Moran 1992: 188; Rainey 2015a: 607; 2015b: 1458.

⁶⁸ CAD H: 83.

⁶⁹ Rainey 2015b: 1458.

⁷⁰ CAD H: 83.

⁷¹ Rainey 1996b: 85–86.

⁷² Rainey 1996b: 85–86. In fact, it would not constitute a case of an SVC with the verb *alāku* at all but could attest to a highly non-canonical SVC with another common verb in SVCs, *elû* “go up.”

⁷³ If V_1 is interpreted as the Imperfect of *elû*, the two verbs necessarily express two distinct, perhaps overlapping, events.

as a modifier of the action expressed by V_2 , with the allative sense being bleached. Given the possible perfective interpretation of the biverbal sequence, V_1 may emphasize the completeness of the event or express the certainty/reaffirmation of its occurrence⁷⁴—the two meaning extensions compatible with the emphatic senses of urgency and intensity, often associated with the motion verb “go” in SVCs across languages (see above) (C-10). This reading would also comply with the analysis of minor verbs of motion and posture used in perfective contexts in other North-West Semitic languages.⁷⁵ Under this mono-event analysis, *u* would not constitute a true close combining marker (e.g. coordinator). It would rather be used as an empty linker—the coordination being thus of a “pseudo” type (cf. C-1).⁷⁶

To conclude, the sequence *ītilik u aḥtani* could be viewed as a non-canonical SVC. The canonicity of this example is most likely lower than that of EA 102:15 (2), analyzed above, because feature (C-1) is violated. Five features are fulfilled (C-2-6). Features (C-7) and (C-9) are fulfilled under some analyses. Feature (C-8) cannot be tested. Within a mono-event interpretation, feature (C-10) would be fulfilled as well. Consequently, given the non-canonical status of the biverbal construction in (2) and given the presence of typologically equivalent pseudo-coordinated sequences with *go* in English,⁷⁷ the translations “I went and urged/pleaded”⁷⁸ or “I did go and urged”⁷⁹ are fully admissible.

⁷⁴ See “I did go” in Moran 1992: 188.

⁷⁵ Andrason 2019a; Andrason and Vita forthcoming; Andrason and Koo forthcoming.

⁷⁶ Pseudo-coordination is one of the non-canonical SVCs. It exhibits an element that is homophonous (or highly similar) to a conjunctive coordinator (Johannessen 1998: 48–51; Andrason 2019b: 168).

⁷⁷ Ross 1967; de Vos 2005: 20–53; Ross 2015: 75–76; Biberauer and Vikner 2017: 77–79.

⁷⁸ CAD H: 83; Rainey 2015a: 607.

⁷⁹ Moran 1992: 188.

EA 294:32–33

- (3) *šum-ma* *ˈki*-*ia-am* *yi-iq-bu* / LUGAL EN-*ia a-na ia-ši* / *iz-zi-ib-mi* URU.KI-*ka* / *iš-tu pa-ni* ¹*Pi-i-ia* / *ù lu-ú iz-zi-ba* *ù* / *ˈil*₅-*la-ka* *ù lu-ú* / *ˈur*-*ra-da* LUGAL EN-*ia* / UD.ˈKAM^V-*ma* *ù mu-ša a-di* / *ˈda*-*ri-ia-ta*⁸⁰

If thus the king, my lord, should say to me, “Abandon your city in favor of Piya,” I would verily leave and **I would come and I would truly serve** the king, my lord, day and night, forever⁸¹

Example (3) is extracted from a letter in which Zimredda, the ruler of the city of Lachish in Canaan, near Jerusalem, complains about Piya, the pharaoh’s official.⁸²

The two verbal components of the biverbal construction in (3) are connected by means of *u*, which as explained above is a typical clause-combining marker in Canaano-Akkadian and functions as a coordinator, subordinator, consecutivizer, and sporadically relativizer (C-1). The contiguity of *V*₁ and *V*₂ is violated to a certain extent only. On the one hand, no argument or adjunct elements intervene between *V*₁ and *V*₂. On the other hand, the two verbs are separated by the proclitic particle *lū* that occurs immediately before *V*₂.⁸³ However, as particles are much less disruptive elements than arguments and adjuncts, their presence need not be analyzed as triggering full non-contiguity (C-2).⁸⁴ The PNG marking of *V*₁ and *V*₂ is concordant as are their subject referents. The two verbs are inflected in the 1st person

⁸⁰ EA 294:27–35.

⁸¹ Rainey 2015a: 1137; similar Moran 1992: 337.

⁸² Rainey 2015b: 1599.

⁸³ Rainey 1996c: 193–199; Izre’el 2005: 39–41; Tropper and Vita 2010: 76–77, 115; see further below in this section.

⁸⁴ As explained above, the element *u* that is placed between *V*₁ and *V*₂ does not count for non-contiguity.

singular of the common gender⁸⁵ and refer to the author of the letter, Zimredda (C-3). V₁ and V₂ do not project two respective object arguments. There is only one object argument, LUGAL EN-*ia* (*šarra bēlīya*) “the king, my lord,” that is projected by the valency pattern of V₂ (C-4). Both verbs, and thus the entire sequence, exhibit unitary positive polarity—the event(s) will occur given the condition stated in the protasis introduced by *šumma* “if” (C-5). V₁ and V₂ do not fall under the scope of duplicated operators of time, place, manner, and instrument. The temporal operator is a complex one. It involves two nearly synonymous phrases: UD.ʾKAMVʾ-*ma ù mu-ša* (*ūma u mūša*) “day and night”⁸⁶ and *a-di ʾdaʾ-ri-ia-ta* (*adi dāriāta*) “forever.” These phrases operate over the entire construction or refer specifically to the action of serving expressed by V₂. V₁ and V₂ exhibit concordant TAM markings. V₁ *illak* is a form of the Imperfect,⁸⁷ whose sematic potential includes present, future, imperfective past, and various shades of modality.⁸⁸ An analogous TAM marking is exhibited by the form *urrad*. Moreover, the two verbs bear the venitive marker -*a* suffixed to their respective Imperfect forms, thus yielding a *yaqtula* gram, *illaka*⁸⁹ and *urrada* respectively. This venitive suffix is the reason why in English translations the verb “come” is used instead of “go” as in (1–2). If taken literally, the TAM interpretations of V₁ and V₂ are parallel. The Imperfect forms of the two verbs most likely express the idea of futurity and modality. Depending on how the particle *lū* is interpreted, modal nuances may concern probability⁹⁰ or certainty.⁹¹ Overall, V₁ and V₂ are not marked by incongruent TAM cat-

⁸⁵ For *il_s-la-ka*, consult K. Baranowski (2016: 85).

⁸⁶ Moran 2003: 283.

⁸⁷ Rainey 1996b: 51.

⁸⁸ Rainey 1996b; Tropper and Vita 2010.

⁸⁹ See Baranowski 2016: 85.

⁹⁰ See the translation with the auxiliary “would” in Rainey 2015a: 1137.

⁹¹ See the translation with the auxiliary “will” and that of *lū* as an assertive particle “of course” in Moran 1992: 337.

egories nor do they allow for conflicting TAM interpretations (C-7). The behavior of the analyzed biverbal sequence in questions, answers, and replies cannot be tested (C-8). With regard to eventhood, two interpretations are possible. On the one hand, V_1 and V_2 can be interpreted as referring to two consecutive events: coming (V_1) and serving (V_2). This literal allative reading of V_1 is warranted because the speaker presents an imaginary situation where the pharaoh requests him to abandon his current location and move elsewhere. Crucially, the idea of motion is overtly mentioned earlier in the text twice: in verse 29 (*iz-zi-ib* “leave!”) and in verse 31 (*lu-ú iz-zi-ba* “I will/would leave”). However, the biverbal sequence may also be interpreted holistically as a single event (C-9). In such a case, V_2 *urrudu* expresses the crucial event—it is used in its lexical sense “serve” and functions as the major verb—. In contrast, V_1 *alāku* assumes the role of a minor verb. It is, at least partially, bleached being used as a modifier of V_2 . It should be noted that in the sequence *ù lu-ú iz-zi-ba ù ʾil₅ʾ-la-ka ù lu-ú ʾurʾ-ra-da*, *illaka* is not headed by the particle *lū* while both *izziba* “I will/would leave” and *urrada* “I will/would serve” are. This suggests that *illaka* does not entertain the same full lexical status as the other verbs, including the major verb V_2 . Most likely, V_1 *alāku* modifies V_2 in terms of certainty or reaffirmation (C-10) (compare with example (2) EA 114:28–29 discussed above). This interpretation of the biverbal sequence implies that *u* used between V_1 and V_2 is not a genuine coordinator but rather an empty linker or a pseudo-coordinator.⁹²

Consequently, the sequence *illaka u urrada* could be regarded as a non-canonical SVC. It violates one feature (C-1); it complies

⁹² Overall, there would be only one coordinator in this example, *i.e.* the lexeme *u* that heads *illaka*. The lexeme *u* found before *lū izziba* functions as an apodosis-marked (see Rainey 1996c: 89, 102–105; cf. *weqatal* in Biblical Hebrew; van der Merwe and Naude 2017), while *u* between *illaka* and *urrada* is a pseudo-coordinator.

with five features (C-3-7); in one feature, this compliance is partial (C-2); two features can be interpreted as either fulfilled or violated (C-9-10); and one feature cannot be tested (C-8). A possible translation of this construction could be “I will/would come and serve”⁹³ which exploits a typological comparable non-canonical SVC available in English, built around the verb *come* and the pseudo-coordinator *and*.

EA 306:13

- (4) ʾal-ʾka-ʾmi ʾu [du-gu-ul pa-ni] / ʾLUGAL be-ʾli ʾ-ʾka
 Come and [view the face] of the king, your lord⁹⁴

Example (4) belongs to a letter that was sent by Shubandu, a city leader in southern Palestine, to the pharaoh.⁹⁵ In the passage that is relevant for this study, which comes immediately after the customary greetings and compliments, Shubandu recalls the pharaoh’s words quoting the monarch directly.

In the biverbal construction in (4), V₁ and V₂ are linked by *u*, which, as explained above, is the most typical clause-combining marker in Canaano-Akkadian (C-1). Except for *u* and the quotative particle *-mi*, which can be suffixed to any word in direct quotes, the two verbal elements occur contiguously. Crucially, V₁ and V₂ are not separated by arguments or adjuncts (C-2). V₁ and V₂ refer to the same person, *i.e.* Shubandu whom the pharaoh addresses in his letter (quoted in turn in Shubandu’s letter back to the pharaoh). The PNG marking of the two verbs is also congruent—the 2nd person singular masculine (C-3). V₁ and V₂ do not project two internal arguments

⁹³ See Moran 1992: 337

⁹⁴ Rainey 2015a: 1165; similar Moran 1992: 344.

⁹⁵ Rainey 2015b: 1607.

separately. There is only one object argument [*pa-ni*] ‘LUGAL’ *be-’li* ‘-ka’ (*pani šarri bēlīka*) “the face of the king, your lord” projected by the valency of V_2 (C-4). The polarity value of the two verbs is identical, *i.e.* positive (C-5). V_1 and V_2 do not fall under the scope of separate operators of time, place, manner, and instrument. In fact, no operators are present in the analyzed example (C-6). V_1 and V_2 are marked for the same TAM category, the Imperative: *alkami*⁹⁶ and *dugul* “view, see, look.”⁹⁷ If analyzed literally, the TAM interpretations of V_1 and V_2 are also analogous, both forms expressing a direct command (C-7). As in examples (2–3) above, the text does not enable me to test the treatment of the biverbal construction with *alāku* in questions, answers, and replies (C-8). The event interpretation of V_1 and V_2 is ambiguous. V_1 and V_2 can express two separate consecutive events: first coming to the pharaoh’s palace and next viewing his face. This two-event reading is possible because the addressee of the order given by the pharaoh is indeed in a different city and seeing the pharaoh would require a change of location and thus a motion. However, V_1 and V_2 may also express a single event. Under this reading, both V_1 and V_2 contribute to the semantic interpretation, although unevenly. The crucial event, *i.e.* “seeing the king’s face”⁹⁸ or more idiomatically “paying homage to the king”⁹⁹ is expressed by V_2 *dugul*, which functions as a major verb and expresses the lexical type of action that needs to be performed. In contrast, V_1 functions as a minor verb and modifies the lexical meaning of V_2 . Accordingly, the literal allative sense is bleached—the verb carries instead the meaning of insistence, urgency, intensity and, perhaps, impatience—senses that are commonly associated with SVCs built around motion verbs such

⁹⁶ In *alkami*, the Imperative is accompanied by the venitive marker *-a(m)* and quotative particle *-mi*; Rainey 1996b: 267.

⁹⁷ See Rainey 1996b: 266.

⁹⁸ Rainey 2015a: 1165.

⁹⁹ Moran 1992: 344.

as “go” and “come.” In this interpretation, the lexeme *u* would function as an empty linker and the *u* structure would attest to pseudo-coordination rather than true coordination.

To conclude, the biverbal sequence in (4) likely constitutes a case of a non-canonical SVC. One feature is violated (C-1). Six features are fulfilled (C-2-7). One feature cannot be tested (C-8). Lastly, two features can be interpreted in two different manners (C-9-10). As was the case of example (3), the non-canonical, pseudo-coordinating SVC built around the verb “*come*” and the linker “*and*” is a useful alternative when translating this construction into English.

DISCUSSION

The evidence presented in the previous section demonstrates that Canaano-Akkadian may have included in its verbal repertory an SVC built around the motion verb *alāku*. However, the canonicity of this serializing construction and its overall grammaticalization are low.

With regard to its canonicity, no cases of full compliance with the SVC prototype are attested. Instead, in all the examples, the biverbal sequence with *alāku* violates at least some of the prototypical features. The typical violations involve: the presence of the element *u*, homophonous with the C-A clause-combining marker (C-1-3x) and the non-unitary treatment of the *alāku* construction in replies (C-8-1x). Crucially, all examples can be interpreted in terms of both bi-eventhood and mono-eventhood. In the former case, the structure would not be an SVC but a mere combination of two clauses. In the latter case, it would be an SVC with *alāku* functioning as a minor verb that modifies the action expressed by the major verb. Two types of meaning could be associated with that minor-verb function: a modal meaning in terms of emphasis, urgency, and intensity (typical with the Imperative) or, alternatively, certainty and reaffirmation; and an aspectual meaning in terms of completeness. With regard to its

overall grammaticalization status, the SVC with *alāku* is compatible with major verbs characterized by different lexical value (postural verbs, activity verbs, and perception verbs) and may be used in different TAM categories (Imperative, Preterite, and Imperfect). Nevertheless, no cases of the 3rd person subjects are attested, and the total number of the examples is highly limited. It is thus unlikely that the SVC with *alāku* was a frequent and well-entrenched grammatical device in Canaano-Akkadian.

The above results are consistent with the hypothesized advancement of Canaano-Akkadian on the serialization cline of (North-West) Semitic languages. In Canaano-Akkadian, even with regard to SVCs built around motion verbs with the meaning “go, come”—which are the most propitious to be grammaticalized in SVCs across languages—the serializing pattern attested is non-canonical and grammaticalized to a limited extent. As predicted, Canaano-Akkadian seems to be less advanced in its serialization than Ugaritic, Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Aramaic, and later Aramaic varieties. In fact, it would be the least serializing language in the North-West Semitic branch.

Apart from confirming the correlation between the chronological and grammatical advancement with regard to verbal serialization in (North-West) Semitic languages, the present research corroborates certain tendencies observed in SVCs in that language group. First, SVCs tend to exhibit a more canonical profile and thus grammaticalize more quickly in imperative contexts.¹⁰⁰ Second, minor verbs used in SVCs regularly appear as V₁.¹⁰¹ Third, minor verbs derived from verbs of motion exhibit similar senses in SVCs, typically modal and aspectual.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Andrason 2019a; Andrason and Koo forthcoming.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Andrason 2019a; Andrason and Vita forthcoming; Andrason and Koo forthcoming; see also Dobbs-Allsopp 1995.

¹⁰² Cf. Andrason and Vita forthcoming; Andrason and Koo forthcoming.

CONCLUSION

The present paper examined the categorial status of biverbal sequences built around the motion verb *alāku* “go” and their possible inclusion in the category of SVCs. The evidence demonstrates that such sequences fail to comply fully with the SVC prototype. Therefore, they may at best be viewed as non-canonical SVCs. The overall grammaticalization of SVCs with *alāku* is also low. All of this is consistent with the grammaticalization cline of verbal serialization postulated for (North-West) Semitic languages: being the oldest attested variety, Canaano-Akkadian is the least advanced on the path. However, to ultimately confirm, or refine, this conclusion, a more comprehensive study is necessary. In that prospective study, biverbal sequences built around all types of verbs will be analyzed.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AHW = MEISSNER, B. and W. VON SODEN. 1985. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. Vol 1. A – L. Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz.
- CAD H = GELB, I., T. JACOBSEN, B. LANDSBERGER and A.L. OPPENHEIM. 1956. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of University of Chicago*. Vol. 6. Chicago, The Oriental Institute.
- CAD D = GELB, I., T. JACOBSEN, B. LANDSBERGER and A.L. OPPENHEIM. 1959. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of University of Chicago*. Vol. 3. Chicago, The Oriental Institute.
- CAD A.1 = GELB, I., B. LANDSBERGER, A.L. OPPENHEIM and E. REINER. 1964. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of University of Chicago*. Vol. 1. Part I. Chicago, The Oriental Institute.

CAD A.2 = CIVIL, M., I. GELB, B. LANDSBERGER, A.L. OPPENHEIM and E. REINER. 1968. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of University of Chicago*. Vol. 1. Part II. Chicago, The Oriental Institute.

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