Besides the routine aspects of morphology in the suffix conjugation, there are a number of special hybrid features in the EA texts from Canaan which caught the attention of scholars from the very beginning. After a century of research, in classical Akkadian, in the peripheral dialects, and in NWS languages, it is possible to place these special phenomena in proper perspective. This chapter will attempt to trace the processes at work in the EA texts from Canaan which produced these unusual formations.

THE PREFORMATIVE STATIVES

One of the special features of Akkadian syntax that was unknown to the pioneer students of the EA tablets is the existence of a group of verbs, some defective, that generally lack a real stative conjugation but whose prefix forms function syntactically as statives (GAG:102, §78b; Hecker 1968:122, §74a). Of the eight verbs in this category, ukal, the present-future of kullu, meaning "to hold," does not occur in the WS texts from EA, and neither does isqallal, the present-future of šuqallulu "to hang." Though uqa"a, the present-future of qu22ù "to expect," can have this function (Hecker loc. cit.), it appears in the Canaanite texts only in the WS indicative imperfect: 1st c.s. ú-qa-mu "I am awaiting" (EA 136:38); 3rd m.pl. tu-qa-ú-na "(they) are awaiting" (EA 195:20; in EA 73:20 and EA 129:54, the reading is tu-bal-ú-na, Rainey 1973c:262). That such indicatives are specifically differentiated from the tenseless stative function will become obvious in the treatment of other verbs in this group.

isù. One of the defective verbs included here is isù, which is nevertheless transitive in Akkadian and means "to have." Such standard usage can be found in the non-WS letters from EA, e.g.
ù GUŠKIN ša-nu-ú ma-2-du ša pa-tā la i-šu-ú "and much other gold that had no limit" (EA 27:28).

However, Ebeling (1915:1430) and Moran (1950a:9; 1987b:242; 1992:138) suggested that the two occurrences of this verb in Byblos expressed a meaning and a syntactic function identical to the existential particles of Hebrew (yēš) and Ugaritic (iš = *šî, šêši).

i-na LUGAL šar-ri / ša i-šu-ú i-na URUšu-mu-ur / ba-al-tā-at
URUGub-la "Byblos is sustained by the king's commissioner whom he (the king) has in Šumur" (EA 68:19-21).

Ebeling and Moran render here, "the king's commissioner who is in Šumur." However, this interpretation is not very attractive because the very next sentence achieves their meaning without the use of išū:

a-nu-ma 1Pa-ša-am-[na]-ta / LUGAL ša i-na1 / URUšu-mu-ur1 "Now, Paḥamnata, the king's commissioner who is in Šumur" (EA 68:22-24).

The second passage which Ebeling and Moran adduce looks on the surface as if it might support their view. If išū were transitive here, then there would be no need for the dative complement, anā yāšī.

[i]1 -1-de dNIN / ša URUGub-la šum-ma 1i?-šu / URUDUMES ū

The word 1i?-šu is written on the edge of the tablet and Schroeder's copy shows the beginning of the i sign. Even though he does not show much space after the first part of the i, it is not impossible that the original reading was 1i1-[ba]-šu, or else we should read 1i1-[ba]-šu. In the Byblos correspondence and