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A Study of the Verb System in the Sistani Dialect of Persian

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University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran

Abstract
The Sistani dialect, though a dialect of Persian, displays its own manifestations of morpho-syntactic categories on the verb form. The purpose of this article is to investigate the verb system of the Sistani dialect as spoken in Sistan based on linguistic fieldwork carried out in the village Sekuhe (locally known as Sakvâ) and provide a synchronic description of its verb structure and the realization of verbal morpho-syntactic categories including agreement, tense, aspect, mood, and voice. The oral texts used as linguistic data, which compose the corpus for describing and analysing the given morpho-syntactic categories for verbs in the Sistani dialect, were extracted from the free speech of 10 males and 10 females between the ages of 7 and 85 with different social backgrounds living in Sekuhe. The findings of the present study show that the Sistani dialect employs what are basically its own morpho-syntactic elements to manifest agreement, tense, aspect, and voice in its verb system.

1. Introduction
The Sistani dialect, a variety of Persian which belongs to the south-western group of Iranian languages (Windfuhr, 1989: 248, Bearman et al., 2003: 427), is spoken in Sistan in northern Sistan and Baluchestan province in the southeast of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Farah and Nimruz provinces of Afghanistan; Sarakhs in Turkmenistan; and in some regions of Iran including the town of Zahedan, Mazandaran province, Golestan province, and the towns of Mashhad and Sarakhs in the Razavi Khorasan province, where a great number of migrant native speakers of the Sistani dialect (henceforth SD) live.

Whereas there are some works on aspects of the verb system of some varieties of SD spoken in Iran such as Zabol or the central region (e.g. Lazard, 1974; Mohamadi Khomak, 1379[2000]), Adimi (e.g. Dusti, 1380[2001]), Posht-e Ab (e.g. Oveisi, 1374[1995]), Shahraki-Narui and Miyankangi (e.g. Kadkhoda (1388[2010]), a comprehensive morpho-syntactic study of the verb system of this dialect as a whole has not yet been undertaken. This article is an attempt to investigate some significant morpho-syntactic categories of the verb system of SD as spoken in Sistan in northern Sistan and Baluchestan province in the southeast of Iran.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Prof. Donald Stilo, Prof. Carina Jahani, Dr. Agnes Korn, Dr. Serge Axenov, Dr. Erik Anonby, and Dr. Simin Karimi for their great contributions and useful comments during the preparation of this article. I also appreciate all the language consultants who greatly contributed to data collection, particularly Ali Jan Ahangar, Mohammad Hossein Ahangar, Hossein Ahangar, and Ali Khosravi.

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The morpho-syntactic study of the verb system of SD includes agreement, tense, aspect, and mood as categories intrinsically associated with the verb as well as voice as a relational category. Though the author himself is a speaker of SD, the linguistic data have also been collected from the free speech of 10 male and 10 female language consultants between the ages of 7 and 85 with different social backgrounds living in the village of Sekuhe in the Shib-e Ab\textsuperscript{2} region. Sekuhe is located 30 kilometres southwest of the town of Zabol in Sistan. The speech recorded consists of life stories, folktales and oral texts concerning wedding ceremonies, mourning ceremonies, cooking procedures, telling memories, etc. The oral texts extracted were phonologically transcribed and then the morpho-syntactic categories under investigation were studied and described.

The phonemic inventory of SD consists of 22 consonants: \( p, b, t, d, k, g, \hat{\text{q}}, f, v, s, z, \dot{\varepsilon}, \varepsilon, j, m, l, r, y \); 11 simple vowels as shown below, and the diphthong \( ou \) (see also: Ahangar, 1382\textsuperscript{[2003]})\textsuperscript{3}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel phonemes in SD</th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>( \text{i} )</td>
<td>( \text{u} )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-mid</td>
<td>( \text{ê} )</td>
<td>( \text{â} )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-mid</td>
<td>( \text{e} )</td>
<td>( \text{a} )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>( \text{â} )</td>
<td>( \text{â} )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This article is composed of an introduction followed by two main sections and a conclusion. Section 2 illustrates the verbal morpho-syntactic categories of the SD verb system as well as the way tense, aspect, and mood are realized in verb forms. Section 3 deals with the syntactic manifestation of voice as a relational category in this dialect.

\textsuperscript{2} Shib-e Ab is one of the five geographical regions of Sistan, namely: (1) Zabol or central region, (2) Miyankangi region, (3) Shahra\-ki-Narui region, (4) Poshi-e Ab region, and (5) Shib-e Ab region.

\textsuperscript{3} Since the status of the glottal stop /\( \hat{\text{q}}/\) as a phoneme in initial position in SD as well as standard Persian is controversial (see also: Okati, 2008; Okati, Ahangar, and Jahani 2009), it will be omitted from the transcription in this article.

\textsuperscript{4} The author checked the short vowel \( u \) and the long vowel \( \bar{u} \) articulation with Prof. Donald Stilo, (at the Summer School workshop held at Kiel university, Germany, August, 2007), and also with Dr. Erik Anonby (during his visit to the Sistan and Baluchestan University, June, 2008); both considered them as back but close to central vowels. In fact, these vowels are phonologically back vowels in the data from Sekuhe, although they are typically realized as high central vowels. Furthermore, Lazard (1974) identifies only one high back vowel \( u \) [\( \bar{u} \)]. Barjasteh Delfonuz (1375[1996]), Oveis\( i \) (1374[1995]), Omrani, (1375[1996]), Dusti (1380[2001]), and Ahangar (1382[2003]) have already considered them phonologically as high back vowels, too. Of course, Okati (2008) and Okati, Ahangar, Jahani (2009) regard \( u \) phonologically as a central vowel in SD (the data are not from Sekuhe). Generally speaking, it seems that \( u \) in SD spoken in Iran is phonologically unstable. The author believes that phonological fronting of this vowel in Sistani varieties from back to central is a matter of degree and is subject to continuum. While it is back in some regions, it is close to central or central in other parts of Sistan.
2. Investigation of verbal morpho-syntactic categories of SD

Tense, aspect, and mood (TAM), as the main inherent morpho-syntactic categories, are commonly manifested in the verbal inflection of languages (Haspelman, 2002; Tallerman, 2005; Katamba and Stonham, 2006).

Tense as the “grammaticalised expression of location in time” (Comrie, 1985:9) displays a deictic relation between the time of the predication, i.e., the event, state, process, or action referred to in the sentence/utterance and the speech time. Hence, tense expresses whether the predication is realized prior to (past tense), contemporaneous with (present tense), or subsequent to (future tense) the speech time. Different languages make various tense distinctions. While some languages make a tripartite tense distinction including past, present, and future (e.g. Swahili), some make only a binary distinction between past and non-past (present-future) tenses (Katamba and Stonham, 2006: 238). Languages may also distinguish absolute tense, taking the speech time as its deictic centre, from relative tense, taking another point in time than the speech time as its deictic centre (Comrie, 1985: 18–23).

Aspect highlights the nature of the predication essentially in terms of its ‘internal temporal constituency’ (Comrie, 1976: 3). The imperfective aspect explicitly refers to the internal temporal structure of a predication as habitual, continuous, progressive, ingressive, etc., while the perfective aspect shows completed predications with no explicit reference to their temporal constituency (see: Comrie, 1976; Lyons, 1977; Katamba and Stonham, 2006).

Mood, “which is concerned with the status of the proposition that describes the event” (Palmer, 2001:1), indicates the possibility, permissibility, necessity, desirability, probability, etc. of the predication. The category of modality can be divided into epistemic modality, which “expresses the speaker’s judgement about the factual state of the proposition” (Palmer, 2001: 8), and deontic modality which “refers to the permission or prohibition imposed on an actor to undertake an act” (Ziegler, 2006: 261–262). In addition, more kinds of mood have also been presented, e.g. potential mood indicating that something is possible, evidential mood used in hearsay reports where the speaker cannot personally vouch for the truthfulness of a statement, and a debitive mood used to express physical or moral obligation (Katamba and Stonham, 2006: 240). Languages tend to distinguish between different kinds of modality morpho-syntactically. In this respect, languages often differentiate between actual and hypothetical events (Tallerman, 2005). The mood used for the former is termed indicative, marking the events as “realsis” and the mood used for the latter is termed as subjunctive, marking the event as “irrealis” (see e.g. Palmer, 2001: 148–149).

SD makes a basic non-past versus past distinction highlighted by the two existing non-past (present) versus past verb stems. The former is used in forming simple non-past (simple present-future), non-past progressive/ingressive (present progressive), present subjunctive, and imperative verb forms, while the latter is employed in making up simple perfective past (simple past), past progressive/ingressive, present perfect, present perfect progressive, past perfect, plu-past perfect, plu-past perfect progressive verb forms. In SD, there is no morphological form to indicate future
time reference. The non-past tense is used both for present and future time reference. Nevertheless, the auxiliaries *kma*/kmou/mou and *xâ*, the last of which is the shortened form of the Persian *xâstan* (to want) in its auxiliary function, are used to express the predication in future time reference. Hence, the verb system of SD displays a two-way opposition, and within this opposition there are subdivisions based on aspectual and modal distinctions.

In the following, the morpho-syntactic categories in the verb forms of SD will be provided, and their most common usages will be illustrated from the data collected for this investigation.

### 2.1 Verbal constituents

#### 2.1.1 Prefixes

##### 2.1.1.1 The prefix /mē-/

The prefix /mē-/, depending on whether the non-past or past verb stem is attached, is used in composing verb forms signifying simple non-past or simple present-future (2.2.1.1), non-past progressive/ingressive (2.2.1.2), past progressive/ingressive (2.2.1.5), present perfect progressive (2.2.1.7), and plu-past perfect progressive (2.2.1.10). Depending on the phonetic contexts, it has different realizations: [mē-], [m-], [me-], and [mi-].

a. The verb prefix /mē-/ changes to [m-] when the stem starts with a single consonant, as in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple non-past</th>
<th>Present perfect progressive</th>
<th>Plu-past perfect progressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>m-pâz-o</em> ‘I bake, cook’</td>
<td><em>m-poxt-â</em></td>
<td><em>m-poxt-adâ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m-dôs-o</em> ‘I milk’</td>
<td><em>m-doxt-â</em></td>
<td><em>m-doxt-adâ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m-gêz-o</em> ‘I sieve, sift’</td>
<td><em>m-gext-â</em></td>
<td><em>m-gext-adâ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m-sâz-o</em> ‘I make, build’</td>
<td><em>m-sâxt-â</em></td>
<td><em>m-sâxt-adâ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m-sâm-o</em> ‘I imbibe, guzzle’</td>
<td><em>m-šâm-âd-o</em></td>
<td><em>m-šâm-âd-adâ</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such a phonotactic arrangement of the consonants gives rise to a two-consonant initial cluster, which is common in SD.

Whenever the verb stem begins with a vowel, the semi-vowel *y* appears as a hiatus filler between the prefix [mē-]/[m-] and the initial vowel of the stem, e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple non-past</th>
<th>Past progressive</th>
<th>Present perfect progressive</th>
<th>Plu-past perfect progressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>m-y-â-o</em> ‘I come’</td>
<td><em>m-y-omad-o</em></td>
<td><em>m-y-omd-â</em></td>
<td><em>m-y-omd-adâ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m-y-âšn-o</em> ‘I hear’</td>
<td><em>m-y-âšnid-o</em></td>
<td><em>m-y-âšnid-â</em></td>
<td><em>m-y-âšnid-ad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>m-y-âr-o</em> ‘I bring’</td>
<td><em>mê-y-ârd-o</em></td>
<td><em>mê-y-ârd-â</em></td>
<td><em>mê-y-ârd-ad</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 The function word *kma*, which has *kmou* and *mou* as free variations, is used in SD as an auxiliary and basically expresses expectancy of the predication being realized in the future. The older generation employs it to express both expectation and futurity depending on the discoursal context. However, nowadays, it is widely used as a future marker by the younger generation, with no attention to its basic meaning. When used as a future marker, it corresponds to the verb *xâstan* in Persian in its auxiliary function to form the future tense of a verb.

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These data reveal that the main difference between verbs with the prefix [m-] and those with [mē-] is based on the special stress position each group takes. The primary stress in the verbs with [m-] is on the first syllable of the stem and not on the prefix. In verbs with [mē-], the primary stress is on the prefix itself.

b. There are some examples where the prefix /mē-/ is manifested as [mē-]:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{Simple non-past} & \text{Past progressive} \\
\text{mē-dā ‘I give’} & \text{mē-dād-o} \\
\text{mē-g-o ‘I say, tell’} & \text{mē-gof-o} \\
\text{mē-š-ā ‘I become’} & \text{mē-šad-o} \\
\text{mē-r-ā ‘I go’} & \text{mē-raft-o}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{(3)}\]

There are some examples where the prefix /mē-/ is manifested as [mē-]:

\[\text{(3) Simple non-past}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mē-dā ‘I give’} & \text{mē-dād-o} \\
\text{mē-g-o ‘I say, tell’} & \text{mē-gof-o} \\
\text{mē-š-ā ‘I become’} & \text{mē-šad-o} \\
\text{mē-r-ā ‘I go’} & \text{mē-raft-o}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Past progressive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mē-dā ‘I give’} & \text{mē-dād-o} \\
\text{mē-g-o ‘I say, tell’} & \text{mē-gof-o} \\
\text{mē-š-ā ‘I become’} & \text{mē-šad-o} \\
\text{mē-r-ā ‘I go’} & \text{mē-raft-o}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Past progressive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mē-dā ‘I give’} & \text{mē-dād-o} \\
\text{mē-g-o ‘I say, tell’} & \text{mē-gof-o} \\
\text{mē-š-ā ‘I become’} & \text{mē-šad-o} \\
\text{mē-r-ā ‘I go’} & \text{mē-raft-o}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Past progressive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mē-dā ‘I give’} & \text{mē-dād-o} \\
\text{mē-g-o ‘I say, tell’} & \text{mē-gof-o} \\
\text{mē-š-ā ‘I become’} & \text{mē-šad-o} \\
\text{mē-r-ā ‘I go’} & \text{mē-raft-o}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Present perfect progressive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mē-dā ‘I give’} & \text{mē-dād-o} \\
\text{mē-g-o ‘I say, tell’} & \text{mē-gof-o} \\
\text{mē-š-ā ‘I become’} & \text{mē-šad-o} \\
\text{mē-r-ā ‘I go’} & \text{mē-raft-o}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Plu-past perfect progressive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mē-dā ‘I give’} & \text{mē-dād-o} \\
\text{mē-g-o ‘I say, tell’} & \text{mē-gof-o} \\
\text{mē-š-ā ‘I become’} & \text{mē-šad-o} \\
\text{mē-r-ā ‘I go’} & \text{mē-raft-o}
\end{array}
\]

The reason why the prefix /mē-/ becomes [me-] and not [m-] in the examples given in (4) is that clusters of three initial consonants do not exist in SD. As to the change of /mē-/ into [me-], there is an exception regarding the verb mālidā ‘to rub’ beginning with one consonant: me-māl-o ‘I rub’.

c. The prefix /mē-/ is realized as [me-] in verbs with stems beginning with two-consonant clusters. For example:

\[\text{(4) Simple non-past}\]

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{me-ston-o ‘I buy’} & \text{me-stond-o} & \text{me-ston-dā} & \text{me-stond-adā} \\
\text{me-frōšt-o ‘I sell’} & \text{me-frōxt-o} & \text{me-frōxt-ā} & \text{me-frōxt-adā} \\
\text{me-gzāšt-o ‘I forgive’} & \text{me-gzāšt-o} & \text{me-gzāšt-ā} & \text{me-gzāšt-adā}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Past progressive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{me-ston-o ‘I buy’} & \text{me-stond-o} & \text{me-ston-dā} & \text{me-stond-adā} \\
\text{me-frōšt-o ‘I sell’} & \text{me-frōxt-o} & \text{me-frōxt-ā} & \text{me-frōxt-adā} \\
\text{me-gzāšt-o ‘I forgive’} & \text{me-gzāšt-o} & \text{me-gzāšt-ā} & \text{me-gzāšt-adā}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Present perfect progressive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{me-ston-o ‘I buy’} & \text{me-stond-o} & \text{me-ston-dā} & \text{me-stond-adā} \\
\text{me-frōšt-o ‘I sell’} & \text{me-frōxt-o} & \text{me-frōxt-ā} & \text{me-frōxt-adā} \\
\text{me-gzāšt-o ‘I forgive’} & \text{me-gzāšt-o} & \text{me-gzāšt-ā} & \text{me-gzāšt-adā}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Plu-past perfect progressive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{me-ston-o ‘I buy’} & \text{me-stond-o} & \text{me-ston-dā} & \text{me-ston-adā} \\
\text{me-frōšt-o ‘I sell’} & \text{me-frōxt-o} & \text{me-frōxt-ā} & \text{me-frōxt-adā} \\
\text{me-gzāšt-o ‘I forgive’} & \text{me-gzāšt-o} & \text{me-gzāšt-ā} & \text{me-gzāšt-adā}
\end{array}
\]

The reason why the prefix /mē-/ becomes [me-] and not [m-] in the examples given in (4) is that clusters of three initial consonants do not exist in SD. As to the change of /mē-/ into [me-], there is an exception regarding the verb mālidā ‘to rub’ beginning with one consonant: me-māl-o ‘I rub’.

d. The realization of the prefix /mē-/ as [mi-] is only seen in the word mi-jjā-o ‘I run, escape’.

2.1.1.2 The prefix [b-]
The prefix /b-/ is used in verb forms of simple perfective past (2.2.1.4), present subjunctive (2.2.2.1.1), and imperative (2.2.2.3). This prefix, according to the phonetic environment where it occurs, is manifested as [b-], [ba-], [be-], [bo-], [bi-], [p-], or [ø-].

\[\text{Simple perfective past}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{b-tākond-o ‘I shook’} & \text{b-tak-o ‘p-tak-o} \\
\text{b-dād-o ‘I gave’} & \text{b-da-o} \\
\text{b-zad-o ‘I hit’} & \text{b-zan-o} \\
\text{b-gāš-o ‘I searched/I revolved’} & \text{b-gārd-o}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Present subjunctive}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{b-tākond-o ‘I shook’} & \text{b-tak-o ‘p-tak-o} \\
\text{b-dād-o ‘I gave’} & \text{b-da-o} \\
\text{b-zad-o ‘I hit’} & \text{b-zan-o} \\
\text{b-gāš-o ‘I searched/I revolved’} & \text{b-gārd-o}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{Imperative (2SG)}\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{b-tākond-o ‘I shook’} & \text{b-tak-o ‘p-tak-o} \\
\text{b-dād-o ‘I gave’} & \text{b-da-i ‘p-da-ē} \\
\text{b-zad-o ‘I hit’} & \text{b-zan-i} \\
\text{b-gāš-o ‘I searched/I revolved’} & \text{b-gārd(-ak) ‘p-gārd(-ak)}
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{When the stem begins with a voiceless consonant, the prefix /b-/ undergoes voicing assimilation and becomes [p-]. Both forms exist in SD.}\]

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If a verb starts with a vowel, the semi-vowel y appears as a hiatus filler between the prefix /b-/ and the initial vowel of the stem, as in the following examples:

(6)  
Simple perfective past | Present subjunctive | Imperative (2SG)  
---|---|---  
b-y-ârd-o ‘I brought’ | b-y-ar-o | b-y-âr(-ak) ~ b-y-ar-i  
b-y-âmad-o ‘I came’ | b-y-a-o | b-y-â (~ b-ya-i)

b. If the verb stem begins with initial two-consonant clusters, the prefix /b-/ manifests as [ba-], [be-], [p-], or [bi], as in the examples below:

(7)  
Simple perfective past | Present subjunctive | Imperative (2SG)  
---|---|---  
ba-šnāst-o ‘I sat’ | ba-ršin-o | ba-ršin(-ak) ~ ba-ršin-i  
ba-stond-o ‘I bought, caught’ | ba-ston-o | ba-ston(-ak) ~ ba-ston-i  
ba-škāst-o ‘I broke’ | ba-škano | ba-škano(-ak) ~ ba-škan-i  
ba-člāxud-o ~ pčlāxud-o ‘I seized’ | ba-člāx-o | ba-člāx(-ak) ~ ba-člāx-i  
be-št-o ‘I put, allowed’ | be-ll-o | be-ll(-ak) ~ be-ll-i

c. The realization of the prefix /b-/ as [bi-] is only seen with the verb ķastā ‘to run, to escape’, as in: simple perfective past: bi-ǰāst-o ~ bi-ǰāst-o ‘I ran, escaped’, present subjunctive: bi-ǰā-o ~ b-ǰa-o ‘if I run, escape’, imperative: bi-ǰā-ak ~ bi-ǰi ko(n-i) ‘(you) run, escape’.

d. If the initial consonant of the verb stem is one of the consonants: [p, b, f, v], the prefix /b-/ appears as the zero morph [ø-], because of the phonotactic constraints on totally or partially homorganic sounds. For instance:

(8)  
Simple perfective past | Present subjunctive | Imperative (2SG)  
---|---|---  
bard-o ‘I took, carried, won’ | bar-o | bār(-ak) ~ bar-i  
pax-o ‘I baked, burnt’ | paz-o | paz(-ak) ~ paz-i  
fāmid-o ‘I understood, knew’ | fām-o | fām(-ak) ~ fām-i  
vārdšt-o ‘I picked’ | vārdar-o | vārdā(r)-i ~ vārdar-i

2.1.3 Negation marker
All verbs with both indicative and subjunctive modality in SD are negated by the prefix /n-/ which is realized as [n-], [na-], or [ne-]. For example, the negative forms of the infinitives dādā ‘to give’, goftā ‘to say’, are ndādā ‘not to give’, ngoftā ‘not to say’, respectively. The negative simple non-past form of the verb dādā for the first person singular is nmedā ‘I do not give’ and its subjunctive becomes ndād/ndao. The negative simple non-past form of the verb goftā for the first person singular is nmego and its subjunctive form is nago. Also, the negative simple perfective past form of the verb stā ‘to put, to allow’ is nēsto for the first person singular and its subjunctive negative form is nello, to provide some examples. Two-part verbs take the negative prefix on the verbal element, as in dur

Orientalia Suecana LIX (2010)
nkardā 'not to separate', ngâ nkardā 'not to look at, not to watch', jâr nazdâ ‘not to hawk, not to proclaim’, etc.

Moreover, the negative form of verbs in SD is also used to indicate an emphatic positive meaning. In this case, these verbs bear the sentence stress and the sentence in turn takes the form of a rhetorical question, as in the example below:

(9) čē ke zēr xendây n-kend-ē sa metr-a
   well.INDF that under moat NEG.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b) three COP.PRES.3SG
   ‘The well that they have dug (lit. have not dug?) in the moat is three meters deep.’

2.1.2 Stems

2.1.2.1 The non-past stem of the verb

The analysis of the data shows that two kinds of non-past stems are derived from the infinitive in SD: (a) regular non-past stems undergoing no phonetic modifications; (b) irregular non-past stems which include two sub-classes: (1) weak suppletive stems, i.e., the stems with vowel and/or consonant modifications, and (2) strong suppletive stems, i.e., the stems with a total phonetic modification.

a. Regular non-past stems

This group of verb stems is derived simply by omitting the infinitive marker -(i)dā(n),7 -tā(n) in non-causative verbs, or -ondā(n) in causative verbs, without any phonetic modifications of the verb form. For instance:

(10) Infinitive          Non-past stem          Simple non-past (1SG)
        borrhīdā ‘to cut’          borrh          mborrh-o
        ārdā ‘to bring, to fetch’   ār            myār-o
        stondā ‘to buy, to take’   ston          meston-o
        čarrīdā ‘to revolve, to turn’ čarrx       mčarrx-o
        kotīdā ‘to grind, to hit’   kott            mkott-o
        darrīdā ‘to tear, to rend’  darr          mdarr-o
        čallīdā ‘to tear, to cut’   čall          mčall-o
        lāxīsīdā ‘to slip, to slide’ lāxš           mlāxš-o
        parondā ‘to squeeze, to press’ parc           mparc-o
        jušondā ‘to boil’           juš           mjuš-o

b. Irregular non-past stems

b.1 Weak suppletive stems with vowel modification: Some of the non-past verb stems involve vowel modification. In these cases, the infinitive has a short vowel but the derived stem takes a long vowel, instead, as in the examples below:

7 Whenever the infinitives, except for the non-past copula astan ‘to be’, occur in compound constructions as non-final elements, they end in -an rather than -ā. for instance: šnastan o xārdan o āstā, meaning ‘to sit’, ‘to eat’, and ‘to run, to escape’, respectively, where the infinitives šnastā and xārdā end in the -an infinitive marker.
### Infinitive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Non-past stem</th>
<th>Simple non-past (1SG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a → ā</td>
<td>parid</td>
<td>mpār-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rās</td>
<td>mrās-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>xāz</td>
<td>mxāz-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šāl</td>
<td>mšāl-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kāš</td>
<td>mkāš-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Weak suppletive stems with vowel and/or consonant modification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Non-past stem</th>
<th>Simple non-past (1SG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o → ō</td>
<td>pōš</td>
<td>mpōš-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sōz</td>
<td>msōz-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dōz/dōš</td>
<td>mdōz-o/mdōš-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šōr</td>
<td>mšōr-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>frōš</td>
<td>mefrōš-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Weak suppletive stems with different sound modifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Non-past stem</th>
<th>Simple non-past (1SG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>šnas</td>
<td>mērš-i-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parlnd</td>
<td>m-parn-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pāz</td>
<td>m-pāz-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g/go</td>
<td>m-g-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strong suppletive stems with different sound modifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Non-past stem</th>
<th>Simple non-past (1SG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bell</td>
<td>mēll-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/kn/ko(n)</td>
<td>mēn-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>mēd-ā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>á/a</td>
<td>mýā-o/mniya-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.1.2.2 The past stem of the verb

Two kinds of past stems derived from the corresponding infinitives are identifiable in SD:

(a) regular past stems;

(b) irregular past stems including weak suppletive stems.

**a. Regular past stems:**

This group of verb stems is derived simply by deleting the infinitive marker -ā, without any phonetic modifications of the verb form. For example:

\[ b-g-o, \text{ in addition to } g: \quad \text{bo-g-g-b-g-i} \quad \begin{cases} \text{say/tell} \end{cases} \]

\[ kn \text{ and } ko \text{ appear in imperative mood, e.g. } \quad \text{bo-ko-ak-lo-pk-lo} \quad \begin{cases} \text{you do} \end{cases}. \]

\[ \text{Besides, } kn \text{ manifests in present subjunctive mood, too, e.g. } \quad \text{aga bo-ko-ak} \quad \begin{cases} \text{if I do} \end{cases}. \]
b. Irregular past stems
b.1 Weak suppletive past stems with vowel modification: the infinitive form has a short (lax) vowel but the derived stem takes a long (tense) vowel. Some examples are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Past stem</th>
<th>Simple perfective past form (1SG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bardā ‘to carry, to win’</td>
<td>bard</td>
<td>bard-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šoštā ‘to wash’</td>
<td>šošt</td>
<td>pšošt-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rextā ‘to pour’</td>
<td>rext</td>
<td>brext-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ļindā ‘to pick, to array’</td>
<td>ļind</td>
<td>pćind-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gextā ‘to sift, to sieve’</td>
<td>gext</td>
<td>bgext-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōxtā ‘to sew, to milk’</td>
<td>dōxt</td>
<td>bdoxt-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>làxšidā ‘to slip, to slide’</td>
<td>làxšid</td>
<td>blāxšid-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xārdā ‘to eat’</td>
<td>xārd</td>
<td>pxārd-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ļāvidā ‘to chew’</td>
<td>ļāvid</td>
<td>bjāvid-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laččondā ‘to stick, to paste’</td>
<td>laččond</td>
<td>blaččond-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xārondā ‘to scratch, to scrape’</td>
<td>xārond</td>
<td>pxārond-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b.2 Weak suppletive past stems with different sound modifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Past stem</th>
<th>Simple perfective past form (1SG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>paridā ‘to jump’</td>
<td>pārid</td>
<td>pārid-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parondā ‘to throw, to drop’</td>
<td>pārond</td>
<td>pārond-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raftā ‘to go’</td>
<td>rāf</td>
<td>brāf-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāṣidā ‘to pull, to draw’</td>
<td>kāṣid</td>
<td>pkāṣid-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graftā ‘to take, to hold’</td>
<td>grāf</td>
<td>bagrāf-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šnāstā ‘to sit, to wait’</td>
<td>šnāst</td>
<td>bašnāst-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šamidā ‘to drink’</td>
<td>šamid</td>
<td>pšamid-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traxidā ‘to burst, to explode,</td>
<td>traxid</td>
<td>bitrāxid-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kendā ‘to dig, to pick’</td>
<td>kānd</td>
<td>pkānd-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>omdā ‘to come, to arrive’</td>
<td>omd</td>
<td>byōmd-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.3 Suffixes

2.1.3.1 Agreement markers
Agreement between subject and verb in SD is manifested in the categories of person and number. This morpho-syntactic relation is specified by personal endings. In this respect, non-past personal endings are not very distinct from those of the past tense. However, the existence of some variant formal agreement markers cannot be totally ignored. The subject-verb agreement inflectional system of SD is not very rich. First of all, the non-past as well as past personal endings are identical for the majority of verb forms. Furthermore, whereas singular personal endings are distinct and vary in most TAM-forms, the plural endings lack such mor-
phological variation; that is, all plural personal endings take the same form in both non-past and past tense verb forms. Thus, in plural paradigms, the categories of person and number are shown not by verb endings, but by plural subject pronouns or nouns/noun phrases in the sentence. In addition, the tense of plural verb forms is expressed by the verb stem, i.e., non-past versus past, rather than personal endings. In spite of this inflectional property, this dialect acts as a pro-drop language.

Number in SD is either singular or plural. Nevertheless, apart from singular and plural persons, the first person plural pronoun has two different realizations: mâ as the exclusive ‘we’ (the speaker and another party, excluding the addressee(s)) and mešmâ as the inclusive ‘we’ (the speaker and the addressee(s)). Morphologically, both take the same personal endings on the verb. So, in what follows, the verb inflection of the subject pronoun mešmâ will be disregarded.

Table 2: Subject personal pronouns in SD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>mâ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>šmâ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>ošo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.3.2 Personal endings

2.1.3.2.1 Non-past tense personal endings

There are, as expected, some dialect alternations of the verb endings in both non-past and past tense verb forms in SD. Depending upon the verb type, the non-past personal endings, all of which are presented in Table (3), are divided into two sets of endings: set A, used with verbs such as xârdā ‘to eat’, referred to as type (1), and set B, used with a very small number of verbs including raftā ‘to go’, štā ‘to put, to become’, and dâdā ‘to give’, referred to as type (2). Furthermore, there are variants in present perfect, non-past progressive and present perfect progressive personal endings.
Table 3: Non-past tense personal endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set A</td>
<td>Set B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>-ō</td>
<td>-ē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>-ē</td>
<td>-ē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-ē</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.3.2.2 Past tense personal endings

As shown in Table (4), except for the third person singular, the past personal endings in SD are the same as non-past personal endings in set A, if we ignore non-past ending alternations. The third person singular past ending is [-ak] which occurs as a zero personal ending [-ø] as well.

Table 4: Past tense personal endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>-ō</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>-ē</td>
<td>-ē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>-ak /-ϕ</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.3.3 The copula

In SD, the copula verb also has different forms and variants in the non-past and in the past tense. The copula *astan* ‘to be’ in non-past is used in either a short or a full form, as presented in Table (5):

---

10 In glosses for the examples in the present article, because of the alternations in non-past personal endings, the set A personal endings have been considered the default non-past personal endings, and the ones belonging to set B have been glossed as ‘NPAST(b)’.

11 The personal ending -ā is the plural ending in SD that in Sekuhe-i and Shib-e Ab-i (locally known as *sakvâ-i* and *šēbouv-i*) is replaced by -ē. But -ā is found in the speech of some educated speakers of SD in Sekuhe and Shib-e Ab as well. Nevertheless, the plural verb ending -ē is still the dominant one in the speech of people living in Sekuhe village and the Shib-e Ab region. Besides, according to Kadkhoda (1388[2010]) SD speakers in the village Gamshad in the Miyankangi region not only use -ē rather than -ā with all plural endings in simple non-past, they replace the first person singular -ā with -ē as well.

12 While apart from the second singular and all plural persons, Sekuhe-i speakers of SD make use of the personal ending -ē with a third singular present perfect verb form, as Kadkhoda (1388[2010]) reports, SD speakers in Gamshad employ -ē for all singular and plural persons in the present perfect. Of course, as for Sekuhi-e speakers of SD, the younger generation has a tendency to use the ending -u with the third singular as well.

13 This personal ending is used with the verb *štâ* in simple non-past, a member of type (2), only when it means ‘to become’ as the third singular marker in SD.
The past copula has two realizations. As illustrated in Table (6), the past copula in the form of (a) ‘-ado, -adi, -ϕ, -ade’, except for the third person singular, is attached to the verb budā ‘simple past of ‘be’; however, another form of the past copula in the form of (b) ‘-adê, -adê, -ada, -adê~-a’ is used, with no exceptions, with the verb budā. The past copula of SD appears in the past perfect (only past copula form (a)), plu-past perfect (both (a) and (b) past copula forms), and plu-past perfect progressive (only past copula form (b), see 2.2.1.10).

Table 6: Forms of the past copula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>-ado</td>
<td>-adê</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>me nâxoś</td>
<td>mâ nâxoś</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bud-ado</td>
<td>bud-adê</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I had been sick.’</td>
<td>‘We had been sick.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>-adi</td>
<td>-ade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to nâxoś</td>
<td>mâ nâxoś</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bud-adi</td>
<td>bud-adê</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘You had been sick.’</td>
<td>‘You had (lit. had have) been sick.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>-ak/-ϕ</td>
<td>-ade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o nâxoś</td>
<td>osho nâxoś</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bud-ak/</td>
<td>bud-ade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘(S)he had been sick.’</td>
<td>‘(S)he had (lit. had have) been sick.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 The past copula -adê rather than -adê is used by SD speakers other than those living in Sekuhe and Shib-e Ab, as well as Gamsbad (Kadkhoda, 1388[2010]). However, it is found in the speech of some educated speakers of SD in Sekuhe and Shib-e Ab. Still, the past copula -adê is the dominant one in the speech of people living in Sekuhe and Shib-e Ab.
As to the function of the copula, it basically links a subject with non-verbal predicates like nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. In this regard, the present copula in SD performs all the predicative functions (as some examples glossed in this article show). However, as the data show, there is a morphological formant that can be identified as the past copula manifested in two types (a) and (b), where it is used on non-verbal predicates only with the verb *budā* as a main verb, satisfying all predicative functions, but never alone. Further, as for verbal predicates, it is used either alone attaching to the past stem of the main verb or with the verb *budā* in its auxiliary function plus the past participle of the main verb; nonetheless, the former is still the dominant use of past copula form. In short, with verbal predicates, it is either used alone, added to the past stem of the main verb used in past perfect and plu-past perfect (the former with the past copula (a) and the latter with the past copula (b)); or attached to the auxiliary verb *budā*, used with past participle form of the main verb used in plu-past perfect (with both (a) and (b) forms of the past copula), as represented in examples below:

(21) Past copula with a noun:
   a. *me sârbâz bud-ado* 'I had been a soldier.' (past perfect)
   b. *me sârbâz bud-adâ* 'I had (lit. had have) been a soldier.' (plu-past perfect)
   c. *me sârbâz ado*
   d. *me sârbâz adâ*

(22) Past copula with an adjective:
   a. *me nâxoš bud-ado* 'I had been sick.' (past perfect)
   b. *me nâxoš bud-adâ* 'I had (lit. had have) been sick.' (plu-past perfect)
   c. *me nâxoš ado*
   d. *me nâxoš adâ*

(23) Past copula with a prepositional phrase:
   a. *me dâr bây bud-ado* 'I had been in the garden.' (past perfect)
   b. *me dâr bây bud-adâ* 'I had (lit. had have) been in the garden.' (plu-past perfect)
   c. *me dâr bây ado*
   d. *me dâr bây adâ*

In examples (21)–(23) the verb *budā* functions as a main verb. The use of the past copula in isolation, i.e., without the verb *budā*, makes the sentences ungrammatical. The past copula also attaches to main verbs, as seen in (24):

(24) Past copula with main verb:
   a. *me šâr raft-ado* 'I had gone to town.' (past perfect)
   b. *me šâr raft-adâ* 'I had (lit. had have) gone to town.' (plu-past perfect)
   c. *me nô xârd-ado* 'I had eaten food.' (past perfect)
   d. *me nô xârd-adâ* 'I had (lit. had have) eaten food.' (plu-past perfect)

In the following examples the verb *budā* appears as an auxiliary carrying the past copula:
Past copula with the auxiliary verb *budā*:

a.  *me sar kāl rafta bud-adā* ‘I had (lit. had had) gone to the farm.’ (plu-past perfect)

b.  *me sar kāl rafta bud-adā* ‘I had (lit. had have) gone to the farm.’ (plu-past perfect)

**2.2 TAM realization of verb forms**

**2.2.1 Simple non-past (or simple present-future)**

The simple non-past form in SD consists of the prefix /mē-/ , the non-past stem, and the present personal endings. In this regard, as the data show, the set A personal endings are included in type (1) verb forms and the set B personal endings in type (2) ones, as illustrated in examples (26) and (27), respectively:

**(26)**

A.  **goftā ‘to say’**

B.  **tārrsīdā ‘to fear’**

C.  **poxtā ‘to bake’**

D.  **omdā ‘to come’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>me</th>
<th>mē-g-o</th>
<th>m-tārs-o</th>
<th>m-pāz-o</th>
<th>m-yā-o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>mē-g-i</td>
<td>m-tārs-i</td>
<td>m-pāz-i</td>
<td>m-yā-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>mē-g-a</td>
<td>m-tārs-a</td>
<td>m-pāz-a</td>
<td>m-yā-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>má/smā/ošo</td>
<td>mē-g-e</td>
<td>m-tārs-e</td>
<td>m-pāz-e</td>
<td>m-yā-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**(27)**

A.  **dādā ‘to give’**

B.  **raftā ‘to go’**

C.  **štā ‘to become’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>me</th>
<th>mē-d-â</th>
<th>mē-r-â</th>
<th>mē-s-â</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>mē-d-ē</td>
<td>mē-r-ē</td>
<td>mē-s-ē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>mē-d-a</td>
<td>mē-r-a</td>
<td>mē-s-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>má/smā/ošo</td>
<td>mē-d-ē</td>
<td>mē-d-ē</td>
<td>mē-r-ē</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The simple non-past verb form essentially represents the habitual aspect in the present. However, it also peripherally implies progressive aspect in the present and future time reference. In general, the simple non-past form of the verb is used to express:

a. General truths:

**(28)**

*va lavâr rōz-â drâz mē-s-o*  
‘Days become longer in summer.’

b. Habitual actions or states in the non-past:

**(29)**

*A.  sōh-ā  gosfend-o-n-a  m-dāš-o  m-qy-o-n-a  dōna*


*B.  mē-d-â     avalī-ra  jouri  mē-n-o*

IND-give.PRES-1SG.NPAST(b) yard-OM sweep IND-do.PRES-1SG seed

*C.  n-o  bâd  nāsta  mē-n-o*

EP and then breakfast IND-do.PRES-1SG seed

‘Every morning, I milk the sheep, feed the hens, sweep the yard, and then eat breakfast.’

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c. Ongoing actions in the present (progressive aspect):

\[(30)\] A: čkâr mē-n-i
\(\text{what.work IND-do.PRES-2SG}\)
\‘What are you doing?\'

B: ĭččî dâs-ē xâ m-şor-o
\(\text{nothing hand-PL.GEN self IND-wash.PRES-1SG}\)
\‘Nothing, I am washing my hands.’

d. Future time:

\[(31)\] A: xarman xâ kē m-kott-i
\(\text{harvest self when IND-thresh.PRES-2SG}\)
\‘When will you thresh your harvest?’

B: sâbâ sôb pegā m-kott-o
\(\text{tomorrow morning early IND-thresh.PRES-1SG}\)
\‘I will thresh early tomorrow morning.’

e. Duration of events or states initiated in the past:

\[(32)\]
\[
\text{dômâd-e me bûd az ouxôski mē-r-â var xâ var gorgân}
\(\text{groom-gen I after from drought IND-go.PRES-3SG for self for Gorgan}\)
\[
dâ sâl-e on ğâ me-môn-ou var xâ bazârî mē-n-â
\(\text{ten years-INDF there IND-stay.PRES-3SG.and for self farming IND-do.PRES-3SG}\)
\‘My son-in-law travels to Gorgan after the drought; he stays there for about ten years and farms.’

f. Narration of past events:

\[(33)\] xvar-â dâr-i dîro xē mašṭî\(^{15}\) mûsâ čkâr
\(\text{news-also have.PRES-2SG yesterday with mashhdi Musa what.work}\)
\št-a bandê xodâ mē-r-a sar kal xâ
\(\text{become.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) servant God IND-go.PRES-3SG head farm self}\)
\ou-v-a-ra m-kâš-a rû zmîn-e xâ n-o xâtêrjâm
\m-y-â-a m-xôn-e xâ álâ ke om-d-a
\(\text{IND-EP-come.PRES-3SG home-GEN self now that come.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b)}\)
\xôna m-bîn-a nou amê lakâ.o.truck-e šo rû râzîn-â n-o
\(\text{home IND-see.PRES-3SG alas all utensils-GEN they on stair-PL EP-and}\)
\dâkônî\(^{16}\) rest-i-a n-o kenji-î-o ēç jûr
\(\text{platform pour-PP-COP.PRES-3SG EP-and daughter-GEN-his what way}\)
\dâ-ra va rû xâ m-zân-ou gerya mē-n-â
\(\text{have.PRES-3SG to face self IND-hit.PRES-3SG and cry IND-do.PRES-3SG}\)
\‘Do you have news of what happened to mashhadi Musa yesterday? He, the servant of God, goes to his farm. He runs the water on his land and certainly comes to his home. Now, he has come home, seeing, alas, all their utensils are scattered around on the stairs and platform and his daughter is hitting herself in the face and crying.’

\(^{15}\) mašṭî pronounced as mašhadi in Persian is a general title given to anybody who travels to Mashhad to visit Imam Reza’s shrine. He is the eighth Imam of \(\text{Ithna ‘Ashariyah}^{(i.e.} \text{Twelver) Shiite Muslims.}\)

\(^{16}\) This is a raised structure of open flooring with a horizontal surface which is built above the level of the yard in Sistani houses.

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2.2.1.2 Non-past progressive/ingressive

The non-past progressive/ingressive form of the verb in SD is usually formed by combining the simple non-past paradigm of the verb dištā ‘to have’ in its auxiliary function with the simple non-past paradigm of the main verb. In this respect, dištā takes set A endings and the main verb, as a member of type (1) or type (2), takes the ones it normally takes. Thus the presentation of separate non-past progressive/ingressive paradigms for such verbs was disregarded.

Besides, another form of non-past progressive/ingressive verbs is sometimes observed in the speech of a few old Sekuhe-i speakers of SD in which the same form of the verb didā ‘to see’ manifested as didē, (dīdē is commonly used in some other villages of Sistan (see also: Mohammadi Khomak, 1379 [2000])), replaces all inflected forms of the auxiliary verb dištā in the relevant paradigms. Therefore, the progressive/ingressive paradigm of the verb xârdā ‘to eat’, for instance, is: didē mxâr-o, didē mxâr-i, didē mxâr-a, didē mxâr-e and that of the verb dâdā’ (to give) is: didē mēd-a, didē mēd-e, didē mēd-a, didē mēd-e.

The non-past progressive/ingressive form in the present is used to indicate:

a. Actions in progress at the speech moment. Such actions are usually of relatively short duration:

(34) dâr-e čkâr mē-n-e goćâ-g-o var-če favâb-e
have.PRES-2PL what.work PROG-do.PRES-3SG child-EP-PL for-what answer-INDEF
NEG-IND-give.PRES-2PL.NPAST(b)
‘What are you doing? Children! Why don’t you answer?’

b. Ongoing (continuous) actions and states in progress at the speech time. Such actions and states are usually of relatively long duration:

(35) čen sâl-e âzgâr-a ke ouxoški-a
several year-GEN long-COP.PRES.3SG ke drought-COP.PRES.3SG
n-o xâksâr-o dâr-e va yag badbāxti gozarā
PROG-do.PRES-3PL have.PRES-3PL with one misery sustenance
mē-n-e
PROG-do.PRES-3SG
‘There are several long years of drought and the wretched are living in a miserable manner.’

c. Events about to begin or in their initial stage at the speech time (ingressive aspect):

(36) bâr-e xar-a sē ko štou kill
load-GEN donkey-OM looking IMP.do.PRES.2SG how cocked
št-a ālā čoppa mē-š-o
become.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) now collapse PROG-become.PRES-3SG
‘Look how the load on the donkey is cocked and about to collapse now.’
d. Actions started in the past and ongoing at the speech time:

(37) čen rōz-a ke mé-r-ā n-o several day-COP.PRES.3SG that PROG-go.PRES-1SG.NPAST(b) EP-and m-y-ā-o ke t-ra bīn-o PROG-EP-come.PRES-1SG that you-OM SUB.see.PRES-1SG ‘I am coming and going (lit. going and coming) for several days in order to see you.’

e. Future time reference:

(38) kār-e xā n-dār-i sābā dār-o work-INDF that NEG-have.PRES-2SG tomorrow have.PRES-1SG mē-r-ā ūr PROG-go.PRES-1SG.NPAST(b) city ‘Don’t you have any work? I am going to town tomorrow.’

As the examples (31) and (38) indicate, there is no separate morphological marker to show future tense in SD. It is, in fact, the simple non-past or the non-past progressive/ingressive form of the verb, occasionally accompanied by a time adverbial like sābā ‘tomorrow’, passābā ‘the day after tomorrow’, dga sāl ‘next year’, etc., which shows future time reference. Nevertheless, there are some lexical future markers used with the main verb to denote future temporal reference.

2.2.1.3 Future tense

Future tense in SD is also expressed by using auxiliary verbs such as kmalk/mou/mou and xā plus the infinitive form of the main verb combined with set A personal endings only. In this verbal configuration, the infinitive form ends in the infinitive marker -an instead of the vowel -ā. Future tense forms express expectation and/or actions, events, and situations that will occur in the future:

(39) A: sāvā kma dīdan-o čkār mé-n-i yag čēz-e tomorrow will see.INF-1SG what.work IND-do.PRES-2SG one thing-INDF xūb-e ba-ston-i dga good-INDF IMP-buy.PRES-2SG then ‘I will see what you will do tomorrow; you should buy a good thing then.’

B: ālā xā pul-e n-dār-o ta vīn-o čkār mou now that money-INDF NEG-have.PRES-1SG to see.PRES-1SG what.work will štan-a i ata xā nā afte dga zādō mou rafan-o become.INF-3SG this week that no week next Zahedan will go.INF-1SG ‘I have no money at the present time, so I will see what will happen. Not this week, I will go to Zahedan next week.’

A: bād xā zarf-a-ra kma šoštān-i b-y-ā later that dish-PL-OM will wash.INF-2SG IMP-EP-come.PRES-2SG film-a sēl ko dāxer-tār-ak ošna xe ām film-OM looking IMP-do.PRES-2SG end-COMPR-DIM them with both m-sār-e IND-wash.PRES-1PL ‘You will wash the dishes later, come and watch the film; we wash them together a little later.’

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B: ē  ni-a   bell   ta  ūn-a   p-šōr-o
  oh NEG-COP.PRES.3SG IMP.allow.PRES.2SG to they-OM SUB-wash.PRES-1SG
āli-a   ke   ou-k-ū   yāt   mē-š-o
  now-COP.PRES-3SG that water-EP-PL cut IND-become.PRES-3SG.NPAST(b)

  ‘Oh! No! Let me wash them, the water is about to be shut off.’

2.2.1.4 Simple perfective past

This form of the verb in SD is derived by combining the past stem of the verb with
the past personal subject endings and the prefix \(b-\) as a simple perfective past
marker. As shown in (40), the third person singular verb form takes either of the
forms, with the suffix \([-ak]\) or \([-ø]\) being used interchangeably. Of course, when
the zero suffix is employed, consonant(s) preceding the \([-ak]\) suffix are dropped. For ex-
ample:

(40)  

paridā ‘to jump’  
graftā ‘to catch’  
stādā ‘to stay’
me   pārid-o   ba-grāft-o   be-stād-o
  to   pārid-i   ba-grāft-i   be-stād-i
  o   pārid-ak/pāri-ø   ba-grāft-ak/ba-gra-ø   be-stād-ak/be-stā-ø
mā/smā/ošo   pārid-e   ba-grāft-e   be- stād-e

The simple perfective past verb form basically shows the perfective aspect of the
predication in the past. But enough data are available to determine that this verb
form also peripherally refers to events happening with a present and future time ref-
ERENCE:

a. Events completed in the past, with or without a temporal adverbial:

(41)  
oš-n-ā   dār   bāy   b-dīd-o   ārče   sālā
  they-EP-OM in garden PM-see.PAST-1SG whatever invitation
b-zād-o   balke   b-y-a-e   ūn-xē   sān-xū   n-y-ōmad-e
  n-ō   b-rāft-e   var   xā
  EP-and PM-go.PAST-3PL for self

  ‘I saw them in the garden, whatever I asked (lit. invited) them perhaps to come to (my)
  home, they didn’t accept it (lit. didn’t come) and went away (lit. went for themselves).’

b. Events just completed:

(42)  

A:  be-sm-e-lā   var   nō
  to-name-GEN-Allah for bread
  ‘Please (lit. in the name of Allah) eat food/please help yourself.’
B:  nōše  jān,   mi-ā   amn-ā   ke   nō   p-xārd-o
  bon appetite I-also this-COP.PRES.3SG that bread PM-eat.PAST-1SG
  ‘Bon appetite! As for me, I have just eaten.’

c. An action just about to happen (normally with verbs of motion):

(43)  
gočā-g-ō   zūd   kon-e   ke   me   b-rāft-o
  child-EP-PL quick IMP.do.PRES-2PL that I PM-go.PAST-1SG
  ‘Children! Be quick as I am about to go (lit. I went).’

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d. Relative past tenses with the main clause as the deictic centre in subordinate temporal adverbial clauses referring to absolute future time:

(44) sar kâr-e xâ ke b-rāft-i mīz-e xâ xub
head work-GEN self that PM-go.PAST-2SG desk-GEN self good
b-gārd-ak balke kēf-e xâ onjâ št-a
IMP-inspect.PRES-2SG perhaps bag-GEN self there put.PAST-PP
baš-i
SUB.be.PRES-2SG
‘When you will go (lit. went) to your work, inspect your desk carefully, your bag may be there (lit. you may have put your bag there).’

2.2.1.5 Past progressive/ingressive

In SD, the past progressive/ingressive verb form is manifested in one of two ways. The first is the simple perfective past form along with the prefix /mē-/. For instance:

(45) me me-nvišt-o m-jāvid-o mē-gext-o/m-gēzid-o
    to me-nvišt-i m-jāvid-i mē-gext-i/m-gēzid-i
    o me-nvišt-ak/ m-jāvid-ak/ mē-gext-ak/mē- gext-ø/
    me-nvišt-ø m-jāvi-ø mē-gēzid-ak/mē-gēzi-ø
    mā/smā/øso me-nvišt-e m-jāvid-e mē-gext-e/m-gēzid-e

The second is the combination of the simple perfective past form of the auxiliary verb dištā with the past progressive form of the main verb, both taking the same past personal endings. For example:

(46) me dišt-o mē-rāft-o dīšt-o m-sāmid-o
    to dišt-i mē-rāft-i dīšt-i m-sāmid-i
    o dišt-ak mē-rāft-ak/ dīšt-ak m-sāmid-ak/dīšt-ø
    dišt-ø mē-rāft-ø/dišt-ø mē-rāft-ak m-sāmi-ø/dišt-ø m-sāmi-ak
    mā/smā/øso dišt-e mē-rāft-e dīšt-e m-sāmid-e

Moreover, just as with non-past progressive/ingressive verb paradigms, in past progressive/ingressive paradigms the same form of the verb dīštā ‘to see’, manifested as dīštā (dēdē is commonly used in some other villages of Sistan), occasionally substitutes for all inflected forms of the auxiliary verb dištā. As a result, the progressive/ingressive paradigm of the verb zādā ‘to hit’, for instance, is: dīštā mēzad-ø, dīštā mēzad-i, dīštā mēza(d-ak), dīštā mēzad-e, and that of the verb raftā ‘to go’ is: dīštā mērāft-ø, dīštā mērāft-i, dīštā mērāft(-ak), dīštā mērāft-e. Both verb forms denote the imperfective progressive/ingressive aspect in the past. The past progressive/ingressive form refers to:
a. Events or states in the past which are viewed as ongoing (continuous aspect):

(47) dišnā-k-a-ra mē-g-i yak pāe
last night-EP-DEF-OM IND-say.PRES-2SG one thunder.INDF
m-yorri yag bâreš-e mē-kard-ak ke
PROG-thunder.PAST-3SG one rain-INDF PROG-do.PAST-3SG that
ma-pars PROH-ask.PRES-2SG
‘You speak of last night! The thunder was clapping so deeply, it was raining so heavily last night that do not ask (about it)!’

b. Repeated (habitual) actions in the past:

(48) xodâ az o na-gzar-a lavâr ke
God from he NEG-forgive.PRES-3SG summer that
mē-ša az sēb ta bēgā az mā
PROG-become.PAST-3SG from morning until evening from we
bēgârī m-kâšid-ak
bondage PROG-pull.PAST-3SG
‘May God not forgive him. In summer, he used to make us toil from morning to evening.’

(49) ē ičči ma-go ta rūze ke ḫvā
alas nothing PROH-say.PRES-2SG until day that young
bud-o sâlem bud-o dam-e nmâz-e sēb
PM.be.PAST-1SG healthy PM.be.PAST-1SG time-GEN prayer-GEN morning
peqā pou mē-sâd-o mē-raft-o var škār
early leg PROG-become.PAST-1SG PROG-go.PAST-1SG for hunting
tâ xâlgočk-e pōr-e čīz-e n-me-grâft-o
until rabbit-INDF francolin-INDF thing-INDF NEG-IND-hold.PAST-1SG
var n-me-gâsht-o xōna
VLP NEG-IND-return.PAST-1SG home
‘Alas! Say nothing! As long as I was young and healthy, I used to wake up at the time of prayer early in the morning, and go hunting. I did not use to come back home unless I caught (lit. held) a rabbit, a francolin, or anything else.’

c. Events about to begin or at an initial stage at a certain moment in the past (ingressive aspect):

(50) anu dišt-o kouš-ē xâ bur mē-kard-ō ke
still PM.have.PAST-1SG shoe-GEN.PL self out PROG-do.PAST-1SG that
dâr avâl dâr šâd-e
in house in become.PAST-3PL
‘I was just about to take my shoes off when they entered the house.’

d. Past actions in progress when something else happened. These actions may be in progress simultaneously or one of them may be progressive and the other one perfective in aspect:

(51) A: me ke toxmē kaval-a mē-zad-ō to
that seed-GEN.PL watermelon-OM dip PROG-hit.PAST-1SG you
dišt-i čâkār mē-kard-ī
PM.have.PAST-2SG what.work PROG-do.PAST-2SG
‘While I was planting the seeds of watermelon, what were you doing?’
2.2.1.6 Present perfect

The present perfect form of all types of verbs in SD comprises the past stem plus non-past personal endings of set B, as in the following:

(52) me dâd-ā‘to give’ xândid-ā‘to laugh’ doxt-ā‘to milk/sew’
to dâd-ē xândd-ē doxt-ē o dâd-ē ~-a xândul-ē ~-a doxt-ē ~-a
mâ/shâ ošo dâd-ē ~-a xândul-ē ~-a doxt-ē ~-a

As given in (52), in fact, the use of the ending -ē for the second singular, third singular, and all plural persons in the present perfect and present perfect progressive tenses usually causes confusion or surprise among non-Sekuhe-i addressees. Because of such confusion and surprise, and also because of being made fun of by non-Sekuhe-i addressees, the younger generation of Sekuhe-i speakers tend to use the ending -a for -ē in the third person singular and -ā for -ē in plural forms. However, -ē is still the dominant ending in the present perfect and present perfect progressive third singular and all plural verb forms in the speech of the older generation in Sekuhe.

The present perfect verbs display events or states in the past of relevance to the past or present time, as illustrated below:

**a. Past events with a present relevance:**

(53) sar-e sîb pou št-ā dâda árd-a-ra
head-GEN morning leg become.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b) sister flour-PL-OM
gext-ā n-o tār kard-ā bâd-ā
sift.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b) EP-and wet do.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b) after-also
lâf o nâmû-ra pōš-ē sîn-ā dâr
quilt and mattress-OM cover-GEN.PL they-OM out
ârd-ā kâkk-ē sîn-â vâ kend-ā
bring.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b) stitch-GEN.PL they-OM open pluck.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b)
pâšm-ē sîn-ā vâ ěnd-ā n-o
wool-GEN.PL they-OM open pick.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b) EP-and
i lê amê sîn-ā pōš kard-ā
this time all.GEN.PL they-OM cover do.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b)
’sister! I have gotten up early in the morning; I have sifted the flour and kneaded it, later, I have also uncovered the quilt and mattress, opened the stitches, pulled out the wool and covered them again.’

(54) dišna mesle ke xross-e mâ omd-ē dâr
last night like that rooster-GEN we come PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) in
kâl-e mary-ON šmâ agjâ sē kon-e bê
nest-GEN hen-PL you where see MP.do.PRES-2PL without
zâmat tavâre amjâ ast-a soxt-a marg yâ
trouble whether there be.COP.PRES.3SG burn-PP death or
nâ not
‘It seems that our rooster has come to the nest of your hens, please (lit. without trouble) see whether it – a curse be on it (lit. to die by burning) – is there or not.’

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(55) var če dróy mě-g-i az ōš-e to for what lie IND-say-PRES-2SG from intelligence-GEN you
go.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) I self I personally this word-OM
xě to goft-ā to you say.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b)
‘Why do you lie? You have forgotten. I myself have personally said this to you.’

(56) amn-a ke xastou monda az byāvō this-COP.3SG that tired.and exhausted from desert
come.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) EP-and lengthwise over.there fall.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b)
‘He has just now come back from the farm (desert), tired and exhausted, and has fallen, stretched out over there.’

(57) va i čen sâl běouvi mā xâ āl to this several year drought we that condition
and day-INDF NEG-have.PAST-1PL.NPAST(b) water-EP-INDF happy-INDF
from throat we down NEG-go.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) always wind
storm dune dust soil be.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) joblessness EP-and
poverty-also we-OM bad way desperation do.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b)
‘In these several years of drought, we have not had a good condition and time, we have not enjoyed a happy moment, there have always been wind, storm, dune, dust, and soil, joblessness and poverty have also made us badly desperate.’

b. Events or states in the past continuing up to the present moment:

(58) xodâ-ra šokr ta ami dam o sâat das xâ God-OM thank until this moment and hour hand self
var pul peš kas-e drâz n-kard-ā for money front person-INDF long NEG-do.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b)
‘Thanks to God, up to this moment and time, I have not asked anybody for money (lit. I have not stretched my hand).’

(59) az amo ɣādīm mā kaštagâr-o ádām-o-n-e setamkaš from same ancient we farmer-PL human-PL-EP-GEN oppressed
and God hit-PP be.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b)
‘Since very old times, we farmers have been oppressed and wretched people.’

2.2.1.7 Present perfect progressive

The present perfect progressive form in SD consists of the prefix /mē-/ attached to the present perfect form of the verb, as presented in (60):

(60) froxt to sell’ lamondā to ruin’ omdā to come’
me me-froxt-ā m-lamond-ā m-y-omd-ā
(to me-froxt-ē m-lamond-ē m-y-omd-ē
o me-froxt-ē -a m-lamond-ē -a m-y-omd-ē -a
mā /šmā / ošo me-froxt-ē -ā m-lamond-ē -ā m-y-omd-ē -ā
This verb structure highlights the progressive aspect of the predication with a present relevance, as illustrated in the following:

Orientalia Suecana LIX (2010)
a. Repeated or habitual actions taking place at an indefinite time in the past with a
present relevance:

(61) az emro xâ ni-a az amo yâdîm sâl-e
from today that NEG-COP.PRES.3SG from that ancient year-GEN
va dvâdâ mâ mâ xên-e sô
to twelve month we house-GEN they
m-raft-ê oêo xên-e mâ
PROG-go.PAST-1PL.NPAST(b) they house-GEN we
m-y-omd-ê aga galkârî oudârî
PROG-EP.come.PAST-1PL.NPAST(b) if mud.roughcasting irrigation
drou-v-e cêz-e bud-a xê yak o
harvesting-EP-INDF thing-INDF be.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) with one and
dêê xê komak m-kard-ê
another self help PROG-do.PAST-1PL.NPAST(b)
‘It is not just nowadays (lit. not from nowadays). From old times, all the year round, we
have been going to their home, they have been coming to our home. If there has been
mud roughcasting, irrigation, harvesting, or a thing (like this), we have been helping one
another.’

(62) âlâ-ra ma-b-i ke rôgzîr i jô
now-OM PROH-sec.PRES-2SG that time this way
št-a ta nami sâl-ê âmôm-e agîa
become.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) until this year-PL bath-INDF where
bud-a ourfînou mîrdîna m-raft-ê
be.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) female.and male PROG-go.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b)
sar nôvîr ou-k-ara va zô
head creek water-EP-PL-OM in pot warm PROG-do.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b)
na o xot xê m-šošt-ê
EP-and own self PROG-wash.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b)
‘Do not consider the present time that has become like this. Until these very years, there
has not existed a bath (lit. where has a bath existed?). The females and males used to go
to the creek and heat the water in a pot and wash themselves.’

b. Narration of events repeated in the past:

(63) târîf mên-e ke yâdîm xêle zolm
narration IND-do.PRES-3PL that ancient very oppression
bud-a ârg-e sakvâ-ra va zôr-e
be.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) citeadl-GEN Sekhe-OM by force-GEN
bêgâri va baji-e mûrdom dros mê-n-e
bondage by back-GEN people make IND-do.PRES-3PL
gall-a-ra tour-e dros m-kard-ê ke
head creek water-EP-PL-OM in pot warm PROG-do.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b)
mud-PL-OM manner-INDF make
b-ras-a gou-v-o-n-a rû gall-ê cêyal
m-dâd-ê ke i gall xub b-ras-a
PROG-have.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b) that this mud good SUB-ripe.PRES-3SG
va xsâb ke va kâr bar-e az amî
va to account that to work SUB.take.PRES-3PL from this
gall-ê vâr m-dîšt-ê n-o ândâze yax
mud-PL-OM VLP PROG-pick.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b) EP-and size-GEN one
xast-e yalonak m-kard-ê m-bard-ê
brick-INDF dough PROG-do.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b) PROG.take.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b)
on-a dan-e sârak-e zemî me-št-ê
it-OM mouth-GEN brook-GEN ground PROG-put.PAST-3PL.NPAST(b) to
bîn-e tavâre xub rasid-a ya ná
SUB.sec.PRES-3PL whether good ripen PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) or not

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'They narrate that there has been oppression in Sekuhe in old times. They made the Citadel of Sekuhe with the force of bondage, with the backs of the people. They used to make the mud in a way to ripen it. They have to walk the cows around over the mud to get it ripened well in order to use it. They used to pick up this very mud and make a dough as big as a mud brick, they used to take and put it at the mouth of the brook of the farm (lit. ground) to see whether it has ripened well or not.'

2.2.1.8 Past perfect

The past perfect as an absolute-relative tense is marked by two alternative verb forms in SD:

a. The sample forms given in (64), as the dominant ones in the speech of all SD speakers, for which the author proposes three possible accounts, the third one just a suggestion:

(64) stondā raftā xārdā
me stondado raftado xārdado
to stondadi raftadi xārdadi
o stonda budak/bu-ø rafta budak/bu-ø xārdado budak/bu-ø
mâ/mâ/oø stondade raftade xārdade

(i) The past perfect verb form of SD consists of the past participle form of the main verb with the shortened simple past form of the auxiliary verb budā in the form of -d-, except for the third person singular (in which the full simple past form of budā is used), followed by past personal endings. As an example, the past perfect forms of the verb stondā ‘to buy, to take’ will be presented as: stonda-d-o, stonda-d-i, stonda budak/bu-ø, stonda-d-e.

(ii) By analogy with Sarhaddi Balochi, spoken in Sistan, the past perfect form consists of the past stem combined with the past copula (a), except for the third person singular, where the past perfect form alone is used as the past participle form of the main verb along with the simple past form of the auxiliary verb budā.

The past perfect forms of some verbs in Sarhaddi Balochi are given below (See also Ahangar, 2007: 17):

(65) wārten ‘to eat’ jaten ‘to hit’ šoten ‘to go’
man wār-taton ‘I had eaten’ jat-aton ‘I had hit’ šot-aton ‘I had gone’
ta wārt-ate ‘You had eaten’ jat-ate ‘You had hit’ šot-ate ‘You had gone’
â, âyī wār-t-ø ‘(S)he had eaten’ jat-at-ø ‘(S)he had hit’ šot-at-ø ‘(S)he had gone’
mâ wārt-atin ‘We had eaten’ jat-atin ‘We had hit’ šot-atin ‘We had gone’
šumâ wār-attit ‘You had eaten’ jat-attit ‘You had hit’ šot-attit ‘You had gone’
âwân wār-atan(t) ‘They had eaten’ jat-atan(t) ‘They had hit’ šot-atan(t) ‘They had gone’

Thus, for instance, the past perfect forms of the verb stondā in SD are shown as: raft-ado, raft-adi, rafta bud-ak/bu-ø, raft-ade. This suggestion has been the preferred choice in the data analysis and glossing in this article.
(iii) Under the influence of standard Persian, the past perfect form is made up of the past participle form of the main verb combined with the shortened form of the past copula (a), except for the third person singular, in the forms of: -do, -di, -de. Consequently, for instance, the past perfect form of the verb froxtā ‘to sell’ will be: froxta-do, froxta-di, froxta-bud-ak/bu-ø, froxta-de.

b. Apart from dialectal phonetic variations, the past perfect form, like in Persian, consists of the past participle form of the main verb (derived from past stem plus past participle marker -a) along with the simple past form of the auxiliary verb budā, as represented in (66). This verb form is interchangeably employed by some educated people and the younger generation as well.

\[(66)\]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>me</th>
<th>kenda bud-o</th>
<th>kaštā ‘to plant’</th>
<th>omda bud-o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>kenda bud-i</td>
<td>kaštā bud-i</td>
<td>omda bud-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>kenda bud-ak/bu-ø</td>
<td>kaštā bud-ak/bu-ø</td>
<td>omda bud-ak/bu-ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mâ/šmâ/ošo</td>
<td>kenda bud-e</td>
<td>kaštā bud-e</td>
<td>omda bud-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The past perfect in SD combines relative and absolute tenses. It places an event or a state prior to a specified or implied reference point (a secondary deictic centre) which is situated in the past in relation to the speech moment (absolute tense), as illustrated below:

\[(67)\]
\[xōna ke b-rāsid-o \quad \text{home that} \quad \text{PM-arrive.PAST-1SG} \quad \text{dinner-OM load do-PP} \quad \text{bud-ak}\]
\[\text{‘When I arrived home, she had cooked dinner.’}\]

\[(68)\]
\[pēš az i-ke šmâ b-y-a-e ošo var xērvāi \quad \text{before from this-that} \quad \text{you SUB-EP-come.PRES-2PL they for farewell} \quad \text{omd-ade} \quad \text{injā} \quad \text{come.PAST-COP.PAST(a).3PL} \quad \text{here} \]
\[\text{‘They had come here to say goodbye before you came (lit. come).’}\]

\[(69)\]
\[xē i-ke on-a pērār yag lē bištār \quad \text{with this-that} \quad \text{she-OM year.before.last.year one time more} \quad \text{n-did-ado} \quad \text{bāz-ā emsāl ke omda} \quad \text{NEG-see.PAST-PART.PAST(a).1SG again-also this year that come.PP} \quad \text{bu on-a xub va jā b-y-ārd-o} \quad \text{be.PAST-3SG she-OM good to SUB-EP-come.PAST-1SG} \quad \text{‘Although I did not see (lit. had not seen) her more than once the year before last, when she has (lit. had) also come again this year, I recognized her well.’}\]

\[(70)\]
\[va yād-e tr-a omd-adi ke \quad \text{to remembrance-GEN} \quad \text{you-COP.PRES.3SG} \quad \text{ke} \quad \text{omd-adi} \quad \text{va mand-e xā kār-a xalās bo-kn-i vale} \quad \text{assumption-GEN self work-OM finish SUB-do.PRES-2SG} \quad \text{but} \]

37 The past perfect form of the verb in Persian comprises the past participle form of the main verb plus the simple past form of the auxiliary verb budān. For instance:
\[\text{man āb xorde būd-am ‘I had drunk water’} \quad \text{mā āb xorde būd-ūn ‘We had drunk water’}\]
\[\text{to āb xorde būd-i ‘You had drunk water’} \quad \text{šomā āb xorde būd-ū ‘You had drunk water’}\]
\[\text{ā āb xorde būd-a ‘He/She had drunk water’} \quad \text{ānhā āb xorde būd-and ‘They had drunk water’}\]
2.2.1.9 Plu-past perfect

Diachronically speaking, SD may have made use of the plu-past perfect, also called ‘compound present perfect’ (Mohammadi Khomak, 2000: 444), to designate an event or a state prior to a far past time reference. Nonetheless, nowadays this original distinction between the plu-past perfect and past perfect has been synthesized and plu-past perfect verb form in SD is synchronically used to emphasize the past perfect with an implied additional meaning corresponding to an auxiliary, i.e. ‘have/had’ in English, when the present perfect form of the auxiliary verb budā is used, or with the additional use of either the auxiliary verb budā or the past copula, or both, again corresponding to the meaning of the auxiliary ‘have/had’, or both, in English. In this respect, plu-past perfect acts as an alternative verb construction to the past perfect. Plu-past perfect in SD is marked in various ways as represented below:

a. Like Persian, past participle of main verb combines with present perfect form of the auxiliary budā ‘to be’, as in (71):

(71) bastā ‘to close, to fasten’  nvištā ‘to write’  jastā ‘to run, to escape’
    me    basta bud-ā    nvišta bud-ā    jasta bud-ā
    to    basta bud-ē    nvišta bud-ē    jasta bud-ē
    o     basta bud-a    nvišta bud-a    jasta bud-a
mā/šmā/ošo basta bud-ē ~ ā  nvišta bud-ē ~ ā  jasta bud-ē ~ ā

So the corresponding meaning of the plu-past perfect form of the verb bastā will be as follows: basta bud-ā: I had (lit. had have) closed; basta bud-ā: You had (lit. had have) closed; basta bud-ā: (S)he had (lit. had have) closed; basta bud-ē ~ ā: We/ You/They had (lit. had have) closed.

b. Past stem of the main verb combines with the past copula(b), where the past copula ends in non-past personal endings set B rather than past personal endings.

(72) mondā ‘to stay’  yendā ‘to spread’  postā ‘to bake, to burn’
    me    mondadā    yendadā    postadā
    to    mondadē    yendadē    postadē
    o     mondadā    yendadā    postadā
mā/šmā/ošo mondadē ~ ā  yendadē ~ ā  postadē ~ ā

Consequently, the plu-past perfect form of a verb like mondā will have the structure: mond-adā ‘I had (lit. had have) stayed’, mond-adē ‘You had (lit. had have) stayed’,

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mond-ada ‘(S)he had (lit. had have) stayed’, mond-adē ~ ā ‘We/You/They had (lit. had have) stayed’.

On the other hand, the same verb construction may be accounted for as consisting of the past participle form of the main verb plus a shortened form of the auxiliary budā as -d- followed by non-past personal endings set B. In this case, the plu-past perfect structure of the verb mondā will be: monda-d-ā, monda-d-ē, monda-d-a, monda-d-ē ~ ā.

c. Past participle of main verb plus past perfect form of the auxiliary budā (consisting of budā and the past copula(b)), as illustrated in (73). This plu-past perfect form of the verb may be referred to as plu-plu-past perfect, because of the iterative presence of the auxiliary budā along with past copula (b).

(73)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subj</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Copula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
<td>rafīā ‘to go’</td>
<td>šoštā ‘to wash’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>rafīā bud-adā</td>
<td>šoštā bud-adā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>rafīā bud-adē</td>
<td>šoštā bud-adē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mâ/smâ/ošo</td>
<td>rafīā bud-adē ~ ā</td>
<td>šoštā bud-adē ~ ā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The past perfect form of the auxiliary budā in (74) may be explained as containing past participle form of the auxiliary budā, in turn followed by its shortened form plus non-past personal endings set B. In this regard, the past perfect form of the auxiliary budā will be: buda-d-ā, buda-d-ē, buda-d-a, buda-d-ē ~ ā, respectively. And, again, the plu-past perfect form includes the extra forms (full and short) of the auxiliary budā as well as an implied meaning of present perfect expressed by relevant personal endings.

d. The past participle of the main verb plus the past perfect form of the auxiliary verb budā (consisting of budā and the past copula(a)), as in the examples illustrated in (74). This plu-past perfect form of the verb can also be viewed as plu-plu-past perfect, as a consequence of the iterative occurrence of the auxiliary budā along with past copula (a).

(74)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subj</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Copula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
<td>kenda ‘to dig, to pick’</td>
<td>kaštā ‘to plant’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>kenda bud-ado</td>
<td>kaštā bud-ado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>kenda bud-adi</td>
<td>kaštā bud-adi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mâ/smâ/ošo</td>
<td>kenda bud-ade</td>
<td>kaštā bud-adak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the past perfect form of the auxiliary budā in (74) is analysed as a past participle of such a verb in its full form, plus its shortened form followed by past personal endings, again, the plu-past perfect form embraces the extra forms (full and short) of the auxiliary budā. So the past perfect form of the auxiliary budā will be: buda-d-o, buda-d-i, buda-d-ak, buda-d-e, respectively.

In spite of the various verb forms of plu-past perfect in SD, like the past perfect verb form, it is an absolute-relative tense. It emphasizes and places an action or a

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state preceding a specified or implied reference point located in the past. As illustrated below, the plu-past perfect verb forms are used interchangeably:

(75) pēš az i-ke bo-g-i me xâ xou
before from this-that PM-say.PAST-2SG I that sleep
šta bud-ā
become.PP be.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b)
‘I had (lit. had have) gone to sleep before you said (so).’

(76) šmâ ke dâr bây râf-â bud-ade maštī
you that in garden-go-PP be.PAST-COP.PAST(a).2PL Mashhadi
mâmad-ā xôna omda bud-ada
Mohammad-also home come.PP be.PAST-COP.PAST(b).3SG
‘When you had (lit. had had) gone to the garden, Mashhadi Mohammad had (lit. had have) also come home.’

(77) me ke sar kal xâ rasid-adâ dişt-â
that head farm self arrive.PAST-COP.PAST(b).1PL see.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b)
ošo xâ xarman-e gândom-a kottid-ade n-â
they that harvest-GEN wheat-OM thresh.PAST-COP.PAST(a).3PL EP-and
dîst-e xarman-e jôu-v-a m-kottid-e
have.PAST-3PL harvest-GEN barley-EP-OM PROG-thresh.PAST-3PL
‘When I had (lit. had have) arrived at my farm, I saw that they had (lit. had had) threshed the harvest of wheat and were threshing the harvest of barley.’

(78) kenj-e xâlû mâ nàxos hud-ada n-ô mûk-e
daughter-GEN uncle we sick be.PAST-COP.PAST(b).3SG EP-and mother-GEN
šmâ goçâ-g-o-nn-a jâm kard-ada
‘Our cousin (lit. uncle’s daughter) had been sick and your mother had taken care of her children.’

2.2.1.10 Plu-past perfect progressive
The plu-past perfect progressive form in SD is made in various ways:

a. The prefix /mê-/ is added to the plu-past perfect verb form with past copula(b) only, as seen in (79):

(79) sâvondâ ‘to abrade’ mâlestâ ‘to rub, to massage’
me m-sâvond-adâ me-mâlest-adâ
me dišt-â m-xond-â me-mûlest-adâ
do m-sâvond-adâ me-mûlest-adâ
mû/sâmû/ošo m-sâvond-adê ~ â me-mûlest-adê ~ â

b. The present perfect form of the auxiliary verb dištâ combines with the present perfect progressive form of the main verb:

(80) xondâ ‘to read’ xûrdâ ‘to eat’ bardâ ‘to take, to carry’
me dišt-â m-xond-â dišt-â m-xûrd-â dišt-â m-bard-â
me dišt-â m-xond-â dišt-â m-xûrd-â dišt-â m-bard-â
do dišt-â m-xond-â dišt-â m-xûrd-â dišt-â m-bard-â
do dišt-â m-xond-â dišt-â m-xûrd-â dišt-â m-bard-â
mû/sâmû/ošo dišt-â m-xond-â ~ â dišt-â m-xûrd-â ~ â dišt-â m-bard-â ~ â

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c. The present perfect form of the auxiliary verb َذَتْ is used with the plu-past perfect progressive form of the main verb, as shown in (81):

\[(81)\quad zdā \text{ ‘to hit’} \quad šamidā \text{ ‘to drink’}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
me \quad & \text{dišt-ā me-zd-adā} \\
\text{to} \quad & \text{dišt-ē me-zd-adē} \\
o \quad & \text{dišt-a me-zd-ada}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
mā/šmā/ošo \quad & \text{dišt-ē me-zd-adē} \quad \sim \quad \text{dišt-ē m-šamid-adē}
\end{align*}
\]

The plu-past perfect progressive, though taking different verb forms, is employed to highlight an event or an action started in the past and continued up to another time in the past. In fact, this verb form emphasizes the progression or inception of the events before other ones in the past.

\[
\begin{align*}
mā \quad & \text{xā i-tou n-bud-ē} \\
& \text{ta rōz-e ke}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{we} \quad & \text{that this-way NEG-be.PAST-1PL.NPAST(b)} \\
\text{until day-INDF that}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
xē \quad & \text{ām bud-ē} \\
\text{ār fayīrī ke}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{with together be.PAST-1PL.NPAST(b)} \\
\text{every poverty that}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
dišt-adē \\
xē \quad & \text{ām m-xārd-adē}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{have.PAST-COP.PAST(b).1PL with together PROG-eat.PAST-COP.PAST(b).1PL}
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{‘We have not been like that. As long as we have been together, we had been using}
\]

\[\text{together whatsoever we had had (lit. we had been eating together every poor thing we}
\]

\[\text{had had).’}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dišt-a} \\
zmān-a \\
\text{me-škast-ada ke}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{have.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b)} \\
\text{ground-OM PROG-break.PAST-COP.PAST(b).3SG that}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
pou-n-a \\
mār-e \\
kend-ada
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{leg-EP-his snake-INDF bite.PAST-COP.PAST(b).3SG}
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{‘He had been breaking up the ground when a snake had bitten his leg.’}
\]

2.2.2 Non-indicative mood forms

SD usually maintains a distinction between the indicative as the most common realis mood expressing actual events and states, where something is actually the case or actually not the case (as seen in all the examples given so far), and non-indicative or irrealis moods referring to non-actual (hypothetical) cases, such as necessity, possibility, wish or desire, etc., namely: the subjunctive mood. Two other moods, the counterfactual mood, and the imperative mood, are also found. Non-indicative moods mentioned above will be further illustrated in the following.

2.2.2.1 Subjunctive mood

The subjunctive mood is realized as the present subjunctive, which denotes uncertainty as well as unreal (hypothetical) but contingent and probable events or states in the present or future, and the past subjunctive, signalling hypothetical events or states in the past. Subjunctive mood in SD is usually used with words and expressions like َسَفُ ‘if’, َبَلَكِ ‘perhaps, maybe’, َمَلا ‘only if’, َتَفَّرَ ‘whether’, َمَسْتَ ‘wish that’, َكَاشَكِ ‘wish that’, َبِيُوُمَدَكَ َبِيُوُمَا نَأ ‘if it happens/if it happened, perhaps, maybe’ َأَرْغَ (ke) ‘if (that)’. Sometimes a combination of words like َسَفُ or َبَلَكِ with the expression َبِيُوُمَدَكَ َبِيُوُمَا نَأ is used as well.

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2.2.2.1.1 Present subjunctive mood

The present subjunctive form in SD is formed by:

a. adding the prefix /b-/ as a present subjunctive marker to the present stem of the verb followed by non-past personal endings. Two types of present subjunctive verb forms, like simple non-past verbs, are distinguished in SD: (i) type (1) verbs, which only take set A non-past personal endings, as represented in (84):

(ii) Type (2) verbs, which take only set B non-past personal endings in the simple non-past but take either the set A or B endings (except for the third singular) in the present subjunctive, where the two forms are used interchangeably, as given in (85):

b. The present subjunctive mood is marked by using non-past and also simple past as well as past progressive forms of the verb along with the relevant lexical means like aga ‘if’, balke ‘perhaps, maybe’, maga ‘only if’, tavâre ‘whether’, kâške ‘wish that’, etc.

Some common uses of the present subjunctive form in SD are the following:

(a) To state possibility and probability:

(b) To mark hypothetical conditions:

If it happens and he buys the house exactly today, what will you do then?’

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(c) In nominal clauses referring to uncertain future events:

(88) me xā va kār-e xodā dār mond-ā ičči
    I that to work-GEN God in stay.PRES-1SG.NPAST(b) nothing
    NEG-IND-know.PRES-1SG should what work SUB-do.PRES-1SG
    ‘God’s work has made me desolated. I have no idea what to do.’

(89) emšou kâške b-rē
    tonight wish.that SUB-go.PRES-2SG.NPAST(b)
    ‘I wish you would go tonight.’

(d) To indicate emphasis:

(90) va me kār-e n-dār-a xot to maga
    to I work-INDF NEG-have.PRES-3SG self you unless
    b-rē n-o o-n-a vārdar-i
    SUB-go.PRES-2SG.NPAST(b) EP-and he-EP-OM take.PRES-2SG
    ‘It doesn’t concern me unless you yourself go and get and bring him.’

(e) To state necessity:

(91) lázem-a ke xot šo b-ra-e piš-i-o
    necessary-COP.PRES-3SG that self them SUB-go.PRES-3PL front-GEN-her
    b-rē n-o xā-s kon-e n-o xē o xrās kon-e
    EP-and with her talk SUB.do.PRES-3PL
    ‘It is necessary that they themselves go to her and talk to her.’

(92) ārgā ke nzar to n-me-zan-a n-me-xā-a
    if that eyesight you NEG-IND-hit.PRES-3SG NEG-IND-want.PRES-3SG
    sūzun-a nāx kon-i
    needle-OM thread SUB.do.PRES-2SG
    ‘If you suffer from lack of eyesight, there is no need for you to thread the needle.’

(f) To state a condition:

(93) bašši-g-o me m-y-ā-o va šārt-e ke
    SUB.be.PRES-EP-3SG I IND-EP-come.PRES-1SG to condition-INDF that
    tā b-y-ar-i
    you.also SUB-EP-bring.PRES-2SG
    ‘All right, I (will) come provided that you come too.’

(g) To make a request:

(94) agū xot to b-ro balke be-tr-i o-n-a
    where self you IMP-go.PRES-2SG maybe SUB-can.PRES-2SG he-EP-OM
    rázi bo-kr-i ke az mā ba-gzar-a
    satisfy SUB-do.PRES-2SG that from we SUB-forgive.PRES-3SG
    ‘If possible, you go yourself. You maybe will make him forgive us.’

(h) To express purpose:

(95) mē-rā ta hīn-o tavāre tāk-ā-ra
    IND-go.PRES-1SG.NPAST(b) to SUB.see.PRES-1SG whether grapevine-PL-OM
    borrid-a yā nā cut.PRES-3SG.NPAST(b) or not
    ‘I go to see whether he has weeded (lit. cut) the grapevines or not.’
(96) *em-sâl dga m-xâ-o gândom-a-ra xodâ*  
this-year then IND-want.PRES-1SG wheat-PL-OM God  
b-xâ-a peštâr p-kâr-o ke tâ lavâr  
SUB-want.PRES-3SG earlier SUB-plant.PRES-1SG that until summer  
n-y-omd-a pâlêz kon-o  
NEG-EP-come.PAST-3SG.NPAST(B) vegetable.garden SUB.do.PRES-1SG

‘God willing, I want, then, to plant the wheat earlier this year so that I could build a vegetable garden before summer (lit. until summer has not come).’

(i) To give advice or recommend that someone do or not do an action:

(97) *aga navadâ yesyô p-kard-i sê kon-i*  
if lest vomit SUB-do.PRES-2SG see IM.do.PRES-2SG  
cîz-e n-xar-i  
thing.INDF PROH-eat.PRES-2SG

‘Lest you vomit, make sure to eat nothing.’

2.2.2.1.2 Past subjunctive

There is also a past subjunctive in SD, which is formed by the past participle of the main verb, plus the present subjunctive of the auxiliary verb *budâ* ‘to be’. The past subjunctive form occurs rarely in the data, but when it occurs, it represents hypothetical past events or states.

(98) *gmô kon-o dâr xôna zêr xazid-a ba-š-a*  
guess SUB.do.PRES-1SG in home under creep-PP SUB-be.PRES-3SG

‘I guess he is hidden at home.’

2.2.2.2 Counterfactual mood

The counterfactual verb forms signal predications which are not likely to happen, far removed from the real course of events, contrary to the facts, impossible conditions, or unfulfilled wishes in the past, present, and future. SD does not actually have morphological means to exclusively mark counterfactuality on verbs. However the subjunctive lexical means along with verb forms in realis mood are used to denote counterfactuality. The counterfactual mood in SD follows a number of verb forms representing present-past unreal conditions:

(a) Past progressive form:

Present unreal condition:

(99) *parsâl aga mn-a pul mî-dâd-i ke var xâ*  
last.year if I-OM money PROG-give.PAST-2SG that for self  
yax xonâk-e me-stond-o âlâ i-st-n u-su  
one house.DIM-INDF me-buy.PAST-1SG now this-side-EP that-side  
darvâdâr n-bud-o  
vagrant NEG-be.PAST-1SG

‘If you had given (lit. was giving) me money to buy myself a small house last year, I would not be a vagrant going from place to place now.’
Past unreal condition:

(100) māste sar ūfā xē šo xērvāi mē-kard-o
wish.that head going with they farewell PROC-do.PAST-1SG
bābb-o ke šiou ālvon-e va del me mond-ak
father-VOC that how yearning-INDF to heart I PM.stay:PAST-3SG
*I wish I had said goodbye to them on going. Alas (lit. Oh father)! What a yearning
that did not fade away!*

Unfulfilled wishes or desires:

(101) emšou māste m-y-ômâd-e injā
tonight wish.that PROC-EP-EP come.PAST-2PL here
*I wish you came here tonight.*

(b) Present perfect progressive form:

Present unreal condition:

(102) ağa am-tou mārd-e m-bud-ē n-o
if this-way man-INDF PROC-be.PAST-2SG.NPAST(b) EP-and
šou-v-o ro kār m-kard-ē xā var-če i
night-EP-and day work PROC-do.PAST-2.SG.NPAST(b) then for-what this
āl o rōz-a dār-i var-če n-me-tr-i
condition and day work have.PRES-2SG for-what NEG-IND-can.PRES-2SG
var xā yag gol-e zmln-e ba-ston-i
for self one flower-INDF land-INDF SUB-buy.PRES-2SG
*Iif you have been such a man working all around the clock, why can’t you buy a small
plot of agricultural land for yourself?*

Past unreal condition:

(103) maga me xē o āšti m-kard-ā
whether I with he reconciliation PROC-do.PAST-1SG.NPAST(b)
aslā va abadā o-ā var xāter-e gol-e rā kablē
never and never it-also for sake-GEN flower-GEN face Karbalayi19
māssē bud-a ke xē o
Mohammad Hossein be.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b) that with he
rūdārvāsî dišt-ā
bashfulness have.PAST-1.NPAST(b)
*Have I been reconciled with him? Not at all. It would also have been for the sake of
(the rosy face of) Karbalayi Mohammad Hossein whom I have been on a formal basis
with.*

(c) Simple past form:

Present unreal condition:

(104) ağa ke to b-rāft-i ke pong-a p-kāš-i
if that you PM-go.PAST-2SG that weir-OM SUB-pull.PRES-2SG
nafā injā čkār mē-n-i
so here what.work IND-do.PRES-2SG
*If you went to remove the water weir, what would you be doing here?

19 This is a general title given to anyone who has travelled to Karbala in Iraq to visit Imam Hossein’s
shrine. He is the third Imam of Ithna ‘Ashariyah (i.e. Twelver) Shiite Muslims.
Past unreal condition:

(105) ārgā ke iz-yār zāmat-ā p-kāšid-e n-o
if that this-much trouble-also PM-pull.PAST-2PL EP-and
b-y-ōmād-e kāš-ke čen rōz-e dgā
PM-EP-come.PAST-2PL wish-that some day-INDF other.also
me-stād-e ke mā xub ser didār-e šmā
IND-stay.PAST-2PL that we.also good full seeing-GEN you
mēšād-e
IND-become.PAST-1PL

‘If you also troubled yourself so much and came, I wish you would have stayed some
more days so that we could have seen you more.’

(d) Past perfect form:

Present unreal condition:

(106) aga čāling-a bast-ada n-o bād-i-o
if stream-OM close.PAST-COP.PAST(b).3SG EP-and after-GEN-it
raft-ada dār bāy xā tā i dām
go.PAST-COP.PAST(b).3SG in garden so until this moment
māste m-y-ōmād-ak
wish.that PROG-EP-come.PAST-3SG

‘If he had (lit. have had) blocked the stream and then had (lit. had have) gone to the gar-
den, he would have been coming until this moment.’

Past unreal condition:

(107) ārgā ou dar xōna-ra piš kard-adi amī gorba
if oh door home-OM close.PAST-COP.PAST(a).2SG this cat
az agī šālīd-a bu n-o dār xōne pešmā
from where slip-PP PM.be.PAST.3SG EP-and in home.GEN inner
dār šī-ā bu
enter become-PP be.PAST.3SG

‘If, Oh! you had closed the door of the room, from where would this cat have slipped in
and entered the inner room?’

(e) Past perfect progressive form:

Present unreal condition:

(108) aga me ou-t-a-ra m-kašid-adā ke kal-e
if I water-EP-PL-OM PROG-pull.PAST-COP.PAST(b).1SG that farm-GEN
t-ra bar-a xōdā az me pars-a
you-OM SUB.carry.PRES-3SG God from I SUB.ask.PRES-3SG

‘If I had been making water flow to submerge your farm, God would pain me (lit. God
would ask me).’

Past unreal condition:

(109) tlag-e xāk-ā-ra agā xub m-gāšt-adē klī-ra
inside-GEN soil-PL-OM if good PROG-search.PAST-COP.PAST(b).2SG key-OM
yādī m-kard-adē
find IND-do.PAST-COP.PAST(b).2SG

‘If you had been searching well inside the soil, you would have found the key.’

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2.2.2.3 Imperative mood

In SD, as with the simple non-past, two types of verb forms are observed in the imperative mood, each type taking somewhat its own personal endings. In this respect, in fact, SD makes use of various ways to form the imperative for the second person singular and plural. Generally speaking, the imperative form is composed of the non-past stem with or without the prefix /b-/ as an imperative marker, and with or without personal endings. Different morphological means employed in the formation of the imperative form in SD are illustrated below:

(110) A. Type (1) verbs: B. Type (2) verbs:
I. Second person singular: I. Second person singular:
[b-] + present stem + [-ø] 1. [b-] + present stem + [-ø]
[b-] + present stem + [-ak] 2. [b-] + present stem + [-i]
[b-] + present stem + [-i] 3. [b-] + present stem + [-ē]
II. Second person plural: II. Second person plural:
1. [b-] + present stem + [-e] 1. [b-] + present stem + [-e]
2. [b-] + present stem + [-ē]~[-ā]

The simple non-past forms of second singular and plural verbs of both types are used to indicate the imperative mood. In general, (111) and (112) represent the imperative forms of some verbs with their variations in SD.

(111) Imperative TAM-forms of some type (1) verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Second person singular</th>
<th>Second person plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rextā</td>
<td>brēz ~ brēzak ~ brēzi ~ mrēzi</td>
<td>brēze ~ mrēze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gustā</td>
<td>bgēz ~ bgēzak ~ bgēzi ~ mgēzi</td>
<td>bgēz ~ mgēzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zdā</td>
<td>bzā ~ bzānak ~ bzāni ~ mzāni</td>
<td>bzāne ~ mzāne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stūdā</td>
<td>best ~ bestak ~ besti ~ mesti</td>
<td>beste ~ mesti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>štā (to put)</td>
<td>bell ~ bellak ~ belli ~ melli</td>
<td>belle ~ melle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>škastā</td>
<td>baškā ~ baškānak ~ baškāni ~ meškāni</td>
<td>baškēne ~ meškāne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>froxtā</td>
<td>bafrōš ~ bafrōšak ~ bafrōši ~ mfrōši</td>
<td>bafrōše ~ mfrōše</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xārdā</td>
<td>pxār ~ pxārak ~ pxari ~ mxārī</td>
<td>pxāre ~ mxāre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>borriddā</td>
<td>bor ~ borra-k ~ borri ~ mborri</td>
<td>borre ~ mborre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postā</td>
<td>pāz ~ pāzak ~ pazi ~ mpāzi</td>
<td>paze ~ mpāze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(112) Imperative TAM-forms of some type (2) verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Second person singular</th>
<th>Second person plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dādā</td>
<td>bde ~ bda-i ~ bdē ~ mēdē</td>
<td>bda-e ~ bda ~ bdē ~ mēdē ~ mēdā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rafā</td>
<td>bro ~ bra-i ~ brē ~ mērē</td>
<td>bra-e ~ brē ~ mērē ~ brā ~ mērā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>štā (to become)</td>
<td>(p)šo ~ (p)ša-i ~ (p)šē ~ mēšē</td>
<td>(p)ša-e ~ (p)šē ~ (p)šā ~ mēšē ~ mēšā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Imperative forms showing the directive modality are usually used to express commands, direct requests, and prohibitions. As for the prohibitive form of the verb, the negative prefix /n-/, manifested as [n-], [ne-], [na-], or [ma-], replaces the imperative prefix /b-/.

(113) dan gāš-a bānd-ak ne-ll-i gosfend-o
mouth sheepcote-OM close.PRES-2SG PROH-put.PRES-2SG sheep-PL
bur š-ā yād-a b-g-i
outside SUB.become.PRES-3PL ram-OM IM-catch.PRES-2SG
Furthermore, in order to form the polite imperative mood, a word such as bē-zāmat ‘without-trouble’ is usually used along with the imperative form.

(115) bē-zāmat namo tās-a b-de mn-a
without-trouble that bowl-OM I-OM
‘Please, give me that bowl.’

To make a suggestion in which the speaker(s) and the addressee(s) are included, the imperative sentence is made up of the optional words: mešmā ‘(inclusive) we’, ta ‘to’, byā ‘come’, agjā ‘where’ plus the imperative verb form, with these words being used either individually or two or more together, as illustrated in some examples below:

(116) a. Imperative sentence with optional mešmā:
(mešmā) be-st-e xōna
we.INCL IM-stay.PRES-1PL home
‘Let’s stay home.’

b. Imperative sentence with ta:
ta b-r-ē sar nōvār ke mi-y-ā yakka-ō
to IM-go.PRES-1PL head creek that I-EP-also alone-COP.PRES.1SG
‘Let’s go to the creek since I am also alone.’

The nest of poultry made of young branches of a tree.
THE VERB SYSTEM IN THE SISTANI DIALECT OF PERSIAN 41

c. Imperative sentence with byâ (ta):
b-y-â (ta) gândom-a-ra rougêzi kon-e
IMP-EP-come.PRES.2SG to wheat-PL-OM sift IM.do.PRES-1PL
‘Let’s (lit. come to) sift the wheat.’

d. Imperative sentence with agjâ:
agjâ árd-a-ra sêl kon-e tavâre truš
where flour-PL-OM look IM.do.PRES-1PL whether sour
št-a
become.PAST-3SG.NPAST(b)
‘Let’s examine the flour whether it is ready to be baked (lit. whether it has become
sour).’

e. Imperative sentence with agjâ byâ ta mešmâ:
agjâ byâ ta mešmâ xê osê gap zan-e
where come to we.INCL with Hossein talk IM.do.PRES-1PL
ta bîn-e čez mê-g-a
to see.PRES-1PL what IND-say.PRES-3SG
‘Let’s talk to Hossein to see what he says.’

3. Voice

Voice as a relational category indicates the relationship between the noun phrase arg-
uments and the realization of the action described by the verb. SD draws a distinc-
tion between the active and passive voice structures through the position of the main
verbal arguments (subject-object), the morphological cases they take, and the form
of the verb. In passives, the object argument of the active sentence appears as the
passive subject. The subject of the active sentence is never expressed with the se-
matic role of agent. The morphological case marking change in nouns (or noun
phrases) only applies to direct objects. The direct object argument taking the object
marker -al-år in active structures loses it when it occurs in the passive subject posi-
tion. The passive verb, in general, manifests as a past participle of the main verb fol-
lowed by an inflected form of the auxiliary verb štă ‘to become’ (ex. 117, 118, 121)
or by replacing the transitive verb ‘to do’ with the intransitive verb ‘to become’ (ex.
119, 120), as shown in the following examples:

(117) a. ošo joll-a-ra p-šošt-e
they cloth-PL-OM PM-wash.PAST-3PL
‘They washed the clothes.’
b. joll-â šošt-a ša
cloth-PL wash-PP PM.become.PAST-3SG
‘The clothes were (lit. was) washed.’

(118) a. ke i nôn-a-ra m-xâr-a
who this bread-PL-OM IND-eat.PRES-3SG
‘Who eats these slices of bread?’
b. juš ma-z-a xârd-a mê-ș-o
tuzzy PROH-hit.PRES-2SG eat-PP IND-become.PRES-3SG
‘Don’t get into a tizzy, they are (lit. it is) eaten.’

(119) a. sâbâ yâssâbi mê-n-a
tomorrow butchering IND-do.PRES-3SG
‘He will do butchering tomorrow.’
b. sâbâ yâssâbi mê-ș-o
tomorrow butchering IND-become.PRES-3SG
‘Butchering will be done tomorrow.’

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As seen in examples (117) and (118), the passive verb takes the singular form with both singular and plural inanimate passive subjects, whereas, in examples (120) and (121), it has two distinct forms with singular and plural animate passive subjects.

4. Conclusion

The description of the SD verb system presented here shows that SD spoken in Sekuhe, except for a few minor differences mentioned, is the same as SD spoken in other areas of the Iranian Sistan area. SD presents various morpho-syntactic categories of agreement, tense, aspect, and mood, as well as voice as a relational category. Although the verb paradigms encompass non-past and past personal endings as well as the copula verb as agreement markers (with the exception of the singular personal endings and variations depending on the classes of verbs specified as type (1) and type (2)), SD captures no distinctions among the plural endings of each class of verbs; that is, all take the same personal ending form. SD highlights the opposition between non-past and past tense in verb stem rather than verbal endings. As for future tense, apart from simple non-past and non-past progressive/ingressive verb forms, SD makes syntactic use of the auxiliaries ‘kmak/kmou/mou/xâ’, the last of which is the shortened form of the auxiliary verb xâstan in Persian. Furthermore, it employs an absolute-relative tense system based on the time of the events, actions, or states with reference to the speech moment or some other temporal reference point conditioned by the text.

SD uses particular verb forms to show habitual, perfect, and imperfect aspectual properties in both non-past and past tenses primarily through various verb structure alternations, especially the past perfect and the plu-past perfect as well as the plu-past perfect progressive verb forms.

Generally speaking, it furthermore denotes verb form differences to represent modality as (a) indicative mood, (b) non-indicative mood in the form of subjunctive, counterfactual, and imperative mood, with all modal verb structures being variation-oriented. Finally, the occurrence of such synchronic dialectal variations in the verb system of SD makes it linguistically mysterious and deserving of a diachronic investigation as well.
Abbreviations

1 1st person
2 2nd person
3 3rd person
~ alternation
COMPR comparative
COP copula
DEF definite marker
DIM diminutive
EP epenthetic
GEN genitive
IM imperative
INCL inclusive pronoun
IND indicative
INDF indefinite
INF infinitive
Lit. literally
NEG negation
NPAST non-past
OM object marker
PAST past
PL plural
PM past marker
PP past participle
PRES present
PROG progressive
PROH prohibitive
SG singular
SUB subjunctive
TAM tense, aspect, mood
VLP verbal prefix
VOC vocative

References


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Appendix

Map 1: The location of Sekuhe in the Province of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran

(Sincere thanks to Christian Rammer and Agnes Korn, Frankfurt am Main, for making this map.)
The “Basmala” in Medieval Letters in Arabic Written by Jews and Christians

Karin Almbladh

The basmala, bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmānī r-raḥīmī, “in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate”, is deeply rooted in Muslim usage. It is incumbent on every Muslim to begin every act of importance with the basmala, and Muhammad is quoted as saying, “every important affair that one does not begin with ‘in the name of God’ is void.” Frequently the basmala is followed by the tašliyya, the blessing for the Prophet and his family. In this way every written discourse in Arabic, including private and business letters, is introduced by the basmala, and at times also by the tašliyya.

It is therefore of interest to discuss its place in written discourse in Arabic among the non-Muslim subjects. When their arabization gained momentum, they took over the literary forms of the Muslim rulers, including the structure of the letter, al-kitāb. In the present paper, the introductory formulae in letters of Jews and Christians are discussed. The focus is on medieval autograph letters in Arabic by Jews to Jews and a small sample of medieval autograph letters in Arabic by Christians to Christians.

The investigation is restricted to letters, as distinct from contracts, receipts, and other types of documents.

1. The Jewish material

The point of departure of the Jewish sample is altogether 935 autograph letters wholly in Arabic and written by Jews to Jews. For the sake of comparison, the choice has been made to exclude Jewish letters in Hebrew, including letters with proems in Hebrew. All letters come from the Cairo Genizah. 887 letters have been published by Moshe Gil and Sabih ‘Aodeh. They are from the second half of the 9th century and from the 11th century with a few letters from the 12th and 13th centuries. Most of them are in Hebrew script, but there are a number of Arabic-script letters as well. In cases where there is any doubt that both the writer and the addressee

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1 This is a revised version of papers read at the Congress for the Society of Christian Arabic Studies in Beirut 2004 and the Nordic Symposium of Semitic Studies at Kivik 2006. For personal names of Jewish personalities the forms as used by Moshe Gil have been adopted as has his system for titles in the Jewish religious community, while the names in the Christian letters appear in the forms they have in the publications by Werner Diem.

2 The basmala, its origin and its place are in discussed in EI2 and EQ s.v. Its translation here follows the translation in EQ. The tašliyya and its place are discussed in EI2 s.v.

3 The term “autograph” is qualified as meaning, “autograph” of the actual writer of the letter. At times there is reason to believe that the writer and the ultimate sender of the letter may be different persons. The epistolary format of Jewish letters in Arabic from the 11th century is discussed in Almbladh, 2004.

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of an Arabic-script letter are Jews, the letter has been excluded. In cases where the both editors have edited one and the same letter, this letter is quoted from the editions by Gil.4 To them are added 48 letters, also from the Cairo Genizah, from the circle of Judah ha-Levi in the first half of the 12th century and published by Moshe Gil and Ezra Fleischer.5 The writers of the letters are mostly from Egypt, Palestine, North Africa, and in a few cases al-Andalus. Only one is from Iraq. Most of the writers are merchants, just as the bulk of the letters are business letters. There are, however, a few letters written by persons holding positions in the Jewish community in Palestine and in Egypt as well as some letters from intellectual Jews in al-Andalus. The words and phrases have been rendered as they appear in the printed texts.

2. Introductory formulae in Jewish letters

2.1. No formula

194 letters in the sample have some kind introductory formula, be it in Arabic or Hebrew/Aramaic, i.e. about one fifth of the total number of letters. This means that the vast majority of letters lack any introductory formula. In a number of cases this lack is, without doubt, due to the present condition of the letters. Yet its absence in most of them is so conspicuous that one wonders how widespread its use was in the period. A perusal of the plates accompanying the publication of the letters from the circle of Judah ha-Levi corroborates this. Only a few letters published there are introduced by a formula, and in most cases there are no traces of one in the cases where the usual position of the formula is undamaged.

2.2. Formulae in Hebrew or Aramaic

2.2.1. Bi-shmākh/bi-shmākh ῥαχαμānā

The formula most frequently used is bi-shmākh ῥαχαμānā, “in Your name, oh Merciful”, shortened bi-shmākh, which is found in altogether 54 letters. One letter has bi-shmākh ῥαχαμānā wē-ṙaḥūm.5 The earliest occurrence is in a business letter on papyrus from the second half of the 9th century.7 More often than not there is a plethora of abbreviations of the formula, and this stresses its stereotypical nature. Since no less than 31 letters are either written by or addressed to a person of rank in the Jewish community (Gaon, ḥāvēr, i.e. a member of the religious academy in Jerusalem, and other communal notables), the rank of the writer or the addressee may be of importance.

2.2.2. ‘Al shēmākh/’al shēmākh ῥαχαμānā

Altogether 50 letters are introduced by the formula ‘al shēmākh ῥαχαμānā, “in Your name, oh Merciful” or by its shortened form ‘al shēmākh. The earliest extant occur-

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5 Gil & Fleischer, 2001 (= GF).

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rence is in a business letter on papyrus from the second half of the 9th century. This formula is the second most frequent one. A few times it is possible to note that a specific writer prefers it, as is the case with one merchant who uses it in fourteen out of his twenty-four letters. Usually, however, no such pattern can be discerned.

2.2.2.1. The origin of the formulae

The Jewish formulae most frequently used are thus ‘*al shēmākh* /‘*al shēmākh rahāmānā* and *bi-shmākh/bi-shmākh rahāmānā* both of which mean “in Your name, oh Merciful.” It is, of course, easy to understand them as modelled upon the *basma*-la. S.D. Goitein has, however, argued that we have here an abbreviation of an ancient Aramaic *bi-shmākh rahāmānā rēḥesnā*, “in your name ‘Merciful’ is our trust” or the like, quoting a medieval letter from Yemen with this formula. He also calls attention to a study by M. A. Friedman of introductory formulae in Palestinian marriage contracts from the Cairo Genizah, viz. ‘*al shēmēḥ dē–varyān*, “in the name of our Creator”, with the variants ‘*al shēmākh baryān*, “in Your name, our Creator”, *bi-shmēḥ dē–varyān* and *bi-shmēḥ dē–rahāmānā*, “in the name of the Merciful.” Of these, ‘*al shēmēḥ dē–varyān* is a fixed formula attested in the Palestinian Talmud, where it is found in contexts expressing trust in God. This would then explain the constructions with both the preposition *bē* and ‘*al*, as the Aramaic verb *rēḥes* is constructed with both prepositions. It is, however, worth noting that the earliest examples of ‘*al shēmākh rahāmānā* and *bi-shmākh rahāmānā* in letters antedate the marriage contracts, but this may just be accidental. A Palestinian provenance of the formulae may also be indicated by its appearance in letters written by or addressed to a person of rank in the Jewish community, including the Gaon and members of the Jewish academy in Jerusalem.

Whatever the ultimate origin of the Aramaic formulae, there is a significant difference between them and the *basma*-la, as both are invocations to God. In a Jewish context it may be added that rahāmānā is the translation of Hebrew rahūm, “merciful” in the Targum, including in Ex. 34:6 with its “thirteen qualities” which have a prominent place in Jewish piety. The relative frequency of the formulae may, however, no doubt have been enhanced by the Muslim *basma*-la, all the more so as it can be argued that rahāmānā was pronounced rahmānā.

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10 Goitein, 1967-1988, vol. 5, 325 (with note), Friedman, 1980, 91-95 (with references). Friedman mentions a suggestion, originally made by S. Lieberman (= Lieberman, 1974), that *bi-shmēḥ dē–varyān* is to be understood as an invocation, “by the name of our Creator” and that it was changed into ‘*al shēmēḥ dē–varyān*, “in the name of the Creator (do I trust)”, but the dictionaries may be consulted for the construction of the verb *rēḥes*.
11 Nöldeke, & Schwally, 1909–1919, vol. 2, 79. See also Jahn, 1937, 159. In Goitein, 1953–1954, 48 it is suggested that the Aramaic formulæ somehow were models for the formula of Quraysh. For the pronunciation, see Bar-Asher, 1992, 100, 136, where the pronunciation of the corresponding word among Algerian Jews from the 20th century is rendered t-rahmana. It is also worth observing that Goitein always renders the word rahmānā. The formula is also discussed in Cohen, 2007.
2.2.3. Bě-shem y’y/bě-shem ṭēl/ bě-[shim]khā ’elōhīm
Two letters are introduced by the formula bě-shem y’y, “in the name of the Lord”, and one each by bě-shem ṭēl “in the name of God”, and bě-[shim]khā ’elōhīm, “[in Your name], oh God.” There is reason to believe that they are variants, and of them bě-shem y’y and bě-[shim]khā ’elōhīm are rooted in Biblical diction.

2.2.4. Bě-shem rām wē-nissā’
One letter is introduced by bě-shem rām wē-nissā’, “in the name of Him who is high and lofty”, a formula built upon Is. 47:15.

2.3. Formulae in Arabic
A number of letters have introductory formulae in Arabic. Formulae in Arabic are only used to introduce letters in Arabic, just as formulae in Arabic never are found introducing letters with proems in Hebrew. Except where explicitly mentioned, the formulae are written in Hebrew script.

2.3.1. Bi-smi llāhī r-raḥmānī r-raḥīmi
Altogether 37 letters are introduced by this formula. The earliest extant occurrences are in three Hebrew-script papyri from the second half of the 9th century, where it is written with Hebrew characters. In the letters from the 11th century a curious picture emerges, as the formula is obviously to be connected with Arabic script. Arabic-script letters are thus usually introduced by the Muslim formula, while a few Arabic-script letters lack any formula. Twice it is written in Arabic script in Hebrew-script letters. The opposite feature, that an Arabic-script letter has a Hebrew or Aramaic formula, is not found. Three times, finally, it is written with Hebrew script in Hebrew-script letters. It thus appears that for a Jewish writer of the 11th century, writing an Arabic-script letter meant accepting the basmala when writing to another Jew, just as it was used addressing a Muslim.

This is the place to mention an Arabic-script papyrus from the end of the 8th century which may come from a Jewish milieu. It is obviously written in Fayyum and is introduced by the basmala. Its addressee is a certain Abū Yazīd, and his brother-in-law Yahūdā is mentioned in the letter, but the name of the writer is no longer extant. Provided it was uncertain that writer and addressee are Jews,

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16 A, nos. 8, 12, 28, 33 and 61. Judging from the printed texts, the absence of any formulae in G, 1983, nos. 141 and 167 and in G, 1997 no. 115 may be due to the condition of the letters.
19 This point is also made in Cohen, 2007. For letters addressing Muslims, see A, nos. 6, 15 and 46. See also drafts of a petition to the Caliph in G, 1983, nos. 196-197.
this letter would perhaps be the earliest extant specimen of a letter in Arabic written by a Jew to another Jew.\textsuperscript{20}

2.3.2. \textit{Bi-smi llāhi al-‘azīmi}

The formula \textit{bi-smi llāhi al-‘azīmi} is found in eighteen letters. Noteworthy is that one and the same writer uses it in no less than thirteen out of eighteen of his own letters and in three letters written by him on behalf of two other senders.\textsuperscript{21} The formula may perhaps be understood as a kind of personal motto of his. The provenance of the formula is not clear. It is a commonplace in Judaism to apostrophize God as “mighty”, and in his translation of the Psalms, Saadia Gaon renders the Divine epithets \textit{addīr} and \textit{gādōl} by ‘\textit{azīm}. In Islam, \textit{al-‘azīm} belongs to God’s beautiful names. In one letter it is used in this way in the oath \textit{wa-bi-llāhi al-‘azīm ismuhu} “by God! His name is ‘the Mighty’”.\textsuperscript{22} Thus the formula should perhaps here be translated “In the name of God, the Mighty”.

2.3.3. \textit{Bi-smi llāhi}

Two letters are introduced by \textit{bi-smi llāhi}, “in the name of God”.\textsuperscript{23} Perhaps the phrase should be understood as an arabization of \textit{bē-shem y‘y}, as Saadia Gaon renders this by \textit{bi-smi llāhi} in cases like Ps. 118:10, 11, 12, 26, 124:8, 129:8 as well as in Is. 48:1

2.3.4. \textit{Tawakkaltu ‘alā llāhi [wahdahu] tawakkaltu/tawakkul bi-llāhi}

Eleven letters are introduced by \textit{tawakkaltu ‘alā llāhi} or ‘\textit{alā llāhi} \textit{tawakkaltu}, “I trust in God”,\textsuperscript{24} one by ‘\textit{alā llāhi} [wahdahu] \textit{tawakkaltu}, “only in God do I trust”,\textsuperscript{25} and one by \textit{tawakkul bi-llāhi}, “trust in God” understood either as a noun or as an imperative.\textsuperscript{26} The verbal forms of the expression are quotations of the Qur’an 11:59. It is not found in any letter of Muslim provenance, but it is used preceding the \textit{basmala}, or after it in a number of contracts. The position of the formula in these contracts is similar to the position of the \textit{‘alāma}, the motto, in decrees from the caliph of the same period. This may indicate that it should be interpreted as an ‘\textit{alāma} in these contracts as well.\textsuperscript{27} As for its use by Jewish writers, it would have been possible to argue that it was a preferred choice for a few of them, were it not for the fact that even then only a few examples are found. Thus it is found in all the three letters from two brothers, as well as in the two letters from another writer.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Jahn, 1937, no. 10. Simon Hopkins understands the letter as Jewish, see Hopkins, 1984, § 220.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} G, 1997, nos. 528–529, 542–547, 549, 552–553, 555–558 and 764. Four letters are damaged, viz. nos. 550–551, 554 and 559 while one letter, no. 545, lacks any formula. Two letters are from other writers, viz. G, 1997, nos. 194 and 320.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} G, 1997, no. 635, r. 10–11. See also Diem, 1991, 39v, 5 (with comments and references).
  \item \textsuperscript{23} G, 1997, nos. 209 and 604.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} G, 1983, no. 506, G, 1997, nos. 526, 663, 687, 689, 690, 693, 733, 738, 788 and 840.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} G, 1997, no. 691.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} G, 1983, no. 507.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Rāghibih, 2002, 20–23 (above the \textit{basmala}), 85–89 (after the \textit{basmala}), and Jahn, 1937, 161. The \textit{‘alāma} in the decrees is discussed in Stern, 1964, 123–165. The expression here is at times found as \textit{‘alāma} but obviously from a much later period.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} G, 1997, nos. 689, 690, 691 and G, 1983, nos. 506 and 507.
\end{itemize}

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2.3.5. Ḥasbī llāhu

One writer uses ḥasbī llāhu, “God is sufficient for me” as a superscription.\textsuperscript{29} This is a variant of the ḥasbala and originally a quotation from the Qur’an 3:167, ḥasbunā llāh, “God is sufficient for us” which al-Qalqashandī prescribed for the conclusion of a letter. As such it was also frequent among North African Jews of the period. In a Muslim contract from the 10th century, however, it is found preceding the basma-la.\textsuperscript{30}

2.3.5.1. Introductory formulae expressing trust in God

The use of the formulae tawakkaltu ‘alā llāhi/‘alā llāhi [waḥdahu] tawakkaltul tawakkul bi- llāhi and ḥasbī allāhu gain a new significance if the formulae ‘al shēmākh′al shēmākh rahāmānā and bi-shmākh/bi-shmākh rahāmānā are to be understood as discussed above. The Arabic formulae are without doubt rooted in the Qur’an, just as they undoubtedly are used in similar contexts in Muslim society. Yet it is possible that they were understood as conveying the same meaning as the Aramaic formulae and hence were more easily accepted in a Jewish context. It is also of interest to note that in his translation of the Psalms, Saadiah Gaon renders forms of Hebrew bāṭah with tawakkala as in Ps. 25:1 31:15, viz. ‘alayka tawakkaltu. In these cases the Targum has forms of rēḥa.\textsuperscript{31} This is also the place to call attention to the use of the preposition bi in tawakkul bi-llāhi. The verb tawakkala is constructed with ‘alā in the sense “trust (God)” and with bi in the sense “pledge for somebody”. Perhaps the construction may here be due to interference from the Aramaic phrase.\textsuperscript{32} Tawakkul was a prime concept in Jewish piety of the period. This is mirrored, if anywhere, in Bahya’s Al-hidāya where the fourth chapter is devoted to a discussion of tawakkul.

2.4. An enigmatic superscription

An enigmatic superscription is found in one letter, written in Aleppo in 1237, viz. the abbreviation ‘‘llkm.\textsuperscript{33} The letter has been edited twice but none of the editors have been able to interpret the abbreviation.

2.5. Letters introduced by quotations from scriptures

Ten letters are introduced by a quotation from the Bible and one by a quotation from the liturgy. A natural question is what relationship there may be between the introductory quotation and the contents of these letters.

\textsuperscript{29} G, 1997, no. 668.
\textsuperscript{30} For the suggestion that North African Jews used the formula, see Goitein, 1973, 235, and for the views of al-Qalqashandī, 1915. The contract with the expression as its introduction is found in Rāghib, 2002, 16-17.
\textsuperscript{31} Saadiah Gaon, 1966, 93, 102. See also his translation of Ps 22:11.
\textsuperscript{32} For another example of the same construction, see Blau, 2006, s.v.
\textsuperscript{33} G, 1997, no. 95.
2.5.1. “The Rock, His work is perfect!”

Mawhûb b. Aaron, the ḥazzān, is the writer of a draft letter from ca 1070 from Alexandria to the merchant Nehorai b. Nissim in Fustāt.34 The letter was written upon the death of the wife of the addressee and is introduced by a quotation from Dt. 32:4, “The Rock, His work is perfect”, a phrase also found in the liturgy of the Jewish burial. That it was connected with death and catastrophes in the period of the letters is evident from that fact that it introduces another letter of condolences and that it is quoted in a letter describing the Almohad persecutions in the 12th century.35 The entire letter is devoted to expressing condolences. The writer opens by describing the pain he experienced on hearing the news of the death of the lady, who is apostrophized as “the chaste one (aṣ-ṣūnū’ā), the virtuous one (al-kīshērā), the pious one (aṣ-ṣaddēqet)”.36 He prays to God that He may comfort the addressee and that all of them should be resurrected at her resurrection. Then follows additional praise of the deceased lady and her virtues, and the addressee is reminded that all of us are on our way to the same goal. The addressee is wished a good life, as is his son, and the writer confirms that all his colleagues in Alexandria are mourning the lady.

In this letter it is obvious that the secondary use of the quotation signals that the letter is a letter of condolence.

2.5.2. “Say this to him who lives: ‘Peace upon you and your house etc’. The Lord will guard you from all evil, He will guard your soul, the Lord will guard your going out and coming in, from this time and forever.”

Abū Sa‘īd b. NN in Sicily is the writer of a letter from ca 1060 to his brother Abū 1-Barakāt b. Ṭāriq in Fustāt.37 The letter is introduced by a quotation of 1 Sam. 25:6, “Say this to him who lives: ‘Peace upon you and your house’”, followed by Ps. 121:7–8, “The Lord will guard you from all evil, He will guard your soul, the Lord will guard your going out and coming in, from this time and forever.” After the customary introductory greetings, the writer relates how he and his family arrived in Sicily from Ifriqiyyah a couple of years earlier. Their intention was to go to Egypt but as the route directly to Egypt was too dangerous they had to go via Sicily. Another obstacle was illness in his family; the youngest child of the writer even died when only one-and-a-half years old. The voyage to Sicily was evidently undertaken in a convoy of four ships, but a storm surprised the convoy and the ships had to seek refuge on a barren island without any food. In the end only one of the four ships arrived in Sicily thirty-five days after departure. At the time of the letter, the writer has been settled in Sicily for three years, as he has not dared to risk the voyage to Egypt after these horrifying experiences. He has, however, been eagerly waiting for letters from the addressee. He suggests that the addressee should settle in Sicily, as the market for different kinds of Oriental spices is prosperous there. After that follow various greetings.

36 For these female virtues, see Goitein, 1967-1988, vol. 3, 166. For the forms of the Hebrew loan-words, see Almbladh, 2007, 40.
The first quotation is naturally understood as a greeting for the well-being of the addressee. As for the quotation of Ps. 121:7–8, these verses were frequently used for anyone setting out on a journey in the period discussed here. In this way it may be connected with the invitation to Sicily made by the writer.

2.5.3. “He will send you help from the sanctuary and strengthen you from Zion! He will send His angel with you and make your way prosperous!”

Abraham b. Saadia in Kairouan is the writer of a letter from ca 1050 to the merchant Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhirti in Fustat. The letter begins with a quotation of Ps. 20:3, “He will send you help from the sanctuary and strengthen you from Zion”, and Gn. 24:40, “He will send His angel with you and make your way prosperous.” After that follows the customary introductory Arabic phrases interspersed with Hebrew phrases and Biblical quotations like Is. 43:2, “when you pass through the waters, I will be with you”, Ps. 91:4, “He shall cover you with His feathers, you shall be safe under His wings”, and “He shall cover them in the shade of His wings and spread over them a secure hut.” The writer then assures the addressee that he prays for the safe arrival of the addressee and his mother to Jerusalem. After that he asks the addressee to get in touch with the writer’s son-in-law in Jerusalem about some money-matter and problems with the delivery of opium. Then he asks for a speedy reply and finally tells the addressee about the harassment from the Bedouins but he closes his letter by quoting Ps. 121:8, “the Lord will guard your going out and coming in, from this time and forever.”

It is obvious that both the introductory quotations and the other Hebrew phrases are blessings and prayers for the safe journey of the addressee to Jerusalem. The introductory quotations naturally comment on the goal of the travel, Jerusalem. Normally people travelled by sea which was less risky than travelling by land. But travelling by sea was nevertheless dangerous, and this explains the quotations and phrases in the introduction as well as the final quotation. As already mentioned, it was current in the period as a blessing upon departure, and it was above all used for pilgrimages.

2.5.4. “For I hope in you, oh Lord!”

Elijah b. Aaron the ḥāvēr is the writer of a letter from ca 1030 to Ephraim b. Shemaria, the head of the Palestinian Jews in Fustat. It is introduced by a quotation of Ps. 38:16, “For I hope in you, oh Lord.” After the customary introductory formulae, the letter is devoted to the arrival of a sufta, a cashier’s cheque, and different problems with this. In this letter there seems to be little (if any) connection between the introductory formula and its contents.

Another letter from August 1053 written by an emissary of the Yeshiva to Joseph ha-Kohen, Av bēt dūn in Jerusalem, is introduced by kī bē-yʾy tōḥaltī, “For

38 It was obviously a frequent blessing for anyone setting out on a journey but especially for pilgrims, see Goitein, 1967–1988, vol. 5, 37.
2.5.5. “You love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God [has anointed you with] the oil of gladness above your fellows. You shall decree a thing and it shall be established to you [and upon your ways] a light shall shine!”

An unknown merchant from Kairouan but living in Fusṭāṭ is the writer of a short letter from ca 1050 to an unknown addressee. The letter is introduced by a quotation of Ps. 45:8, “You love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God [has anointed you with] the oil of gladness above your fellows” followed by Hi. 22:28, “You shall decree a thing and it shall be established to you [and upon your ways] a light shall shine.” After customary introductory phrases, the writer tells the addressee that he has been living in Fusṭāṭ for eight months. There he met a relative of his, Nehorai, perhaps identical with Nehorai b. Nissim. Now, however, he is in great troubles since a certain Abū Zikrī owes him money, and in his despair he asks the addressee to intervene.

Not much information is given in the letter. The quotation from Psalms was, however, used for judges whose office in this way was compared to kings, and so the addressee may be a judge. This may also be indicated by the quotation from the book of Job. If so, the introductory quotation is a marker of the dignity of the addressee.

2.5.6. “My help comes from the Lord, who has made heaven and earth!”

Two letters from Iraq are introduced by these words. One letter from the early 11th century is written by the physician Jacob to a certain Joseph. The writer is writing from Shamṭūniyya in southern Iraq where he is on pilgrimage to the sepulchre of Ezekiel. The letter is introduced by Ps. 121:2, “My help comes from the Lord.” After the introductory blessings and small talk about some merchants the writer tells the addressee of an epidemic which befell the population of the town. He and his son were also affected by the epidemic, and he describes their agonies. He also describes the niggardliness of the inhabitants of the town, but “the Creator (He is mighty and high!) was of help in this”, and the writer and his son received the treatment they

42 G, 1997, no. 744. The words within brackets are damaged and restored from the Biblical text.
43 For the purpose of the quotation from the Psalms, see Goitein, 1967-1988, vol. 5, 435 (with notes).
needed and recovered. It is likely that the Biblical phrase is a comment on this experience of the help of God in their illness.\textsuperscript{44}

The second letter is from the second half of the 11th century and written by an unknown man from Fustat but living in Baghdad. This letter is introduced by the complete verse “My help comes from the Lord who has made heaven and earth.” After lengthy introductory blessings the main topic of the letter is to ask the addressee to be kind to a certain Solomon al-Sijilmāsī whom Fate has badly struck. The connection between the Biblical phrase and the letter is rather opaque in this letter, at least in its present condition (it is obviously not complete).\textsuperscript{45}

2.5.7. “The Lord is your keeper, the Lord is your shade on your right hand! The Lord will guard you from all evil, He will guard your soul.”

Isaak b. ‘Ali al-Majjānī, obviously from al-Mahādiyya, is the writer of a letter from 1039 to a certain Abū ‘l-Fadl, perhaps in Fustat.\textsuperscript{46} The letter is introduced by a quotation of Ps. 121:5, “The Lord is your keeper, the Lord is your shade on your right hand” followed by Ps. 121:7, “The Lord will guard you from all evil, He will guard your soul.” After brief introductory phrases the writer picks up the topic of the letter, viz. to remind the addressee of an undertaking on behalf of the writer which he has made. The writer thinks he has been swindled in a business transaction in al-Mahādiyya concerning 36 denars. The matter obviously has to be decided at the rabbinical court in Sicily. In the final lines the writer says that he need not insist anymore on the matter. After that he prays to God to facilitate the addressee’s handling of the matters, ensure his well-being and confirm concerning him the words “when you pass through the waters [I will be with you]” (Is. 43:3).

For a modern reader of the letter, lacking previous correspondence in the matter, the meaning of the introductory quotation is decided by the final quotation. From this quotation of Is. 43:3, it becomes evident that the writer urges the addressee to set out on a risky voyage, in this case to Sicily. As has been noted above, however, Ps. 121:7 was current as a blessing upon departure, and so it may signal to the addressee the contents of the letter.

2.5.8. “Blessed be the Lord who resurrects the dead!”

Jacobo b. Salmān al-Harārī in Ramla in Palestine is the writer of a letter from about 1060 to Nehorai b. Nissim.\textsuperscript{47} The letter, which was written in the autumn, actually opens with tawakkul bi-llāhi, “trust in God”, after which follows a variant of a benediction from the liturgy, “Blessed be the Lord who resurrects the dead”, which is used when someone has escaped deadly danger. In the introductory greetings with the customary blessing for the addressee the writer states that he personally feels “bodily sound but upset in mind.” He relates that he had set sail to Jaffa

\textsuperscript{44} G, 1997, no. 72. For the pilgrimage to the sepulchre of Ezekiel, see EJ2, s.v Ezekiel, esp. cols. 1096-1097 and for the location of Shamānīyya, see Gil, 2004, 510.

\textsuperscript{45} G, 1997, no. 88.


but a storm blew up and chased the ship to the high sea. The storm raged for four days, the boat was adrift without sails and oars, with broken rudder and mast, and everyone on board was despairing for their lives. But finally the boat reached Caesarea. There the writer took refuge in a synagogue with all his things, as he could find no other place to spread them out to dry. Having spent five days in Caesarea, he finally arrived in Ramla. The rest of the letter is wholly devoted to mercantile discussions.

In this letter there is no doubt that the quotation was chosen to signal the narration of the stormy voyage and how the writer was rescued.

3. The formulae in the Jewish letters

The most striking feature is the non-use of any introductory formula in Jewish letters in Arabic. This means that not only was the tasliyya naturally excluded but also an equivalent to the basmala. This is all the more striking as the Jews used the same epistolary format as Muslims. Indeed, the absence of any introductory formula is the most conspicuous formal difference between letters written by Jews to Jews on the one hand and letters written by Muslims in the same period. Since there seem to be no references to the use of introductory formulae among Jews prior to the Islamic period, its non-use may be understood as an adherence to an earlier custom just as its use would be an innovation in this period. This also means that its use was optional among Jews. It is also obvious that the use of introductory formulae could later be perceived as “Islamic” in the Middle Ages. Simon b. Sema (Christian Spain, died 1444) thus criticizes its use in marriage contracts, maintaining that it was against the custom of the rabbis of antiquity.48

Whatever the ultimate origin of the formulae, their use may thus quite well be due to the use of the basmala among Muslims. Significant is that the formulae bi-shmāk rahāmānī/lī bi-shmākbi’al shēmākhi’al shēmāk rāhāmānā and bi-smi lāhī r-rāhmānī r-rāhīmī are already found in letters from the 9th century. The presence of the basmala is the least surprising feature as it was naturally adopted when the epistolary format of the period was adopted. Of greater significance is the presence of the other two formulae at this early period. It is also striking that Jews used a plethora of formulae and that most of them are invocations of God’s name. This is also true of the formulae in Hebrew and Aramaic, the languages of prestige among Jews and the preferred languages for these formulae.

In a few cases it is possible that the rank of the writer or the addressee has been a factor determining the choice of a certain formula just as it is possible that a certain writer uses a specific formula as a personal motto. Also peculiar is that certain formulae are directed to God, viz. ‘al shēmāk rāhāmānā, bi-shmāk rāhāmānā, “in Your name, oh Merciful”, and [bē-shim]khā elōhēm, “[in Your name], oh God.” As for the basmala, it is obviously the choice of script which has been decisive. A peculiar feature is the use of scriptural quotations as introductory formulae, just as such a

48 For this, Friedman, 1980, 92–93. There is no mention of such a use in Talmudic times in Krauss, 1912, 181ff. See also Cohen, 2007. There are, though, no systematic investigations of Jewish epistolary formats prior to the Islamic period.

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quotation frequently signals the message of the letter. Yet the possible link between a specific formula and the contents of the letter remains to be studied.

4. Formulae in Christian letters

The earliest documents in Arabic of Christian provenance in Egypt are from the end of the 8th century. Such documents become more frequent in the 9th century. Some of these documents are introduced by the basmala with the rest in Coptic. There are also cases where the writer uses the basmala, adding a cross in the margin.49 Cases are also attested where Christians have added bi-smi l-abi wa-l-bni wa-r-rūḥî l-quddāṣi l-wāḥidi, “in the name of the only Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”, or bi-smi l-masīḥi, “in the name of Christ”, to the basmala.50

Ten autograph letters, identified as written by Christians to Christians, are studied here. All of them are from Egypt and all of them are in Arabic and written in Arabic script, although there are minor additions in Coptic in a few of them. All of them follow the Muslim format of letters in each period.

Four of the letters studied here are introduced by the basmala. J, a papyrus from the end of the 8th century, is a letter from Umm al-Hakam to Menas Pejoš. The writer asks the addressee to buy olives and onions. She also asks the addressee to send grapes and citrons and to lend her wheat and barley until the next harvest. She also tells the addressee that she is anxious to see the addressee, that her daughter’s marriage has been consummated in Fustāṭ, and that her sister has died. The letter is concluded by the conventional as-salāmu ‘alayka/‘alayki.51 D1 from the 9th century is a short note where the writer expresses his happiness that the addressee is well. The letter is wholly in Arabic except for the address which is in Coptic. It concludes with the conventional ḥaḍīqa ilāhū, “may God preserve you.”52 D2, from the 9th or the 10th century, is a letter from Athanasius, son of Severus, writing to Sophia. The bulk of the letter discusses agricultural matters. The writer tells the addressee that the harvest in Dmšîw is finished but that the harvest in another place is on its way. The addressee is also informed that wild boars have destroyed part of the wheat. There is also mention of some quarrel. The writer then asks the addressee to care for a certain girl, Nike. After some final remarks concerning the state of the fields follow the final greetings after which follows a post-script.53 D3, from the 10th century, is a message from a monastery.54 The writer tells the addressee, Abū l-Yusr, that he is at the monastery for Holy Communion. He has, however, sent the surveyor to the addressee, expecting him to already have arrived in al-Lahūn. After final greetings, the letter concludes with the ḥashāla.

D4a and D5 are introduced by bi-smi llāhi r-ra‘ūfī r-raḥīmi, “in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.” D4a, from the 13th century, is a petition written

50 Jahn, 1937, 160.
51 Jahn, 1937, no. 12. It is understood as coming from a Christian milieu by Björnesjö (Björnesjö, 1996, 97, 104 (footnote 12).
52 Diem, 1993, no. 34.
54 Diem, 1996a, no. 20.
by the novice Dāwūd to the patriarch Yūnus. He complains to the patriarch that the abbot of his monastery controls the property of the qillāyā, “cell”, at his own discretion. Now he asks the addressee to deal with the problem according to monastic law. The petition is concluded by the doxology as-subḥu lī-lāhī dāʾīman ʿabadan, “glory to God for ever and ever.” 55 D5, from the 13th century or later, is a letter from a monk to his brother. In the letter, which is modelled upon a petition, the writer asks the addressee to spend the rest of the fast, perhaps the fast before Easter, with him in the monastery. He also expresses his hopes that his mother will have another son – obviously a brother of his has just died. Finally he asks for some clothes. After final greetings to the addressee and everyone he knows comes the doxology al-majdu lī-lāhī dāʾīman ʿabadan, “the praise belongs to God for ever and ever.” 56

Both D6 and D7 have one and the same introduction, al-marjū mina lāhī rahimatuḥu, “what is hoped for from God is His mercy.” D6, from the 10th century or later, is a short note from Buṭrus concerning the delivery of some goods. The letter closes with the doxology al-ḥamdu lī-lāhī dāʾīman ʿabadan, “thanks to God for ever and ever.” Of interest to note is that the writer has signed the letter with his name in Coptic. 57 D7, from the 13th century or later, is a letter modelled upon a petition and written by the novice Ibrahim to the monk Najīb. The writer blames the addressee for his haughty speech after leaving the monastery. He nevertheless comforts the addressee that Christ cares for anyone who cares for his brother and that Christ is the hope of every human being. After that follow final greetings, wa-hasanu ḥasanu minnī, “and all good from me.” Then follows a post-script where the addressee is asked to buy some lentils and other types of food for the monastery. After renewed exhortations to behave well comes the doxology as-subḥu lī-lāhī dāʾīman. Then follows another post-script closing with wa-qabbala aqdāmahu, “he [the writer] has kissed his [the addressee’s] feet.” 58

D4b is the answer from the patriarch Yūnus to the petition of the novice Dāwūd, and thus it also is from the 13th century. 59 It is introduced by al-majdu lī-lāhī dāʾīman ʿabadan. The letter is obviously directed to the ḥāfiz of the monastery of the novice. Just as the novice wanted, the patriarch orders the ḥāfiz to follow the rules for the monasteries. The answer closes with the doxology as-subḥu lī-lāhī dāʾīman ʿabadan.

D8, from the 14th century or later, is a letter from a man writing to his cousin. 60 It is introduced by al-amalu mina lāhī subḥānahu baqāʾu mawlānā wa-khulūdū saḥ[ādatihī], “what is hoped for from God (Glory to Him!) is that our [plural of modesty] master will remain and that his happiness will continue for ever!” The writer invites him and his mother to visit him at the feast of the Cross, as-ṣalīb. The letter obviously closes with the words anhā l-mamlūku dhālikā baʿṣ da taqbiḥi ayādi mawlānā wa-yuqabbil ʿanī l-mamlūki ayādi l-wālidati wa-yastawḥaṣa minhā, “the

56 Diem, 1991, no. 66.
57 Diem, 1991, no. 34.
slave [the writer] has informed you about this after kissing the hands of our master. Kiss, on behalf of the slave the hands of the mother, he is sad after her." Then follows a post-script where he also asks the addressee for his mother to make some clothes just as he asks the addressee to let other persons make other items.

5. The formulae in the Christian letters

Ar-raʾūfu is connected with God in the Qurʾan as is ar-rahūmu. Of interest here is a document from the 10th century or later, introduced by bi-smi llāhi r-raʾūfi r-rahūmi.61 In the absence of early Christian Bible translations of Exodus and the Psalms, it is in place to call attention to the translations of Saadia Gaon. He renders rahūm wa-ḥannān in Ex. 34:6 by [inna llāha] r-rahūmu r-raʾūfu. In Ps 111:4, however, he renders ḥannān wa-rahūm by [liʾanna] r-raʾūfu r-rahūmu llāhu. If this is correct, this formula is to be understood as a quotation from the Bible used as a Christian formula.62 It may also be relevant that the writers who use this formula are monks.

The doxologies al-majdu li-llāhi dāʾiman ʿabadan and as-subḥu li-llāhi dāʾiman ʿabadan are obviously variants. In D5 al-majdu li-llāhi dāʾiman ʿabadan appears as the concluding words, while as-subḥu li-llāhi dāʾiman [ʿabadan] closes D4a and D4b and al-ḥamdū li-llāhi dāʾiman ʿabadan closes D6. Perhaps the formulae here is connected with the “Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”63 The use of the doxology as the concluding formula may be compared to a petition from the 13th century from a Muslim milieu which is closes with the common form of the ḥamdala, al-ḥamdū li-llāhi.64 The use of the doxology to introduce the answer of the patriarch in D4b may in turn be compared to the use of the ḥamdala as an introductory formula in edicts from Mamluk Egypt, i.e. the period of this letter.65 In this way the Christian writers use the Mamluk format of the period, only substituting the Christian formulae for the Mamluk ones. Of interest to note is, however, that the ḥamdala occurs after the basmala in (Muslim?) papyri and thus should be assigned a date no later than the 10th century.66 The phrase dāʾiman ʿabadan may be specifically Christian. In any case Saadia Gaon renders laʾ-ʾolām wâʾ-ʾed, by ʿabadan ilā d-dahi (Ps. 9:6) and ilā d-dahi ʿabadan (Ps. 45:18, 119:44, 145:1, 2, 21). In this way al-ḥamdū li-llāhi dāʾiman ʿabadan may be understood as a Christian variant of the usual ḥamdala.

The origin of al-marjū ʿamalā mina llāhi raḥimatuhu is not clear. As for al-amalū mina llāhi suḥānahu baqāʿu mawlānā wa-khumdū suʿādatih, the editor quotes another example (by a Muslim writer) of the same way of introducing a letter without a basmala.

61 Margoliouth, & Holmyard, 1929–1931, 249 (no. 1).
63 For the Gloria Patri, see Graf, 1954, 104.
64 Diem, 1996a, no. 45 (from the 13th century).
66 Jahn, 1937, 162.

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The picture which emerges from these examples is that Christians early on accepted the Muslim formula, at times adding some other formula or another sign to mark the letter as emanating from a Christian milieu. There are, however, also examples which show that Christians quite early on introduced other formulae. Some of these formulae may be rooted in the Bible, while other may have their roots in the liturgy. It is also of interest to draw attention to a number of Coptic introductory formulae like “By/with God”, “By/with the Holy trinity”, “By/with Jesus Christ”, “[In the name of] the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, and “In the name of God.” In a number of cases they are obviously undated while others undoubtedly are from Late Antiquity, antedating the Islamic conquest of Egypt. To what extent this means that the Muslim usage of introducing any written discourse with the basmala is to be connected with this Christian usage in Egypt remains to be investigated.

6. The Jewish and Christian formulae compared

Among Jews, the use of an introductory formula obviously was an innovation – there is no evidence that letters were introduced with any formula before the rise of Islam. Judging from the sample, its use furthermore remained optional. Among Christians, the evidence from Coptic letters from pre-conquest Egypt suggests the use of such a formula. Both Jews and Christians used the Muslim formula, but both groups constructed specific formulae. Likewise it is noteworthy that Christians and Jews alike refer to God’s mercy and compassion in their specific formulae, although their formulae differ. Irrespective of the origin of these formulae, they may be understood as competing with the Muslim basmala and as religious markers.

References


EI2 = Encyclopaedia of Islam (2nd ed.). 1961-. Leiden.
EQ = Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān. 2001-. Leiden.

Gil, M., 1983 (ed. and trans.). Palestine during the first Muslim period (634-1099), vol. 2–3. Tel Aviv.
Gil, M., 1997 (ed. and trans.). In the kingdom of Ishmael, vol. 2–4. Tel Aviv.


Dērīk is located on the Syrian-Turkish border, some fifteen kilometers west of the river Tigris. Dērīk is the name used by Christians who speak this Arabic dialect. The town’s name on the Syrian national map is al-Malikiyah. The so-called Azxēni speakers of Dērīk have their origin in Āzǭx, a town some 20 kilometers north of Dērīk across the border in modern Turkey. The modern Turkish name of Āzǭx is Idil.

The persecution of Christians that began in the mid-nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire and reached its peak with the massacres of 1915, forced the Azxēnis who survived to flee in order to stay alive. They escaped to neighboring countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran, Russia, etc. In 1940 many Azxēni families left Āzǭx accompanying French soldiers withdrawing from Āzǭx to positions in Dērīk. This was natural since the Christians of Anatolia saw a salvation in these Christian French soldiers. It is difficult to know how many families or households came to Dērīk at that time, as it is difficult to estimate how many Christians were living in Āzǭx and its surrounding area in those times. According to tales from the old people of Āzǭx there were more than 1300 families living there before the massacres of 1915. In April 2002, when I visited Āzǭx, there were less than 30 people left. Most of them were aged men and women. One of the striking things that drew my attention, beside the poignant sight of a forgotten, scattered community, was that I witnessed an unforgettable scene while tape-recording three old ladies. We were sitting outside the famous Virgin Mary church and the ladies were telling about how depressed they were to have survived all this aggression and now to witness how the Christians of Āzǭx, one after one, feel the necessity of leaving Āzǭx. All of a sudden a group of children 8–10 years old showed up and shouted, while pointing at us gawer, gawer, gawer “infidel” and run away. One of the ladies shouted in Kurdish at them to disappear and looked at me with tears in her eyes and said: do you see

1 Other spellings of the name are possible, such as Mālkiy, al-Malikiyya and al-Malkiyye. The variant spellings are due to the absence of a universal transcription system.
2 Other spellings of the name are also found, such as Azakh, Hazakh or the old Syriac name Beth Zabdai.
4 Wittich, 2001, 3.
5 It is worth mentioning that as early as 1843, a large-scale Kurdish revolt broke out when Nur-Allah and Bādir Khan invaded Christian territory. In July of that year, Bādir Khan attacked the Nestorians living in and near the town of Jezire (Cizre or Gzéro that is ca five kilometers east of Āzǭx). Massacres continued over several years, and the number of Christians killed reached an estimated ten thousand, Minorsky 1981, 462.
now why Āzāx is not Āzāx any more?6 We are just few old people left here and we have to face this kind of harassment every single day. What do you know about this in Sweden? Does Europe know about us?

In Dērīk, on the other hand, the number of Christian, Azxēni speakers today is ca 1500 people. This number is nevertheless declining because of continuous migration. Harassment is not a rare occurrence in the everyday life of the Christians in Dērīk. Sometimes this harassment leads to fatalities as in October 2007, when two people were killed. History is seemingly repeating itself for this people. For the same reason that Āzāx is more or less empty of its Christian population Dērīk seems to face the same destiny.

The number of Kurds in this region has grown very fast into an immense majority. The long-lasting PKK-struggle against the Turkish state drove many Kurds over the border to Syria. The national awareness among Kurds, no matter if they are in Turkey, Syria, or Iraq is strong. One of the ideas of Kurds is to create a homogeneous Kurdish region which makes it easier to make national demands.7 The process of homogenization always has victims, and in this instance the victims are the Azxēnis of Dērīk.

Since no other Arabic speaking community was living in this area when the Azxēni speakers came to Dērīk, the Azxēni dialect survived in the town until this very day. At the present time the Arabic of the Christians living in Dērīk or in the Diaspora is still called Azxēni. There are in Sweden today more than 700 families from Āzāx and Dērīk. They all call themselves Azxēnis and speak the Azxēni dialect.

The dialect of Dērīk is an Azxēni dialect and as a consequence belongs to the Mardin group of the Anatolian ħalku–dialects. Based on tape-recordings from Azxēni immigrants in Germany, Michaela Wittrich published in 2001 a complete description of the dialect. One of the differences between the two variants of this dialect is that in the case of Āzāx the dialect is influenced by Turkish, and in the case of Dērīk the dialect is more influenced by North-eastern Syrian Arabic. In both cases there is influence from North Kurdish, Kurmanji.

The tape-recording of this text was conducted in situ in spring 2000 by Khali El-Ahmad and Gabi Lahdo. Julo, the informant of this text, is an illiterate 65-year-old woman. In the text she is telling about the “adventure” of traveling to Germany to visit her children and her sister. This material is genuine in the sense that Julo has not left Dērīk for a long period of time. The purpose of this paper is, accordingly to present a genuine body of a textual material from the town of Dērīk and in footnotes comment on some particular features.

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6 During the massacres the people of Āzāx showed great bravery in defending the town from the attacking regular Ottoman troops and Kurdish tribes, Gaunt 2006, 273.

The trip to Germany


5. w rakhna faż-tiyyārtna rāhna l-Almānya. rāhna l-Almānya baqat raqšn ma‘na ila sā ‘ayna a’s<sup>19</sup> ‘awwāt al-mātūr. wādāna kī-ydawrūn ‘alaytna l-nāhne kā-, w aš’ Ĥanna ī qiftna ‘awni mūqīn sīyyārnu ṣā‘ dī-ty,.<sup>20</sup>

6. aquli quwa‘ warak<sup>21</sup> maṣfū‘, qaltnu kāmīrat xafiyye fi. tanzalun, nqalt sarbas<sup>22</sup> lā šahla, lā ykan, yā Ĥanna baḥdalttna. Bassām warak āyn la-nkūn hā-taṣṣal hā-taṣṣalm ‘alaytna w huwe ġann.

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<sup>6</sup> yaqt‘a means literally “he cuts”. In context of buying or booking tickets the root has the meaning of “buy or book”.

<sup>7</sup> The expression *bayt abūk xarab* means literally “may your father’s house become ruins”. This is a way of condemning a statement or showing disapproval towards something. The expression is also common as *yū-xrab baytīk*.

<sup>8</sup> This is probably a mispronunciation.

<sup>9</sup> The copula of 3.f.sg in Āzū is *tālī*<sup>23</sup> “also”, *hiyye-ze* “she also”. The postposition -ze “also” is common in the Anatolian qultu-dialects, cf. Jastrow 1978, 301.

<sup>10</sup> The conditional particle *iza* is transcribed as *iza* in Wittrich 2001, 135.

<sup>11</sup> Probably as <em>*aṣyad</em> “more”.


<sup>14</sup> The genitive exponent, with suffixed pronouns, occurs three times in this text; in paragraph 4 above: *lē lahu* “that belongs to her”, in paragraph 26 *lay lūna* “that belongs to us”, and *leyw* “that belongs to me” in paragraph 44. These forms correspond, to *lēluha*, *lēlūna* and *lēlw* in Wittrich 2001, 47.


<sup>16</sup> The genitive exponent, with suffixed pronouns, occurs three times in this text; in paragraph 4 above: *lē lahu* “that belongs to her”, in paragraph 26 *lay lūna* “that belongs to us”, and *leyw* “that belongs to me” in paragraph 44. These forms correspond, to *lēluha*, *lēlūna* and *lēlw* in Wittrich 2001, 47.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the postposition -ze “also”, *hiyye-ze* “she also”. The postposition -ze “also” is common in the Anatolian qultu-dialects, cf. Jastrow 1978, 301.

<sup>18</sup> The genitive exponent, with suffixed pronouns, occurs three times in this text; in paragraph 4 above: *lē lahu* “that belongs to her”, in paragraph 26 *lay lūna* “that belongs to us”, and *leyw* “that belongs to me” in paragraph 44. These forms correspond, to *lēluha*, *lēlūna* and *lēlw* in Wittrich 2001, 47.

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8. na‘hne ku-šârá26 ar’î al-me‘... ar’î àşar-ze, na‘hne hèke fał-màṯîr. yîyàr âlla îla amît mà-rsa hàk al-yavm. wàlálam qâmna, ana qà’èdù ka-bkî w à-čantît mà‘-î raf ayî-în, là sâhâbutu çantît w là maddaytu çantît w là a‘-î raf ayî-în w là a‘-î raf ayî-în.27


10. kàrrâ tâlla‘nà gà sîb òbni ku-dàr mà xalla quwwât hàk al-màtîrât kàllân strastâq28 alâyôn. fà‘a-âqeddù gya mà‘-î rafî, màśî ki-yèsè tâlla‘ k-àna kë-që‘ de ‘ad-dîvânî gà hàllaq rûhù ‘alày ‘alàw bî mawme, mawme! gàlût àbî mawme tâkîl ràs mawme29 w gàddî w rîh kwàhâ31 gàddûk, kwàhâ gàddûk rûh tâllà‘ kà-yûmkàlî, kàmmà tàlpàtù kàmmà tàlpàtù30 tiyàratak bâymà rôh ñawwî, rôh ñawwî!

12. gàl hàdà gàddî-îwe? gàlût è gàddûk-îwe. è, wàlîl ‘ëdi lavyî hàd bôkî, w hàd bôkî w ñaww. w kàrrà al-Mîlàd pappûkù33 ègày èn tiëypàlù‘a ën èn èn mà-yàyla‘nà, yà òmmi màţûr àl... , abûhù wàqûf èn w hànèh ànî.

14. kàrt lâyex món hawnak nàrkàb fà-wêhàd lâxî kàrt lâxî yàyỳna yàyỳna yàyỳna nàrmât fà-mûqàyà na îlà àqûlî qìmà ‘àn-sàllam àl... tûnlàllà w nàrgà ‘àlà màqà ‘àl’. Àdzâ tay... tayrànà. wàqà ‘àl mal-àqyrày, wàqà ‘àl mal-àqyrày w ñàrmà w qàlù wàlîlà tə ‘nà.

24 Cf. Kurdish xude haya. The expression means literally “God exists”, meaning that there still are good people in this world.

25 Cf. tâbì ‘to go out’.

26 ku, ki- and kwa- + perfect reflects the meaning of “here, behold, obviously”.

28 The literal meaning of là a‘î raf ayî-în w là a‘î raf ayî-în is “I don’t know where to go or where to come”, which means “I am totally lost, confused, disoriented”.

29 Cf. rastaqa “to arrange well, put in order”.

30 The expression gà hàllaq rûhù ‘alày means literally “he came and threw himself on me”. This is a way of saying, that a meeting between, for example, two people is very dear.

31 Kwà + hà < hàk “there he is”.

32 Cf. tâlpàtu “catch him”.

33 Cf. Àdzà “once” where the /r/ shifts to /t/ due to regressive assimilation.
15. ĕ qāl xwa ǧaddo w mayme qaṣfu hawne abīy w ana tanzal aqīl šā bāba ’Azīz ana ka’-rāf halla āyī ū-yaṣāwī97 ’alay. ĕ waļla nṣzw, nṣzw rāḥ u tālā’na waļla ku-, ku-ḡā. be-aṣqad98 abīhu sabbu-ze, kā-tiyyabbw ǧl-polis-ze ’alayu. yqūl yā ni ǧbni ǧl..., nkamāš.
16. ĕ, waļla nṣzwla w karra ḍax ǧl-’ Azīz ǧš-šāfna w ḍann. ĕ yā bāba ĕ mal-mīrāt nēs yqāṭ ‘fa’-tiyyaṭī Māltā w yqā’ id satt sā āt ǧa-Mālta w ẓnīka yqṭla’ yāği. kārmāl ayī, āl-arbā’ tālāf waraqa arxs ma-lay Ṣūrīyya.
17. ǧl-muḥm bahlalā hawnak, sawawlu bahlale-ze u ṣrāna. ṣrāna ’al-bayt, waļla ṣrāna qaḍdēmīt bāyt Šāmu ’al-Baytār, ē qrayy-WE ’al-māṭār, bāyt ǧxṭī.
18. waļla kā-raḥat xārīf hal-qaḍd99 u kā-qaḍdēmītna kallātn w fil al-māniyīye ǧōq ǧl-’ āyī byūt k-yaṣṭarqāqun ’alayzn, ya’ni ayī, ayī mnaśāb hāş-šī, ē ayī mnaśāb ya’ne ne mone kā-ġālun hāş-šī kī-yaṣawawu. l-xārīf f-ID Šāmo, f-ID zāw̢ ǧxṭī.
19. waļla ṣrāna w karra ǧxṭī halhal̢t u kūTqadd na w ǧaBhunderdot ǧxys ǦlTBaytār, ē qrayyBtunderdotwe ǦlTmāBtunderdotār, bayt Ǧlxtī.
20. w rBhunderdotna karra ǦlTBaytār zabaBhunderdot ǦlTxārūf qddfā LJrayna w qām u LJaladu qaBtunderdotBtunderdota=w ṣrānaBtunderdotu ṣrānaBtunderdotu ṣrāna ktygT LJūn w qāllyy lTmay. ĕ waBhunderdot na kūTqadd līyu w yqBBbBtunderdot Btunderdota. halTbū ṣrāna w haLJlli kā.
21. warkBhunderdota kū TrabaBtunderdot xārūf halTqadd u kūTqddfā ltna kulfTqddfātna. w karra waxt ǦlTšṬšāfūna yādē ašṣ wēBhunderdotBtunderdota=w qaBtunderdotBtunderdota=w BtunderdotaBtunderdotBtunderdotu ṣrānaBtunderdotu ṣrāna ktygtljīyu w ykBBbBtunderdot Btunderdota. halTbū ṣrāna w haLJlli kā.
22. warkBhunderdota rBhunderdota w karra ǦlTBaytār zabaBhunderdot ǦlTxārūf qddfā LJrayna w qām u LJaladu qaBtunderdotBtunderdota=w ṣrānaBtunderdotu ṣrānaBtunderdotu ṣrāna ktygT LJūn w yqBBbBtunderdot Btunderdota. halTbū ṣrāna w haLJlli kā.
23. ǦlTmuhūm qddfā ṣBhunderdot xūlānna t ḍaddaynā w uw... w bayt ’Azīz baqa yārū ǧōq ḍl-tleṭin siyyāra hawl ǧš-Šāqqa taba Ǧn. b- ād-enn ǧttl attāt sā āt man bayt Xātīn. ē, u māṣṣāhu waļla mbadālīk yḥat ṣaṣṣy yal-xal-xal-haṭanīyye ’alayu w tānī marra yḥatū ygīlī katt lāξ xmaṣṣiyu.
24. yqūl Ǧm Ǧs-, samne Ǧs-yaṣlaḥluna. qddfū abīy ynal-xalawu. xalaw samn=xī ṣīy. nal-xe m’allamīn samne abīy, waļla Ǧt-ṭaraf gā nāξelu.
25. ḍl-muḥm qddfā tabaxūlna t ḍaddaynā w uw... w bayt ’Azīz baqa yārū ǧōq ḍl-tleṭin siyyāra hawl ǧš-Šāqqa taba Ǧn. b- ād-enn ǧttl attāt sā āt man bayt Xātīn. ē, u māṣṣāhu waļla mbadālīk yḥat ṣaṣṣy yal-xal-xal-haṭanīyye ’alayu w tānī marra yḥatū ygīlī katt lāξ xmaṣṣiyu.
26. ḍl-muḥm qddfā tabaxūlna t ḍaddaynā w uw... w bayt ’Azīz baqa yārū ǧōq ḍl-tleṭin siyyāra hawl ǧš-Šāqqa taba Ǧn. b- ād-enn ǧttl attāt sā āt man bayt Xātīn. ē, u māṣṣāhu waļla mbadālīk yḥat ṣaṣṣy yal-xal-xal-haṭanīyye ’alayu w tānī marra yḥatū ygīlī katt lāξ xmaṣṣiyu.

37 ku-, ki- kwa- + imperfect denotes the actual present.
38 be- indirect question. The particle is often followed by an interrogative. This particle is also used in Ṭūrūy, cf. Jastrow 2002, 43.
39 When using the expression hal-qaḍd the speaker normally makes a gesture.
40 Cf. Turkish belki “perhaps, maybe”.
41 Cf. Turkish yâde “mother”. In a speech the expression may also mean “dear, oh dear, oh God”.
42 ašš ~ ayyī < *ayīn < *ayīn ṣay ṣīn. This interrogative is transcribed as aš in Wittrich 2001, 41.
43 Cf. Turkish zahmet “difficult”.
44 massa – ymasī “to soak, absorb”.

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27. ṑ, w araw taba’ na-ze⁴⁵ weğa xatiyār u maxīru fiyu hal-qadd u, u kāsś hal-qadd. ṑ, hal-l-almānīyye hama⁴⁶ baqqaw āhēk, baqqaw yaʾffarāqū. waḷla daxalna ġuwwa.

28. daxalna ġuwwa qalna hal-karra-ze k-wṣalḥna b-salāme hama kayfān.⁴⁷ waḷla bṣqaṭna ġuwwa yā ʿxti. kal-yawm ē yawm lā⁴⁸ tiy abbawn as-stiyyārāt tayinzalūn ’a-qawf⁴⁹, hawnak yṣqulūlu qawf.

29. nāhne nqaldān dākekīn hawne, hawnak yṣqulūlu qawf. qalū mō tḥayn maʾna? qalū lā yāde waḷla mō-ġi ma’kan. qalū xwade bantna lāz-zgayre tabqaʾ āndki w nāhne tānrūḥ.


31. aṣfāḥ al-mafetīh aṣfāḥ w mā aṣfāḥ⁵⁰ asey al-. al-ṣaddāḥā hēk asey al-kabrītī ḡē-. qaddāḥtī tabaʾ as-sagūyār asey w mā asey mā fi nār.

32. qalū w ḥāṭṭaytu w bktụ. qalūtu nār mā lḥhn u ku-Ṣalūlu ṭbxi w halla tawṣīrūn ’as-siyyārāt qaddāl-bbū ana aṣṣ tātaʾ āmmān?

33. qantū mūn harīq qalībī,⁵² ēngi kū-bktụtu qataltu ḡāl al-bnt mūn ṣarbūn, qataltuwā mūn ṣarbā šaʾ alṭ al-sagūrā, u maḥṣūm mūn wqkīkī⁵³ kān-wassaxūt, qūltā tāńa marra twaxṣīn ḡālūkī w avaddī as-sagūrā sawba w tāţa, w avaddī as-sagūrā sawba w tāţa... ḡānantuwa.

34. qalūtu mūn Bahunderdotaraqu qalībī ḡaṭtq qalīhbī w mūn aftaBahunderdot w mūn aftaBahunderdot “I really try to open”; aṣey w mūn aṣey “I really try to do”; ṭbqīn tiyṭyaylaʾ ṭn w aṣey mūn ayšlīn mūn kān- ayyanūhū, yē ṭnā alḥaw. qalūtu ṣṣaad al-kā-ṣṭallā ǧānē nār mākū.

45. tbaʾ is the genitive exponent used in Syrian Arabic. Cf. Lahdo 2000, 64.

46. Cf. Turkish hemen “right now”.

47. Cf. Turkish “state, condition, good mood” + ṣin which is the suffixed possessive pronoun for 3.c.pl.

48. ṭawm ē ṭawm lā “every second day; literally: one day yes one day no”.

49. Cf. German “store”.

50. A way of putting emphasis on something said is to repeat it with a mā in-between, aṣey w mā aṣey “I really try to open”; asey w mā asey “I really try to do”; ṭbqīn tiyṭyaylaʾ ṭn w aṣey mūn ayšlīn mūn ṭnā ṭaṭṭa “how is he really going to be able to take us out”.

51. A short form of ḡaddām “in front of”.

52. The expression mūn ṣḥāraq qalībī or mūn ṣḥāqat qalībī means literally “of the burning of my heart” meaning “because of what I have been through; because of the suffering I have gone through”. But biyraq qalībī ṭlayu means “I felt sorry for him”.

53. The literal meaning of maḤṣūm mūn waqky is “may you be spared from witnessing or hearing this”. Cf. the root ḡṣā ṣyyārā “to exclude”. The expression is used when someone is mentioning something “dirty”, for example shoes, toilets, etc.


56. ṭmāde ḡaḥṣaīn means literally “ash(es) in your head”. The expression is a kind of chastisement. It is used to express dissatisfaction.

57. Cf. lṣṣaʾ < li-ḥādīhi ṣ-saʾ a “still, yet”.

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37. qamtu gā lāʾ ābtu fāl-mafēth. ānta fa maʾ i. wʾalla mbadālki28 baqaw bala akāl, w karra rāḥ gāb martu māl maṭ an, taʾ ama qatle-s, w qā dāt sawawtīna vēgā29 akāl al-pappāke u hal-qadd dūf kallānʾ anna.

38. hāk al-bont yā xti naqāṭaʾ st mā wassaxat. mā wassaxat, koll yawm, koll yawm, koll yawm aḵrās ʿawlādī30 kartōnṭ aḥfāzāt ḥāzrīn ḫala dērī yawm ʾaḥ-sabāḥ mā kān ... ʿAzīz hāss ʿalay.

39. ḥaṣṣ yawm yawmayn tłāte, qāl ʾaḥ-sabāḥ, qāl tāʾ rafīn haqq hal-ʾaḥfāzātī31 lázōm tāḏmāʾ iyn laʾammī, hadīl tāʾ yawm laʾammī, tātawlaʾni mar-taḥtānīyītū, yāʾ nē taqṣīf ašš sawāytūla.

40. qalītū lā, lā mānātak wʾal-xara, mō rīdān, lā ṭaṭallawā ʿala evīyyītī32 w mō rīdān, qāl mō kāʾ-qaṭaʾ tīya maḷ-wasax ʿes. nāḥne mā baqā twassaய yāʾ ʾammī, layī ṭezʾ ali, yābū kāl yawm, koll yawm haqq halʾ ābtāl al-ʾaḥfāzātī ʾakkī, laʾ-daxānīkī, ḡāy ṭaṣāsītī ʾakkī al ṭaṭābūk.

41. ē, ṭallā tu kā-naṭaṣgadda kāʾ-ṣarāb latār wīṣkī-ye be-ayṣ kāl-ḥaṭṭaʾ ʿat-ṭāwle šārba xallaṣa ḫāṣū ṣā r-rāṣū,33 yṣīl ʾammī tāʾ ay qaddī34 ḫanvāʾ ʿendī. qāʾ ēdtuʾ ṭandu. qaʾ ēdtu gya saḥabnī bās rāṣī kā-yqīl īdī ʾalā rāṣkī, qūllī ašš sawāytī laʾ-Ḥanān?

42. qalītū ašš sawāytī laʾ-Ḥanān abūy? hāʾ35 mā ḡanayṭūkīn? kal yawmʾ ābtāt aḥfāzātī mā ka-yūḥālkan? mān yawm ʾaḡ-ṣīṭū ḫāy arayṭū aḥfāzī? ʾaḥbtān aḥfāzī?

43. waḥaṣ brāsī šī ʾaḡ-ḡā ʾammī fā-ẓarbāt mā, mā tāṭuʾ ʿalayya. ḥama šaʾ altu ʾaṣ-saḡāra awaddīya ṣaww ṭāḏaya, awaddīya ṣaww ʾaḡraya, ṣaww ṭīṭā w hiyye ʿay, ʿay, ʿay.

44. qāl ḥama brāsī mōʾ tīya ʾaṭ-saḥʾaṭ ʿatn ʿawlādī,36 bass yāʾṭīkī ʾalʾ āfyē bass yṣībā šī ʾgayr ʾammn Īlā mō ṭallā. wēgā mō rāṣa ḡayyār kān, kāmā ley-li kā-yqīl ṣāḥyī ʾammī-yī, bōš kā-yḥabbā. nāḥne kān fallatāt nār fāl-bayt mā kā-yfāb ... qāl ʿabrāṣī ʾammī yṣībī šī ʾyi ni mō ṣfālki bass mān ṭaraf al-wēḥād ʾaṣ ... waḥaṣ addabṭiya. ē, wafflehi sār arbaʾ miyyī u xamsīn mark maʾi ḫaqq aḥfāzāt ʿaḥ-hāk ʾaḥ-ṣaḥār ṭla ʿṣīṭū, b-hal ... b-hāk ʾalʾ ādra.37

45. ē, wallāḥi qomna iда38 ṭaṣqīnā ʿaḥ-hāk ṭla ʿwaḥaṣ w qomna ʾaḥna katt ṭaṭān w yāʾṭīkī ʾalʾ āfyē.  

58. The literal meaning of ʿalla mbadālki is “may it be God instead of you”, meaning I would say the same thing even if it was God sitting here with me instead of you, meaning I am telling the truth.  

59. Cf. Kurdish vēva “now”.

60. The literal meaning of ʿabrās ʿawlādī is “on my children’s head”. By swearing on children’s head you assure someone that you are telling the absolute truth. One may also find brāṣī (paragraph 43) “I swear on my head, your head”. Another expression using the “head” is ēdtuʾ ʿandu. qaʾ ēdtu gya saḥabnī bās rāṣī kā-yqīl īdī ʾalā rāṣkī, qūllī ašš sawāytī laʾ-Ḥanān?

61. The forms Bhunderdotfāḍāt and BhunderdotfāBzunderdotāt “napkins” occur in the same text. Bhunderdotfāḍāt is the Syrian Arabic pronunciation.  

62. Cf. Kurdish ḡubb “hope, trust”.  

63. The literal meaning of haššu LJā rTrāsu is “his sense came back to him” meaning he is calm and rational.  

64. Cf. q⁽adi “sit down”.

65. ašš sawawtī laʾ-Ḥanān abūy? hāʾ This is a common way of asking a question with emphasis. Instead of repeating the question twice, one adds a hāʾ “what” often in somewhat angry tone.

66. This is a way of expressing “my seven children or the seven children of mine”. Another way of expressing the same is: wālādī ʾaṭ-saḥab “my seven children”.

67. The form ḡaṣ “the Virgin Mary” is expected here. The different pronunciation is, most likely, caused by influence from Syrian Arabic.

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Translation

1. The father (of my children) goes to Damascus and buys flight tickets for us. He books a flight for us to Malta. Damn you, what is the difference (in price)? It is all three or four thousand pounds. He doesn’t know (better), so they book it for him so that we travel via Malta. We will have to sit and wait six hours at the airport before our aircraft takes off and flies to Germany.

2. And Aziz (the son that lives in Germany) thinks that we have bought tickets for a trip from the airport in Syria to Germany, a direct flight. He doesn’t know that we will have to wait six hours (on the way). So they left in the morning to meet us (at the airport in Germany) while we left (Damascus) to sit (and wait) in Malta.

3. So as I told you, a lady from, from a place, Egypt, isn’t it Egypt? She came to us. She came and sat next to me and asked me: Where are you from? I said: From near Turkey, from the shores of the big water. She was happy to hear that.

4. She said: Do you have a telephone? I said: Yes, I have a telephone. She said: Give me your telephone number. I called upon Hanna and said: Hanna, give her our telephone number. She also gave us hers. She said: when I land I will talk to you.

5. And so we boarded the aircraft to Germany. We left for Germany and she stayed (as) a friend with us up to two hours at the airport. Our children (on the other hand) are searching for us while we are … and when Hanna stretches his arms and lets out that sound you would surely say it is an ambulance.

6. I tell him: be quiet you disreputable person! Didn’t they tell us that there are hidden cameras (that register everything)? When getting off (the aircraft), do it casually! Do not look around and do not … Oh Hanna you disgraced us. Bassam (Aziz’s son), on the other hand, will find us no matter where we are. We should be there any moment. They should come to us any moment. He should be here any second and welcome us. But he (Hanna) got totally mad.

7. We remained more than three or four hours like that. We called, thank God, that lady phoned to our children. She put money (in the telephone booth) and talked to Fahima (Aziz’s wife), Aziz and all of them. They said that they went out to meet us at nine o’clock in the morning.

8. And now it is four in the afternoon and we are still at the airport. By God, until the day I die I will not forget that day. And so they, I sat down and started crying. I do not know where our bags are. I didn’t pick them up from anywhere. I am totally disoriented. And here we are in such a situation.

9. Then, all of a sudden that lady says: I have lined up your bags here; watch them so no one may steal them, since there is actually thievery here. I asked if the bags were ours and she said: yes. She had pulled them for us and we brought them close to me and I sat on a bench.

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69 The informant is referring to an earlier conversation.

70 Referring to Tigris River.

71 The informant is referring to her husband’s behavior when he gets angry.
From nowhere we saw my grandchild showing up. He had looked for us in every corner of those airports until he found us. He passed his grandfather without recognizing him. He passed him looking around and saw me sitting on the bench. He came and hugged me. They had seen me one year earlier.

So he came and hugged me and cried grandmother, grandmother. I said: may God reject grandmother, may God take grandmother and grandfather. Go to your grandfather, there he is, there he is. Take care of him! He is becoming a wild animal. I am just afraid that a camera may catch him and he will destroy everything for us. Go to him, go to him!

He said: is this my grandfather? I said: yes, he is your grandfather. So he runs to him and he cried and the other one cried too and so the others came. So poor Milad (another son of Aziz), he came and wanted to take us out of the airport. God it is a huge airport, his (Milad’s) father is waiting somewhere and we are somewhere else.

He takes us out and puts us in that, in those trains. Our bags are with us and we walk around and around, as if he is making us go all around Derik, and after that he takes us down under the levels of earth again.

Once again from there we get on another one (train) that drives us on and on and on until we get off in another place until, as I tell you, we came close to the stairs where Aziz will meet us. We were so tired, totally finished, and thought that for sure we are lost.

So he said: grandfather and grandmother, you stay here while I go down to daddy Aziz. I know now what he thinks of me. He went down. He went down and then we saw that he came back. His father was obviously swearing at him and was about to notify the police about him, since the father must have thought “my son must have been taken by the police”.

So we went down and imagine how mad Aziz became when he saw us. Oh father, have you ever seen anyone (on his way from Syria to Germany) fly via Malta and wait six hours in Malta and first after that continue? And what for, because it is four thousand pounds cheaper than Syrian airlines?

Nevertheless, they humiliated him there, they showed him up and we left. We went home. We arrived in front of Samo Baytar’s house since it is near the airport. My sister’s house, so to speak.

He (Samo) had obviously tied up a lamb this big in front of us all. There were also more than ten German families watching us. They were wondering what the purpose of this is, what the special occasion for this is. Who is arriving to do all this? Samo, my brother in law is holding the sheep.

So we came there and all of a sudden my sister let out a joyful sound. They started walking from here to, maybe as far as to our relative Babbo, and all of them walking in front of us. But imagine when they saw us, God how hard it is, imagine all the crying.

The woman is obviously, not familiar with the underground system at airports, train stations, etc.

The informant probably means that the father must have thought his son had lost his way, since he was gone for a long time.

Halhal is a sound that normally women make. It is often used at weddings and on joyful occasions but sometimes also at funerals, especially when the deceased is a young person.

This is a way to approximate a distance “from here all the way to ...”.

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20. When we arrived, Samo Baytar slaughtered the lamb before us. He flayed it, chopped it and put it on the stove. He put it on the stove and started boiling it. When the meat was boiling he poured out the water and changed it. He repeated this action a couple of times.

21. Damn it, you are destroying the taste of the meat! He said: we are used to doing it this way here. I said: what are you talking about? He said ... that meat was boiled five or six times and each time he was pouring out the water and again putting new water from the tap on it and letting it boil again and thereafter pouring out the water again.

22. He says: the fat is not good for us. I said: dear, let it be! Let its fat be! We are used to fat, dear. We eat everything.

23. Anyhow, they cooked for us and we had lunch. And now at Aziz’s place there were more than thirty cars around their apartment (waiting for us). They live almost three hours driving from where Xatun (my sister) lives.

24. And Sabah, his wife says: oh Aziz, I am totally finished, oh Aziz all these people have been waiting here since the morning, why ... By God, he says: my aunt didn’t let us leave (without lunch).

25. We had lunch and we got into the cars and left home (to Aziz). We came there and you should have seen (this scene), she had filled a whole washing bowl with Turkish delight and caramels and candies and lots of other sweets. She had filled such a washing bowl, we say washing bowl.

26. And then from the balcony she throws (the sweets) over us. All those Germans were watching and when they saw my face and saw me, they said: this is it? You are throwing all these sweets on this one’s head? They also saw my company (the husband) with his (big) stomach and his big nose.

27. So they saw my husband, old as he was and with a big nose and a big stomach. The Germans were shocked, they stared at us. So we went in (laughter).

28. We went in and said: (thank God) also this time we arrived in peace and the rest is not a big deal. We remained inside. Every second day they have to fill the car and leave for the Kauf, there they call it Kauf.

29. We say shops here but there they call them Kauf. They asked me: don’t you want to come with us? I said: no dear, I won’t come with you. They said: then could we leave our youngest daughter with you while we are gone?

30. So they left her with me. They left her with me but she doesn’t know me. She is younger than Lahhud. She cries. Every time I come close to her she cries. They also told me to cook for them. I look at the stove and I see no fire in it.

31. I turn the knobs (of the stove) and no matter what I try (no use). I tried the lighter and the matches, my cigarette lighter, no fire whatsoever.

32. I felt bad and started crying. I thought: they don’t have fire and they asked me to cook for them. Soon they will arrive with their cars in front of the door and what will I feed them?

76 Throwing sweets on someone is a way to show a warm welcome.
33. Since I was so sad and since I cried a lot I slapped that (little) girl. I slapped her and I lit a cigarette; she had, sorry to say, done it. I said to her: if you dare do it again, and I point the cigarette at her and draw it closer while in the meantime she cries; I point the cigarette at her and draw it closer while in the meantime she cries. I drove her crazy.

34. I said to myself: the same way they made me sad I will make them sad. So, it became 2 o’clock, 3 o’clock, and Aziz shows up with Daoud Matto’s son, and Abu the Nada’s, and there were about ten to twelve cars. (Aziz must have) told them: come home with me, my mother has prepared Syrian food for us.

35. They had told me, come and cook for us, cook for us and when they came back they saw that the cooking pots were still exactly the same way I put them on the stove with cold water in them. They asked: mother, where is the food?

36. I answered: dear, where is your fire? Tell me! Damn you all and damn your life. You still don’t have a stove! But mother, how? Haven’t we preset (the stove), turned it on? I said: no matter how much I looked there was no fire.

37. Obviously when I turned the knobs I switched it off. I switched it off. God may be my witness, they remained without food. But then all of a sudden he (Aziz) brought his wife from the restaurant and beat her up. She prepared food for us, poor her, so many guests we had too.

38. That baby girl stopped doing it (in the diapers). She didn’t do it (any more). Every day, every day, every day, I swear to God, a whole package of diapers was finished before the next morning. Aziz obviously knew what I had done.

39. He felt it after one day, two days, three days. He called: Sabah! She said: yes. He said: you will collect the money that these diapers cost and give it to my mother. These you will give to my mother. You will give it to her from the hidden (saved) money. Here he wanted to see if I would react and say what I had done to her (the little girl).

40. I said no, no. I don’t want to have your shit money. I don’t want it. Just don’t leave her in my trust and I don’t want it. He said: but you have helped to stop doing it in the diapers and she is not doing it anymore. Why do you get angry, oh mother? So (it is just fair) that whatever this package of diapers cost every day, every day should be yours, for your cigarettes. It is a gift for you, congratulations.

41. I noticed, while having lunch, he drank a liter of whisky or whatever it was, he had put it on the table and drank it all. After that he felt relaxed, he said: mother, come and sit here beside me. I sat beside him. When I sat down he pulled me and kissed my (fore)head saying, please tell me, what did you do to Hanan (the little girl)?

42. I said: dear, What did I do to Hanan? Tell me! Haven’t I made you rich? Didn’t you use a package of diapers every day? Have you seen a diaper since I came to you? Have you bought a diaper (since that day)?

43. I swear on your head, I slapped her as much as I could until it didn’t help. After that I took the cigarette and drew it towards her hands, towards her feet, towards her butt and she cried ouch, ouch, ouch.
44. He said: I swear on my head, she is worth more to me than all my seven children. Thank you, but if anything happens to her I will just call her mother Julo. Since she had a small head just like mine, he used to say "this is my mother". He loved her much. Even if she would have set the whole house on fire he wouldn’t have ...

45. He said: I swear on my head, mother, if anything (bad) happens to her I will never forgive you. But on the other hand you lectured her. So I had four hundred fifty marks, from the savings of the diapers that month until I came back. I swear on this, that Virgin Mary.77

46. So we stayed about a month there and after that we came back once again and thank you.

References
Lahdo, A. 2009. The Arabic Dialect of Tillo in the Region of Siirt (South-eastern Turkey) (Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 26). Uppsala.

77 The informant wanted obviously to point at an icon of Virgin Mary while talking.
Giving Voice to Silenced Stories in the Novel Kamā yanbaghī li-nahr [As is appropriate for a river] by Manhal al-Sarrāj

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Introduction

In February 1982 the massacre in Hama [majzarat Hamā] took place or, if we prefer the name used by the Syrian authorities for the catastrophe, “the events of Hama” [aḥdāth Hamā].

On the 3 February 1982 the Syrian town Hama, situated by the banks of the river Orontes, was overrun by Syrian special forces. The operation lasted for three weeks. During this period thousands of people were killed (according to Human Rights Watch between 5,000 and 10,000) or were taken away and thrown into prisons, the majority of them men and boys. Many of those who were taken away are still missing. A large part of the town was completely demolished, and later on modern houses, among them a five-star Cham hotel, were built on the ruins. Monja Kahf writes that when the special forces withdrew from the town one third of its residential buildings had been razed and 50,000–60,000 people had become homeless, this in addition to the official buildings like mosques, churches, and school buildings that had been destroyed. The town was completely isolated by the military and no news about what was happening there was allowed to get out.

The massacre in Hama was the climax of a period of increasing political tension between the Alawite regime and the Sunni opposition (the forbidden Muslim Brotherhood). During this period, that lasted from 1976–1982, several acts of violence were carried out by the Sunni opposition and were followed by bloody retaliations from the regime. Hama, with its long-standing reputation as a town marked by conservatism and piety, had constituted a center of all this. The direct instigation for the attack on Hama was a full-scale insurrection in the town against the

1 Tal, 1996, 7.
2 Abbas, 2006, 225.
3 Kahf, 2001, 229.
5 Kahf, 2001, 228.
Alawite regime, an insurrection organized by the Muslim Brotherhood and an event that, according to Patrick Seale, caused panic among the regime in Damascus.\(^6\) One possible reason for the terrible brutality with which the retaliation was carried out has roots that stretch back into history. At the beginning of the 20th century Hama had been “the citadel of landed power and the capital of rural oppression” and in the houses and on the fields of its rich landowners many members of the now ruling, but formerly so poor and despised, Alawite community had in the past worked as serfs.\(^7\)

In her study of “the effects of trauma upon individual survivors and the manner in which that trauma is reflected and revised in the larger, collective political and cultural world”, Worlds of Hurt. Literature of Trauma, 1996, Káli Tal mentions three different strategies used when trauma is to be dealt with culturally.\(^8\) These strategies are: “mythologization”, i.e., reducing the trauma to standardized narratives of the event, “medicalization”, i.e., focusing all attention on the individual victim who is regarded as suffering from an illness from which he or she can be cured and, finally, “disappearance”, i.e., “a refusal to admit the existence of a particular kind of dilemma”.\(^9\)

As regards the massacre in Hama, the strategy used by the Syrian authorities has definitely been disappearance or enforced silence. In Syria, where all literature, the press and other cultural media are strictly controlled by the state, “the events” were quickly quieted down.\(^10\) It became a strong political taboo to talk about what had happened there. Even to mention the name of Hama in public places could in the 1980s‒1990s be dangerous. It is thus not strange that the massacre which Monja Kahf in her article “The Silences of Contemporary Syrian Literature Today”, 2001, calls “one of the top traumas of the 20th century for Syrians”, also seems to hardly have any presence in Syrian literature. In fact, Monja Kahf states that, “Syrian literature contains no accounts of the Hama massacre.”\(^11\) Or in the words of Miriam Cooke: “no writer in his right mind touches Hama”.\(^12\)

Still, this overwhelming silence was sensationally broken with the publishing in 2003 of the novel Kamā yanbagī li-nahr [As is appropriate for a river] by the Syrian writer Manhal al-Sarrāj.\(^13\) In the novel we are told about a town in which a

\(^6\) Seale, 1989, 32.
\(^7\) Seale, 1989, 42. I am grateful to Professor Jan Retsö, University of Gothenburg, for having directed my attention to this fact.
\(^8\) Tal, 1996, 5. The traumas that are discussed in Káli Tal’s study are the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, and sexual violence against women and children.
\(^10\) An official explanation of the events was published in the newspaper al-Ba’th. Wedeen, 1999, 46–47. Traces of this official version can be found in, e.g., the description by Patrick Seale of the massacre. (He refers to official sources such as president Hāfiz al-Asad himself.) Although not ignoring the brutality of the operation Patrick Seale writes that “the pounding of the town in 1982 was designed to banish […] puritanism once and for all. In rebuilding the shattered society a conscious effort was made not just to erase the past but to change attitudes […].” See Seale, 1989, 334.
\(^12\) Cooke, 2007, 114.
\(^13\) Miriam Cooke refers to “several anonymous books that appeared in the 1980s” with detailed descriptions and photographs from the massacre. The example she mentions was printed in Egypt in 1984/1987. Cooke, 2007, 168, note 10.
catastrophe has taken place. Although the name of Hama is never mentioned in the
text, it is nevertheless quite clear from the description of the town as well as of the
catastrophe that it is Hama that is referred to, or that serves as as model for the
events in the novel.\textsuperscript{14} This has also been confirmed by the writer herself.\textsuperscript{15}

Theoretical framework
The novel \textit{Kamā yanbaghī li-nahr} is a description of a trauma and the ensuing con-
sequences of this trauma for the survivors. This trauma consists of a massacre that
has been carried out in the past in a town whose name the reader never gets to know.
It is through the life and testimony of one of the survivors that the trauma is being
related. This survivor is a Muslim woman who lives in a strictly conservative and
traditional milieu.

This study will focus on two main aspects: the fact that the novel describes a ca-
tastrophe that constitutes a strong political taboo and consequently never before has
been treated in fiction, and the strategy of the writer to let a woman be the one who,
through her words and every-day life, conveys the memory of this catastrophe. At
the same time as this woman is relating the story of the massacre she is also relating
the story of her own life as a woman. She is thus struggling to prevent two silenced
stories from falling into oblivion or from being distorted.

The novel will be studied within the theoretical framework of Kalí Tal’s discus-
sion of “literature of trauma”. One aspect of Kalí Tal’s definition of “literature of
trauma” is of particular importance for this paper. This aspect is her connecting “lit-
erature of trauma” to literature by women writers. Thus she defines “literature of
trauma” as follows:

\begin{quote}
Literature of trauma is defined by the identity of its author. Literature of trauma holds at its
center the reconstruction and recuperation of the traumatic experience. [...] It comprises a
marginal literature similar to that produced by feminist, African-American and queer
writers—\textit{in fact it often overlaps with these literatures, so that distinct sub genres of litera-
ture of trauma may be found in each of these communities}.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

When discussing “literature of trauma” Kalí Tal stresses the importance of the iden-
tity of the author as being a “trauma survivor”. She proposes that behind the writing of
literature of trauma can be found “a need to tell and retell the traumatic expe-
rience, to make it ‘real’ both to the victim and to the community”. It serves “both as
validation and cathartic vehicle for the traumatized author”.\textsuperscript{17} The “desires for af-
firmation and release” that are traced as motivations for the writing of literature of
trauma can also be found in literary work by women writers “who are not specifical-
ly identified (either by themselves or others) as trauma survivors”.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{14} Also Hassan Abbas refers to the fact that although there is no definite time and place of the events in
the novel, it is quite clear that the town is Hama. “Pourtant, cette dissimulation chronotopique ne trompe
pas le lecteur averti qui reconnaît la ville de Hama par d’autres ‘embrayeurs’ que ceux de l’espace et du
temps.”, Abbas, 2006, 226.

\textsuperscript{15} Personal communication with Manhal al-Sarrāj, Stockholm, December 2008.

\textsuperscript{16} Tal, 1996, 17.

\textsuperscript{17} Tal, 1996, 21.

\textsuperscript{18} Tal, 1996, 22.
Kalí Tal also states that “members of opposing interest groups will attempt to appropriate traumatic experiences while survivors will struggle to retain the control.” Consequently survivors’ stories about their experiences are always political, even if not intended to be, and “at the same time as they are political, they are intensely personal”. 

In this paper, use has also been made of Rita Felski’s discussion of feminist literature and the feminist counter-public sphere. Rita Felski argues, that “all those texts that reveal a critical awareness of women’s subordinate position and of gender as a problematic category” can be regarded as feminist literature. She also writes that, “the feminist novel focuses upon areas of personal experience which women are perceived to share in common beyond their cultural, political and class differences”. Rita Felski argues for the existence of an oppositional feminist public sphere that “offers a critique of cultural values from the standpoint of women as a marginalized group within society”. This feminist public sphere is characterized by a tension between universality and particularity. Its discourse originates from that which is particular and personal, i.e., women’s personal experiences of oppression, but at the same time it challenges existing universal structures of authority.

When reading the novel it is hard to ignore the repressive political conditions under which it was written and of which it is a reflection. Thus in the present article the novel has also been read against the backdrop of the descriptions and analysis of Syrian society made by Miriam Cooke in her study Dissident Syria, making oppositional arts official, 2007, and Lisa Wedeen in Ambiguities of Domination. Politics, Rhetoric and Symbols in Contemporary Syria, 1999.

The writer
Manhal al-Sarrāj was born in Hama in 1964. She is an engineer by profession. Her career as a writer started when she wrote a short story that came to be recited on Syrian radio. Apart from the novel Kamā yanbaghī li-nahr, which is her first novel, she has written one collection of short stories Takhaṭī al-jisr [Crossing over the bridge], 1997, and two novels: Jūrat Ḥawwā [The pit of Eve], 2005, and ‘Alā ṣadrī [On my breast], 2007. The events described in all of these texts take place against the backdrop of Hama. Except for Kamā yanbaghī li-nahr, all her books have been published in Syria. Manhal al-Sarrāj presently lives in Sweden (Stockholm).

At the time of the massacre in Hama, Manhal al-Sarrāj was a student in Aleppo, but several members of her family were inside the town and had first-hand experi-

24 A new novel by the writer is soon to be published in Egypt. Personal communication on the phone with Manhal al-Sarrāj, 24 August 2010.
ence of the terrible events. It is thus correct to regard her as having been personally affected by the massacre. Kalí Tal’s statement referred to above about the function of literature of trauma to serve as a “cathartic vehicle for the traumatized author” was also unintentionally confirmed by Manhal al-Sarrāj through her answer to my question of what her feelings had been when writing this novel. Was she not afraid of the possible consequences? Her answer to this was: “No, I felt relieved.” [Lā, irtaḥtu.]26

The novel Kamā yanbaghī li-nahr is forbidden in Syria.27 It is, however, interesting to note that it was actually written in Syria and that the writer, despite its sensitive topic, initially tried, though in vain, to get it published there.28 After having been awarded the third prize for Arab creativity in al-Shāriqa in 2002 the novel was eventually published in the Arab Emirates in 2003.29

The edition of the novel that has been used for the present article was printed in Lebanon in 2007. All the translations of passages from the novel from Arabic to English have been made by the author of this article.

The story of a survivor
In her study of oppositional culture in Syria in the 1990s Miriam Cooke refers to the description made by the Czech playwright and later president Vaclav Havel regarding the situation in socialist Czechoslovakia. In a totalitarian society, Vaclav Havel writes, the citizens live as if the claims put forward by the regime are the truth. It is not necessary that they really believe “in the mystifications” of the regime, but “they must behave as though they did, or they must at least tolerate them in silence, or get along well with those who work with them. [...] They must live within a lie.”30 Miriam Cooke also uses the word “drugged” when talking about the citizens in this kind of society.31

The society that is described in the novel Kamā yanbaghī li-nahr is such a society of “drugged citizens” who are living within a lie. The town in which the events in the novel take place is brooding on memories of something terrible that happened in the past. Twenty years earlier the town was invaded by Abū Shāmā’a’s men and thousands of its inhabitants were killed or taken away. The main character in the novel is Fāṭma, an old lady who lives alone in a big traditional Arabic house, a house that once used to be full of people and buzzing with life. The

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26 Personal communication with Manhal al-Sarrāj, Stockholm, December 2008.
27 Personal communication with Manhal al-Sarrāj, Stockholm, December 2008. See also Abbas, 2006, 226.
28 Personal communication with Manhal al-Sarrāj, Stockholm, 20 September 2010.
29 This prize is awarded to writers for their very first published work. The novel has also been given quite a lot of attention in Arab media outside of Syria. E.g. “Kamā yanbaghī li-nahr”: riwāya li-Manhal al-Sarrāj, Mana’ūhā fi Sūrīya fa-nālāt jā’īza fi al-Shāriqa” [As is appropriate for a river: a novel by Manhal al-Sarrāj. They forbade it in Syria and it was awarded a prize in al-Shāriqa] by the Syrian writer and literary critic Nablī Sulaymān on the web-site Rāḥiṭat udābā’ al-Shām [The union of Syrian men of letters]. See http://www.odabasham.net/show.php?sid=4996 [accessed on 4 November 2010].
women who used to live there have now either died or have married and moved out. As for the men, many were killed or taken away on the day when Abū Shāma’s men came. In a community where everyone seems to have forgotten, Fatma takes pains to keep the memory of the catastrophe alive. “Everyone has forgotten, except for you!” [Kullu al-nās nasiyat illā anti] exclaims a man in the novel. When Fatma wants to discuss the events with a shopkeeper he refuses and begs her to be silent.

He wants her to keep quiet just as he and the others keep quiet in order for him not to be invited by Abū Shāma for a cup of coffee and disappear. The memory of him would also disappear just as had happened with those who are gone.

It is clear that the reason for this silence and seemingly complete oblivion is fear. Silence and “living within a lie” have become strategies for survival. This is illustrated, for example, by a passage in the novel which describes how after the massacre the citizens in the town go out into the streets to pay their respects to the Leader, i.e. Abū Shāma:

They are greeting Abū Shāma. They are giving him thanks for his having killed their children, razed their homes, and robbed them of their money. Here they are clapping their hands with enthusiasm, yes, with a hysteria that not even the greatest philosophers and psychologists in the world would be able to observe.

A recurring theme in the novel is the conflict, “that constantly on-going conflict to which there seems to be no end” [dhālika al-ṣirā’ al-dā’ir alladhi yabdū bilā nihāya], between the pious ‘Ammo Naṣīr (an uncle of the main character of the novel) and the powerful Abū Shāma (“the man with the mole”). We are told that it was this conflict that was the direct cause of the catastrophe. It is quite clear that these two characters, ‘Ammo Naṣīr and Abū Shāma, are symbols for the Muslim Brotherhood and the Syrian president at the time Hāfiz al-Asad. This has also been confirmed by the writer Manhal al-Sarrāj herself. It is interesting to note that while ‘Ammo Naṣīr is described as a human being of flesh and blood, Abū Shāma is described in a more abstract way and with the use of symbols. He is distant and surrounded by rumors. When he appears in the text it is in the form of dreams or hallucinations. As Fatma is lying on her death-bed she sees Abū Shāma sitting on a stage

33 al-Sarrāj, 2007, 50.
35 al-Sarrāj, 2007, 41.
36 Personal communication with Manhal al-Sarrāj, Stockholm, 20 September 2010.
in front of a cheering crowd and “he greeted the crowd with his foot” [yusallimu ʿalā al-hudūr bi-rijihi], i.e., with great contempt. In another passage of the text the reader is told that Abū Shāma has got a tumor [tālāla] on his neck. It is a new tumor that has appeared on the spot of an old one that had fallen off “while he was not paying attention” [fī ghafatīn minhu].

أقسم ألا يغفل عن الجديدة أبداً، بل سيشكل معها ومع التالفة القديمة ثالوثاً لا ينسى في تاريخ المدينة والنهر، بل العالم أيضاً.

He swore that he would never neglect the new one. No, on the contrary, together with it and with the old tumor he would form a trinity that will not be forgotten in the history of the town and the river, no not even in the history of the world.

This description of the trinity evokes in a reader who has some knowledge of Syrian political life images of political posters, frequently seen on buildings and in the windows of shops, cars, and buses, where the former president Ḥāfiz al-Asad is shown standing flanked by his two sons the late Bāsil and Bashshār. In another passage of the novel we are told that Abū Shāma “was born on straw and the taste of damp saltiness was forced upon him while his family was licking the left-overs from empty tins” [ʿalā al-tīb kāna mawlidahu, lá zamahu taʿmu al-mulūḥa al-raḥba, baynamā ahlahu yalḥaṣīna baqāyā al-muʿallabāt al-fārigha]. This clearly refers to Ḥāfiz al-Asad’s poor upbringing in a small village on the Syrian coast.

Faṭma keeps the memory of the catastrophe and of the life before the catastrophe alive not only by talking about it but also through her daily work. She takes care of the big Arabic house and the garden that surrounds it, and she cooks traditional local dishes that hardly anyone has the patience or knowledge to prepare any more. Thus the memories are very much connected to Faṭma’s daily tasks.

The preparing of the traditional dishes has a prominent role in the novel and is described in great detail. This work is directly connected to the memories of the catastrophe and its victims. The dishes are distributed to relatives and friends from the days before the catastrophe, like Abū Raḥmān, the announcer of the hours of prayers and Crazy Lāmiya [Lāmiya al-majnūna], a woman who lost her husband and children, and as a consequence also her mind, when Abū Shāma’s men burned down her house. It is when Faṭma is working in the kitchen that the memories of the catastrophe come to her mind. Into the detailed descriptions of the preparation of the different dishes are inserted flashbacks from what happened during the days of the

38 al-Sarrāj, 2007, 164.
40 See also Lisa Wedeen’s discussion about how it in the late 1990s became more and more common to see pictures showing president Asad flanked by his two sons. “His [i.e., Bāsil’s, the son who died in January 1994] apotheosis has nonetheless facilitated his brother Bashshār’s iconicgraphic ascension. By 1996, laminated pictures, buttons and other paraphernalia regularly showed Asad flanked by his two sons. [...] the young eye doctor, his dead brother and aging father.” Wedeen, 1999, 60–61.

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catastrophe. Thus, e.g., the shape of the vine leaf dolmas reminds Faṭma of the blood-stained fingers of her dead uncles.

She could not even once neglect what the vine leaf meant to her. Each time that she spread out the green leaf with its stem on the wooden chopping board and placed on it rice mixed with meat in the shape of a finger she could not prevent herself from remembering the palms of the hands of her uncles and their outspread fingers covered with blood as they were killed by the men of Abū Shāma and their sons were taken away thus sharing the fate of those who have disappeared.\textsuperscript{42} \textsuperscript{43}

A little further on in the text we read, that “Faṭma was, without any previous notice, overcome by memories, and she found herself hurrying up in order to complete the wrapping of a new vine leaf.”

The memory of the men and boys who were taken away by Abū Shāma’s men, most of whom have been gone ever since, is a recurrent theme in the novel. The importance of this theme is even further stressed by the fact that it turns up already in the dedication of the novel.\textsuperscript{44}

Do not ask when he will come back. To my brothers Mustafā and Mukhliṣ.\textsuperscript{45}

The first part of the dedication [“Do not ask when he will come back”] is taken from a poem by Maḥmūd Darwish, “Wa ʿāda ... fi kafn” [And he returned ... in a shroud] from the collection Awrāq al-zaytūn [Olive leaves], 1964. The same phrase is also repeated in the narrative in a description of how Faṭma, before going to sleep, is reading “a forgotten collection of poetry”[diwān shīʿr mansī].\textsuperscript{46} The theme of this poem by Maḥmūd Darwish is migration and the migrant is described as a vagabond “sojournning without provisions, family and home”.\textsuperscript{47} In the novel it refers to those who are no longer present. In the first place the phrase refers to the men and boys who were taken away during the catastrophe and who have been gone ever since.

\textsuperscript{42} al-Sarrāj, 2007, 15. 
\textsuperscript{43} al-Sarrāj, 2007, 16–17. 
\textsuperscript{44} Gérard Genette states that the function of what he refers to as paratexts (i.e. productions that accompany a text of which the dedication is one example) is to be “at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it”. Genette, 1997, 2.
\textsuperscript{45} al-Sarrāj, 2007, 5. 
\textsuperscript{46} al-Sarrāj, 2007, 44. 
\textsuperscript{47} Månsson, 2003, 56.
Still, the dimension of exile and migration is also present, although less obviously. The two brothers of the writer, Musṭafā and Mukhliṣ, that are referred to in the dedication are actually living in exile.\textsuperscript{48} The memories of these men and boys are materialized in their personal belongings that were left behind as they were taken away: schoolbooks, clothes, cash-books, shoes, etc., that now lay stored in piles in the basement of the big Arabic house.

At the heart of the text is also a big wooden box that is being kept in the house, a box that used to belong to Faṭma’s grandmother and that is filled with photographs, letters, and souvenirs of the life of the family. “It contains the past of the members of the family who is no more.”\textsuperscript{49} Also here the importance of this wooden box is stressed by the fact that it appears at the very beginning of the novel. The novel starts with a passage describing how Faṭma is opening the box and contemplating its contents, and at the end of the novel Faṭma is lying on her deathbed wondering who will take over the box when she is gone.

The only company that Faṭma has in the house and against whom she keeps up a constant fight is a rat that she hears moving around in the rooms and the garden. As Faṭma, because of illness, is losing strength, the presence of the rat becomes more and more disturbing. The rat even tries to get into the basement where all the souvenirs of the family are being kept. We can read this as a symbol of the oblivion against which Faṭma is fighting, or as a symbol of death.

The story of a woman’s life
Along with the description of the catastrophe and the ensuing sufferings of those who survived, there is also the description of the life of Faṭma, i.e. the life of a woman living in a traditional Muslim milieu. In the novel the reader gets to follow her from childhood up to old age and eventually death. The events in the novel actually take place on two levels as regards time: in present time, i.e. twenty years after the massacre, but also in the past as the reader is taken back to periods in the past of the main character leading up to the time of the massacre.

Apart from the main trauma in the novel, the massacre and the destruction of the town, Faṭma’s life can also be said to have been filled with traumas: a tragic secret love-affair ending with the death of the beloved, a failed marriage with a weak man who on their wedding-night broke into tears out of fear of the task that he was supposed to perform, and the loss of a child just after it had been born.

In her description of Faṭma’s life, the writer also touches on a social as well as political taboo: the relations between persons who belong to different religious communities. In the \textit{Human Rights Watch report} from 1991 religion and ideology are mentioned among the subjects that are politically taboo in Syria. “The censors ban any book that refers to Alawites or to sectarian differences […]”\textsuperscript{50} Still, sectarian differences are a theme that is very much present in Manhal al-Sarrāj’s novel. As we

\textsuperscript{48} Personal communication with Manhal al-Sarrāj, Stockholm, 20 September 2010.
\textsuperscript{49} al-Sarrāj, 2007, 57.
\textsuperscript{50} Cooke, 2007, 9.

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have seen the life in the town was marked by the conflict between ‘Ammo Naďr and Abū Shāma, i.e., the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood and the Alawite regime. Also in Fāṭma’s personal life there are a number of persons belonging to different religious communities who have important roles to play. Thus we are told how Fāṭma in her early youth had an innocent love-affair with a young man belonging to “the community of Abū Shāma” [millat Abū Shāma], which means, if we translate it into Syrian reality, that he was an Alawite. The two young lovers used to meet each other secretly on a staircase in the afternoons when the inhabitants of the town were having their nap. The love story ends tragically, however, when the young boy is killed, also he a victim of the conflict between ‘Ammo Naďr and Abū Shāma. At the time of the massacre, as Fāṭma is running away from the town, she meets with Fāris al-Nahḥāt [Fāris the sculptor] who is a Christian. A strong friendship develops between the two, and at the end of the novel Fāṭma entrusts him with the task of making a tombstone for her grave. In the text a woman is also mentioned who used to live with the family in the big house. About this woman it is said that she had grown up in the house of someone “who used to put a piece of clay in front of him at the time of prayer” [kāna yaḏa’u fakhkhāra amāmahu athnā’a al-ṣalāt], i.e., she belongs to the Shiite community.51

The life that is described in the novel to a great extent follows a pattern that often is found in other works by Arabic women writers. So, for example, we have the description of Fāṭma’s tragic love-affair. The theme of young girls having secret love affairs or being accosted by young men on their way home from school is frequently found in texts by Arab women writers. Very often these love affairs have a tragic ending, either with the death of the beloved or with the family of the girl taking her out of school in order to avoid improper behavior. One example of this is found in the novel Dimashq yā basmat al-ḥuţn [Damascus, smile of grief], 1980, by the Syrian writer Ilfat al-Idilbī.52 In this novel, a great part of which takes place during the French Mandate, the beloved of the main character is killed by her brothers.

Manhal al-Sarrāj’s novel also contains the theme of links existing back to the past as well as links stretching into the future symbolized by objects as well as persons, something often found in Arabic women’s literature. The link to the future is often a young woman whose task it is to carry the legacy of the older woman into the future. Also here we have an example in the novel Dimashq yā basmat al-ḥuţn by Ilfat al-Idilbī where the link back to the past is a diary that the main character, just before committing suicide, leaves to her young niece. In a more recent novel, Abnās [Ebony], 2004, by another Syrian writer, Rūza Yasīn, the reader gets to follow five generations of women where the connecting link is a wooden box.53

In Kamā yanbaghī li-nahr the link that connects the present with the past is, as we

51 al-Sarrāj, 2007, 83.
52 Ilfat al-Idilbī, 1912–2007 is regarded as one of Syria’s pioneer women writers. From the beginning of the 1950s she published novels, collections of short stories, and essays. Her novel Dimashq yā basmat al-ḥuţn was translated into English by Peter Clark as Sabriya, 1996. In the 1990s it was also dramatized for Syrian television.
53 This novel received second prize in the literary competition of Hanna Mina for the best novel. Abbas, 2006, 228, note 3.
have seen, symbolized by the grandmother’s wooden box. As for the link to the future, it is represented in the novel by Fatma’s young niece, Lamis. Lamis is a young woman with a modern upbringing, a representative of the new generation who did not experience the catastrophe and for whom Abu Shama and his men mean nothing. “Aunt, Abu Shama means nothing to me!” [khālatī, Abu Shama lā ya’nim], remarks Lamis. Lamis wants to learn languages and to travel to other countries. She frequently goes to the Internet-café [markaz al-khalīya] that on order of Abu Shama has been built on the ruins of the part of the town that was destroyed at the time of the catastrophe. Still, it is Lamis who eventually is to shoulder the task of preserving and carrying the memory of the catastrophe, as well as the memory of Fatma’s life, into the future.

Concluding discussion

The memories of what actually happened in Hama during those three weeks in February 1982 are connected with strong feelings of fear and taboo. This situation fits well with Kali Tal’s discussion when she writes, that “if ‘telling it like it was’ threatens the status quo, powerful political, economic and social forces will pressure survivors either to keep their silence or to revise their stories”. Thus, until the present date the novel Kamā yanbaghī lī-nahr is the only fictional work that has dealt with the massacre in Hama. As has been shown, the main character in the novel is a survivor, Fatma, who in opposition to fear and enforced silence struggles to retain control over her own experience and to keep the memory of what happened alive.

Apart from the memory of the destruction of the town and the killing and taking away of its citizens, the novel also relates Fatma’s memories from different periods in her life. Here it is interesting to note that in the description of Fatma’s life there are several themes that can often be found in literary works by Arab women writers. These are themes that are connected with the particular situation of women in traditional Oriental societies as belonging to a marginalized group whose different stories have not always been allowed to be told in public. Using Rita Felski’s definition we can say that the novel is an example of feminist literature.

The novel is also characterized by an intertwining of that which is personal and that which is political. It is through personal experiences that political matters are approached. The story of the massacre is told through a particular woman’s personal experience of what happened. Also, it is through her personal life and every-day activities that the memories are evoked. Still, the relating of these personal experiences of a woman has far-reaching and political consequences. She actually gives voice to two silenced stories: that of the survivors and that of women living in a traditional milieu. By doing this, she is carrying out an act of resistance against the strategy of “disappearance” referred to by Kali Tal.

54 al-Sarraj, 2007, 75.
56 See page 2.
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In Chinese literary theories, since ancient times up to the late 20th century, the term *wenti* (originally just *ti*) has been used to denote both what we may roughly translate as “style” and “genre”. The concepts of “genre” and “style” were hence not clearly separated. In the abundant literary theories up to the late Qing dynasty, much effort was made to separate and describe the characteristics of genres and to create functionalist genre systems to be used by writers/bureaucrats. Discussions of the concept of *wenti* itself, however, were scarce in these theories. In many literary theories up to the late 19th century the traditional, didactic view of the function of literature as a vehicle for the Confucian way, moral instruction, and maintaining the social order prevailed; hence content was often stressed at the expense of form and aesthetic qualities. The period around the May Fourth Era in the 1920s offered relative freedom for the individual artist, influence by Western literary theories, experimentation, and “art for art’s sake”. But the dominant feature of the modern literary theories from the 1940s up to the late 1980s was their emphasis on evaluating the content of literary works based on political and moral values, rather than analysing form, style, language, and aesthetic features. This was a result of the interference of politics in literature and literary research, which severely obstructed literary creation, especially during the Cultural Revolution, and led to almost complete stagnation in the fields of genre theory and stylistics.

1. *Ciyuan*, vol. 4, p 3475. *Ciyuan* lists eleven meanings of *ti*. The first meaning is: “body (shenti)” of human beings or animals. It may refer to the whole body or parts of the body. The earliest listed example is from “The Book of Rites”: “When the heart is big the body (*ti*) is fat”. Bernhard Karlgren lists the following meanings: “[…] t’i body (Tso); limb (Shï); embody (Yi); form, shape (Shï); embody; category, class (Li); indication in divination (Shi).”, *Grammata Serica Recensa* (Goteborg: Elanders Boktryckeri, 1964; reprint, from *BMFEA* 29, (1957)), p 160. For a thorough discussion of the concept of *ti/wenti* see L. Rydholm, “The theory of ancient Chinese genres”, in *Literary History: Towards a global perspective*, vol. 2: *Literary genres: An intercultural approach*, Gunilla Lindberg-Wada (ed.), (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), pp 53–110. The term *wenti* is clearly not the equivalent of either the modern Western term “style” or “genre”, but can refer to concepts similar to these Western concepts, hence I use these rough translations and in each instance *wenti* appears choose the translation most suitable to the context. The more recent term *ticai* is always translated as “genre” and *fengge* as “style”. All translations from Chinese sources in this paper are my own unless otherwise stated.


3. Many writers, poets, and critics such as Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, Mu Mutian, Hong Shen, and others then expressed thoughts on style and language in literature, see Tong Qingbing, *Wenti yu wenti de chuangzao* (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 1994), pp 3–4.
The lessening influence of politics on literary theory in the past three decades has allowed for new developments in these fields.\(^4\) The renewed influence of Western philosophy, genre theory, linguistics, stylistics, etc. (in the works of Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Saussure, Chomsky, and many others) has reawakened the interest in these issues. This has led to language, form, style, and aesthetic features once again being recognized as important in the analysis of genre and style, and an urgent need to discuss the concept of *wenti* being acknowledged. In the 1990s, a number of scholars published books and articles on the subject of *wenti*, for instance Chu Binjie, Feng Guanglian, Tao Dongfeng, Tong Qingbing, Yang Zhongyi, and Zhang Yi.\(^5\) These Mainland Chinese literary scholars face a formidable challenge. They are attempting to introduce Western genre theory and stylistics in China, re-evaluate ancient Chinese theories of style and genre, and create new concepts of *wenti*. In this paper, I discuss a few of these new theories by contemporary scholars Chu Binjie, Tao Dongfeng, Tong Qingbing, Wang Meng, and Zhang Yi with the purpose to draw attention to some current trends in this dynamic field.

**Wang Meng’s thoughts on *wenti* and the development of *wentilun***

Famous writer and critic Wang Meng expressed his views on *wenti* in a short preface to a series of studies of genre and style, *Wentixue congshu*, published in 1994.\(^6\) The renewed interest in literary style and genre in China is important not only for the development of literary theory, but also for the development of Chinese literature as a whole, according to Wang. For Wang, style is closely connected with the aesthetic purpose of literature, and he and many other Chinese writers have suffered (both professionally and in their private lives) as a direct result of their literary works being judged by non-literary (i.e. political) criteria. The recent creative and scholarly freedom to develop of literature and literary theory stirs emotions within writers who have experienced the earlier oppression, as can be seen in Wang’s following statements.

I thank heaven and earth that it is finally acceptable to study *wenti*. At last, there are many scholars and specialists doing research within this field, and it is now possible for the publishers to publish such books.\(^7\)

Writers need to be understood and appreciated. This understanding and appreciation mainly concerns style. When a reader or critic admits that style exists in this world, it already

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\(^4\) Writers like Wang Zengqi, Wang Meng, A Cheng, Zhang Chengzhi, Mo Yan, Deng Youmei, Chen Jian, Wang Shuo started to experiment with literary language to create aesthetic effects. This brought changes in literary theory, evident through a change in terminology, words like imagery, symbolism, metaphors etc. started to appear in discussions of literature and analysis of style flourished, see Tong, pp 6–7.


\(^7\) Wang, p 1.
makes one feel warm inside; if they also recognize the stylistic features of an author’s work, then this simply makes one’s eyes fill with tears.\(^8\)

In Wang Meng’s view, style mainly concerns the aesthetic form of literary works.\(^9\) He claims that observing the style of a literary text is the same as looking at a person’s body, seeing if the person is thin or fat, tall or short, checking out posture, the expression in the eyes, etc. Though Wang concedes that judging people by their outward appearance is not always reliable, he claims that it still often is, and regardless of whether this method is reliable or not, almost everybody does it and takes great pleasure in it. Now, this may seem a rather naïve statement, but Wang consciously connects the meaning of style in literary texts with the original interpretation of the meaning of the character \(ti\), namely “body”.\(^10\) This line of thought is present in many literary theories through the ages, in for instance Liu Xie’s \(Wenxin diaolong\). And when Wang explains what he means by “style” he draws on the influential discourse developed in \(Wenxin diaolong\) on the relationship between the author’s character and his style: “the style [text] is like the person” (\(wen ru qi ren\)). This line of thought became a paradigm in Chinese literary theories and obviously has survived up to the present. Wang claims, in line with Liu Xie’s theory, that “Style is the externalization of individual character.”\(^11\) But literary style also has deeper implications. For Wang, style is the very core of literature.

Style is what makes literature become literature. Style is what separates literature from non-literary forms. \[---\] Changes in the concept of literature are manifest in the evolution of style. Experiments in literary creativity are expressed by reforming style.\(^12\)

Zhang Yi’s “Introduction to literary style” \(Wenxue wenti gaishuo\)

The term \(wenti\), according to Zhang, should be translated into English as “style”,\(^13\) but has its roots in ancient Chinese literary theories discussing \(ti\), a term that denoted two “threads of thought”.\(^14\) Firstly, \(ti\) “is used to separate kinds of literature”, which, according to Zhang, is the equivalent of the modern Chinese word \(ticai\) “types or forms of literature”, i.e. \(tishi\) “form of literary works”.\(^15\) The second interpretation of \(ti\) is: “to express the features of an author’s individual style, a school, or the style of an era”.\(^16\) Here Zhang uses the term \(fengge\) for style. To Zhang, \(ticai\) and \(fengge\) are obviously not two separate concepts, but are closely related. However, he does not explain why he chooses to translate \(wenti\) as “style”, and not as “genre”, and \(wenxue wentixue\) as “literary stylistics”.\(^17\) Zhang appears to consider \(wentixue\) to concern stylistics rather than genre theory, yet the aspect of genre is still included in this con-

\(^8\) Ibid., p 2.
\(^9\) Ibid., p 1.
\(^10\) See f. 1.
\(^11\) Wang, p 1.
\(^12\) Ibid., p 1.
\(^13\) Zhang Yi, \(Wenxue wenti gaishuo\) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe,1996), p 45.
\(^14\) Ibid., p 4.
\(^15\) Ibid., p 4.
\(^16\) Ibid., p 4.
\(^17\) \(Wentixue\) should be translated as “stylistics” according to Zhang, p 5.
cept. This is, in my opinion, because Zhang considers genre and style to be merely two levels of literary style.

Zhang discusses Western philosophy of language and linguistics in the works of Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Saussure, Chomsky, and Jakobson, among others. He appreciates the importance attached to the language in literature\(^{18}\) and that modern quantitative studies of language in literary texts are more objective than earlier research methods. But he is critical of studies that focus exclusively on analysis of language and lack analysis of the thoughts and emotions expressed, and of the impact of culture and society.\(^{19}\) According to Zhang, the latter kind of analysis can be found in the traditional Chinese studies of wenti. But the ancient Chinese scholars in turn failed to recognize the importance of the literary language, and the studies are, according to Zhang: “rather inattentive descriptions of general impressions”.\(^{20}\) Instead of attaching too little, or exclusive importance to the literary language, there is another solution, says Zhang. “Literary stylistics” can combine modern Western scientific linguistic research methods with traditional analysis of content and the impact of culture and society.\(^{21}\)

To Zhang “literary style” (wenxue wenti) has three levels.\(^{22}\) On the first level, it is “a form/mode of cultural existence”, just like philosophy, religion, science, etc. Literary style is a cultural product with certain features within a certain cultural system. What separates literature from other art forms or modes of cultural existence, according to Zhang, is “literary style”; so in fact literary style is the essence of literature.\(^{23}\) The world described in literature is not a mirror of the real world, but a world of a special pleasing quality, created by the author, that reflects his/her attitude, emotions, and experience of human existence and the natural world. Zhang explains: “It is because of the special grasp and expression of the essence of existence that literary style constitutes a mode of cultural expression of its own.”\(^{24}\) Literary style is the product of a certain culture, society, and historical time, and changes continuously. It is also a product of the creativity of authors of different times.

On the second level: literary style is “a linguistic form/mode of existence” (yuyan cunzaiti).\(^{25}\) Literary style, and literature itself, differ from other art forms by being manifested in language, and furthermore, in a special kind of language. The difference between literary style and other styles (as for instance legal or scientific texts), as Zhang explains in accordance with Roman Jakobson’s communication model, is that literary style is not simply meant to transmit a message, but involves reorganizing existing language for aesthetic purposes.\(^{26}\) The basic character of “literary style” and of literature itself, is the transformation of language, the creation of a special literary language for aesthetic purposes, which makes it possible for the author to fully

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p 2.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., p 3.
\(^{20}\) Ibid., pp 4–5.
\(^{21}\) Ibid., pp 4–5 and 9–11.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., pp 43–45.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., p 8.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., pp 22–23.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., p 121.
\(^{26}\) Ibid., p 20.
express a multitude of thoughts, emotions, and values. Literature and literary style are cultural products of the mind, expressed through a special use of language.\textsuperscript{27} Literary style is the aesthetic union of language and thought in literary texts.\textsuperscript{28}

Finally on the third level, we have what Zhang labels the two “concrete forms” of literary style, namely \textit{ticai} “literary form/genre” and the author’s \textit{fengge} “style”. The first form, according to Zhang is the two basic literary modes: narrative form (novels, theatre, etc.) and lyrical form (poetry and prose). The four basic “genres” (\textit{ticai}) are poetry, prose, drama, and novels. These forms combine to create new literary styles like “poetic novels”, etc. To Zhang the development of new genres is a sign that mankind moves towards a higher degree of civilization. The second concrete form of “literary style” is the author’s creative style (\textit{fengge}), the “subjective” part of literary style. The author’s creative style depends on his cultural education, talent, values, etc., and is limited by the rules of common language. But the author also enjoys a degree of artistic freedom. The spirit of free aesthetic creativity is a main feature of literary style, according to Zhang, and reflects the author’s choice of linguistic elements. But earlier in his book, Zhang claims that literary style is mainly the result of what is perceived as beautiful language by people in certain culture, that linguistic patterns first and foremost bear the impressions of national culture.\textsuperscript{29} Zhang claims that literary style is a cultural product that shows the level of maturity of human civilization.\textsuperscript{30} Both the intellectual content of literary texts and the literary language are products of a particular society, culture, and historical time that are evolving towards higher levels of human civilization.

Zhang is progressive compared to many of his predecessors who saw the development of new genres and styles as a process of degeneration from the ancient pure literature. So many anthologists through the ages were reluctant to include new literary genres in their anthologies (e.g. recent-style verse and \textit{ci}-poetry both faced this problem in the beginning). Given the rapid modernization in China today in every field, also affecting the humanities, it is perhaps not surprising that Zhang would adopt an evolutionary perspective on literary development. But development in itself is not necessarily a sign of improvement, or of a society reaching a higher level of civilization. In China today, as in the West, there is a large market for books of rather poor literary quality, books filled with gratuitous sex and violence, just like in the West, and written for the purpose of making money.

It may be seen as an inconsistency in Zhang’s theory that he also claims that the ultimate purpose of “literary style” is to give expression to universal human thoughts and emotions (to create works that can be appreciated by people of different cultures and times),\textsuperscript{31} yet he also strongly emphasizes cultural differences in both thought content, emotions, and language. He claims that the basic feature of literary style is that it contains the “features of national culture”.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p 24.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p 5.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p 35.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pp 23–24.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p 23.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p 41.
The evolution of literary style is limited by the whole cultural spirit of a certain age. It deeply reflects the representative traces of the spiritual civilization of a particular age.33

Different national cultures create different kinds of languages, which naturally leads to the creation of literary styles with different aesthetic features.34 Zhang compares English, French, and Chinese poetry and claims that because of the difference between these languages, authors will use different techniques to create certain aesthetic effects, different “literary styles”. In ancient Chinese poetry the use of parallelism is especially important, as is the use of the four speech-tones to express and enhance moods and emotions.35 Zhang attempts to create a theory of “Literary stylistics” that combines the modern (Western) theories and the traditional (Chinese) theories, but the aim is not to create a universal concept of literary style or “literary stylistics”.

Now we will establish a theory of literary stylistics with special Chinese features. On the one hand we shall incorporate the excellent parts of traditional [Chinese] literary theory and modern Western theories of literary stylistics, on the other hand we shall struggle to overcome all kinds of shortcomings in both (...)36

Zhang raises an important issue here: since the languages created in different cultures differ, can we really use identical ways of analysing literary style, the same methods and criteria to analyse texts written in different languages? Well, parallelism has also been important in, for instance, ancient biblical poetry. A more challenging point is the importance of the four speech-tones in Chinese poetry, but speech-tones do appear in other languages in Asia as well. And how different are the linguistic techniques used in poetry written in different languages? Is it a question of using different means to achieve the same effect, or of using different means to create effects not obtainable in poetry written in another language? Are the techniques and the effects created in poetry written in different languages different enough to require completely different concepts of “literary style”? Zhang seems to imply that it is a question both of using different methods and of creating different effects. But that may actually be said of two poets writing in the same language, or even one and the same poet when writing different poems, and do we then require a special concept of literary style for each poet or even poem? The answer, of course, is no. We can discuss and define differences in “individual style”, but when it comes to a broad concept like the literary language/style of a certain culture at a certain time (or of a concept like “world literature”), we need a broad concept based on a high degree of generalization. Though we may use different linguistic markers in our investigations of literary styles in literature written in different languages, this does not necessarily mean that the broad concept of “literary style” must be different in different cultures. We could, for instance, simply claim that the literary style in

33 Ibid., p 42.
34 Ibid., p 40.
35 The four speech-tones have by some been regarded as creating a kind of “intrinsic music” in poetry, for instance by Shuen-fu Lin, “The formation of a Distinct Generic Identity for Tz’u”, in Voices of the Song Lyric in China, Pauline Yu (ed.), (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California and Oxford, England: University of California Press, 1994.).
36 Zhang, p 329.
any given culture “involves linguistic techniques used for an aesthetic purpose”. This is not unlike what Zhang actually says when defining the “concept of style with special Chinese features” as a mode of cultural existence, manifested in a literary language created for aesthetic purposes that simultaneously contains a certain intellectual content, and that both language and the content are themselves products of a national culture. Now this description, if we agree with Zhang, could actually be applied to the literary style of any culture, not only the Chinese.

In a period of economic and cultural globalization, which many people view as “westernization”, national identity has become increasingly important in China. Some scholars wish to stress the difference between Chinese and Western culture, rather than search for universal principles. Zhang’s synthesis of Western linguistic research methods to uncover the cultural spirit in texts, such as in Chinese literary theory, brings to mind the attitude expressed towards Western knowledge by 19th century official Zhang Zhidong in a famous slogan based on a neo-Confucian concept: “Chinese knowledge constitutes the essence, Western learning provides the means” (zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong).

Zhang then moves on to discuss what literature is really about. Literature, for Zhang, involves the author’s creation and the reader’s reading process, and literary style is the only thing that can bridge the gap between these two and, it is the prerequisite for their existence. Through the aesthetic transformation of language, literary style creates a realm of a special pleasing quality, which gives literature a unique “spiritual cultural meaning”, i.e. “the meaning of literature”. Literary style is thereby the essence of literature.

Since it is literary style that makes literature become a special form of cultural existence, it is not difficult to come to another conclusion: literary style makes literature independent, or makes literature become literature in the true sense of the word.

Zhang tries to explain what it is exactly that makes literature be literature. In some Western literary theories the word “literariness” is used to denote this quality. Zhang comes to the conclusion that it is literary style that makes literature become literature and explains that “in people’s minds and impressions ‘literature’ mostly refers to literary style”. In doing so he makes these concepts more or less synonymous.

Many Western scholars would object to Zhang’s statements and claim that this is a gross simplification, that there is much more to literature than literary style. But then again, Zhang’s definition of “literary style” is probably rather different from that of many of the scholars who would object to his statements. Zhang’s definition of literary style is indeed broad, including aesthetic use of language, the author’s thoughts and emotions, a cultural content reflecting the spirit of society and culture at a certain time, etc. So having included most of what he obviously considers to be the major elements that may characterize “literature” within his concept of “literary style”, it is not so far fetched for Zhang to claim that literature and literary style are more or less synonymous.

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37 Ibid., p 31.
38 Ibid., p 25.
39 Ibid., p 34.

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Presumably, when dealing with a concept with multiple meanings like *wenti*, we might try to cut it into pieces, to separate and clearly define the concepts of style and genre, and use different terms to denote these concepts. Or we might, like Zhang, choose to keep the multiple meanings of *wenti* and try to explain how these concepts are related and united. The advantage of an all-inclusive definition is that it can incorporate minor deviations and thereby allow for flexibility, the ability to adapt and change over the course of time. Perhaps it also reveals the true complexity of things. It counteracts problems like one-sidedness and the ruling out of the possibility of mutual existence. On the other hand, if we do not distinguish between certain concepts in literary theory, we cannot clearly delimit our object of study and we then will not know what our conclusions are based on or what they actually apply to. Not separating the concepts of style and genre easily leads to a circular argument, and while Zhang’s predecessors only equated genre and style, Zhang goes one step further and in practice also equates these two concepts with the concept of literature, and thereby further enlarges the frame of reference of the concept of *wenti*. It seems to me that, in Zhang’s view, the concept of “literary style” (*wenti*) encompasses all the following concepts: mode of cultural existence, linguistic form, style, individual style, group style, style of the era, genre, genre style, and literature.

Unlike in many earlier Chinese theories of *wenti*, Zhang emphasizes the importance of the analysis of language and wants to include it in the study of literary style. But Zhang also believes that language and thought are simultaneous and inseparable.

If we are to sum up in one sentence the object (of study) and the task of literary stylistics, it is: through stylistic analysis of the literary texts to interpret and explain the particular thought content inside it, while not ripping apart the quality of unity in literature, contributing some technical methods and techniques for analysing literary texts. [...] The process of analysing style is simultaneous with the process of interpreting and explaining the particular thought content of a literary work. It (the process of interpreting and explaining the thought content) and the analysis of linguistic elements are united and should never be separated.40

Zhang’s view of the concept of style represents, in my opinion, what Nils Erik Enkvist labels a “monistic view of the concept of style”, i.e. the idea that content and utterance are inseparable and that the poet’s choice is not of linguistic elements but rather of content.41 Zhang claims that modern literary theory “finally” has brought about the abolition of the separation of form and content, language and thought. But in my opinion, this has been the mainstream view in Chinese theories of style since ancient times,42 and is particularly evident in Liu Xie’s *Wenxin diaolong*.43 In the opposite, “dualistic view of the concept of style”, the content and expression are separable; the

40 Zhang, p 7.
43 See Rydholm, “The theory of ancient Chinese genres”. 

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same content may be expressed in different ways. The choice of linguistic expression results in different styles. Though Zhang advocates using “modern scientific research methods” in linguistic analysis, a monistic view of style is not always reconcilable with such methods. A dualistic view of style is the foundation of the stylistic research methods in many modern linguistic analyses of style. Zhang’s view of stylistic analysis, in my opinion, amounts to what Enkvist describes as a “mentalistic monism”, and thereby risks turning stylistic analysis into content analysis.

It [mentalistic monism] makes the stylistic researcher into a contents, concepts, and ideas researcher. What happens on the surface of the text becomes secondary since it is determined by the content, even while the content only becomes available through examination of the text surface. The problem then, of course, is how to describe in a sufficiently concrete manner the abstract content that determines what the text will look like on the surface.44

Tong Qingbing’s “Style and the creation of style” Wenti yu wenti de chuangzao

In Tong Qingbing’s view, wenti is an essential part of what we consider to be literature; in fact “a literary theory neglecting the issue of wenti is no more than a half-measure”.45 According to Tong, wenti has in the past mainly concerned genre and genre research, though the term wenti has multiple meanings and should preferably be translated as “style”.46 This tendency among mainland Chinese scholars in the 1990s to translate wenti into English as “style” rather than “genre”, might in some cases, be due to their having read more Western linguistic and stylistic works (which are frequently quoted), than Western genre theories. But the main reason, in my opinion, is that the concepts of “style” and “genre” are not clearly separated, and that genre theory as a field is still not distinct from stylistics.47 The reason for the reluctance to distinguish these concepts is, in my view, that “genre” is in general regarded as a level of style, and that genre theory is therefore included in the field of stylistics. In traditional Mainland Chinese literary theory using one term, wenti, to denote what can be seen as two concepts, style and genre, has led to some theoretical confusion. Instead of separating the two concepts and giving each one a specific term, some 20th century scholars have tried to bridge the gap between genre and style with the aid of auxiliary concepts and terms. Tong Qingbing explains:

Some scholars doing research feel that the meanings of “ti” and “wenti” quickly leap from genre to style and that the span between them is too wide. What is missing is an intermediary concept, and since it is difficult to clearly explain “ti” and “wenti”, they suggest putting the concept “genre style” (wenti fengge) in between genre (ticai) and style (fengge). [---] These scholars think “wenti fengge” implies that different genres, because they condense different aspects of life, each contain a special subject matter suitable to it. This results in different styles, and thus genre serves the function of restricting style.48

44 Enkvist, p 98.
45 Tong, p 7.
46 Tong Qingbing, Wenti yu wenti de chuangzao (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 1999), p 1.
47 Though in Western literary theories stylistics and genre theory are generally separated, these concepts are also highly complex and far from clear.
48 Tong, p 22.
Tong Qingbing is very critical of the concept of “wenti fengge”, which “some scholars” (alluding mainly to Wang Yuanhua) have imposed on the ancient theories of, for instance, Cao Pi, Lu Ji, and Liu Xie. Wang Yuanhua, an expert on Wenxin diaolong, introduces the concept “genre style” (ticai fengge) when interpreting the chapter on “Deciding Style” (“Ding shi”) where Liu Xie describes styles inherent in genres. In Tong’s view, the genre can only set a general standard for content and form of expression, but can not control the highest aesthetic level of the work, the style, since style mainly consists of the author’s individual creativity, his personality, inner thoughts, and emotions, manifest in an aesthetic union of content and form. Therefore the concept of wenti fengge is unscientific. In my view, however, the use of a concept like “genre style” is not unscientific, but it would clearly be an anachronistic interpretation to claim to find this modern concept in Liu Xie’s work, even though Liu Xie’s line of thought reminds one of this concept.

In Tong’s view, the ancient scholars discussing wenti have not referred to the concept of wenti fengge, but rather to a deeper level of ti/wenti, namely that of “yuti”, a term which can be translated into English in several ways such as “linguistic form”, “linguistic structure”, “linguistic pattern”, “linguistic mode of expression”, “type of writing”, and even “style”. Tong’s description mainly seems to refer to linguistic properties; hence I translate it as “linguistic form”. Tong claims that: “In ancient China, ‘ti’ and ‘wenti’ meant not only literary kind (wenlei), but also linguistic form (yuti), style (fengge), etc.” According to Tong, each genre requires a certain linguistic form, and the connection between genre and linguistic form is evident in the “six meanings of poetry” listed in “The Great Preface” of Shijing. The three manners of expression: “fu”, “bi”, and “xing”, all concern yuti; they are: “different linguistic forms constructed by different rhetorical means”. The intermediate concept that bridges the gap between genre and style, in Tong’s view, is therefore “linguistic form”. According to Tong, the use of “linguistic form” (yuti) as an intermediate concept was initiated by Cao Pi (187?-226?) when he listed the genre requirements for four kinds of literature.

In fact memorials and interpellations (zou yi) should be refined, letters and treatises (shu lun) must contain reason, inscriptions and parentations [over the dead] (ming lei) should be factual, and shi-poetry and fu-poetry (shi fu) should be beautiful. These four categories are different; therefore the writers able to achieve this are partial [to one form]; only a universal genius would master all these forms (ti).

49 Tong, p 22.
51 Tong, p 23.
52 Tong, p 1.
53 Tong, p 24. Based on his reading of Zhu Xi’s explanations of these concepts in Chuici jizhu, Tong claims that “fu” should be seen as “the linguistic form of narration”, “bi” as “the linguistic form of simile”, and “xing” as “the linguistic form of metaphors and symbols”. For a more thorough and enlightening discussion of the meanings of these terms, see Haun Saussy’s The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp 129–150.
54 Cao Pi, “Lun wen” in Dian lun, in Zhongguo lidai wenlun xuan, Guo Shaoyu (ed.), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), p 158. The genre names can be translated in different ways. Siu-kit Wong used “reports to the throne” (zou), “discourses on state matters” (yi), “essays” (lun), and “elegiac and other inscriptions” (ming, lei), in Early Chinese Literary Criticism (Hong Kong: Joint publishing Co., 1983), p 20.
According to Tong this last “ti” and the qualities of “refined”, “reason”, “factual”, and “beautiful” refer not to wenti fengge as some scholars believe, but rather to the different linguistic forms (yuti) suited for each pair of genres. Tong also claims that Lu Ji (261-303) referred to yuti, and not to wenti fengge, when describing what to write about and how to write in ten genres.

The lyric (shih), born of pure emotion, is gossamer fibre woven into the finest fabric; The ex-hibitory essay (fu), being true to the objects, is vividness incarnate; In monumental inscriptions (bei) rhetoric must be a foil to facts; The elegy (lei) tenderly spins out ceaseless heartfelt grief. The mnemonic (ming) is a smooth flow of genial phrases, succinct but pregnant; The staccato cadences of the epigram (zhen) are all transparent force. While eulogy (sung) enjoys the full abandon of grand style. The expository (lun) must in exactitude and clarity excel. The memorial (zou), balanced and lucid, must be worthy of the dignity of its royal audience. The argument (shuo) with glowing words and cunning parables persuades.

In Tong’s view, Cao Pi, Lu Ji, and Shen Yue (441-513) all perceived two levels of ti/wenti, namely genre and yuti, and managed to connect these two levels by showing that a certain genre required a certain linguistic form. But, if a certain genre requires a certain linguistic form of expression, the author must still enjoy some freedom of creation, a problem that according to Tong was resolved by Liu Xie (d. ca. 520) in Wenxin diaolong. Liu Xie wrote: “Understanding the genre (ti), you can be innovative without causing chaos; knowing the transformations, you can use strange words without being vulgar.” In Tong’s view, this means that Liu Xie recognized two levels of language, of linguistic form. The first one comprises some basic principles, the fixed linguistic form required by the genre, that must be adhered to avoid disorder, and the second is the fluctuating linguistic form used by the authors that is based on their aesthetic ideals and individual artistic creativity.

In memorials illuminative (zhang), memorials manifestative (biao), reports to the throne (zou), debates (yi) the appropriate standard is classic elegance; in fu-poems (fu), laudes (song), songs (ge), and shi-poetry (shi), the appropriate principle to follow is pure beauty; Compliments to the sovereign (fu), war declarations (xi), letters (shu), and declaration of disquiet (yi) are modelled on clarity and resolution; in history (shi), treatises (lun), prefaces (xu), and commentaries (zhu) the principle is to focus on the central issue [object of study]; in cautiously (zhen), inscriptions (ming), epitaphs (bei), and parentations (lei), the composition (tizhi) is deep and impressive; string of pearls (lianzhu) and words in sevens (qici) are suited for witty and colourful [language].

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55 Tong, p 24.
58 Tong, p 26.
60 Tong, p 28.
61 Liu Xie, “Ding shi”, in Wenxin diaolong, Zhou (ed.), p 280. I have used Siu-kit Wong’s translations of the genre names of zhang, biao, zou, yi, bei, fu (compliments to the sovereign), and yi (declaration of disquiet). Wong translates song as “panegyric poems”, zhen as “puncturing pieces” and lei as “laudations”, Wong, Allan Chung-hang, Lo and Kwong-tai, Lam, The Book of Literary Design (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1999), p 115.
But were Cao Pi, Lu Ji, and Liu Xie in each case in fact referring to linguistic form, *yu-ti*? The features listed in their genre requirements can, in many cases, be associated with linguistic features, or at least with stylistic features, but did these ancient scholars really refer to such a concept or is this an attempt to adapt their thoughts to the knowledge of linguistic science of the 20th century and, perhaps, at the same time justify Tong’s theory of *wenti*? Are the features Tong labels *yuti* in these ancient sources, for instance “reason”, “resolution”, “factual”, etc., really linguistic features? The answer to this final question perhaps gives a hint to the answer to the preceding question. *Yuti* is a modern concept that started to be used in Chinese literary theory in the 20th century, and that furthermore is given a particular interpretation by Tong Qingbing in his book (see below). While Tong is critical of the concept of *wenti fengge* being imposed on ancient texts by other scholars, he does not hesitate to make an anachronistic interpretation of these ancient texts, and claim to find the modern concept of *yuti* in these theories. In my view, ancient scholars and critics like Cao Pi, Lu Ji, and Liu Xie cannot be said to have used single, specific, and unified criterion for style/genre but rather a combination of features concerning different aspects of literary creation. (The apparent lack of unified criteria for genres has constituted one of the major criticisms of these ancient theories put forward by modern critics.) It was hardly the goal of Cao Pi, Lu Ji, and Liu Xie to set up a perfectly coherent genre system based on the single criterion of the modern concept of *yuti*.

Tong Qingbing seeks evidence for *yuti* being the intermediate concept between genre and style in the ancient sources mentioned above, however, we cannot re-create the original historical context and identify the “true” meaning of these ancient sources. We can certainly do close readings and try to understand what they meant and see what we can learn, what may be useful in them for developing modern genre theory and stylistics. But our theories will suit our present goals and intentions, which differ quite a lot from those of the ancient critics (who often created functionalistic genre systems for utilitarian purposes in bureaucracy). Nor is there any absolute truth to be found about the nature of literary style in the texts by the ancient writers.

Tong states that the meaning of *wenti* is complex and contains three components: “the norm of the genre”, “the creation of linguistic form”, and finally “the pursuit of style”.62 *Wenti* manifests itself through these three separate but interrelated categories of genre, linguistic form, and style,63 and the relationship between these three levels is as follows: “The genre conditions a special linguistic form, and the linguistic form, developed to the utmost point, turns into style”.64 In Tong’s view, genre, linguistic form and style (the part created by the author’s individual creativity) melt together creating an overall impression of the work for the reader to appreciate. Tong explains his view of *wenti* as a system.

A certain genre (*ticai*) must have its conventionally set up aesthetic standard, and the aesthetic standard of the genre must be perfectly manifested through a linguistic form. The lin-

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63 Ibid., pp 102–103.
64 Ibid., p 39.
guistic form united with some other features of literature, when developed to the ultimate point, turns into style (fenge). Literary form is the external form of appearance; linguistic form is the kernel level of appearance; while style is the highest condition of appearance. These three are different, but also closely related. Wenti is a system created by the organic union of the three essentials of genre, linguistic form, and style.\(^{65}\)

Tong describes these three levels of wenti, beginning with the first level, the genre concept: “Ticai is the basic essential elements of the text as they function together creating a harmonious and relatively stable special relationship. It is precisely the perfect union of the several essential elements of the text that constitutes the special aesthetic standard of a certain ticai.”\(^{66}\) The essential elements are the products of a long period of literary creation by several authors. Authors should respect the boundaries and aesthetic standards of genres and not “wilfully” destroy these standards, since this would lead to “chaos” (a statement resembling Tong’s quotations from Wenxin diaolong, see above). However, authors may change the aesthetic standards of the genres in response to the demands made by the subject matter, “a deep reflection on life” or “a touching expression of emotion”.\(^{67}\) Authors may not only change the standards, but also mix genres creating new ones \(^{68}\) says Tong, just as human beings “understand how to use all kinds of different means of production”, according to Marx.\(^{69}\) Literary scholars quoting Marx for support of their theories is something far from new in Chinese literary theory since 1949. In spite of the recent reduced influence of politics on science and art, many literary scholars presenting literary theories evidently still find such quotations necessary.

The second level in the wenti system is the “linguistic form” (yuti i.e. yuyan de tish), the intermediate concept that bridges the gap between genre and the author’s style. The problem for Tong here, it seems to me, is how to explain the difference between linguistic form and the author’s style, and yuti is often translated as “style” even in dictionaries. Tong’s solution to the problem is to divide linguistic form into two parts: “standard linguistic form” (guifan yuti) and “free linguistic form” (ziyou yuti).\(^{70}\) The “standard linguistic form” is the literary language by which genres are manifested. Different genres require different linguistic forms: poetry requires lyrical linguistic form, etc. According to Tong, authors must follow the standards of the genre, but should also express their special linguistic sensitivity, preferences, and creativity through a “free linguistic form”.\(^{71}\)

Free linguistic form refers to how, in an extremely relaxed state of mind, the author’s individual mindset achieves complete revelation and expression, thereby bestowing on language a unique tone, style, and vitality. \(\ldots\) free linguistic form is the expression of the author’s individuality.\(^{72}\)

\(^{65}\) Ibid., p 182.
\(^{66}\) Ibid., p 105.
\(^{67}\) Ibid., p 110.
\(^{68}\) Ibid., p 109.
\(^{69}\) Marx, in “1844 nian jingjixue-zhexue shougao”, in Makesi Engesi quanj (The complete collection of Marx and Engels), juan 42, p 97, quoted by Tong, p 109.
\(^{70}\) Ibid., pp 119–160.
\(^{71}\) Ibid., pp 153–159.
\(^{72}\) Ibid., p 152.
According to Tong, “free linguistic form” is the most important linguistic feature that manifests the style. Tong discusses at length how the author’s individuality is created by biology and environment and how individuality turns into individual creativity. In Tong’s view, when it comes to theme and content the author can use “fictive” ones, but when it comes to how he writes he cannot fake it. This is because language and mental activity are simultaneous; every change in individual character finds full expression in language. This happens subconsciously. The linguistic form is coloured by individuality, and hence the language in a literary text will be individualized. A basic requirement of *wen* is original creativity. Therefore, the author and his work must become one; the author’s personality must melt into the free linguistic form. So according to Tong, “free linguistic form” is actually “individual linguistic form.”

It seems to me that Tong adheres to a rather naive tradition in ancient Chinese literary theory (which can also be found in some Western literary theories) that considers the author to be a genius who freely expresses his thoughts and emotions in language without ever having to think, work on the language, or intentionally create aesthetic effects. Tong’s view obviously originates in the traditional, monistic view of style in ancient Chinese literary theory, in the belief that language and content are inseparable, and that literary style is a direct expression of the author’s personal character (*wen ru qi ren*). When discussing the standard language of lyrical linguistic form, Tong claims that the author can create aesthetic effects by breaking the common rules for grammar and syntax, etc. But this is not a conscious effort on the part of the poet, but rather a consequence of different people having different experiences.

What then is the relationship between this “free linguistic form” and “style” (*fengge*)? According to Tong the “free linguistic form” is the intermediate concept uniting “standard linguistic form” with style. There are no clear dividing lines between these three. In fact they can only be separated theoretically, says Tong, not in the actual works of writers, since they melt together into one corpus (standard language contains free linguistic form and in turn changes standard linguistic form). But style, “standard linguistic form”, and “free linguistic form” are three different aspects of a literary text. “Standard linguistic form” is needed by the genre to distinguish types of literature; “free linguistic form” is the expression of the author’s personality and character. “Free linguistic form” is not equivalent to style, because style is the union of “free linguistic form” and other aspects of the work. However, “free linguistic form” may, according to Tong, be called “quasi-style”, since developed to the fullest and in combination with other features, it turns into style.

So, in short, in Tong’s view, “linguistic form” is the intermediate concept between genre and style. “Linguistic form” is further divided into two parts, “free linguistic form” and “standard linguistic form”, of which the “free linguistic form” in turn is the intermediate level between “standard linguistic form” and style. One may

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73 It is quite remarkable that Tong here claims language and thought to be simultaneous, since at the beginning of his book he claimed that an author can choose between different ways of expressing the same content, p 2. But his theoretical system of an “organic whole” obviously demands a monistic view of style.

74 Tong, p 154.

75 Ibid., p 30.
wonder if introducing more and more intermediate concepts really clarifies the situation. Furthermore, since these "levels" can only be theoretically separated, the author saves himself the trouble of having to prove the existence of these levels in concrete analysis of literary texts. But on the other hand, Western scholars have yet to prove the exact difference between, for instance, literary language, genre style, and individual style in every aspect of a literary work, though Western scholars in general also accept, in theory, the existence of different levels in texts (since they use these concepts in their discussions of literary style).

The third part of wenti according to Tong, is "style", fengge, the highest level of manifestation of the concept of wenti. According to Tong, a literary work without style has no wenti and is a failure.

In Tong’s view, the “free linguistic form” can be explained by the author’s personality, but style is more complex and refers to the author’s “creative individuality”, which in turn is a conglomerate of his personality, education, aesthetic ideals, and preferences. The author’s “creative individuality” can be transformed into literary style through the subjective, aesthetic grasp of existence, based on subjective experience, emotion, and imagination, which transforms life and the world and creates an aesthetic world unique to the author and manifested throughout the content, form, and aesthetic effects. In Tong’s view, style is an organic whole of content and form, language. Tong’s description of style is very similar to Liu Xie’s view of the relationship between the author’s character and style in the “Style and Personality” chapter (“Ti xing”) of Wenxin diaolong, where individual creativity originates in the author’s “talent”, “disposition”, “learning”, and “habits”.76 In his book, Tong also claims that in Liu Xie’s view “the author’s individual creativity is manifested in the union of content and form in literary texts” and thereby “turned into the aesthetic style” of the author in question.78 Tong claims that Sikong Tu (837-908) also shared his opinion of an organic whole in styles.79 This is because in the description of the 24 poetic styles, Sikong did not describe particular features, but rather grasped the organic whole of styles and gave them overall descriptions in poetic form, using verse and metaphors to imitate these styles, rather than making a thorough analysis of their parts. According to Tong, this shows that Sikong treated style as an organic whole that could not be expressed through words, but rather through experience, i.e. through poetic description. But what Tong here sees as a scientific analysis of style based on a certain concept of style being an organic whole, is in my view rather experiential literary criticism. It seems to me that Tong is again “imposing” modern concepts and thinking on an earlier theory to justify his particular concept of style.

In his book, Tong also discusses stylistic divisions, typologies of style, claiming

76 Ibid., p 164.
77 Liu Xie, “Ti xing”, in Wenxin diaolong, pp 256–257.
78 Tong, p 34.
79 Ibid., p 170.

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that there are two major kinds, the subjective and the objective. The “not too numerous nor too simplified” subjective view is represented by Liu Xie in Wenxin diaolong. In the “Style and Personality” chapter of Wenxin diaolong, the word “ti” does not simply imply genre, but has acquired a meaning that, in my view, may be roughly translated as style. Although Liu Xie expressed the opinion that the author’s styles are inexhaustible, they all still fit into eight basic styles expressed by Liu as dualities, as fours pairs of mutually opposing styles.

Thus, the stylish (dianya) stands against the peculiar (xinqi), the profound (yuan’ao) is separate from the manifest (xianfu), the extravagant (fanru) is opposed to the frugal (jingyue), the vigorous (zhuangli) is different from the elegant (qingmi). This is what makes up the roots and the leaves in the garden of letters.

Liu Xie’s typology of eight styles in four pairs of opposites that can combine in different ways to generate more styles, fits the scheme of the “Eight diagram” (bagua, eight combinations of three whole or broken lines used in divination with four pairs of opposites that can be combined into 64 divinatory symbols). In Tong Qingbing’s book Liu Xie’s eight styles in Wenxin diaolong are illustrated in the shape of a regular octagon with the opposing styles placed in mutually opposite corners of the octagon, and with lines drawn between the corners of the octagon marking the different, possible combinations of these eight styles. Tong Qingbing claims that Liu, who was greatly influenced by “The Classic of Changes” Yijing, simply transferred the system of ancient divination into the realm of literary creation and theory. Tong sees many advantages in Liu Xie’s division of styles. Not only is Liu “systematic” and uses “simple dialectical thinking”, but he “reflects the reality of the division of styles into types”. Tong, however, criticizes Liu for being intolerant and letting his emotions affect his arguments when judging two of these styles to be decadent. Furthermore, he accuses Li Xie of not being objective and scientific.

Liu’s division is still the result of subjective enumeration. Since he has not clearly stated the reason why the basic stylistic types only include these eight kinds, this (division) is not very scientific.\(^{87}\)

\(^{80}\) The term \textit{ti} appears no less than 191 times in \textit{Wenxin diaolong} according to a count by professor Gu Guorui (professor at Yanjing yanjiuyuan in Beijing, personal communication in Stockholm, September, 2000). The meaning of this central term is determined by the context, it can easily shift frames of reference, and translations into modern Chinese or English often differ in their interpretations. For an interesting discussion of the term \textit{ti} in “Ti xing”, see Stephen Owen, \textit{Readings in Chinese Literary Thought} (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp 210–211. The term “ti” occurs seven times in the “Ti xing” chapter, and only in one instance, when it occurs as a disyllable “tishi”, is it reasonable to translate it as something other than “style”, e.g. “literary form”.

\(^{81}\) Liu Xie claimed that the author’s character influenced the style and that there is both an innate component of the author’s creativity, talent (cai), and disposition (qi) and a part that can be acquired through studies (xue) and habits (xi). Since everyone is different, the authors’ literary works are “as different as are their faces.” Zhou (ed.), p 257. The influential discourse equating the style with the author’s personality (wen ru qi ren), has flourished up to the late 20th century.


\(^{84}\) Liu Xie, p 260.

\(^{85}\) Tong, p 37.

\(^{86}\) Ibid., p 37.

\(^{87}\) Ibid., p 173.
In Tong’s view, Yao Nai’s (1732-1815) division into two styles, “masculine strength” (yanggang) and “feminine softness” (yinrou), from the Qing dynasty, is simple, logical, and more scientific. This is because Yao unites mankind, the psychology of mankind, and the order of nature, and then separates these into these two major categories in a way that surprisingly “happens to coincide” with 18th century Swedish botanist Carl von Linné’s (Carolus Linnaeus) divisions in the sexual system of plants. In Tong’s view, masculine strength is an ascending structure, and feminine softness a descending structure of mankind and nature, and these “two different kinds of forces decide the direction of style”.

These final statements by Tong show that he too is greatly influenced by the Yi-jing and the discourses on cosmology and the two forces of yin and yang. But the thought that these qualities of “masculine strength” and “feminine softness” in literature, literary styles, and genres, constructed by writers and critics in China could find verification and justification in the reproductive organs of plants seems to me to be quite absurd. These “styles” concern the traditional gender marking of themes and diction related to these themes. For instance, ci-poetry basically dealt with the “private” love and boudoir-theme that was associated with feminine qualities, while shi-poetry dealt with “masculine”, “public” themes such as politics, and morals. There is no botanic or biological evidence for these aesthetic qualities; they are man-made constructions of femininity and masculinity exploited by writers to achieve certain effects and impressions. Furthermore, Tong’s statements show that from an ontological viewpoint, he believes that these styles objectively exist, that they are evident in the order of nature and mankind, and are not simply intellectual constructs.

Apart from the subjective typology represented by Liu Xie, there are, according to Tong, “objective” categorizations. Chen Wangdao created a typology of eight styles, four pairs of opposing styles: “concise versus elaborate” (based on the balance between content and form), “vigorous versus delicate” (based on atmosphere), “pedestrian versus colourful” (based on amount of ornate diction) and finally, “precise versus scattered” (based on the level of caution). Chen Wangdao has, according to Tong, used “objective criteria”, since the language in literary texts is the basis for his model, and therefore the model is “scientific”. These eight styles, and the possible combinations of these eight styles, are also illustrated in the shape of an Eight-diagram (a regular octagon with lines drawn between possible combinations of styles).

Tong’s own typology of styles is an attempt at a synthesis. From the “subjective

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88 Tong, pp 38–39.
89 Ibid., p 39.
90 For a discussion of these styles and their origins, see my In Search of the Generic Identity of Ci Poetry, vol. 2, pp 204–220.
92 Chen Wangdao in Xiucixue fafan (Shanghai: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1976), p 228 quoted by Tong, p 175.
93 Tong, p 177.

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“viewpoint” it aims to unite the aesthetic experience of the reader with “objective linguistic analysis” by studying both impressions of atmosphere or mood in the work and the use of language. Tong creates eight pairs of dualities, altogether 16 styles that, except for the opposites, can be combined in all kinds of ways (1. simplified versus sumptuous, 2. vigorous versus delicate, 3. pedestrian versus colourful, 4. precise versus unrestrained, 5. forceful versus meaningful, 6. solemn versus humorous, 7. refined versus absurd, 8. obscure versus clear), which he illustrates with two Eight-diagrams (two regular octagons with lines drawn between possible combinations of styles). Tong’s typology of styles is obviously a mixture of Liu Xie’s and Chen Wangdao’s typologies, but one can hardly say that it unites the “subjective” and the “objective” (nor that Chen Wangdao’s typology is completely objective). There is no description of how we could analyse and distinguish these sixteen basic styles in literary works. One hopes for a definition of each style using Tong’s criteria of subjective impression of atmosphere and objective linguistic analysis of the use of language, but he says it is “unrealistic” to expect this and concedes that to fully explain each style in terms of his criteria, much further research must be done.

In his book, Tong explains literature mainly from the viewpoint of social science, aesthetics, and psychology, not linguistics. There are detailed explanations of how a person’s individuality is created and then turned into creative individuality, and of the underlying social-economic and cultural reasons for *wenti*. The actual linguistic aspects of *wenti* and the central concept in this theory, *yuti*, are accorded little space and lack concrete examples. In creating his typology of styles, Tong does not explain why he uses exactly 16 styles or why he chooses precisely these sixteen styles. Tong thereby makes the same mistake he accuses Liu Xie of, namely being subjective and arbitrary in his selection of styles.

In his book, Tong attempts to create a new genre system. In Mainland China, after the May Fourth movement, two views of the Chinese generic system have prevailed. These are a division into three categories of literature: narrative, lyrical and dramatic, inspired by Western literary theories; and a later appearing division based on four categories: poetry, prose, novels, and drama (which in Tong’s view suits Chinese literary tradition and reality). The problem with this latter division is its lack of a unified criterion of division and its inability to deal with categories such as poetic prose. Tong aims to create a new genre system that is based on unified criteria of division and makes it possible to include future genres. Inspired by Kant’s

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94 Tong, pp 178–179.
95 Tong briefly describes only four of these styles with names that feel modern to Chinese readers, such as “humour” (*youmo*, a transliteration from English). In these four descriptions, Tong explains only the “atmosphere/mood”, for instance what humour is, but when it comes to the linguistic part, he merely says it uses quick-witted punch lines.
96 Tong claims that the underlying reasons for *wenti* consist of both objective reasons, the external environment, society, history, and culture (historical time, ethnic background, class, cultural and literary tradition, the literary spirit of the era) and subjective reasons, the author’s subjectivity, the expression of his thoughts and emotions (originating in his character, both the innate natural gift and disposition and as shaped by education and environment), and finally the author’s aesthetic endowments (form of aesthetic experience and aesthetic ideals), Ibid., pp 182–219.
97 Ibid., pp 110–114.
“ästhetische idee” and theories of art of Gu Zujian,\footnote{Gu Zujian, "Lun yishi zhi jingguan", in Wenyi zhengming No 2, 1992.} he introduces a system based on the “pattern of artistic imagery” in literary works.\footnote{Ibid., pp 114–118.} Tong divides literary art into three kinds: “reproductive”, “expressionistic”, and “conceptualistic” art, according to their separate functions, i.e. to reproduce reality, to express emotions, and to express ideas, each kind using its distinct pattern of imagery: “representative”, “artistically conceived”, and “illustrating” ideas.\footnote{Tong’s genre system is based on the three patterns of artistic imagery in Gu Zujian’s article “Lun yishu zhi jingguan” in Wenyi zhengming, No 2, 1992, see Tong, p 116.} This division according to Tong, corresponds perfectly with the structure of the human mind and its three basic needs: to understand the world, and to express emotions, and to express ideas. In a table, Tong places the three literary types and their respective patterns of artistic imagery on the highest level. On the next level he lists the actual genres (\textit{wenti}). For each of the three kinds of literature, Tong lists five genres: poetry, novels, prose, dramatic literature, and film literature. Each of these genres can be divided into sub-genres and the sub-genres can be further divided into categories.\footnote{See table, Tong, p 220.}

Tong’s division into three patterns of artistic imagery is obviously based on the traditional idea in Chinese literary theory of not only separating objective from subjective expressions, but also dividing subjective expressions into the two categories of emotion (\textit{qing}) and ideas/thoughts (\textit{zhi}), the former mostly being equated with “private” emotions such as love, and with much lower status than the latter, which is mainly associated with intellectual activity, morals, philosophy, and politics, etc. So if Tong did not use this tripartite division, it would seem like literary works with “subjective expressions” could only deal with the love theme. But it might not be so easy to strictly separate emotions from ideas in literary works,\footnote{James Liu discusses this division of emotion (\textit{qing}) and ideas (\textit{zhi}) in \textit{The Art of Chinese poetry}, pp 72–73. Liu claims that this is an artificial division constructed by the Song Dynasty didactic/moralist critics of literature. Halvor Eifring, however, shows that this division is of much earlier date and can not be seen as artificial in Liu’s sense, see Eifring, “Introduction: Emotions and the conceptual history of \textit{qíng}”, in \textit{Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature}, Halvor Eifring (ed.), (Leiden: Brill, 2004).} and this problems obviously applies to the different “patterns of imagery” as well.

\textbf{Chu Bingjie’s “Introduction to ancient Chinese genre theory” \textit{Zhongguo gudai wenti gailun}}

When Tong Qingbing and Zhang Yi discuss \textit{wenti}, they discuss both genre and style, but to them \textit{wentixue}, as a field, means “stylistics”, while Chu, fully aware of this meaning of \textit{wenti}, moves in the opposite direction. Chu Bingjie breaks off from the main body of contemporary scholars discussing \textit{wenti} by disregarding the aspect of “style” in the meaning of \textit{wenti}. According to Chu, \textit{wenti} is simply an abbreviation of “literary genres, forms” (\textit{wenxue ticai, tizhi})\footnote{Chu Bingjie, \textit{Zhongguo gudai wenti gailun} (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1997) p 1. Chu’s book is a good introduction to pre-modern Chinese genre theory, but unfortunately, there are many misprints in it.} and the Western term “genre” can be translated as “\textit{wenlei}” (literary kind), which in turn is equivalent to \textit{wenti}. But
in my view, we cannot simply equate the ancient Chinese term "wenti", with the modern Western concept of "genre", nor discuss the ancient term "wenti" without reference to its inherent meaning of "style".

Chu discusses Western "genre theory" as a field of its own, and translates this term as "wenleixue". His description of the field of "wenleixue" is in principal identical to his description of "wentixue", which in turn is equivalent to what in ancient times was called "wenzhang liubie lun", i.e. the study of the features and divisions of literary types and their appearance and development. At first glance Chu appears to make an attempt to separate the concepts and terms used for style and genre and to advocate using the term "wenlei" for genre. But it turns out that this is not his intention. In Chu’s view, "genre" and "style" are still both "wenti"; it is merely a question of a broad or a narrow definition of the term. Because of this close relationship between genre and style, the ancient scholars mixed them up, says Chu, and used both at the same time.

Chu’s book, however, is clearly a work on genre theory, though most scholars now equate "wentixue" with "stylistics". Chu discusses the faults and merits of genre theories in pre-modern times, and describes a large number of pre-modern genre systems. He also describes the ancient genres, providing each conventional genre’s name, origins, major features, development, and sub categories.

In Chu’s book, a genre system for literary genres in pre-modern times is outlined. He thoroughly discusses the major poetry genres of pre-modern times in chronological order, followed by shorter summaries of the prose categories: "Primitive shi-poetry in two to four characters per line", "The Songs of Chu", "Fu-poetry", "Yuefu-style poems", "Ancient-style shi-poetry" (5 and 7 characters per line), "Parallel prose", "Recent-style regulated shi-poetry", "Other kinds of ancient-style shi-poetry" (3, 6, or mixed numbers of characters per line), "Ci-poetry", "Qu-drama", "Ancient essays of all kinds" (documents used in politics and administration), "Ancient essays of other kinds" (short notes, speeches). In Chu’s view 12 major genres obviously suffice to cover ancient literature, which is a substantial simplification (or improvement considering the number of genres listed in ancient anthologies such as Ming dynasty scholar Xu Shizeng’s "Genre division" Wenti mingbian with its 121 genres). Unlike many of the ancient anthologists and scholars, Chu does not include the Classics, the historical and philosophical works, in his genre system. These works are presumably not regarded as "literary" genres. But in spite of not being regarded as "pure" literary genres by Chu, many of the works in these categories undeniably contain literary qualities.

104 Chu, p 1.
105 Ibid., p 14.
106 Ibid., p 1.
107 Chu, pp 38–496.
108 For a comprehensive discussion of these issues, see Rydholm, “The theory of ancient Chinese genres”.

Orientalia Suecana LIX (2010)
Tao Dongfeng’s “Stylistic evolution and its cultural significance”
Wenti yanbian ji qi wenhua yiwei

A large part of Tao’s book comprises an introduction to Western literary theories, genre theories, linguistics, and stylistics. Tao refers to a wide range of Western works by Saussure, Barthes, Spitzer, Todorov, Goldmann, Fowler, and many others. Tao seems to imply that Western literary theories can be applied to Chinese literature without modification, and that this goes for the definition of the concept of wenti as well. The concept of wenti, which he translates as “style”, is traced back not to ancient Chinese sources, but to Ancient Greek and Roman rhetoricians.109 Wentixue, “stylestics” is a scholarly field that according to Tao, emerged in the West in the 20th century. According to Tao, “style” in English can be translated into Chinese either as “wenti” or as “fengge” (the former used mainly in literary theory, the latter more used in contemporary Chinese). Tao claims that wenti and fengge basically have the same meaning and in his book they are used as “synonyms”.110 In my view, however, the Western term “style” should not simply be equated with wenti, since this ancient Chinese term denotes a concept that differs quite a lot from the common understanding of the Western concept of “style”. In one instance, Tao translates “stylestics” as “fenggexue”,111 a rather new term which perhaps is a better choice for discussing Western stylistic theories, since it does not carry with it the whole history of ancient Chinese theories of wenti.112

Tao presents a definition of wenti that is largely based on the definitions of “style” in J. Cuddon’s A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory and H. Shaw’s A Dictionary of Literary Terms.

Wenti is the verbal structure (huayu tishi) of literary works. It is the structural pattern of the text. If we say that texts are a special kind of structures of symbols, then wenti is the coding pattern of these symbols. The word “structure” (tishi) is used here to imply and reinforce that these kinds of structures and coding patterns involve a sense of pattern or a model.

Thus, wenti is a concept that reveals the formal features of literary works.113

The term huayu tishi could be translated in different ways such as “verbal expression/structure”, linguistic form/structure/pattern”, “discourse”, etc., but “verbal structure” seems to be suitable in this context. It is perfectly acceptable to use the above definition of style in a stylistic study, but the problem is that in Chinese literary theory wenti does not simply mean “style”, but also denotes what can be referred to as “genre”. Tao does not account for this aspect of the Chinese term wenti in this definition. Instead he uses the term wenlei for “genre”114 and defines this term as well in accordance with H. Shaw’s A Dictionary of Literary Terms.

109 Tao Dongfeng, Wenti yanbian ji qi wenhua yiwei (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 1999), p 1.
110 Ibid., p 2, f 2.
111 Tao, p 2.
112 The concept of “wenti” can be traced back as far as Shijing and Shangshu, and the term appeared at least as early as in “Xie Lingyun zhuanshu” in the Songshu, written by Shen Yue (441–513), Ciyuan, vol. 2, p 1363. For an introduction to the origins of the concept and term wenti see Rydholm, “The theory of ancient Chinese genres”.
113 Tao, p 2. Unfortunately there are two misprints in these lines: wenben “text” is misprinted as wenti in both places in this quote.
The word *wenlei* is “genre” in French. Originally it refers to class, sort, kind, and used in literature it is a category used in the division of literary works. It places a group of similar works in the same category.\(^{115}\)

This, however, does not mean that Tao attempts to completely separate the concepts of style and genre, since genres, according to Tao, are defined by stylistic features. Tao (rightly) claims the Western term “genre” to be complex and unclear. He traces the reason for the confusion about the definition of the concept of genre in the West to the multitude of genre theories and different criteria for the division of literary genres. Tao lists nine kinds of divisions, but points out that the main criterion for division is either the theme, content, subject matter, and object of description, or formal standards and structural patterns. The former, according to Tao, neglects the aesthetic qualities of literature and is basically a “vulgar” sociological division of genres by non-literary criteria which display “changes in political interests”.\(^{116}\) Tao’s statement displays an implicit criticism of the traditional view of literature as a vehicle for moral/political education advocated both in early Chinese didactic (Confucian) literary theories and later by the Chinese Communist Party. The latter divides genres based on linguistic structures, moves the concept of genre closer to the concept of style, and directs genre studies towards formalism, structuralism, and stylistics. Tao claims formal and stylistic features to be most important in genre division, but holds that content also is important. The solution, in Tao’s view, is to combine these major criteria by regarding form and content as inseparable. Form and content are simultaneous; form incorporates content, and content is manifested by form.\(^{117}\) According to Tao, no formal features exist that are separate from content.\(^{118}\) A certain way of expression, a certain linguistic structure, corresponds to a certain mood, flavour, and mental construct; so in using formal criteria to separate genres, one is simultaneously including features related to content and mood.

The most important criterion for genre division should be the verbal structure (*huayu tishi*), that is, similarities in style (*weniti*). This is because the content of a literary work relies on form to become established; the content is the level of meaning of the expression, and is determined by the structural pattern of the expression. A specific way of expression creates a specific structure of meaning, genre features are basically decided by the text, and stylistic features are the basic features of genre. True literary genres are always marked by specific stylistic features, and genres based purely on theme are not true literary genres. Therefore, genre division always has stylistic implications; literary genre is the sum of stylistic features of a kind of (not one single) literary work.\(^{119}\)

Tao claims that Wang Guowei (1877–1927) in *Renjian cihua* expresses the same opinion when discussing the difference between recent-style verse and *ci*-poetry. In my view, Tao represents a monistic view of style (discussed above). It is quite possible to divide genres based on both language and theme/content without believing that content and form are inseparable, i.e. without adhering to a monistic view of

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\(^{115}\) Tao, p 9. It should perhaps be noted that the term “genre” originates from the Latin word “genus”.

\(^{116}\) Ibid., p 10.

\(^{117}\) Ibid., p 49.

\(^{118}\) Ibid., p 45.

\(^{119}\) Ibid., p 48–49.
style. In my opinion, several options are available to express the same content, and writers do choose between different ways of expressing a certain content. Especially in such strictly regulated forms as recent-style verse and *ci*-poetry, there were so many formal demands on line-length, speech-tone pattern, rhyme scheme, etc. that had to be satisfied, that the author had to be really flexible when putting his thoughts into words. Tao is right in claiming that theme/content alone does not suffice to divide genres, but if content and language really are inseparable, we would not have different genres treating the same theme/subject matter in different ways.

To sum up, in Tao’s theory genres are defined by their stylistic features, which in turn consist of linguistic/verbal structures, which in its turn consist of both content and form. To further strengthen the relationship between the concepts of genre and style, Tao introduces an intermediate concept unifying the two, namely “genre style” *wenlei wen*ǐ*. The relationship between “genre” (*wenlei/wenxue leixing*) and “genre style” (*wenlei wen*ǐ*), according to Tao, is as follows:

We may say that genre in fact is a generalization of a kind of literary works with similar stylistic features, while genre style refers to these verbal structures and structural norms of a specific kind of literary works.120

In Tao’s view, since every genre has its specific stylistic features, the main criterion for genre division is stylistic features,121 and hence each genre has its “genre style”. In Tao’s opinion, Cao Pi, Lu Ji, Zhi Yu, and Liu Xie all divided genres by their stylistic features. But as previously mentioned, the genre requirements proposed by the authors mentioned do not simply refer to what could be labelled stylistic features, even by our current or by Tao’s standards (mainly by verbal structure).

Tao describes the nature of style in more detail. In Tao’s view style, *wen*ǐ*, refers to the manner of putting thoughts into words. It is a verbal structure (*huayu tishi*), involving all the linguistic devices used by authors to create a specific textual structure.122 The verbal structures in styles evolve, and Tao’s main interest is to study manifestations and principles of the evolution of style through the methods of diachronic structuralism.123 Tao is critical of traditional histories of literature, since they focus on the subject matter in literature rather than on the manner of description/expression; in essence they are “thematic histories” meaningful for studies of history, philosophy, and social sciences rather than for history of literature.124 In Tao’s view stylistic history (*wen*ǐ*shi*) is the core of the history of literature, since it deals with the evolution of forms of literary language and structural patterns of texts, with aesthetic experience, and with the ability of art to reflect the world.125 In other words, for Tao, style is the core and substance of literary history, and linguistic evolution is the core and substance of the evolution of style. But simply using linguistic research methods to study linguistic structures does not suffice to understand style, according to Tao, since style is also inseparable from psychology and culture.

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120 Ibid., p 10.
121 Ibid., p 8.
122 Ibid., p 4.
123 Ibid., p 6.
124 Ibid., p 5.
125 Ibid., p 5.
Tao, like Tong Qingbing, is critical of scholars (i.e. structuralists) who use solely linguistic methods, “juggling with terms” (thinking that “everything can be counted” and lacks spirit). Changes in style are not simply linguistic phenomena, but reflect changes in living circumstances, intellectual needs, values, aesthetic perceptions, and ways of experiencing the world. Social history and cultural environment are important, according to Tao, since literature and language are parts of culture, and the literary style of a certain period reflects the features of the culture of that time. Tao is also critical of traditional Chinese “psychological” studies of styles that connect the author’s personal character with his style (wen ru qi ren). In my opinion, this is truly a problem in many traditional Chinese studies of style; not only the author’s individual style, but group and genre styles are sometimes attributed to one author in the same way. Biographical data on the poet are used for autobiographical interpretations of the literary texts and become stylistic evidence.

Tao instead advocates a method of stylistic study that combines linguistic analysis, reception aesthetics, and socio-cultural context. He purposes to investigate the evolution of styles from three main perspectives: linguistics, psychology (the author’s intellectual constructs and stylistic consciousness, and the reader’s stylistic expectations), and culture. Style is made up of verbal constructs, and language is culture in itself. In Tao’s view, as in that of Zhang Yi, the symbols of language are a mode of cultural existence. Tao claims that culture and symbols – language – are inseparable, therefore linguistic studies should also involve cultural analysis. Tao describes the relationship between language, style, and culture as follows:

Symbols and the organization of symbols are in fact exactly what we understand to be style. Style is the text’s structural pattern; it is the structural pattern of the relationships of the symbols, and this pattern has a rich cultural connotations. Cultural standards govern linguistic and stylistic standards, and at the same time condition our understanding of style.

Literary texts and stylistic patterns (linguistic patterns of texts) reflect socio-cultural patterns (a broad concept referring to politics, form of consciousness, values, spirit of the era, moral education, etc.), and not only the individual writer’s personality. Stylistic/linguistic patterns represent a way of experiencing, interpreting, and understanding the world. They represent intellectual constructs of people in a certain culture and society at a certain time. Tao therefore wants stylistics to return to the field of anthropology and through linguistic analysis uncover “mental structures and cultural connotations”. The purpose of stylistic studies is to decode the symbolic structures in literature to find the deeper connotations.

Literary texts are symbols, but not ordinary symbols, not scientific texts. They are a form of manifestation of human emotions, a concrete form of the experience of living, the aesthetic manifestation of the circumstances of human existence. The decoding activity in-

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126 Ibid., p 20.
127 Tao, p 24.
128 Here Tao refers to the theories of L. A White, Roland Barthes, and others, Tao, p 129.
129 Tao, p 130.
130 Ibid., p 174.
131 Ibid., p 131.
132 Ibid., p 23.
THEORIES OF GENRE AND STYLE IN CHINA

In Tao’s view, stylistic evolution consists of changes in the structural patterns of literary language, which in turn correspond with and are inseparable from changes in cultural patterns and patterns of consciousness.

The whole culture of mankind can be seen as a meaningful, functional form. Or, rather than saying that culture is the content of our beliefs, we can say that it is the shape or pattern that conforms to our beliefs and actions. This way, style and culture obtain a correspondence on the level of form and structure, and it is completely possible for us to find their internal relations by analysing and comparing them.

In my opinion, Tao thereby represents a “mentalistic monistic view of style” (discussed above) that attempts to uncover the “cultural content” through studies of the language in texts. The problem for scholars representing this view is how to define this abstract content in order to be able to study it, and Tao does not provide us with any concrete examples of analysis.

Tao discusses different levels of style: “individual style”, “national style”, “period style”, and “genre style” (wenlei wenti), but claims that the main focus of diachronic stylistics is the evolution of genre styles (wenlei wenti), using stylistics to construct a genre history. The evolution of literature is often the result of genres replacing one another, and every important period in literary history corresponds to a dominant genre in that era; therefore the evolution of literature basically depends on the evolution of genre styles. But Tao does not want to simplify to the point of claiming that literary history is the same as evolution of styles, nor does he think that in a certain period/dynasty there was basically one dominant genre in use. Genres consist of literary works sharing certain, but not all, features. Genre constructs are based on generalizations, and since genres are in constant change, it is hard to verify the genre descriptions by referring to individual literary works with many dissimilar features. The solution, according to Tao, is a combination of theoretical and historical genre studies using temporary genre definitions, constantly redefining genres based on empirical studies of literary works, and to use these theoretical frameworks, these generalizations, to understand individual works – a hermeneutic cycle process. Genre definitions rely on the features of individual works, says Tao, and genre is the most important tool for recognizing what is special and individual about an author’s work. In my view, it is true that genre constructs or genre expectations sometimes make it easier to see what is individual in an author’s work, but stylistic features of genres are not always so easily separated from the features of individual style.

133 Ibid., p 23.
134 Ibid., pp 134–135.
135 Ibid., p 41.
137 Ibid., p 11.
138 Ibid., p 56.
Tao also provides a brief description of how he thinks styles evolve, and how
genres evolve, but because genres are defined by stylistic features in Tao’s theory, it turns out that his two separate descriptions of these two evolutionary processes coincide to a large extent. Both these two processes involve changes in the same “dominant” features.

Every specific kind of genre (wenlei) has its standard pattern, its dominant stylistic norm (wenti guifan), and is both subjective and objective; it is both a structure for emotional and experiential structure and also an organized linguistic structure, that is, a stylistic structure (wenti jiegou). A kind of literary genre represents a specific way of experiencing the world and its linguistic structures. In a certain age it prospers or fades, and that all reflects a change in the mental structures of the authors and cultural psychology, as well as a change in the structure of linguistic constructs.

Styles/genres do not completely vanish, nor do they emerge out of nothing, but they rather preserve and/or develop features from earlier styles. Thus it is impossible to draw clear-cut lines between them. In this context, he also takes the opportunity to implicitly criticize earlier literary policies of the Chinese Communist Party, when he states: “To completely break with traditional culture can only be a slogan (axiom), and can not become reality.”

Styles and genres can influence each other or merge into new styles or genres. Tao emphasizes that the phenomenon of popular styles/genres replacing or giving new life to styles/genres in literary literature, is an important factor in the evolution of Chinese literature. Evidently, one consequence of defining genre by stylistic features, but still keeping the terms separate, is that there will be have to be (more or less identical) double accounts for each phenomenon concerning style and genre, such as evolutionary processes, etc. in Tao’s theory. And this seems to me to be rather uneconomical.

140 Ibid., p 61.
141 Ibid., p 16.
142 There are many examples of ancient scholars adverse to the idea of cross-mixing genres, such as Hu Yinglin, Li Dongyang, and Chen Shidao, see Tao, pp 69–71. According to Tao, this phenomenon is connected to the political arena. In the feudal era, there were strict rules for relationships in politics and culture and therefore genres had strict boundaries, and it was in general not accepted to cross-mix genres. Chen Shidao was critical of Su Shi’s way of “writing shi-poetry in the ci-poetry form” which he considered was “not the essential character (feibense) of ci-poetry, Chen Shidao, Houshan shihua, quoted by Tao, pp 70–71. According to Tao, what Chen meant was that Su Shi’s ci-poetry was using the style of “heroic abandon” (haofang), as opposed to the general standard of ci-poetry, “delicate restraint” (wanyue). But in my view, Chen Shidao could also have been referring to Su Shi breaking the speech-tonal rules, for which Su was criticized by some other contemporary critics. See my In Search of the Generic identity of Ci Poetry, vol. 2, p 206–209. Some scholars, especially in the Song dynasty, held a different opinion on the relationships between genres, like Chen Shan, Jiang Kui, and Wang Zhuo, see Tao, pp 72–73. Wang Zhuo stated the following: “The ancient songs developed into yuefu, the ancient yuefu developed into present day quiz[ci]. They all have the same origins”, Wang Zhao, “Geci zhi bian”, Bi ji manzhi, juan 1, in Cihua congbian, Tang Guizhang (ed.), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), vol. 1, p 74, and quoted by Tao, p 73. Wang Zhuo seems reluctant to separate shi-poetry and yuefu, since they have the same origins. According to Tao, this opinion is too extreme and eliminates the need for the concepts of shi-poetry and ci-poetry: “The stylistic norm and differences between literary genres are not definite, but genre divisions are in fact not purely artificial and without foundation. The works listed under the name of a certain genre have elementary similarities. In addition, if there were no existing differences, then one could not even discuss the issue of interaction and infiltration”, Tao, p 74.
143 Ibid., p 18.
Tao also describes the development of theories concerning the relationship between style and culture in China. Firstly, the theories from ancient times up to the late Qing dynasty were based on “vulgar sociology”. The function of literature was moral education, and stratification and stylistic features of shi-poetry were seen as direct reflections of politics, of the state of the country. These theories, in Tao’s view, served the purposes of the feudal rulers and represent political interference in the development of literature and a failure to recognize the importance of the literary language. After 1949 the histories of Chinese literature inspired by Marxist criticism were, according to Tao, based on “vulgar sociology”, and (also) explained literary/stylistic evolution as a direct result of changes in socio-cultural environment. They completely neglected form, language, and sound. In the West, on the contrary, in the 20th century, stylistics developed rapidly due to Saussure’s structural linguistics, inspiring Russian formalism and New criticism to focus on the analysis of linguistic structures and features in the text, while, according to Tao, society, culture, and the author’s psyche were seen as external factors of no importance to style. These scholars, according to Tao, failed to see that texts and formal structures possess socio-cultural significance, that language and style are manifestations of culture.

Finally, says Tao, in the middle of the 20th century, in the theories of Marxist critics Lucien Goldmann, Terry Eagleton, Raymond Williams, and Fredric Jameson, the solution is sought in a dialectical unity of language/style and culture. The cultural implications of literary works are uncovered through analysis of the texts’ formal structures and through explanations of the relationship between the literary text and socio-historical reality. Tao concludes: “Genuine literary sociology must be a sociology of a kind of form or style, or a cultural science of form (wenti), and regard style as a manifestation of culture, while not failing to recognize its special aesthetic quality.”

Tao supports Goldmann’s theories of the sociology of form versus the traditional sociology of content. As stated above, Tao advocates the idea of text structures being analysed in the context of socio-cultural mental constructs. Tao supports Eagleton’s theory that the development of literary form is conditioned by changes in the dominant way of perceiving sociological reality, the form of consciousness; by changes in the relationship between author and reader; and by the history of literary form in itself. Eagleton explains, for instance, the change in the style of novels in the 18th century towards being concerned with the individual mind and ordinary life experiences, as a product of the increasing confidence of the capitalist class. But this solution to the problem of the relationship between style and culture that Tao hopes will now prosper in contemporary Chinese stylistics has not been so success-

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144 Ibid., pp 160–163.
145 Ibid., p 15.
146 Ibid., pp 164–165.
147 Ibid., pp 166–171.
148 Ibid., p 172.
149 Ibid., p 182.
150 Tao discussing Eagleton’s Marxism and literary criticism, ibid., p 181.
151 Tao discussing Eagleton’s Marxism and literary criticism, ibid., p 181.
ful in the West. Many Western literary scholars today agree that the theories of these Marxist critics are based on gross simplifications.

To sum up Tao’s theory: the core of the evolution of literature is the evolution of genre; the core of the evolution of genre is the evolution of style/genre style; the core of stylistic evolution is linguistic evolution; and the core of linguistic evolution consists in changes in the socio-cultural mental constructs (since form and content are inseparable). This way of reasoning displays a mentalistic monistic view of style with its inherent problem of describing these socio-cultural mental constructs, and combines “modern Western” linguistics, traditional Chinese literary theory, and Marxist criticism. It also maintains the close relationship between genre and style in traditional Chinese studies of style and genre by defining genre in terms of stylistic features, and by using the intermediate concept of genre style in which the two melt together. The advantage of this model is that it explains why it is so hard to separate the concepts of genre and style in Chinese literary theory, and perhaps also that it leads one to question the basis for separating the concepts of genre and style in many Western literary theories. The Western concepts of genre and style are equally complex and unclear, and maybe these two concepts are simply two sides of the same coin.

Conclusions
The complete theories of wenti developed in the works of Zhang Yi, Tong Qingbing, and Tao Dongfeng share many similar traits that in my opinion reflect some general tendencies in the discourse on wenti (genre and style) in China in the 1990s. A larger study would of course be necessary to confirm these observations. These three scholars are all trying to create a new concept of wenti based on a feasible combination of concepts used in Western linguistics and Chinese literary theories and emphasize the aspect of “style” in wenti (as opposed to Chu Binjie’s study, which is basically a work solely devoted to genre theory (wenleixue).) The similarities in these three major stylistic theories are as follows:

1. In these studies, the term wenti refers to and is generally translated into English as “style”, and wentixue is “stylistics” (Zhang, Tong, Tao). The term fengge is seldom used, though it is more or less synonymous to style according to Tao, and in his study it only appears in the context of the author’s individual style. In Zhang’s and Tong’s studies fengge is also a level of wenti concerned with the author’s individual style. While the term wenxue wenti is used for “literary style”, these scholars mainly use the terms ticai or wenlei to denote “genre”. But this does not mean that the concepts of genre and style are clearly distinguished in these theories. On the contrary, genre and style are seen as merely two levels of wenti (Zhang, Tong, Tao), connected by the intermediate concept of “linguistic form”; “linguistic form/mode of existence” (yuyan cunzaiti) (Zhang,) “verbal structure” (huayu tishi) (Tao), and “linguistic form” (yuyan tishi) (Tong). These terms can be translated in slightly different ways, but they all basically refer to the same thing, to language structure, the manner of expression, linguistic form or pattern. The aim of these studies is not to separate the concepts of genre and style, but rather to explain how they are related and fit to-
gether. The concept of “linguistic form”, developed from Western linguistics, is in-
tended to provide the key to connecting the concepts of genre and style.

2. In these studies, both modern Western theories of linguistics, genre, and style, and
ancient Chinese theories of styles and genres are discussed, and their respective ad-
vantages and shortcomings compared. The general tendency is that these scholars
are working towards a kind of synthesis of Western and Chinese literary theories
(Zhang, Tong, Tao). They claim that while the literary language and Western lin-
guistic research methods are important in studies of genre and style, language alone
does not suffice to explain literary style or genre. The content of literary texts is also
important, as in the ancient Chinese theories of genre and style (Zhang, Tong, Tao),
based on “vulgar sociology” (Tao) (seeing literature as a direct reflection of a good
or bad government, society, etc.), or psychology (equating the author’s personality
with his style: “wen ru qi ren”).

3. Both the problem of how to combine modern Western research methods and an-
cient Chinese theories, and the problem of how to combine form/language and con-
tent, are solved by claiming that language and thought content are simultaneous and
inseparable (Zhang Tong, Tao, and also Wang). Consequently, analysing language
also amounts to studying the content, and Western linguistic research methods can
be used to uncover the cultural spirit in texts, as in Chinese literary theory. (“Chi-
nese knowledge constitutes the essence, Western learning provides the means”
zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong, see Zhang above.)

Although the idea of content and form/language being simultaneous and insepar-
able is presented as an innovation, this line of thought is far from new, and in my
opinion, it constitutes the main stream of Chinese theories of style since ancient
times, and is evident in Liu Xie’s Wenxin diaolong. Basically, these scholars
create their theories of style and genre based on a combination of concepts used in
Western linguistics and in Liu Xie’s Wenxin diaolong. These three scholars may
be said to represent what Nils Erik Enkvist labels a monistic view of style (perhaps
even a mentalistic monism, as discussed above).

4. These scholars try to create a “scientific” (Tong) definition of style/genre, based
on unified criteria and obviously a monistic view of style. They all seem to presume
that genres and styles objectively exist and that evidence of the nature of these con-
cepts can be found in Western literary theories and/or in ancient Chinese literary
theories. While Zhang, and especially Tao, refer mainly to Western sources, neither

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153 For instance in Liu Xie’s following lines: “When the emotions are stirred they take on the shape of language; when principals are expressed they are manifest in writings. This is how the concealed becomes manifest, how the internal turns into the external.” Liu Xie, “Ti xing”, in Wenxin diaolong, in Zhou Zhenu’s edition, Wenxin diaolong jinyi (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), p 256. See also Stephen Owen’s discussion of the subject in Readings in Chinese literary thought (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp 234–235.
Tao nor Tong hesitate to make anachronistic interpretations of ancient Chinese sources and claim that their concepts of *wenti* are evident in, for instance, *Shijing* and *Yijing* (Tong), and in the theories of, for instance, Cao Pi (Tong, Tao), Zhi Yu (Tao), Lu Ji (Tao, Tong), and Liu Xie (Tong, Tao).

There are, of course, different opinions concerning the ontological question of genre and style. I share Anders Pettersson’s view that genres do not have a mind-independent existence because all concepts are human intellectual constructs. Reality does not come in pre-set divisions, but rather these divisions are created for a certain purpose. Reality, just like literary genres, can be divided up in any kind of way. In my opinion this line of reasoning applies not only to genres, but also to styles. Since genres and styles do not objectively exist, the ontological “truth” about them cannot be found in the texts by the ancient writer/scholar sages. Genres and styles can be defined/distinguished in any number of ways, and we cannot really say that one definition is “right” and another is completely “wrong”. We can only create definitions of style or genre suitable for the purposes of a certain study, or to be applied to a certain body of material. Any particular definition should instead be evaluated according to how well it serves the purposes of a certain study.

5. These three scholars all stress the cultural implications of style. Language, the intermediate concept between genre and style in these three theories, also functions as an intermediate concept between culture and style, since style consists of linguistic form/language, and language is part of culture. Therefore, in *wenti*, content, language, and culture constitute an inseparable union. Thus, according to Tao, the literary styles reflect and are limited by the society of a certain culture at a certain time, and are constantly changing in response to socio-cultural changes. Thus Tao’s theories amount to a sociology of form, more or less in line with the view of Marxist critics like Goldmann and Eagleton. But while Tao is eager to apply these Western Marxist theories directly to Chinese literature, genre, and style, Zhang takes the cultural implications of style one step further by wanting to establish a theory of literary stylistics with “special Chinese features”.

6. These three scholars all emphasize the author’s artistic freedom and ability to express his own personality or individual creativity through literary style. In the view of all these scholars this is achieved not through the content, but rather through language, linguistic form (but thought content is inseparable from language). In traditional studies, style is, in general, described as the manifestation of the author’s character and there is a kind of organic union of the two. This line of thought, which was developed by Liu Xie in *Wenxin diaolong*, originates from the original interpretation of *ti* as “body” (also Wang Meng continues the tradition of connecting style with the human body). The author’s mental disposition and character are manifested through language. In these three studies, the idea of a kind of organic union between the author and his style continues, though style is now basically defined as a kind of

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“linguistic form”. Hence, in my view, we can say that the traditional expression equating the author with his style: “the style [text] is like the person” (wen ru qi ren), has been transformed into “the linguistic form is like the person” (yuti ru qi ren).

7. These scholars all create their own division of wenti into three levels one of which is linguistic form/structure/pattern. Zhang: mode of cultural existence, linguistic form/mode of existence, and the two concrete forms of genre and style; Tong: genre, linguistic form, and style; Tao: verbal structure (in genres and styles), but also the perspectives of psychology and culture. Though these systems appear different, they are essentially the same. They are, in my opinion, all based on a monistic view of style and involve the concepts of genre and style, which are connected by the intermediate concept of “linguistic form”, which in turn incorporates culture.

8. These scholars (Zhang, Tao, Tong, and also Wang Meng) claim that wenti, literary style, is the core of literature (though Tong does not emphasize this aspect as much as the others), that style, wenti, is that which gives literature its value and independence, that it is that which makes literature become “literature”. In Zhang’s words: “literary style makes literature independent, or makes literature become literature in the true sense of the word”.\(^\text{155}\) Zhang claims that “in people’s minds and impressions ‘literature’ mostly refers to literary style”.\(^\text{156}\) In other words, these concepts are more or less synonymous. The general tendency in these theories is therefore, in my opinion, not only to preserve the senses both of genre and style in the concept of wenti, but to further enlarge the frame of reference of the concept of wenti also by more or less including “literature”, and what is in some Western studies labelled “literariness”.

9. What seems to often have happened in Chinese literary theory through the ages is that when new literary theories develop, the traditional terms are retained, but their frame of reference expands to accommodate new ideas and concepts. This is certainly the case with the concept of wenti in these studies. Not only does wenti preserve its original connotations, e.g. genre and style, but it can now also refer to, for instance, linguistic form, literature, and culture, etc.

10. Though we today are witnessing a reduced influence of politics on literary research, these late 20th century scholars/studies still stay within certain political boundaries. It is obviously still a bit controversial to promote formal and aesthetic features, since these issues are closely related to the author’s individual aesthetic creativity, to individuality, the freedom of creation, and the freedom of the individual. Tong quotes Marx and Engels\(^\text{157}\) on the importance of formal features of texts (not only political content) and includes a chapter on “The relationship between wenti and class”.\(^\text{158}\) Tao’s conclusions are based on Marxist critics’ theories of soci-

\(^\text{155}\) Zhang, p 25.
\(^\text{156}\) Ibid., p 34.
\(^\text{157}\) Tong quotes Engels’ claim that in writings not only political content is important but also the form, ibid., p 7.
\(^\text{158}\) Tong, pp 191–193.
ology of form, and Zhang’s goal of developing a “theory of literary stylistics with special Chinese features” (you Zhongguo tesede wenxue wentixue lilun) calls to mind the Chinese Communist Party’s efforts to build a “socialism with special Chinese features” (you Zhongguo tesede shehuizhuyi), i.e. one that is adapted to Chinese culture, and politics. This field of research is still influenced by contemporary politics, but these studies show noteworthy progress in this regard compared to the literary and stylistic studies between the 1940s and 1980s. We are now witnessing a true development in the field of literary theory, genre studies, and stylistics. I would like to conclude with the words of Wang Meng expressing hope for the future.

Chinese literature, Chinese stylistics, will surely achieve a healthy and vigorous development, and nobody will be able to stop this.159

159 Wang Meng, “’Wentixue zongshu’ xuyan”, in Wenti yu wenti de chuangzao, p 3.
Impersonal Constructions

Edited by Carina Jahani and Åke Viberg
Impersonal Constructions – A Brief Introduction

This thematic issue is devoted to impersonal constructions across a number of languages. It consists of four contributions:

(1) Åke Viberg: *Swedish Impersonal Constructions from a Crosslinguistic Perspective. An Exploratory Corpus-based Study*

(2) Serge Axenov: *Argument Structure and Impersonality in Avar*

(3) Carina Jahani, Serge Axenov, Behrooz Barjasteh Delforooz, and Maryam Nourzaei: *Impersonal Constructions in Balochi*

(4) Guiti Shokri: *Impersonal Constructions in Mazandarani*

The articles are the result of a number of joint seminars at the Department of Linguistics and Philology in Uppsala between the research units of Linguistics, Iranian languages, and Turkic languages with the aim of making crosslinguistic comparisons based on the great variety of languages that are studied at the department. The general aim of the seminars has been to make detailed corpus-based studies from the perspective of functional typology and corpus-based contrastive analysis. In addition to impersonal constructions, verbal semantic fields such as mental verbs and verbs of verbal communication have been discussed at the seminars.

The term ‘impersonal’ has been interpreted in several different ways. In a recent survey, Siewierska (2008) makes a distinction between a subject-centred approach based on formal grammatical criteria and an agent-centred approach based on functional criteria related to agent defocusing of various types. Among formal criteria, deviations in person agreement has played a prominent role, as has non-canonical case marking (e.g. dative subjects instead of subjects in nominative or ergative case, depending on the language type). With respect to functional criteria, it is possible to make a distinction between agentive and referential impersonality. Agentive impersonality refers to the cases where an agent is completely missing, as in clauses with weather verbs (*It is snowing*) or where the agentivity of the subject is low. Referential impersonality refers to the cases where the reference of the subject is general (‘generic’) (e.g. *You can see the lake from the balcony*), or vague (e.g. *They have changed the timetable again*), where the referent is identifiable but the speaker does not know the exact identity of the referent or regards it as irrelevant.

The article by Viberg serves as a general introduction to various approaches to impersonal constructions and demonstrates how these can be applied to the study of Swedish from a crosslinguistic perspective. In a corpus-based contrastive study, Swedish is compared to a number of languages which genetically and/or areally are rather closely related to Swedish: German, English, French, and Finnish. The analysis is carried out in two steps. The first step follows a subject-centred approach and is based on formal criteria. All occurrences of the third person neuter pronoun *det* ‘it’ without clear reference and of the pronoun ‘*man*’one’ have been coded as imper-
sonal. In the second step, these examples are analysed from a functional perspective primarily based on the distinction between agentive and referential agentivity. Basically, *man* appears as an impersonal subject with general (‘all of mankind’) or vague reference, whereas *det* appears as a formal subject (or placeholder) in agentless sentences or sentences with low agentivity. The role of information structure is also taken into consideration by including presentatives and clefts. Finnish in several cases turns out to use impersonal constructions belonging to a different type than Swedish, but despite a general structural congruence in most cases between the other languages and Swedish, there are important usage-based differences even when congruent structures are available.

The next contribution, by Axenov, deals with Avar, a language that is of a radically different type from the European languages discussed in the previous article. Avar is a Northeast Caucasian language with ergative structure. Its most striking feature is the lability of the verb. Most verbs can be used both transitively and intransitively without any morphological marker on the verb. Axenov presents a brief sketch of referential and agentive impersonal constructions against the background of argument structure in general.

The two subsequent articles focus on impersonal constructions with low referentiality. Jahani et al. look at referential impersonals in Balochi, an Iranian language. The study is based on four subcorpora which represent several spoken and one written genre. Three main constructions with a non-specific human agent were found: 3PL and 2SG with an active verb, and one construction with a passive verb. In oral narratives, 3PL was used with vague reference excluding speaker and hearer, whereas 2SG was used with general (‘generic’) reference. In written narrative texts, the passive, which is rather rare in oral texts, was the preferred strategy to refer to a vague human agent. The corpus also included oral procedural texts (dealing, e.g., with weaving, cooking, or farming). In these texts, 2SG and 3PL were used interchangeably allowing the 3PL construction to include speaker and hearer, which is unexpected for this type of construction which crosslinguistically tends to be referentially more restricted than the 2SG. In addition to the three main constructions, the verb in 3SG could also be used with vague reference. This was used only in narrative texts in one of the subcorpora and was restricted to the verb ‘say’ used in the third person singular present tense, but it played a rather central role in these texts as a marker that the narrator did not have first-hand information.

Shokri deals with referential impersonals in Mazandarani, an Iranian language spoken in northern Iran. The study is based on oral narratives, stories, and ethnographic texts. This makes it possible to present a number of situated examples with rich contextual information. In narrations about village life past and present, speakers often start out in the first person when speaking about their private life but switch to third person plural when they speak about their culture and customs. The third person plural can also be used to speak about topics that are taboo. Similar to what has generally been found, the 3PL must be used if the speaker wants to exclude the speaker and hearer from reference, and the 2SG must be used if the speaker wants to focus on the inclusion of speaker and hearer, but there is also a grey zone in the middle where both constructions are possible.
The studies in this thematic issue comprise an example of the corpus-based approach to language comparison that has characterized the joint seminars mentioned above. Corpus-based studies make it possible not only to compare usage patterns across languages even when they basically use congruent structures to express a certain function, but also to compare contrasting ways to realize a function across different genres within a language.

Reference
Swedish Impersonal Constructions from a Cross-linguistic Perspective
An Exploratory Corpus-based Study

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Uppsala University

Abstract
This paper presents a corpus-based contrastive study of impersonals in Swedish based on extracts from five Swedish novels and their translations into German, English, French, and Finnish. As a first step in the analysis, impersonals were identified with simple formal criteria. All occurrences of non-referential det ‘it’ in the subject slot and all occurrences of the Swedish generalized pronoun man were extracted for further analysis. As a second step, this material was analysed from a functional point of view. It turned out that det appears as a formal subject (or placeholder) in agentless sentences or sentences with low agentivity, whereas man appears as an impersonal subject with general (‘all of mankind’) or vague reference.

1. Introduction
1.1 Impersonal sentences in Swedish
As stated by Siewierska (2008a), impersonalization can be treated from a subject-centred vs. agent-centred perspective. The former perspective is structural and takes its starting point in the lack of a canonical subject, whereas the latter is functional and is concerned with agent defocusing. The present study is corpus-based and will be carried out in two steps. The first is concerned with the coding of all the relevant examples in a corpus, and in order to code examples as “impersonal” in a consistent way, it is convenient to base the coding on clear, formal criteria. Based on a subject-centred approach, two types of impersonal subjects will be identified, namely constructions with a formal det as subject and constructions with man as a subject referring in a general way to ‘anyone, all humans’. Passive constructions will also be discussed, though rather briefly, in the present study.

As a second step, all the examples with formal det or man as subject will be analysed from a functional perspective. It turns out that det and man do not always have an impersonal function, but nevertheless in most cases they can be analysed from an agent-centred perspective as various types of impersonal subjects. Semantically, a prototypical subject functions as an agent (semantic role function) and has specific reference (referential function). It also has certain grammatical properties: coding properties, such as the coding of case on nouns and NPs, and the coding of agreement on the verb; and behavioural properties, such as its role in deletions, movements, and control of cross-reference (see Keenan 1976). Semantically, an impersonal sentence has a subject which deviates from the prototype with respect to reference or agentivity and in many cases
such deviations are reflected in non-canonical coding properties and anomalous grammatical behaviour.

**Agentless impersonals** conceptually lack a human agent that controls the situation. In the extreme case, the verb does not have any argument except a formal subject, as is the case with many predicates referring to weather phenomena and natural forces in Swedish and English. There are also a number of cases where the subject has a non-prototypical agent (or a primary role) such as that of an Experiencer or a Receiver. Grammatically such arguments behave as canonical subjects in some languages, whereas they have a tendency to appear as non-canonical subjects (e.g. “dative subjects”) with respect to case-marking and other grammatical properties across a number of languages. Such arguments characteristically appear within certain semantic fields such as mental and modal verbs. In Swedish, several mental, and also some modal verbs take an impersonal det as subject.

**Non-specific agent impersonals** represent the other possibility (see Siewierska 2008b). Conceptually, there is an agent which, however, is nonspecific and has a general or vague reference. The major example of this type of impersonal in Swedish is the man-construction. The third person plural pronoun de (colloquial dom) can also be used with a vague reference, and a further type of non-specific agent impersonal in Swedish is the impersonal passive such as det dansades lit. ‘it was danced’ or det spelades pingis lit. ‘it was played ping pong’. Such passives refer to actions carried out by an agent who is non-specific.

A special type of impersonal constructions is represented by three constructions with an expletive det as subject in Swedish: Clefting, Presentation, and Extrapolation of finite and non-finite clauses.

Since this is an exploratory study based on a specific corpus (see below), it is only possible to refer briefly to earlier studies on Swedish impersonals. Ljungren (1926) is a general treatment of impersonals in Swedish and relevant information can also be found in Sundman’s (1987) work on the subject in Swedish and in the Swedish reference grammar published by the Swedish Academy (Teleman et al., 1999, in particular “Expletivt subjekt” Vol. IV, p. 53–64).

1.2 The typological profile of Swedish

The typological profile of a language is an account of the distinctive character of its structure in relation to other languages based on work in general typology and contrastive studies. The two impersonal subjects det and man which form the topic of this study play a central role in a basic characteristic of Swedish referred to as the placeholder constraint by Hammarberg & Viberg (1977). The placeholder constraint refers to the obligatory use in Swedish of a number of semantically more or less empty grammatical words which to varying degrees tend to lack equivalents in other languages: the formal subject det ‘it’, the obligatory use of unstressed subject pronouns in general, the copula, and the use of som as a subject marker in indirect WH-questions. The placeholder constraint is functionally related to the use of word order in Swedish to signal syntactic role (subject/object), syntactic type (statement/question), and sentence hierarchy (main/subordinate clause). If, to pick a simple example, the dummy subject det ‘it’ were omitted from sentences
with a weather verb, word order would no longer serve as a clue to the interpretation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Statement or Question?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Det regnar.</td>
<td>‘It is raining.’</td>
<td>Regnar det? ‘Is it raining?’ #regnar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To various degrees, the placeholder constraint is characteristic of all the Germanic languages and of French but is most pronounced in Swedish and the other Mainland Scandinavian languages. Finnish is primarily a non-placeholder language, even if sitä, the partitive form of se ‘it’, is used to a certain extent as a placeholder in varieties of spoken Finnish. One of its functions is to avoid verb-initial constructions, but Finnish sitä is primarily a pragmatic marker, see Hakulinen (1975). Her article contains several interesting examples showing how sitä can appear both in some cases where Swedish uses det and where Swedish uses man. Only a few relevant examples are found in the dialogues of the novels used for this study. (See example 33 below).

The placeholder constraint is a primarily syntactic phenomenon. A closer look at the functions of the two frequent placeholders det and man is likely to deepen our understanding of the typological profile and of the functional underpinnings for a cluster of language-specific characteristics of Swedish.

1.3 A corpus-based contrastive study of impersonals in Swedish

General typology with a world-wide scope provides the basic framework for the characterization of the typological profile of Swedish. The major focus of this study, however, will be a contrastive comparison of Swedish and a selection of genetically and/or areally relatively closely related languages based on corpus-data, making it possible to provide a relatively fine-grained semantic analysis. In particular, data will be obtained from a parallel corpus that is being compiled by the author and is referred to as the Multilingual Parallel Corpus (MPC). At present, it consists of extracts from 22 novels in Swedish with translations of all texts into English, German, French, and Finnish. For some texts, translations also are included into Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Icelandic, Danish, and Norwegian, but these translations will not be analysed in this paper. There is a total of around 600,000 words in the Swedish originals. In addition to this material, there are also some original texts in French and Finnish with translations into Swedish. For this exploratory study, five original texts in Swedish and their translations have been analysed. The Swedish originals contain around 110,000 words. When examples from the corpus are presented, the Swedish original will be followed by the initials of the author in capitals. A list of the texts that have been used in this study is given at the end of the section References with a key to the initials. In a few cases, reference will also be made to data from the English Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC) prepared by Altenberg & Aijmer (2000), which contains original texts in English and Swedish together with their translations. The texts are divided into two broad genres, Fiction and Non-fiction, with several subcategories. The original texts in each language contain around 700,000 words.

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The comparison will be concerned with genetically and/or areally relatively closely related languages. German, English, and French like Swedish, are placeholder languages. Only Finnish belongs to a different structural type. As will become clear, there are interesting differences with respect to usage patterns even between the languages that belong to the same type. Finnish in many cases will stand out as a language of a different type (see Helasvuo & Vilkuna 2008 for a systematic presentation of Finnish impersonals). The other languages analysed in the special issue in which this study is printed are other examples of non-placeholder languages and also in other respects are typologically, areally, and genetically more distant from Swedish.

The presentation of Swedish impersonals will start with a number of constructions with impersonal placeholder subjects: clefting, presentation, extraposition of finite and non-finite clauses, and the man-construction. After that follows a brief overview of the functions of the Swedish passive constructions and an account of the Swedish impersonal passive with det as subject. As will be evident already in the analysis of the impersonal constructions, the semantic characteristics of the verb (or other predicate) play a central role. For that reason, the final section of the paper looks at the interaction between impersonal subjects and the meaning of the verb and the distribution of impersonal verbs (and other predicates) across semantic fields.

2. Cleft sentences

Cleft sentences in Swedish have already been the topic of a corpus-based contrastive study by Mats Johansson (2001, 2002) who compared three types of clefts in English and Swedish based on data from the English Swedish Parallel Corpus.

\[
\begin{array}{lll}
(1) & \text{It-cleft} & \text{Det är mer pengar vi behöver.} & \text{It is more money we need.} \\
& \text{WH-cleft} & \text{Vad vi behöver är mer pengar.} & \text{What we need is more money.} \\
& \text{Reversed} & \text{Mer pengar är vad vi behöver.} & \text{More money is what we need.} \\
& \text{WH-cleft} & \\
\end{array}
\]

In spite of the close structural parallels between the two languages, there are striking differences with respect to frequency, distribution, and discourse function. Whereas it-clefts are more frequent in Swedish than in English, the opposite holds for both types of WH-clefts. This was reflected in many ways in the translational correspondences. For example, Swedish it-clefts had a tendency to correspond to reversed WH-clefts or to ordinary non-clefted sentences in English, whereas English reversed WH-clefts tended to be translated by it-clefts or fronted elements in Swedish. Johansson suggests that one important function of it-clefts in Swedish – similar to fronting – is to create cohesive links, which is reflected in the fact that anaphoric elements often appear in the clefted position in Swedish it-clefts. This is yet another case where it-clefts in English show the opposite tendency, whereas a similar pattern is followed by reversed WH-clefts indicating that interesting parallels also exist with respect to discourse function.

Gundel (2008) compared the clefts in 78 pages of the Norwegian novel Sofies
verden (Garder) and its English translation and found 32 clefts in the Norwegian original text but only 11 in the English translation. A further study of Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone (Rowlands) and its translations into Spanish and Norwegian showed that out of 19 clefts in the English original only 5 were translated as clefts into Spanish but as many as 14 into Norwegian. The comparison of frequency differences in use of clefts thus indicated that “clefts are more frequently used in English than in Spanish, and much more frequently used in Norwegian than in the other two languages.” (Gundel 2008, 86) This observation is probably correct, but it is based on a rather small amount of data.

With the exception of Finnish, all of the MPC-languages have a structural equivalent of the Swedish it-cleft, as can be observed in (2). (In all versions except the English one, the possessive pronoun is in the third person: ‘It was her (1b: my) mother who told her...)

(2) a Det var hennes mor som hade berättat för henne om Antonio. HM
b It was my mother who told me about Antonio.
c Es war ihre Mutter, die ihr von Antonio erzählt hatte.
d C’était sa mère qui lui avait parlé d’Antonio.
e Hänen äitinsä oli kertonut hänelle Antioniosta. [Her mother had told her about A.]

The structure of the cleft in all the four languages that have it consists of a formal subject (IT), a Copula, a clefted element (XP), and a relative clause introduced by a relative marker (REL), which in Swedish has the invariable form som. As in English, this marker can be omitted when another element than the subject has been relativized. Schematically, the structure can be rendered as in (3):

(3) IT + Copula + XP + Rel-S

Semantically, XP is focused (in some sense) and the proposition in the relative clause is presupposed (e.g. ‘someone told me about Antonio’ in 2b). In spite of the existence of a close structural parallel to the Swedish it-cleft in English, German, and French, the cleft construction is not used as a translation in several cases. Actually, there are striking differences in the usage patterns between these three languages, as can be observed in Table 1. There are 181 occurrences of it-clefts in the five Swedish texts in the MPC-corpus which have been coded so far.

Table 1. Correspondents of the Swedish it-cleft in five texts from the MPC corpus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It-cleft</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cleft</td>
<td>Not studied</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be observed in Table 1, it-clefts and other clefts (pseudoclefts) are equally frequent as translations in English. Together, these structures account for no more than 30% of the translations. For German, the proportion is even lower (20% including Other cleft). The highest correspondence is found in French with 43%, which is still rather low.

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One reason for these differences can be structural, since there are differences between the languages with respect to the types of constituents that can be clefted. In English and Swedish, a wide range of constituents can be clefted. In German, clefting is more restricted in this respect, as shown by Ahlemeyer & Kohlhof (1999) in a corpus-based study of the translation of English it-clefts into German. It turned out that English sentences with clefted subjects and objects rather frequently were translated with German it-clefts, whereas clefted adverbials very seldom were translated with a congruent structure. However, in many cases a syntactically non-congruent structure is used even when an it-cleft is structurally permitted in the target language. Actually, a completely neutral sentence structure is not infrequent, as in the English, German, and Finnish translations in (4).

On the other hand, non-clefted sentences in the translations rather often contain some element that fulfils a function similar to the Swedish it-cleft as in (5).

English, in (5b), uses a reversed WH-cleft in accordance with what has been said above, whereas German uses a focus marker (or focus particle), nur ‘only’, in front of the focused element, and, in this example, a similar device is used in French (ne…que ‘only’). In Finnish, the focused element is fronted (lit. ‘But about birds he could write’ – ‘about’ is expressed with elative case: -sta). Fronting of the element that corresponds to the element that is clefted in Swedish is rather frequent both in German and Finnish, as in (6c) and (6e). This may be interpreted as a focusing device, but the situation is not always clear since in many cases the elements, such as temporal and spatial adverbials, have a general tendency to be fronted. Subjects, which are the most frequent type of clefted constituent, appear initially in the unmarked case.

One type of clefted element worthy of special attention is question words, which can be clefted in Swedish. This appears to be a characteristic of spoken language. In fic-

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tion, such structures are found primarily in the dialogue as in (7). Question words do not appear in clefted sentences in any of the translations.

(7)  
   a  Vem är det som kanske har försvunnit? HM (lit. Who is it that …)  
   b  *Who might have disappeared?  
   c  *Wer ist vielleicht verschwunden?  
   d  *De que s’agit-il?  
   e  - *Kuka siis on mahdollisesti kadonnut?

As observed by Johansson (2001), clefts are used to create cohesive links in Swedish. The most prominent example of that in the present material is the clefting of därför (‘therefore’, ‘because of that’), which appears 15 times in the texts analysed so far. A typical example is (8).

(8)  
   a  [Var hon tokig? Galen? Helknäpp? Våldsam? Kristina verkade snarare som om hon levde i en egen värld, i en stor såpbubbla.] Det var därför hon sträckt fram handen så tvetsamt. PCJ  
   b  [Was she crazy? Insane? Nuts? Violent? Kristina looked more as if she lived in a world of her own, in a great soap bubble.] That was why she held out her hand so hesitantly.  
   c  Deshalb hatte sie so zögernd die Hand ausgestreckt.  
   d  *C'était pour ça qu'elle tendait si doucement la main.  
   e  Sen vuoksi hän ojensi kätesäkin niin varovasti.

English in most cases uses a reversed pseudo-cleft (that is/was why-S) as in (8b), whereas a fronted causative connective is the dominant type of translation in German (deshalb in 8c) and Finnish (sen vuoksi in 7e, siksi another connective, in most of the other examples). Only in French are it-clefts the dominant type of translation, as in (8d).

In this short space, it has only been possible to exemplify the great variety of structures that appear as translations of Swedish it-clefts. It will be possible to go into this in greater detail when the complete corpus has been analysed. What is clear is that cleft sentences are used less in English and German than in Swedish despite the fact that structural equivalents exist and in many cases are possible as translations. There is a continuum with respect to the extent to which clefts are used in the languages in which the structure is well established. This is summed up in Table 2.

Table 2. Differences in usage patterns of cleft constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clefts established and used to various degrees</th>
<th>Clefts not established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finnish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the time being, whether Swedish or French should be first, is left open. As mentioned above, an it-cleft is used as a French translation in 43% of the cases,
which appears to be rather low but to be certain it is necessary to obtain information about the translations of French it-clefts into Swedish. That it-clefts are used less in English than in Swedish has already been established in Johansson’s studies (2001, 2002), and the study referred to above by Ahlemeyer & Kohlhof (1999) has shown that clefts are used less in German than in English. It is also clear that non-clefted translations can convey the same content by means of other focusing devices such as focus markers or word order (or a combination). This is an interesting area of study but such structures have only been exemplified in this study since a systematic study of such phenomena falls outside the scope of a study of impersonals.

The cleft is a rather special type of impersonal construction. Functionally, it is related to information structure as a kind of focusing device. Formally it stands in a derivational relationship to a base sentence with canonical structure. (I use the expression derivational relationship loosely to simplify the description without committing myself to a grammatical model in which sentences are actually derived in this way.) The cleft in itself is impersonal, as for example it was Peter in the cleft sentence *It was Peter who hit me*, but the subject of the corresponding non-cleft base sentence may both be agentive and have specific reference, as is the case in *Peter hit me*. This means that the translation in many cases is not impersonal when some other construction than a cleft is used in the target language.

3. Presentative (or existential) sentences

Swedish presentative constructions have been studied extensively by Wallin (1936) and Sundman (1980). There are also typologically oriented studies such as Clark (1978) and Hetzron (1975). A corpus-based contrastive study has been presented by Ebeling (2000) who compared Norwegian and English using the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus. Ebeling makes a distinction between three types of presentative constructions as demonstrated in (9) (based on Ebeling 2000, 1).

\begin{align*}
\text{(9) } & \text{a There’s a long trip ahead of us. Full presentative construction} \\
& \text{b A long trip is ahead of us. Bare presentative construction} \\
& \text{c We have along trip ahead of us. Have-presentative construction}
\end{align*}

This study will only deal with full presentatives, in which a placeholder, such as English *there* or Swedish *det*, appears. As Ebeling shows, there are functional differences between the constructions that are interesting but that must be left out of consideration in this study which only includes examples with an impersonal *det*.

A typical example of the Swedish presentative with its translations is shown in (10). Swedish uses the impersonal *det* as a placeholder in the subject slot. The most frequently used verb in Swedish presentatives is *finnas*, the passive form of *finna* ‘find’ formed by the addition of an –*s*. The presented NP follows the verb, after which follows an indication of the location (Place). In this example, the presented NP appears in the slot where the inverted subject typically appears, after the first verb. When there is a sequence of verbs, however, the presented NP appears after

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the last verb, which is the typical object slot (det måste finnas citroner i kylskåpet ‘there must be lemons in the fridge’).

(10) a Det finns citroner i kylskåpet. KE det + V + NP + Place
    b There are lemons in the fridge. there + V + NP + Place
    c Im Kühlschrank sind noch Zitronen. Place + V + NP
    d Il y a des citrons dans le frigo. Pro + there + has + NP + Place
    e Jääkaapissa on sitruunoita. Place + V + NP

In the German and Finnish translations, the Place appears in initial position. This is the dominant translation in Finnish and a frequent alternative in German to the use of the construction es gibt (see below). The primary discourse function of the presentative is to introduce a new referent and this is achieved by moving the presented NP out of the initial subject slot to a later position in the clause. In languages without formal subjects, preposing of Place is a frequently used strategy. The French translation contains the construction il y a in which il ‘he’ appears as a formal subject followed by an obligatory spatial element y ‘there’ and a form of the verb avoir ‘have’, which appears in various inflected forms. For simplicity, the construction will be referred to as il y a with the verb in the third person present form. The presented NP typically (there are some exceptions) refers to an unknown referent and typically appears in indefinite form in Swedish, English, and German, whereas the partitive form plays an important role in French and Finnish when the noun is a mass noun or plural (French de + definite article, Finnish partitive case). Verb agreement is another morphological feature which sometimes follows specific rules, but morphology will not be accounted for systematically in this short expository study.

In Swedish, other verbs than finnas appear relatively frequently in presentative constructions. Among them are the postural verbs sitta ‘sit’, stå ‘stand’, and ligga ‘lie’ as in (11). The use of alternative verbs is clearly less frequent in the other MPC languages except German. (11) is representative of this tendency

(11) a Det ligger en databutik precis intill. HM [it lies a computer shop]
    b There’s a computer shop right next door.
    c Gleich nebenan liegt ein Computeraladen.
    d Il y a un magasin d’informatique juste à côté.
    e Ihana vieressä on tietokoneliike.

In English and French, there is a strong tendency to use the more or less grammaticalized phrases there is and il y a as translations in most cases. Another possibility is to use other types of translations than presentatives, as in (12), where the verb is komma ‘come’ in the Swedish original. English in this case uses the basic word order S + V with an ordinary subject in indefinite form.

(12) a Det hade kommit personal från Östersund. Rättsmedicinare också. KE Det + V + NP + Place
    b More police had come from Östersund. The forensic squad, too. S + V
    c Aus Ostersund war Personal eingetroffen. Auch Rechtsmediziner. Place + V + NP
The various syntactical forms used as translations are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Major syntactical structures used as translations of the Swedish full presentative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentative with formal subject</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place + V + NP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>76*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + V</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial V</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>255</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cases/Unclear</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 20 of these are: da+ V

As can be observed, initialization of the Place is the major strategy in Finnish and is relatively frequent in German as well, even if the use of a formal subject is the most frequent strategy, similar to Swedish, English, and French where this is the dominant strategy. Actually, the two strategies can be combined but that happens only in a minority of the cases. (Examples with formal subject and preposed Place have been included only as the first category in the count which is a simplification.) According to Clark’s (1978) typological study, preposing of Place is the dominant strategy across languages. Interestingly, Clark counts the use of English *there* and French *il* as a special case of this strategy with pronominalized place. The use of a spatial prefix in the subject slot of many Bantu languages could be added to this observation. The use of Swedish *det*, German *es*, and French *il* does not play any role in Clark’s typology. As shown in Hammarberg & Viberg (1977), the use of such subject placeholders is an areally very restricted language-specific phenomenon. When used in preverbal position, such placeholders fulfil the same function as the preposing of Place, namely to move the presented NP from an initial position to a position later in the clause in order to avoid introducing new referents in initial position.

In presentatives, there is a general tendency to favour one verb but this tendency is stronger in some of the languages. In (13), the most favoured verb appears in all the MPC languages. In this example, the Place is implicit but has been mentioned in the preceding discourse (a cabin). In Finnish, a spatial element (*siinä ‘there’*) appears in initial position for structural reasons (Place + V + NP)

(13) a Det *fårns* bara ett fönster. KE
    b *There was* only one window.
    c *Es gab* nur ein Fenster.
    d *Il n’y avait* qu’une fenêtre.
    e *Siinä oli* vain yksi ikkuna.
The degree to which one verb dominates in the translations is demonstrated in Table 4 (line one is repeated from Table 3).

Table 4. The use of the most frequent verb in its characteristic syntactic construction in the translations of the Swedish full presentative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentative with formal subject</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of core presentatives</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there is</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il y a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place + olla &quot;be&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A complete list of all the verbs that appear in the five Swedish originals from the MPC corpus is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The frequency of the verbs used in Swedish full presentatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>290</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finnas 'be found'</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vara 'be'</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bli 'become'</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>komma 'come'</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stå 'stand'</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ligga 'lie'</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hända 'happen'</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitta 'sit'</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gå 'go'</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inträffa 'happen'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>växa 'grow'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 occurrence each (10 types):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hänga, uppstå, löpa, växa, svara, vara fullt med, fastna, räcka, krävas, lösöra sig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Clark’s (1978) typological study, the major presentative verb tended to be identical to the copula. (There are a few examples, with ‘have’ in European languages, ‘be found’ in Arabic, and ‘stand’ in Gbeya). Ebeling (2000), who compared the verbs in English and Norwegian full presentatives, found only 8 English verbs including be but 229 different Norwegian verbs. The dominance of one verb was also greatest in English where be accounted for 98.4%, although the core verbs of Norwegian full presentatives, være, finnes, and bli, reached 64.6%. (The cognate Swedish verbs together reach 76% in Table 5.)

Presentative sentences state that something is present or exists in a specific location and usually contain a reference to a specified Place (at least implicitly, see the comments to example 13). In English and French, this is reflected in the presence of the grammatical spatial markers there and y. A special type of presentatives, referred to as pure existentials, state that something exists in general. In Finnish, pure exis-
tentials typically require – as in (14e) – a general indication of place (*olla olemassa* ‘be in the being’; *ole-ma-ssa* ‘be’-Third infinitive-Inessive)

(14) a Sedan *fanns det något som hette fallna änglar; PCJ*
b Then *there was something called fallen angels;*
c Dann *gab es auch noch gefallene Engel;*
d Et puis *il y avait* ceux qu’on appelait les anges déchus.
e Sitten *oli olemassa* langenneita enkeleitä.

One particular problem that will only be touched on here, but that deserves more detailed treatment is the presentation of abstract NPs, which have been treated together with concrete NPs above. The presentation of nominalized events, as in (15), can be translated with restructurings where the nominalized verb appears in passive form. (Literally, the Swedish presentative reads: ‘it had been (a) burglary in the house’.)

(15) a - Fick du ett intryck av att *det hade varit inbrott* i huset? HM
b “Did you get the impression *the house had been broken into*?”
c “Hatten Sie den Eindruck, daß *im Haus eingebrochen worden ist*?”
d - Avez-vous eu le sentiment que *la maison à été cambriolée*?
e - Saitko sen vaikutelman, että *talo on murtauduttu*?

The status of the Finnish passive construction – or constructions – has been much discussed (see Helasvuo 2006). In this particular example, the passive lacks a subject, since *talo* ‘house’ is in the illative case. German also uses an impersonal passive in this example.

To sum up, similar to the cleft construction, the presentative is a kind of focusing device. In its most basic function, it stands in a derivational relationship to a corresponding locative sentence (*The book is on the table* ⇒ *There is a book on the table.* But this does not hold when the presented NP is abstract.) From a functional point of view it is often characterized as a device to introduce a new referent. This is a rather vague characterization since new referents are frequently introduced without using a presentative. Hetzron’s (1975) characterization is more precise when he talks about “the existence of a presentative function in language which means calling special attention to one element of the sentence for recall in the subsequent discourse or situation.” (op. cit. p. 374). According to Hetzron, the most important way to signal this across languages is to move the presented element to a clause-final or later-than-usual position. The presentative clause lacks a canonical subject. Even if the presented element is regarded as a kind of subject (which is questionable) it lacks (or is very low in) agentivity, but it often has specific reference, so the presentative could be regarded as a kind of agentless impersonal even though the major function of the presentative is related to information structure rather than agentivity. A prototypical subject is the topic of its sentence and presents old information, whereas the presented element is rhematic and presents new information. The fact that there is a strong tendency in many languages to use a single verb in presentative constructions can be regarded as emergent grammaticalization.
4. Extraposition

4.1 Introduction

Subjects realized as finite or non-finite clauses are often extraposed in Swedish and are placed after verbs and other predicates. In such constructions, det obligatorily appears in the ordinary subject slot. Extraposed constructions of this type exist in all the MPC languages as exemplified with the extraposed non-finite infinitive complements in (16). Finnish does not use any dummy ‘it’ or any infinitive marker in the form of a particle.

(16) a det var viktigt att någon gång få i sig varm mat. PCJ
b it was important to get some hot food into you occasionally.
c es war wichtig, auch mal was Warmes zu essen.
d c'était important de manger chaud de temps en temps.
e olihan tärkeää saada välillä lämmintäkin ruokaa. [was important get]

Even if extraposed constructions of this type exist in all the MPC languages, it is rather often the case that the translations are radically restructured, as in several of the translations in example (17) which shows a finite extraposed clause in Swedish. Only English uses a parallel structure in the translation, in spite of the fact that all of the languages have parallel constructions in principle (except that there is no dummy subject in Finnish). What structure is chosen depends very much on the individual predicate, and these predicates often also appear in other types of impersonal constructions. For that reason, extraposed finite clauses will be treated in connection with the study of impersonal predicates in section 7, in which the presentation is organized according to semantic fields.

(17) a Det slog honom att hon visste allting om honom. KE [it struck him that-S]
b It struck him that she knew everything about him.
c Ihm ging durch den Kopf, daß sie alles über ihn wußte. [him-Dative went through the head that-S].
d L’idée le frappa qu’elle savait tout de lui. Presque tout, en tout cas. [the idea struck him that-S]
e Johan tajusi että Gudrun tiesi hänestä kaiken. [Johan realized that-S]

The extraposition of non-finite clauses in the form of infinitives with an explicit infinitive marker att is primarily used in a restricted number of semantic fields. For that reason, it is meaningful to treat them together, as will be done in the rest of section 4.

4.2 Svårt ‘difficult’

In constructions with extraposed indefinite complements, the predicate very often is an adjective which appears in the neuter form ending in –t. One of the most frequent such adjectives is svår ‘difficult’ with the neuter form svärt. When used as a predicational adjective, svår expresses a judgment by the speaker concerning the degree of difficulty of carrying out a certain act. Several structural possibilities to express this judgment are shown in (18a) – (18d). The judgment can optionally be made with respect to a specific potential actor which is expressed in a PP with the preposi-
tion för, which primarily marks an Experiencer (or Interested party). In (18d), the Experiencer appears in the ordinary subject position.

(18)  

a  Att öppna dörren var svårt (för Ann).  
   To open the door was difficult (for Ann)

b  Det var svårt (för Ann) att öppna dörren.  
   It was difficult (for Ann) to open the door.

c  Dörren var svår (för Ann) att öppna.  
   The door was difficult (for Ann) to open.

d  Ann hade svårt att öppna dörren.  
   Ann found it (lit. ‘had’) difficult to open the door.

In (18a), the infinitive phrase appears in the ordinary subject slot. (18b) is the extrapoed construction with an impersonal det in the subject slot, and (18c) shows the structure called object-to-subject-raising in transformationally inspired terminology. In this construction, the adjective agrees with the subject. (dörr ‘door’ is common gender, and the adjective appears in its basic form svår without –t). All of these are in principle impersonal constructions in which the (potential) agent may remain vague or general unless it is specified in a for-Phrase. (18d) is a personal construction referring to a specific potential agent. There are several examples of each one of these structures in the five MPC texts except (18a) where the to-infinitive is in the ordinary subject slot. This option has a low frequency and appears primarily in non-fiction.

As can be observed in (19a–e) the extrapoed structure has close equivalents in English and German, and also in Finnish, except that this language does not use a dummy ‘it’. In this regard French, as in most examples in the MPC corpus studied so far, prefers a personal construction, as in the Swedish example (18d). (The expression ‘have difficulty’ in the literal back translations to English correspond to avoir ‘have’ + du (the partitive article de + le) + mal ‘bad’.)

(19)  

a  Det var svårt att veta hur djup brunnen var. KE  
   It was difficult to know how deep the well was.

b  Es war schwer abzuschätzen, wie tief der Brunnen war. [it was difficult to]

c  Il avait du mal à juger de la profondeur du puits. [he had difficulty to judge]

d  Oli vaikea sanoa kuinka syvä kaivo oli. [was difficult say-1stInfinitive]

e  Even if only the extrapoed structure with a dummy ‘it’ belongs to the impersonal constructions studied in this paper, it is essential to look at all alternatives since different alternatives may be favoured as translations, as in the French example (19d). French also prefers a personal construction when translating the Swedish object-to-subject-raised structure in (20). Swedish, English, and German use completely parallel structures in this example, and the same applies to Finnish, except that Finnish does not have any particle as infinitive marker.

(20)  

a  Den vita fågeln är svår att se på avstånd, MA  
   The white bird is difficult to see from a distance,

b  Der weiße Vogel ist auf die Entfernung hin schwer auszumachen,

c  A cette distance, on a du mal à discerner l’oiseau blanc [one has difficulty to]

d  e  Valkeaa lintua on vaikea erottaa matkan päästä,
The personal construction is used also in Swedish and has a direct counterpart also in German in addition to French as can be observed in (21a-e).

(21)  

a  Hon **hade svårt att** uttala namnet KE  

b  She **found it difficult to** pronounce the name  

c  Sie **hatte Mühe**, den Namen auszusprechen,  

d  Elle **eut du mal à** prononcer le nom  

e  Hänen oli **väikea** lausa nimeä  
  [He/she-GEN was difficult pronounce name-Partitive]

English has a personal construction but can not use *have* + *difficult*. Instead, *find it difficult* is used, as in (21b). Other alternatives, that all appear with some frequency in the English originals in the English-Swedish Parallel corpus are: *have difficulty/trouble/a hard time V-ing* (Example: I sometimes *have trouble believing* in it, MA Ibland *har* jag **svårt att** tro på det.)

4.3 General survey of predicates with extraposed infinitive clauses

The majority of the predicates that appear in the *det _ att-VP inf* construction fall into a restricted number of semantic classes. These classes are rather similar to the ones found in English, which are well described in Biber et al. (1999, 720–721). According to that source, there are three major semantic classes of adjectival predicates that take extraposed to-clauses in English: (1) Necessity and importance, (2) Ease and difficulty, and (3) Evaluation. In particular, three adjectival predicates are relatively common in this construction and appear more than ten times per million words in the corpus on which the description is based. These are *(im)possible, difficult,* and *hard.* The classification of Swedish predicates in Table 6 includes both adjectives and verbs that take extraposed infinitive clauses. The classification of adjectival predicates differs from that of Biber et al. in some respects. Necessity is combined with Possibility to form the class Modal. Evaluation similar to that done by Biber et al. includes both more or less pure evaluative word such as *bra* ‘good’ and words with a more specific meaning of which evaluation is a prominent part. If the number of texts is extended it may be meaningful to introduce further semantic classes to cover distinctions among the latter type of adjectives. For the time being, even *viktigt* ‘important’ is included in Evaluation. The lists of adjectives and verbs are not complete even for the five texts studied so far.

Table 6. Predicates with extraposed infinitive clauses in Swedish in the five MPC texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Class</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Adjectives (selection)</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease and Difficulty</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>svårt ‘difficult’, lätt ‘easy’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>bra ‘good’, trevligt ‘nice’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal: Possibility &amp; Necessity</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(o)möjligt <em>(im)possible</em> nödvändigt ‘necessary’</td>
<td>gå ‘go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal duration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>ta ‘take’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples with other predicates taking to-infinitive complements will be treated briefly here without going into translation patterns. Use of a modal adjective is shown in (22).

(22) a Var det överhuvudtaget nödvändigt att gifta sig? HM
    b Was it even necessary to be married?

Possibility can be expressed by the use of gå ‘go’ with a to-infinitive complement as in (23). This construction has a language-specific meaning and a complex set of translations which are described in some detail in Viberg (1999, forthc.).

(23) a Det gick att bända upp spikarna som höll det gångjärnslösa kammarfönstret på plats. KE [it went to ease out the nails]
    b It was possible to ease out the nails that held the hingeless bedroom window in place.

Another impersonal construction which has a relatively direct correspondent in English is the use of ta ‘take’ to express temporal duration as in (24). This construction is described in Viberg (2010).

(24) a Det tog över en timme för Vidart att mjölka. KE [it took ... an hour for Vidart to V]
    b It took Vidart an hour to do the milking.

To sum up, similar to clefting and presentation, extraposition can be related to information structure, since there is a derivational relationship between sentences such as To open the door was difficult ⇐ It was difficult to open the door. Extraposition can be regarded as a device that moves new and syntactically complex information out of the initial position and towards the end of the clause. On the other hand, the types of predicates that appear in clauses with extraposition usually do not contain a prototypical agent in their argument structure but rather an experiencer or other non-prototypical human proto-role if any. This means that similar to sentences containing impersonal verbs (and other predicates) of the types that will be discussed in section 7, agentivity is low in sentences with extraposition.

5. Non-specific agent impersonals in Swedish. The man-construction
5.1 Vague agents and agents with general reference in Swedish

As mentioned in the introduction, Swedish has a specific pronoun man (an uninflected form of the noun man ‘man, male human being’) which prototypically is used to refer to ‘people in general’ and is similar to German man, English one and French on. There is a continuum from generalized reference, which potentially includes any human being, to vague reference to certain groups of people who are not exactly identified. Such reference can be made with a variety of forms with partly overlapping functions, both within and between languages. Several of these possibilities are exemplified in (25).

(25) a Träkigt bara att de skulle sjunga och spela så mycket på en del teatrar, så att man inte hörde vad som sas. PCJ
Starting with the English example (25b), the third person plural pronoun *they* is used with a vague reference to actors appearing in some theatres. Corresponding elements are used in Swedish (*de*), whereas German and Finnish use agentless passives. *You* in (1b) refers to anyone in the audience in theatres of the type being discussed. The ‘generalized pronoun’ is used in Swedish (*man*), German (*man*), and French (*on*). The reason *one* is not used in English is that *one* is rather formal (see below). In Finnish, the same function is fulfilled with the “Zero person”. The verb is used in the third person singular without any subject pronoun, which is obligatory in order to refer to a specific referent when the verb is in the third person singular. (First and second person pronouns are in principle optional.) Unlike the vague ‘they’, the *man*-construction involves the addressee and the speaker in the situation referred to. Potentially, or in the imagination, they are part of the audience but not of the acting troupe. A similar contrast is present in Finnish. According to Helasvuo & Vilkuna (2008, 228), the zero person typically refers to one of the speech act participants, whereas the passive can either include or exclude the speech act participants. In the last clause of (25b), *what was said*, the actors are understood as vague agents. In this case, an agentless passive is used in Swedish (*sas*), English, and Finnish (*sanottiin*), whereas third person plural pronouns are used in German (*sie*) and French (*ils*). Separate sections will be devoted below to *man* and to the passive. The use of third person plural pronouns with a vague reference will be treated only briefly in this paper.

5.2 Siewierska’s typology of non-specific agent impersonals
Siewierska (2008b) presents a typological survey of non-specific agent impersonals. Table 7 presents her taxonomy in graphic form.

Pronominal impersonals cover the third person plurals (3PL) appearing as free forms in the preceding section as well as bound agreement markers. A distinction is made between pronominal impersonals and verbal impersonals, such as agentless passives (see section 6), reflexive impersonals such as the Portuguese *se*-construction, and participle impersonals appearing in Polish. Siewierska focuses on the referential range of these impersonal constructions and her major contention is that 3PL pronominal impersonals are more referentially restricted than verbal impersonals.

5.3 The *man*-construction
From a typological perspective, person markers used to refer to people in general are briefly surveyed in Siewierska (2004, 210–213) and are referred to as impersonal
forms. When such forms are distinct from ordinary person forms, they are personal only in the sense that they refer to persons (i.e. humans). Siewierska focuses on the impersonal use of ordinary person forms and states that the third person plural is the form that crosslinguistically is most common in this use.

Giacalone Ramat & Sansò (2007) treat the *man*-construction from the point of view of an areal typology of European languages. The *man*-construction is defined as “an impersonal active construction in which the subject position is filled by (an element deriving etymologically from) a noun meaning ‘man’.” Three different meanings are distinguished which form a grammaticalization path (see Table 8) and range from “a species-generic interpretation (*man* meaning ‘mankind’ or ‘human race’) to a non-referential indefinite interpretation (*man* as an equivalent of ‘one’, ‘anyone’), and finally to a referential indefinite interpretation (*man* as an equivalent of ‘someone’).” In some languages, ‘man’ has developed further and can refer to first person singular (as in Swedish, see below) or first person plural (as French *on*).

Table 7. Non-specific agent impersonals according to Siewierska (2008b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-specific agent impersonals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronominal impersonals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal impersonals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agentless passives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive impersonals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participle Impersonals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person plural (3PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bound forms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. The grammaticalization path of the *man*-construction (based on Giacalone-Ramat & Sansò 2007)

(1) *man* as species-generic
(2) *man* as human non-referential indefinite
(3) *man* as human referential indefinite
(4) 1st person singular/plural

From an areal point of view, the *man*-construction is regarded as a recessive areal...
feature, since its distribution included more languages earlier, in particular some more Germanic and Romance languages than today. In English, the use of *man* as an indefinite pronoun disappeared in the 15th century. More recently, the construction has expanded into West and South Slavonic languages, whereas no clear case has been found in East Slavonic.

There are also corpus-based contrastive studies. The ‘generic’ person in English, German, and Norwegian is devoted a chapter in Johansson (2007) based on data from the Oslo multilingual corpus, and the ‘generic’ person in Swedish and English has been studied by Altenberg (2004/2005) based on data from the English-Swedish Parallel corpus. What these studies show is that there is a complex relationship, in particular between English and the other Germanic languages involved. Translations of *man* into English result not only in change of pronoun (*one*/*you*/*they*) but also in syntactic shifts and clause reduction. These studies will be further commented on in relation to the discussion of translations into English and German in the MPC-corpus.

5.4 Swedish *man*. Data from the MPC corpus

Similar to its cognates, Swedish *man* is used only as a subject. As an object, *en* ‘one’ is used as in (26) from Viberg et al. (1984 §5.3), and in certain regional variants of Swedish *en* is used instead of *man* also in subject position.

(26) a Ingen gillar *en*, om *man* skryter.
   b No one likes *you*, if *you* boast.

A typical example from the MPC corpus where *man* refers to people in general is (27). In this example, the most frequent correspondent is used as a translation in all the other languages (see below).

(27) a - Kan *man* köra dit? KE
   b ‘Can *you* take a car up there?’
   c “Kann *man* da hinfahren?”
   d *On* peut y aller en voiture?
   e - Pääseekö sinne ajamaan? [Zero person]

Since in the prototypical case *man* refers to people in general, it often, as in (27), appears in modal contexts and refers to potential and other irrealis situations, and not to specific factual situations. This is reflected in its typical linguistic contexts of use.

As can be observed in Table 9, *man* occurs together with a modal in 40% of the examples, and also frequently appears in a conditional or temporal clause.

Table 9. Typical contexts of use of Swedish *man* in the MPC corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modal:</th>
<th>Potential</th>
<th>Deontic</th>
<th>Modal:</th>
<th>Conditional clause</th>
<th>Temporal clause</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (27), the most frequent equivalent in the other languages is used. The extent to
which the major correspondent is used varies greatly across the MPC languages as demonstrated in Table 10.

Table 10. Correspondents of the Swedish pronoun *man* in the MPC corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>man</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>Zero-Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correspondence is lowest in English. To begin with, the pronoun *one*, which appears to be the most direct equivalent, is used with very low frequency. The reason for this is that *one* is rather formal (see below). In the German translations, *man* is clearly dominant and covers 86% of the translations. French *on* covers 57% and the Finnish “Zero person” 51%.

It should be kept in mind that the comparison is based exclusively on translations from Swedish into the other languages, which influences the result. This also applies to other cases treated in this paper, but it will be discussed here, since there is a study which is relevant in this particular context. Altenberg (2004/2005), who based his study of Swedish *man* on the English-Swedish parallel corpus, compared originals and translations. *One* in the English originals was in general translated with *man*, which appears unproblematic. However, *one* was more frequent in English translated texts than in English originals, whereas the opposite pattern applied to *man*, which was less frequent in translated texts. This means that translated texts are influenced by the source language. In the material from MPC presented here, *one* can hardly be overrepresented since it appears only four times, but it is possible that *you* has a higher frequency in the translated English texts than it would have in similar original texts. In spite of this caveat, there is no reason to doubt that the differences shown in Table 10 represent the general trend. It would also be possible to complement the present study with data from originals in the other MPC languages to make the comparison more exact.

Translation often involves syntactic restructuring. This is also clearly demonstrated in the study by Altenberg (2004/2005) who compared fiction and non-fiction texts. In fiction, 68% of the translations of Swedish *man* were congruent in the sense that they contained a pronoun (*you, one, they, we*), whereas only 38% of the translations were congruent in non-fiction texts. Non-fiction contained a larger proportion of syntactic shifts and reduced clauses (53% vs. 26% for fiction). Even if the present study is only based on fiction texts, there are many examples of syntactic restructuring. Passivization is one possibility, as in (28). In this example, Swedish has a topicalized initial object. In English and French, the same element is topicalized as the subject of an agentless passive. In this example Finnish translates *man* with a personal pronoun *hän* ‘he/she’ derived from context in a way that involves a subtle shift of meaning.
Another type of restructuring involves reduction of a finite clause to a non-finite clause or a nominalization. In (29), infinitives are used in the English and German translations.

In (30), there is one more example of passivization in the English translation. In the French translation, an impersonal modal with a dummy subject is used, which is a relatively frequent French translation (primarily il faut ‘it is=required’ but also other alternatives such as c’est possible ‘it is possible’).

A further possibility is to use an imperative, as in the English translation in (31b).

Swedish man can also be used in colloquial style to refer to first person singular, as in the example (32) taken from a dialogue in one of the novels.

According to Altenberg (2004/2005), the use of English one with reference to the speaker “is likely to sound pretentious and affected” and “is a (frequently satirized) feature of Royal and upper-class speech” (op. cit. pp. 94–95). This is not the effect the use of man with first person reference has in Swedish. It rather is used to signal solidarity (among people who use it with first person reference). It can also be used to decrease intrusiveness as when it is used to tone down a request as in (33).
In (33), English, German, and French translate using a personal construction as translation, whereas the Finnish translation gives an example of the colloquial use of *sitä* 'it' as an impersonal subject. According too Hakulinen (1975, 152) *sitä* can be used to express indirect statements about the speaker in sentences which basically have a generic meaning. Functionally, this is a close parallel to the uses of Swedish *man*. (The verb is in the zero-marked third person singular: *sa(a)-isi-ko* 'get'+Conditional+Question.)

The difference between general and first person reference can often be subtle. Swedish *man* can be used with a general reference, when the speaker primarily refers to him/herself, as in example (34) where the speaker wants to communicate that anyone in his situation (including the listener) would experience the same thing. (A more literal translation of the first clause is: *When you deliver oil as I do*). The use of *you* with a general reference in the English translation places the listener and people in general in the speaker’s situation and in this way includes the listener in the reference despite the listener actually being excluded. (The listener does not deliver oil.)

5.5 Vague *de* ‘they’ in comparison to *man*

Vague *de* ‘they’ has not been systematically studied in the Swedish texts but it is obvious that a similar range of constructions are available as translations in this case as in the case of *man*. In (35), the English translation contains a zero-marked shift in transitivity (the English verb *change* can be used both as a transitive and an intransitive verb whereas *ändra* only can be used transitively and must be used with the passive form *ändras* in order to shift subject.) In the German and Finnish translations the verb is passivized. Only the French translation contains a vague third person pronoun as subject (*ils*).

The use of vague *de* ‘they’ excludes the speaker and listener from the reference. It should be noted that *man* can also be used when the speaker and listener are not included, as in (36).
In (36), the speaker and listener are not involved in the action, even in the imagination. On the other hand, this appears to be the case in (37). The use of *man* implies that the speaker imagines being part of the portrayed situation and invites the listener to experience the situation in the same way, whereas the use of *de* ‘they’ instead of *man* in this example would indicate a completely neutral report.

(36) a Bilar körde upp också vid Föreningshuset och instrumenten skorrade och dunkade därifrån när *man* prövade högtalaranläggningen. KE
   b Cars were also drawing up at the community centre and the instruments were rasping and thumping inside as they sound checked.
   c /---/ als *man* die Verstärkeranlage testete.
   d /---/ tandis qu’*on* réglait la sono.
   e /---/ kun vahvistinlaitteita *kokeiltiin*. [Verb in passive form]

(37) a Det hände när *man* blev mycket rädd. I skyttegravar. KE
   b It happened when you were really frightened. Shit-scared. In the trenches.
   c So etwas passierte, wenn *man* große Angst bekam. In Schützengräben.
   d Ça se passait quand *on* avait très peur. Dans les tranchées.
   e Näin kävi kun pelästyi oikein pahasti. Ampumahauoisissa. [Zero person]

To sum up, the *man*-construction is the main way to express referential impersonality in Swedish. Basically it expresses a reference to people in general but can also be used with vague reference. In certain stylistically marked contexts, it can be used to refer to first person singular. The 3PL pronoun *de* (colloquial *dom*) can be used with vague reference but is not used when the speaker or hearer is included in the set of referents.

6. The impersonal passive in Swedish

*Man* can in principle appear as a subject of all types of verbs. The passive is an operation centred on the verb and is more sensitive to the meaning of the verb. The function of the passive can be regarded as successive steps of agent defocusing ending up in a construction without any overt agent and the introduction of a vague or generic agent at the semantic level similar to the *man*-construction. As could be observed in the previous section, various types of passives are frequently used as translations of Swedish *man*. This section will give a brief overview of passive constructions in Swedish with a special focus on impersonal passives with *det* as subject.

6.1 From passive to *man*-construction
Passives are not in general to be regarded as impersonal constructions but there is a continuum from passives with an explicit and fully referential agent to ones with an impersonal agent, as described by Sansò (2006) in the cline of agent defocusing shown in Table 11.

Swedish has two passives, one of which is a morphological passive formed with the suffix *-s* (historically a reduced form of the reflexive pronoun *sig*), which must be regarded as the most basic alternative in Swedish (see 38a). The other option is a
periphrastic passive formed with the verb *bli* `become’ in combination with the past participle of the main verb (see 38b).

(38) a Presidenten mörda. 
    president-the murder-PAST-PASSIVE 
    The president was murdered.

b Presidenten blev mörđad. 
    became murder-PAST PARTICIPLE

Even when there is an explicit agent in a passive, which is often not the case, the event is presented from the point of view of the patient, as in the Swedish example (39), where the patient is topical.

(39) a Men anmälan finns här. Och den gjordes av Holger Eriksson. HM 
    But the report is here. And it was made by Holger Eriksson.

The functions of the Swedish passives have been studied by Engdahl (2001), who compares Swedish with the other mainland Scandinavian languages. Interestingly, Danish and Norwegian have the same two forms of the passive, but despite the fact that similar forms are used in the three mainland Scandinavian languages, there are systematic differences in the choice of the passive, especially between Swedish on the one hand, and Danish and Norwegian on the other, the latter being more similar to one another. Engdahl (2001) presents a corpus-based study which shows that the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Situation type</th>
<th>Formal device</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent less discourse-central than the patient</td>
<td><strong>Patient-oriented process:</strong> the state of affairs is represented from the point of view of the patient</td>
<td>Periphrastic constructions (agent expressed as an oblique), medial diathesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent easily recoverable from the context; patient highly topical</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agentless periphrastic constructions; medial diathesis; (middle constructions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent de-emphasized, irrelevant; Patient not particularly topical</td>
<td><strong>Bare happening:</strong> The event is conceptualized as a naked fact, in summary fashion</td>
<td>Periphrastic passives; medial diathesis; impersonal passives; Middle constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent not specified but identifiable as a subgroup of humanity; patient not particularly topical (&quot;Vague agent&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle constructions; man-clauses; vague <em>they</em> constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent representing virtually all humanity; patient not particularly topical (&quot;Impersonal agent&quot;)</td>
<td><strong>Agentless generic event:</strong> The action/event is irrealis</td>
<td>Middle constructions; man-clauses; vague <em>you</em> constructions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. A cline of agent defocusing (Sansò 2006)
choice is influenced by a complex set of factors having to do with the context of situation, morphological and syntactic factors, semantic properties of the verb, as well as the idiosyncratic lexical characteristics of individual verbs. For example, in Danish and Norwegian, the s-passive is productive primarily in the present tense and the infinitive, whereas the bli-passive can be used in all tenses. In Swedish, there are no restrictions on either type of passive with respect to tense but there are lexical restrictions on the bli-passive, which is not used at all with certain verbs. In Danish and Norwegian, the s-passive is used primarily to express a general norm or similar generic meanings (Sansò: agentless generic event), which explains why it cannot be used in the Danish example (40a) which describes a specific event. A specific event requires a periphrastic passive as in (40b).

(40) a *Vi så vinduet åbnes. We saw the.window open-PASSIVE
b Vi så vinduet blive åbnet. We saw the.window become open

In Swedish, the context determines the interpretation to a great extent. When used on a sign, the s-passive is interpreted as a rule, as in Dörren öppnas utåt ‘The door should be opened outwards’ (Sansò: agentless generic event), whereas it can also be interpreted as a specific event if the context is appropriate, as in Vi såg fönstret öppnas ‘We saw the window being opened’.

6.2 Non-specific agent impersonal passives with det in Swedish

Only impersonal passives with det ‘it’ will be looked at in any detail in this study. Such passives can be formed from both intransitive verbs (see below) and transitive verbs as in (41).

(41) a Rop och röster forplantade sig genom luften; någonstans spelades badminton, någon annanstans sköts det krocketbollar mot sköra metallportar. MF
b Calls and voices spread through the air; somewhere badminton was being played, croquet balls were being hit against fragile metal hoops somewhere else.
c Stimmen und Rufe pflanzten sich durch die klare Luft fort, irgendwo wurde Badminton gespielt, woanders wurden Krocketkugeln gegen wacklige Metalltore geschossen.
d Les cris et les voix résonnaient dans l’air tiède ; une partie de badminton était en cours quelque part, ailleurs des boules de croquet heurtaient de fragiles arceaux en métal.
e Ilman halki kantautui huutoja ja ääniä; jossakin pelattiin sulkapalloa, jossakin muualla paukuteltiin krokettipalloja rautalankaportteja kohti.

From a functional perspective, (41) is a clear example of what Sansò refers to as a bare happening, which is characterized in the following way: “The label bare happening is taken to mean a conceptualisation of the event depicted by the verb as a naked fact, at the lowest level of elaboration. The arguments of a prototypical transitive clause represent distinct, clearly individuated participants that are sharply differentiated from one another and from other entities that could virtually participate in the event. When the event is conceptualised as a bare happening, none of the par-
participants is focused: as a result, the event too is characterised by low salience.” (Sän-
sò 2006, 240–241)

The impersonal passive can also be used to refer to a vague agent as in (42). Even
if the implied agent has a very general reference, this is not a generic agentless event
in Sansò’s sense, since the event is realis and bound to a certain time and place.
(Even if the boundaries are vague, the sentence does not apply to any time and
place.) In examples of this type, the impersonal passive has more or less the same
function as the man construction or the 3PL personal pronoun de, which could also
have been used in the example.

(42)  a Det pratades om Torsten och Vidart KE  b There would be much talk about Torsten and Vidart
c Es wurde über Torsten und Vidart getratscht. [it was spoken]  d On jasait sur Torsten et Vidart [one talked]
e Ihmiset puhuvat Torstenista ja Vidartista [people talked]

In principle, the impersonal passive is fully productive, but in terms of frequency a
restricted number of more or less lexicalized impersonal passives dominate. Verbal
communication verbs form a prominent group among these. In addition to (42), this
is illustrated in (43), which contains the lexicalized impersonal passive det ryktas ‘it
is rumoured’ (rykta does not exist as an active verb).

(43)  a Det ryktades att hon i sin ungdom varit dansare CL  b It was rumoured that in her youth she'd been a dancer,
c On disait que dans sa jeunesse elle avait été danseuse [one said]  d Es ging das Gerücht, daß sie in ihrer Jugend Tänzerin gewesen war
e Huhujen mukaan hän oli tanssinut nuorena

The nuclear communication verb säga can also be used as an impersonal passive (det
sågs ‘it is said’) and in this use it functions as a reportative evidential marker (see
Viberg, in progress). The coinage of a new impersonal verb is exemplified in (44),
which is formed from an expression like (säga) god jul ‘(say) Merry Christmas’ (‘it is
Merry Christmassed’). Various types of paraphrases are used as translations.

(44)  a Ska det börja godjulas redan? LM  b Is this ‘Merry Christmassing’ business starting already?
c Geht es jetzt schon los mit den Weihnachtsgrusen?  d Faut-il vraiment déjà commencer à se souhaiter un joyeux Noël?
e Joko hyvänjouluntoivotukset alkavat?

Certain lexicalized impersonal passives represent an early stage of grammaticalization.
The verb kräva ‘demand’ can be used in an impersonal passive form with a
modal meaning (obligation) as in (45). In this case, there is no implied human agent.
The same applies to the most frequent lexicalized passive det finns lit. it is=found,
‘there is’ (see section 2 on presentatives above).

(45)  a - Ja, det krävs ett hot. LM  b ‘Well, there has to be a threat.
c ‘Ja, eine Bedrohung ist Voraussetzung.  d - Eh bien, il faut qu’il ait une menace.
e - Siihen vaaditaan uhkaus.
As already mentioned, intransitive verbs can also be used in impersonal passives with *det*. To be precise, only active intransitive verbs (with an agent in the argument structure, also called unergatives) can be passivized in this way, since a non-specific agent must be implied. Often, such impersonal passives are used for expressive purposes and introduce a strongly evaluative element as in (46), especially when a number of passive verbs are coordinated, as in this example, which is taken from a review of a theatrical performance. What takes place on the stage is presented as a bare happening with vague agents, despite the fact that the reader would have expected the artistic performance to be described as an action carried out by highly individuated artists. The reviewer in this way signals an ironic (not to say scornful) attitude.

(46) Det märkliga händer att jag mitt under föreställningen sitter och längtar efter rörelse. Det *steg* och *springs* och *svingas* och *sträcks* i ett på scenen, så visst rör det sig, men det jag efterlyser är känslan av ett genuint språk.

“Strangely enough in the middle of the performance I find myself longing for movement. There is an endless striding and running and swinging and stretching [lit. it is stridden and run etc.] on stage, so, sure, it moves, but what I am looking for is the feeling of a genuine language.” [My translation]

A strong stylistic effect is achieved by the use of a series of coordinated impersonal passives in (47). In this example the impersonal passives describe an irrealis event (N.B. *det ska fettsugas* lit. ‘it shall be lipo-sucked’ with reference to performing liposuction) and the function approaches that of an agentless generic event, even if the situation is more restricted than in a true generic event. (In time, it is restricted to a time span close to now.) Intuitively, it seems as if the impersonal passive in general is not used to refer to generic events, however, the number of examples is too restricted to test this claim on corpus data.

(47) Lystring män – gå inte i skönhetsfällan!

Viktigt meddelande till alla män:


Nu är det er tur att grooma, peela, dutta och feja. *Det ska fettsugas, lyftas, botoxas och fyllas*. Lite syntetisk hyaluronsyra får vaderna att se mer imponerande ut på fotbollsplanen.

Attention men – Don’t fall into the beauty trap!

Important message for all men:

You are the growing beauty industry’s most desirable scalp. The wet dream of plastic surgeons. They want nothing more than to get their hands on your receding hairlines, smile lines, and budding beer bellies.

Now it’s your turn to groom, peel, dab, and scrub. You’ll be [lit. It shall be] lipo-sucked, lifted, botoxed, and filled. A little synthetic hyaluronic acid will make your calves look more impressive on the football pitch.

Functionally, the impersonal passive in Swedish is concerned with referential impersonality. There is an implied agent, except in certain uses that represent an early stage of grammaticalization (such as *det finns*, *det krävs*, see above). When the impersonal passive is used to refer to bare happenings, agentivity is also low. What is normally conceived of as human action is portrayed more like a process. The passive is generally not restricted to referential impersonality but to defocusing of the agent. In many uses of the passive, the implicit agent has specific reference, and an explicit agent with specific reference can appear as an oblique constituent (corresponding to the by-phrase in English).

7. Impersonal verbs and the structure of verbal semantic fields

In Swedish, the term ‘impersonal verb’ refers to verbs which have an impersonal, non-referential *det* in the subject slot serving primarily as a placeholder. It has already been noted in several places above that various semantic classes of verbs characteristically appear in constructions such as presentatives and impersonal passives. However, there are many impersonal verbs that do not fit into the description of the constructions discussed so far. In this section, impersonal verbs will be regarded from a lexical perspective. In syntactically oriented studies of impersonals, semantic classes of verbs are often somewhat loosely defined. In order to give a deeper semantic characterization, it is fruitful to study the impersonal verbs from a broader perspective. Often a verb can appear both in personal and impersonal constructions, and it is necessary to look at all uses of a verb in order to describe its meaning. It is also necessary to see how the meaning of an individual verb fits into the general semantic structure of a language, which can be described in terms of semantic fields. (It would be more adequate to talk about semantic fields of predicates than of verbs, since other types of predicates, such as copula + Adjectives belonging to various semantic fields, should also be included.)

This section will provide a brief sketch of a semantic field approach to impersonal verbs (and other impersonal predicates). From this perspective, all impersonal verbs should be classified into semantic fields and described with respect to the role they play within the fields to which they belong. This inevitably leads to a certain overlap with the preceding sections, but this is due to the fact that many constructions are partly productive and partly strongly lexicalized (or grammaticalized). As was shown in the section on impersonal passives, there is a cluster of verbal communication verbs that are so frequently used in this construction that it is justified to state this as a lexical fact. On the other hand, the impersonal passive is productive and can be extended to newly coined verbs (see examples 44 and 47). Since only a limited part of the corpus has been analysed so far, there is no point in trying to provide a complete list of impersonal verbs of this type. Only some representative examples will be discussed.

7.1 Verbs which do not require any argument

There are verbs, like weather verbs, that do not have any obligatory semantic argument. In Swedish, such verbs require *det* as a subject placeholder, whereas other lan-
languages such as Finnish make do with a single verb (*sataa* ‘(it) rains’). In principle, verbs and other predicates with this characteristic refer to environmental phenomena of a general type such as weather, time of day (*It was early/late*), light conditions (*It was dark*), temperature (*It is warm/cold*). This is not a complete list, but since space is limited we will look in somewhat greater detail at a small selection of relatively complex examples.

7.2 Non-prototypical agents and non-canonical subject marking

Impersonal verbs with *det* in the subject slot may be regarded as a special type of non-canonical subjects and it is interesting to make a comparison with Onishi’s (2001) survey of research on non-canonically marked subjects and objects, which pays particular attention to case marking but also discusses verbal agreement. The description is based on the assumption (Dixon 1994) that there are two universal clause types: an intransitive clause with an intransitive predicate and a single core argument referred to as S, and a transitive clause with two core arguments referred to as A and O. With respect to the cases of these arguments, there are two types of canonical marking of A, S, and O. In ergative-absolutive languages, A has ergative marking, whereas S and O are treated alike and receive absolutive marking (often zero). In nominative-accusative languages, A and S are treated alike and receive nominative marking, whereas O receives accusative marking. Non-canonically marked A/S are typically marked by cases such as Accusative, Dative, and Genitive. Of special interest for this study is the semantic classification of predicates which tend to take non-canonically marked subjects shown in Table 12.

**Table 12. Predicates which take non-canonically marked A/S (Onishi 2001)**

- **Class I**: Affected A/S: ‘be sad’, ‘have a headache’
- **Class II**: Less agentive A/S: ‘see’, ‘know’, ‘like’
- **Class III**: Modal verbs: ‘want’, ‘need’, ‘can’
- **Class IV**: Verbs expressing ‘happenings’
- **Class V**: Verbs of possession, existence, lacking

Verbs taking an impersonal *det* as subject appear to a great extent in the same semantic fields, even if the fields are not necessarily structured in a corresponding way in all languages (see perception verbs, below). Most of the verbs in Class I and II belong to the verbs of emotion, pain, and bodily perception, and to verbs of perception and cognition. The structure of these fields in Swedish is treated from a crosslinguistic perspective in Viberg (1981), and verbs belonging to these fields are also treated in Leinonen’s (1985) comparison of impersonal sentences in Finnish and Russian. To Class I, with an affected S/A, belong verbs of emotion and verbs of pain and bodily perceptions. Only a couple of illustrative examples can be given here. Physical Pain typically involves a human Experiencer, a sensation of Pain, and a Body part to which the feeling is localized. In many cases, an impersonal expression is used to describe pain in Swedish as in (48), where *göra ont* ‘hurt’ (lit. ‘do/make
(48) a Han försökte skrika igen men det gjorde ont i halsen. KE
b He tried shouting again, but that only hurt his throat.
c Er wollte wieder schreien, doch ihm tat der Hals weh.
d Il essaya de crier à nouveau mais sa gorge était douloureuse.
e Hän yritti huutaa taas mutta mutta kurkkuun koski.

All the translations are restructured with respect to the Swedish original. In the English translation a causal event appears as subject and the body part as object. In German, the Experiencer is topicalized and marked with dative case, whereas the body part is realized as subject (‘to him the throat did bad’). The body part is the subject in French, as well, where the predicate is realized as copula + Adjective (‘his throat was painful’). Finnish uses a subjectless clause (‘but throat-into touched/hurt’) with the body part in the preverbal position, which is a topic position. It should be noted that several alternative types of structure can be found in all the languages. In (49), Swedish and German have placeholder subjects, whereas the body part is grammatically realized as a subject in English and French. In Finnish, the body parts appear in the preverbal topic position with partitive case marking.

(49) a Det stack och värkte i benen och ryggen. KE
b His legs and back ached and prickled.
c Es stach und schmerzte in den Beinen und im Rücken.
d Ses jambes et son dos cuisaient et l’élanciaient.
e Jalkoja ja selkää särki ja pisteli.

Class II contains among other things a number of verbs belonging to the field of perception which will be treated separately below. Examples of modal verbs (class III) have already been mentioned (see comments to example (23) det går and to (43) det krävs). Verbs of existence and lacking (Class V) typically appear in presentative constructions. Verbs expressing happenings (Class IV) which are not controlled by an agent or are controlled by a completely defocused agent also take det as a subject. Example (50a) might be interpreted as a kind of presentation, since it is also possible to say nånting kunde också ha hänt Dan (lit. ‘something might also have happened Dan’).

(50) a Det kunde också ha hänt Dan nånting. KE
b Besides, something might have happened to Dan.
c Außerdem konnte Dan etwas passiert sein.
d Et puis, quelque chose était peut-être arrivé à Dan?
e Enfin, aussi Danille oli sattunut jotain.

In the five texts studied so far, the verb hända ‘happen’ occurs 10 times with det as subject. In total, there are 52 examples with a verb of happening. Included among
these are a number of examples with gå ‘go’ which describe the manner in which something happened as in (51a).

(51) a Ändå gick det fort. KE [yet it went quickly, with inversion]
    b Yet it all happened very quickly.
    c Trotzdem ging es schnell.
    d Ils allaient vite pourtant. ['They (sic!) went fast yet']
    e Silti mentiin aika kyytiä.

7.3 The verbs of perception
Among the verbs of perception, a distinction can be made between Experiencer-perception verbs like see and hear, which take the Experiencer as subject (Maria saw/heard Peter), and Phenomenon-based perception verbs that take the perceived Phenomenon as subject: Peter looked/sounded happy (to Maria). In Swedish, as in English, Experiencer-based verbs such as see and hear, which belong to Class II, take a canonically marked subject in spite of the fact that this subject has a non-pro-totypical, non-agentive semantic role. In several groups of languages, such arguments are realized as non-canonical subjects in the dative or another non-canonical case.

Phenomenon-based perception verbs appear in several types of constructions with a formal det as subject. In Viberg (1981, 2008), attention was drawn to the contrast in Swedish between phenomenon-based perception verbs taking a non-factive as_if-complement and another set of such verbs that take a factive sentential complement. A non-factive as_if-complement is shown in (52). (The complementizer can have the form som om, som att, or simply som in Swedish, and as if, as though, or like in English.)

(52) a Jag vet att det låter som att vi förnekar vad som hänt, CL
    b I know it sounds as if we're denying what happened,

Complements of this type can be used in all the MPC languages (except that there is no placeholder subject in Finnish.). There is also a specific set of verbs expressing potential perception in Swedish such as synas ‘be visible’, höras ‘be audible’, and känns ‘be possible to feel, perceive’. These verbs have a passive form. (Synas does not have a corresponding active form, whereas höras is derived from hör ‘hear’ and känns from känna ‘feel’.) These verbs have rather direct correspondents in Finnish but require various types of restructuring in the translations to the other MPC languages. Example (53a) can be literally paraphrased (disregarding word order) as ‘Through the floorboards it was=heard that Per-Ola asked something’. In the English translation, as well as in the French translation, a subject with definite reference is supplied from context. The German translation is based on a construction known as the potential (or passive) infinitive, which involves an implicit non-specific agent (or experiencer) and has a modal meaning that something can or should be done (‘through the floorboards was to hear that-S’). Finnish has a rather direct equivalent, except for the lack of a placeholder (kuulua ‘be audible’, derived from kuulla ‘hear’ with the so called reflexive suffix –ul-y).

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A special type of perception verbs which only require a formal subject and no other argument in Swedish are verbs of light emergence and sound emergence (referred to as *ljuskälleverb* and *ljudkälleverb* in Viberg 1981). Since there are only a few examples of verbs of light emergence, only one example will be given.

A typical example is the verb *knacka* ‘knock’ in (56), which can be used without any (core) argument except a placeholder *det* in the subject slot. In English, the sound is realized as a noun introduced in a presentative construction, whereas German has the same structure as Swedish, French uses the *man*-construction, and Finnish the passive.

Further types of translations are exemplified in (57) and (58).

Further types of translations are exemplified in (57) and (58).
In (57), Swedish *det slafsade kring stövlarna* lit. ‘it squelched around the boots’ is translated into English with a clause in which the sound source is the subject, *the boots squelched*. This kind of restructuring appears in 9 out of the 25 examples with sound source verbs. In 13 examples, the Swedish verb corresponds to a nominal form in the English translation, either in a presentative construction, as in (56), or some other type of nominal construction, as in (58). In the texts analysed so far, there is no example where English uses *it* in the subject slot of a sound source verb. German, on the other hand, uses the same construction as Swedish in 18 out of the 25 examples, as in all of the three examples above. The French and Finnish translations are more variable, which means that it is difficult to form any generalizations based on this limited material except that the languages use the ordinary means they have to construct impersonals. In (57), both languages use a verb without any core argument as in Swedish, except the obligatory placeholder (*ça*) in French. The translations in (58) are interesting because they introduce a verb of perception, which is personal in French (‘he heard a twittering’) and of the impersonal potential type in Finnish (‘from (the) table was-heard twittering’). Even if the sound source verbs strictly speaking do not have any implicit experiencer, they often appear in situations where an experiencer can easily be induced from the discourse context.

It should be noted, that the Swedish sound source verbs often can be constructed in several different ways. In (59), *knaka* ‘creak’ is constructed with a placeholder in the subject slot, whereas the sound source is realized as subject in (60).

(59)  
*Det knakade* igen i bron, ESPC: ARP [it creaked again in the bridge]  
The bridge *creaked* again,

(60)  
*Sängen knakade* ovanför henne. KE  
The bed above *creaked*.

There are a number of verbs that are primarily used as sound source verbs in Swedish. There are also verbs that have another basic meaning. Several verbs of physical contact such as *slå* ‘hit’, ‘strike’ and *knacka* ‘knock’ are also used as sound source verbs (see Viberg 1999b, 2004). Several verbs of motion can be extended to serve as sound source verbs in the construction *det* + (active) verb: *det går i trapporna* lit. ‘it walks in the stairs’ can be said when you hear footsteps on the stairs (usually without seeing anyone). An actual example from the Bank of Swedish is given in (61):

(61)  
-- Nu ska vi väl gå, sa han. Då hörde de hur *det sprang* på korkmattan och så stod Ingrid i dörren bakom dem. RomI  
I guess we should go now, he said. Then they heard running steps (‘how it ran’) on the carpet, and then Ingrid was standing at the door behind them (my translation)
In (61), *det sprang* ‘it ran’, the sound is profiled and the event is conceptualized as agentless. It is interesting to compare this construction with the impersonal passive in (62) which also is taken from the Bank of Swedish. In (62), *det sprungs* ‘it was run’ profiles the motion and there is an implicit agent even if it is completely de-focused.

(62) I lördags *sprang det* nattorientering i Brastad. GP01  
Last Saturday, there was (lit. ‘it was run’) night orienteering in Brastad. (my translation)

A similar minimal pair can be presented for the verb *sjunga* ‘sing’. In (63), the impersonal passive *det sjungs* refers to an activity with a defocused agent, whereas the impersonal *det sjunger* in active present tense profiles the sound, with the telephone wires as Sound source in example (64).

(63) Underhållningen pågår under hela kvällen, *det sjungs* och dansas till förrätt, varmrätt, dessert och till aven kommer huvudshowen. GP04  
The entertainment goes on all night, people are singing and dancing (lit. it is sung and is danced) to the starter, main dish, and dessert, and with the cognac came the main attraction. (my translation)

(64) Men en dag cyklar jag. *Det sjunger* i Värmlands telefontrådar. Roml  
But one day I am (out) cycling. (lit.) ‘It sings’ in the telephone wires of Värmland. (my translation)

The impersonal passive has an implicit human agent even if it is vague and backgrounded, whereas the corresponding impersonal verb in active form lacks such an implicit agent. This is particularly clear with a verb such as *sjunga* ‘sing’ which normally has a human agent as subject. The expression *det sjunger* ‘it sings’ completely lacks an implicit agent.

Impersonal verbs of the type described in section 7 are used to express agentless impersonality. There is a continuum, in the sense that some verbs completely lack any argument at the semantic level, whereas there are verbs at the other end of the continuum that have a human argument that can be regarded as a non-prototypical agent (or proto-role) such as an Experiencer. In that case, both personal and impersonal alternatives may exist in one language, as in Swedish: *Det gör ont i huvudet* ‘My head hurts’ (lit. ‘it makes bad in the head’)– *Jag har ont i huvudet* (lit. ‘I have bad in the head’) or *Jag har huvudvärv* ‘I have a headache’.

8. Conclusion

The present study has provided an overview of the major types of impersonal constructions in Swedish and of the major types of constructions that can be used to translate such structures into English, German, French, and Finnish. Since the study is intended to be exploratory and is based on a limited part (less than 25%) of the multilingual parallel corpus that is being constructed, only the most general patterns will be summarized.

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From a functional point of view, it turns out that the *man*-construction is the major expression of referential impersonality in Swedish. The use of impersonal 3PL *de* ‘they’, which is treated only briefly, seems to be restricted to vague reference, whereas the *man*-construction can be used both with general and with vague reference, even if its primary function appears to be to signal general reference to all of mankind. In both cases, free forms of subject pronouns are used. The type of verb does not play any role except that it should allow a human subject. Constructions with impersonal *det* as a subject placeholder primarily appear in agentless clauses or clauses with low agentivity and is characteristic of phenomenon-based mental verb constructions. In the majority of cases, the low agentivity is closely related to the meaning of the verb (or other predicate). The only exception to this is the cleft construction, if the verb of the non-cleft counterpart is taken as a point of departure. (The copula is, of course, agentless.) At the same time, the referential function of *det* is so low that it can be regarded as a subject placeholder. In most languages, a subject placeholder is completely lacking or is used much more restrictively as in Finnish.

The Swedish passive, whose primary function is to defocus the agent to various degrees, is impersonal only in some of its functions. In examples with an explicit agent such as *Anmälan gjordes av Holger Eriksson* ‘The report was made by Holger Eriksson’, the agent has high levels of both referentiality and agentivity. Referentiality can be low as it is in generic sentences of the type *Dörren öppnas utåt* ‘The door should be opened outwards’. In general, however, an agent is implied even if it is vague, as in impersonal passives and in generic uses of the ordinary passive. Only in certain lexicalized passives, such as *det finns* ‘there is’, is no agent implied.

From a contrastive perspective, the study has shown that Finnish in many respects follows another pattern than Swedish, whereas German, English, and French have rather direct equivalents to most of the Swedish impersonal constructions. In spite of this general similarity, there are important differences in usage patterns between the languages that in principle share a certain structural pattern. With respect to clefting, for example, the most obvious contrast was that Finnish lacks such as structure, but at the same time it was shown that clefting was used to different extents in the languages where this construction is established.

It must be stressed that this study has primarily been focused on the typological profile of Swedish. With respect to methodology, a monodirectional corpus with originals only in Swedish is sufficient to demonstrate to what extent various constructions are language-specific. For a balanced contrastive study, a bidirectional (or multidirectional) corpus with originals in all contrasted languages would be a prerequisite. The present study can serve as the first step in such a full-blown contrastive comparison. There are a number of original texts in French and Finnish with Swedish translations in the MPC corpus which have not been used in this study but that could be used to complement the data presented above. For English, the English-Swedish parallel corpus can be used for the same purpose.
References


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— Forthc. Basic verbs in typological and contrastive perspective. (submitted)
— In progress. The verbs of verbal communication.

Swedish source texts

Electronic sources
ESPC. The English-Swedish Parallel Corpus. For a description, see: http://www.englund.lu.se/content/view/66/127/
The Bank of Swedish (Språkbanken) http://spraakbanken.gu.se/.
Abstract
The article presents a preliminary overview of the impersonality category in Avar. On the basis of valency patterns, argument structure, and verb lability I point out several syntactic constructions with impersonal semantics. The term ‘impersonality’ here covers referential impersonals, verbal impersonals, and null-subject impersonal predicates.

1. Introduction
Avar belongs to the Avar-Andic language group of the Nakh-Daghestanian (or East Caucasian) family and is spoken in the Republic of Daghestan by 814,500 speakers. This figure also includes the Andic, Tsezic, and Archi peoples with a total number of about 40,000 speakers. A significant number of the Avar language speakers live in Azerbaijan where, in accordance with the data of the last Soviet census of 1989, their number was estimated to be 44,100 (Alexeev 2001: 203). The Avars call themselves maʕarulal ‘mountaineers’ and their language maʕarul mac: ‘mountain language’.

The unmarked order of constituents in Avar is SOV, although all possible permutations of major constituents are admissible. Talking about the East Caucasian languages, van den Berg (2005: 171) notes:

Grammatical relations are not sensitive to the relative order of the verbal arguments in the clause: word order encodes primarily pragmatic functions like topic, focus, givenness, and contrastiveness. SOV is the neutral order, whereas OVS may be used to put the object in focus. To place the subject in focus, OSV order is applied – not SVO.

Avar is a language with the ergative alignment: the S/P arguments take the absolutive case, and the A argument is in the ergative case, while the verb agrees with S/P in gender. Verb agreement is realised by single-consonant gender markers which are either prefixal or suffixal (participles). The gender in the singular is marked by the following consonants: w for male human, j for female human, and b for non-human; for example: bač’ine, wač’ine, jač’ine ‘to come’; bač’arab, wač’araw, jač’araj ‘come.pp’. In the plural there are two markers for all the three genders: the prefix r- and the suffix -l: rač’aral ‘pl. of come.pp’. The category of person is not marked on the verb.

As material for the article samples of modern Avar prose literature, as well as

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1 According to the 2002 census presented at http://www.perepis2002.ru
2 Not all the verbs have the prefixal gender marker.
3 Derived verbs and the verb ha-G-ize ‘to do’ have the infixal gender marker.
published collections of fairy tales and proverbs have been used, especially the following publications:


The article is divided into three sections. The second section contains a description of grammatical structures and processes connected with impersonal semantics in Avar: valency, argument structure, and lability. In the third section the category of impersonality and semantic types of impersonal predicates are discussed.

### 2. Valency and argument structure

Avar has the following main valency patterns: intransitive, transitive, affective, and possessive. The intransitive valency pattern consists of either a one-place verb [ABS], as shown in (1) or a two-place verb [ABS, OBL] with an oblique object, as in (2).

\[
\begin{align*}
(1) & \text{feder-go w-eker-ana ha-w} & \text{quickly-FOC I-run-PRT DEM-I-ABS} \\
& \text{‘He ran quickly.’ (MM: 120)}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
(2) & \text{he-l-dasa-ʃagi-iš: mun hinq’-ula-r-e-w} & \text{DEM-PL-ABL1-even-QS YOU-ABS scare-PR-NEG-PRP-I} \\
& \text{‘Are not even you afraid of them?’ (MR: 19)}
\end{align*}
\]

The transitive valency pattern includes either a two-place verb [ERG, ABS], as in (3) or a three-place verb [ERG, ABS, OBL] with an oblique object (4).

\[
\begin{align*}
(3) & \text{bac’-i:ə ʃ’w-ana dur ʃaqabi} & \text{wolf-ERG kill-PRT YOU.Gen sheep.PL-ABS} \\
& \text{‘The wolf killed your sheep.’ (MR: 58)}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
(4) & \text{he-b mac:’-al: ʃ’-una die kwark’abi} & \text{DEM-III language-ERG give-PRT I.DAT wing.PL-ABS} \\
& \text{‘This language gave me wings.’ (RH: 76)}
\end{align*}
\]

Affective and possessive constructions in Avar share the same valency pattern: [OBL, ABS]. The experiencer of the affective constructions is either in the dative case

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4 Arguments of two main valency patterns are marked "non-canonically", see, e.g., Onishi (2001: 1–4).
5 All the grammatical and spatial cases, except for the ergative and the absolutive, are treated as oblique in this context.
or in the first essive case depending on whether it is used with verbs of emotion (e.g. G-oł'iz 'to love', xira'iz 'to appreciate, to like', etc.) or with verbs of perception (e.g. G-ixiz 'to see', ražiz 'to hear', laze 'to know', etc.). The verbs of emotion require the experiencer in the dative case (5), and the verbs of perception require the first essive case of the experiencer (6).

(5) š:i-b due b-oł'-ule-b laj-iš: Sarac-iš:
    what-III you.DAT III-love-PRP-III knowledge-QS money-QS
    ‘What do you like, knowledge or money?’ (MR: 135)

(6) ha-b kina-b-go mał'-il-iš:-xa ha-sda b-ił'-ule-b b-uł-e-b
    DEM-III all-III-FOC dream-ESS4-QS-EMP D-em-ESS1 III-see-PRP-III III-be-PRP-III
    ‘Does he dream about all this?’ (lit. ‘Does he see it all in dream?’). (MM: 28)

Possessive constructions require the possessor either in the genitive case (7) or in the second essive case (8), where the semantic difference seems to be the expression of a temporal vs. permanent possessor.

(7) dir coho jas j-igo
    LGEN only daughter:ABS II-be PR
    ‘I have only the one daughter.’ (MM: 21)

(8) diq b-ułgo guča-b jaraj
    LESS2 III-be PR powerful-III weapon:ABS
    ‘I have a powerful weapon.’ (RH: 123)

One and the same verb in Avar can have different valencies depending on whether it is used transitively or intransitively. This property of Avar verbs is discussed in the following subsection.

2.1 Lability

Most of the Avar verbs are labile in terms of association “with two valency patterns, a transitive valency pattern and an intransitive valency pattern that lacks the Ergative agent argument”, as Haspelmath (1993: 289) puts it. Actually, an ergative subject of a transitive verb or an oblique subject of an affective verb can be omitted for pragmatic reasons to produce an intransitive verb.

The verb G-uhiz ‘to burn’ is used transitively in (9), and intransitively in (10):

(9) he-b c'a šabadal-asuqe l'-uni he-s ši-w-go-gi
cogi-jal-gi r-uh-ize b-eh-ula
    this-III fire:ABS idiot-LAT2 give-COND DEM-ERG self-FOC-and
    other-PL-and PL-burn-INF III-can-PR
    ‘If you give this fire to an idiot, he can burn both himself and others.’ (RH: 269)

6 Spatial cases are named here in accordance with the classification of Hewitt (2006: 263), except for the allative case, which is called lative here.

7 The primary meaning of the first essive case is the location of an object on a surface.

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(10) *dun w-uh-ule-w w-ugo*
   I.ABS I-burn-PRP-1-be.PR
   ‘I burn.’ (RH: 252)

The affective verb rašize ‘to hear’ is used transitively in (11) and (12), and intransitively in (13) and (14):

(11) *co q’o-jalda kortasda raš-un b-ugo he-w či xw-an-ilan*
   one day-ESS1 PN.ESS1 hear-PCVB III-be.PR DEM-1.man.ABS die-PRT-CML
   ‘One day Kortaw heard that this man died.’ (MR: 64)

(12) *dida raš-ule-l r-ugo he-l rašabi*
   LESS1 hear-PRP-PL PL-be.PR DEM-PL WORDS.PL.ABS
   ‘I hear these words.’ (FA: 17)

(13) *hele-xa hanže raš-ule-b b-ugo rocada rak’*
   indeed-EMPH now hear-PRP-III III-be.PR chest cartridge.ESS1 heart
   *k’ut*-ule-b kuc
   beat-PRP-III way
   ‘Now indeed it is heard how the heart beats in the chest.’ (MM: 96)

(14) *hanže daỵistan-al-ul haraɬ’ rik’ade raš-ule-b b-ugo*
   now Daghestan-GEN voice:ABS far.LAT1 hear-PRP-III III-be.PR
   ‘Now Daghestan is known far away’ (lit. ‘Now Daghestan’s voice is heard.’). (RH: 40)

The examples above demonstrate P-labile verbs, when the S of intransitives equals the P of transitives. An A-labile verb (S = A) is shown used intransitively in (15), and transitively in (16):

(15) *c’aq’ qant’-un q’arum-gi kw-an-ila*
   very be greedy-PCVB PN.ABS-and eat-PRT-QUOT
   ‘And Qarum ate very greedily.’ (CM: 13)

(16) *he-l: čurpa kwan-ala-ro*
   DEM-ERG soup eat-PR-NEG
   ‘She does not eat the soup.’ (FA: 122)

In the same way, semantically intransitive verbs can be used in syntactically transitive constructions, as shown in the following examples where the verb G-ač’ine ‘to come’ is used intransitively (17) and transitively (18):

(17) *hale dun w-ač’-ana hani-we*
   MIR I.ABS I-come-PRP here-LAT5
   ‘And now I came here.’ (RH: 15)

(18) *šor-uc:a c’ul b-ač’-ana*
   river-ERG timber:ABS III-come-PRP
   ‘The river brought timber.’ (Bokarev 1949: 41)
Functions of the ergative case in Avar are not limited to only the A argument marking; the ergative case is also used in the instrumental meaning. The verb in (18) can also be understood intransitively if the instrumental meaning of the ergative case is assumed here.

3. Impersonality

Siewierska (2008: 3–4) defines the semantic characteristics of impersonality as centred on either agentivity or reference. The referential type of impersonals includes constructions with a non-specified human agent, and from the point of view of agentivity Siewierska distinguishes between the following types: weather phenomena (meteorological); bodily sensations and emotions; and modality. Blevins (2006: 238), on the contrary, distinguishes between impersonal constructions and “impersonal predicates that express weather conditions, natural forces, etc.” which lack “a logical subject, and thus cannot participate in passive or impersonal constructions”.

I will distinguish between the referential impersonal constructions with omitted third-person plural pronouns, verbal impersonals, and null-subject impersonal predicates which roughly coincide with the agentivity type of impersonality of Siewierska.

3.1 Referential impersonals

According to Blevins (2003: 473), impersonals “are insensitive to the argument structure”. Referential impersonal constructions in Avar will here be defined as constructions with an omitted third-person plural pronoun, where the pronoun dropping neither permutes argument relations nor removes arguments.

As has been noted above, person is not marked on the verb. Usually, omission of arguments of a valency pattern makes the sentence non-grammatical, except for the pronoun dropping.8

Dropping of the first (20) and second (19) personal pronouns is only possible when they can be recovered from the discourse context.

(19) šaj  təd-ule-w
      why  cry-PRP-1]

‘Why are you crying?’

(20) per  k-une-b  b'-uk'-un
      onion:ABS  eat-PRP-III  III-be-PCVB

‘Because I am eating onion.’ (MR: 7)

8 The person of dropped pronouns is underterminable in conditional clauses, where it can either be the second singular or the third singular/plural, for example:

(a) hoc’o-gi  ēsəf-ula  semeč  ēk’-ani
      honey:ABS-and  taste bitter-PR  much lick-CND

‘Even honey tastes bitter if one licks it (too) much.’ (CM: 30)

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When a dropped pronoun in a non-conditional clause cannot be recovered from the context, it most probably is the third-person plural pronoun. In the Avar language, the third-person plural pronouns are omitted when it is important to stress a reference to an indefinite human agent, as shown in (21) and (22):

(21) zankila-lda ce-be ɓasarhalil ɬurpa l-un b-ugo
PN-ESS1 before-III.LAT5 haricot.GEN soup:ABS put-PCVB III-be.PR

‘In front of Zankilaj they have put a (bowl of) haricot soup.’ (MR: 6)

(22) dir son-al t’iq’wa-jalda qw-an r-ugo
I.GEN year-PL.ABS horseshoe-ESS1 write-PCVB PL-be.PR

‘My years are written on my horseshoe.’ (CM: 12)

Bokarev (1949: 115) gives an example (23) of the impersonal passive (bezličnaja stradatelnost’) and explains it as only being possible in constructions with a compound predicate:

(23) an’-ab-go balah b-aci’-une-b b-uk’-ana me’er sündul
kwcr-al q’ot’-ule-l r-uk’-ana
hand:PL.ABS cut-PRP-PL PL-be-PRT

‘All the seven troubles were coming; nose, ears, hands were being cut.’ (Bokarev 1949: 115)

As a matter of fact, the examples (21) and (22) on the one hand, and (23) on the other hand, are syntactically identical, since in all of them the third-person plural pronoun is dropped to gain the impersonal semantics. The only difference is the TAM category in use: perfect in (21) and (22), and imperfect in (23). However, impersonal constructions are also possible in simple predicates, as in (24):

(24) q’aluda j-at-ana zulajxat
noonESS1 II-find-PRT PN:ABS

‘At noon Zulajxat was found’ (or ‘they found’). (FA: 216)

3.2 Verbal impersonals

In Avar agentless passives can be categorized as verbal impersonals. The Avar language does not have “sentence-pairs like active and passive that allow precisely the same semantic roles to be expressed by different syntactic positions” (Comrie 2004: 118). Since the only possible case for the logical subject is the ergative (instrumental) case, which would switch the construction from passive into active, the logical subject cannot be expressed in passive constructions. Thus, the passive in the Avar language can only be impersonal.

Agentless passives in Avar are possible in compound predicates with the past participle, as in (25) and (26).

(25) nučer c:’ar-al hiq’-ize die huq’-ara-b b-ugo
you.PL.GEN name-PL.ABS ask-INF I.DAT forbid-PP-III III-be.PR

‘I am forbidden to ask your names.’ (RH: 470)
The difference between verbal and referential impersonals is obvious in the structure of compound predicates: verbal impersonals include the past participle.

### 3.3 Impersonal predicates

Predicates expressing atmospheric precipitation generally include the polysemantic labile verb $G$-aze. In different contexts this verb can have the following meanings: ‘to hang, to be hanged; to build, to be built; to pour, to be poured; to spend time’, etc. It is difficult to determine whether the verb $G$-aze is used transitively or intransitively in these constructions, or in other words, whether A is suppressed (e.g., sky) or lacking, as in the following examples:

(27) $\textit{rahduq} \ b-a-le-b \ b-uk'$-ana \ $\textit{ʕ}a$-$\textit{zu}$

‘Outside it was raining.’ (RH: 65)

(28) $b-a-le-b \ b-uk'$-ana

‘It was snowing.’ (FA: 171)

A probable missing A argument can be traced in (29), where the verb with the explicit transitive semantics is used:

(29) $\textit{čiq} \ e$-wa-le-b \ $b$-ugo

‘It is drizzling.’ (Saidov 1967)

Verbs of bodily sensation and emotion constitute the class of “experiential predicates” (Haspelmath 2001: 59). In Avar the experiential predicates can further be subdivided into two groups: verbs of emotion have the affective valency pattern and are used in personal affective constructions; constructions of bodily sensation can be built either personally or impersonally depending on the type of experience evaluation. Personal experience presupposes the use of personal constructions with the experiencer in the absolutive case (30), while the expression of common or ambient sensations occurs in impersonal predicates (31):

(30) $\textit{kida-l-go} \ kwa$-$\textit{č}$-ala \ a-sul \ $h$at'-$\textit{al}$

‘His feet always get cold.’ (MM: 213)

(31) $\textit{haq}'i$-a-lat$\textit{alda}$-gi \ $\textit{kwa}$-$\textit{č}$-an \ $b$-uk'$'$-ana \ $h$a-$\textit{b}$ \ $k$'udia$-$b \ $k'$a$-$\textit{ša}$-$j$-a$-$ub$-$ub$

‘And to tell the truth, it was cold in this big palace.’ (MM: 208)

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Modal impersonal predicates include infinitives in combination with verbs *G-ehize* ‘may’ (32), *k:ez* ‘must, to have to’ (33), etc.

(32) t’ok’-ab kwat’-ize beh-ula-ro
more-ATR. III be late-INF may-PR-NEG
‘One may not come late any more.’ (RH: 13)

(33) š:i-b-ab nux-a ɬ hit’in-go ruhun-ab piša-jalde
what-III-ATR. III time-ERG small-FOC common-ATR. III occupation-LAT1
w-uss-ine k:-ana
I-return-INF must-PRT
‘Every time one had to return to a less common occupation.’ (RH: 12)

4. Conclusion
The main valency patterns in Avar are intransitive, transitive, affective, and possessive. The majority of verbs are labile. This verb lability probably compensates the personal passivization, so the passive in the Avar language can only be impersonal. The category of impersonality includes referential impersonals, verbal impersonals, and null-subject impersonal predicates. The referential impersonals do not change valency and are built by dropping the third-person plural pronouns, in order to obtain an indefinite human reference. Verbal impersonals include agentless passives. The logical subject of agentless passives cannot be expressed syntactically, and impersonal predicates lack the logical subject.

Abbreviations

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ARGUMENT STRUCTURE AND IMPERSONALITY IN AVAR

References


Impersonal Constructions in Balochi

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Abstract
Impersonal constructions are interesting from a typological perspective. Siewierska (2008: 3–4) finds that “[t]he semantic characterizations of impersonality centre on two notions”, either “the lack of a human agent controlling the depicted situation or event” or “situations or events which may be brought about by a human agent but crucially one which is not specified.” The present article focuses on grammatical constructions for situations or events brought about by a non-specified agent in one Iranian language, namely Balochi. It draws upon four Balochi corpuses available to the authors, comprising four different dialects of Balochi and consisting of altogether approximately 130,000 words.

There are three constructions for a non-specific agent found in the corpus, those with the verb in 3PL, those with the verb in 2SG, and those with a passive verb. It seems that the 3PL construction allows the speaker to distance himself/herself from the event somehow in narrative texts, where the speaker and addressee are not included in the referential framework of this construction. The 2SG construction, on the contrary, allows an unrestricted impersonal interpretation in narrative texts. However, in procedural texts, the 2SG and 3PL constructions are used interchangeably to include the speaker, and probably also the addressee. The 2SG construction in narrative texts and the 2SG and 3PL constructions in procedural texts are open to a truly impersonal interpretation. Thus, the 3PL construction does follow the referential properties described by Siewierska (2008: 14–17) in narrative texts but has wider referential properties in procedural texts. In Balochi, the referential properties of the passive construction seem, on the contrary, not to be as unrestricted as Siewierska (2008: 23) suggests.

1. Introduction
Impersonal constructions are interesting from a typological perspective. Onishi (2001: 45) notes that impersonal constructions need to be investigated for a large number of languages with different typological profiles and from different linguistic areas in order to draw far-reaching conclusions about these kinds of constructions and the typological constraints that apply to them. Siewierska (2008: 13–14) also pays attention to the lack of data for impersonal constructions in, e.g., grammatical descriptions of specific languages. The aim of the present article is to provide data concerning impersonal constructions for one such specific language, namely Balochi.

Balochi is an Iranian language, thus belonging to the Indo-European language family, and is spoken in south-eastern Iran, south-western Pakistan, and southern Afghanistan, as well as in the UAE, Oman, and other parts of the Arabian Peninsula, Turkmenistan, India, and East Africa.

1 In 2009, a corpus-based linguistic project comprising several languages belonging to different language families was initiated at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University, the aim of which is to study, among other grammatical features, impersonal constructions.

2 Sincere thanks to Agnes Korn, Frankfurt am Main, for comments on an earlier version of this article and to Guiti Shokri for interesting discussions during the writing process.

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In her article “Ways of Impersonalizing”, Siewierska (2008: 3–4) discusses the concept ‘impersonal’ and finds that this term has been used in a wide and not entirely well-defined sense. Some scholars “conceive of impersonality in semantic terms, others adopt a syntactic approach, and yet others a morphological perspective.” She finds that “[t]he semantic characterizations of impersonality centre on two notions”, either “the lack of a human agent controlling the depicted situation or event” or “situations or events which may be brought about by a human agent but crucially one which is not specified.”

In the second category she pays particular attention to third person plural impersonal constructions and verbal impersonals and to the referential properties of these different constructions. Among Siewierska’s conclusions are that the referential range of the 3PL construction is more restricted than for other constructions and that 3PL impersonal constructions denote third person referents among which the speaker and/or addressee are hardly ever included. She also concludes that verbal impersonals are generally of a less restricted character when it comes to referential properties, and normally include the speaker, and that the most open reference is found in agentless passives, which she finds referentially unrestricted (Siewierska 2008: 23).

Blevins (2006) takes a morphological approach and describes the characteristics of morphologically marked impersonal constructions found in, e.g., Balto-Finnic and Celtic languages, which “represent a distinctive grammatical strategy for ‘suppressing’ reference to the subject” (Blevins 2006: 236). There are no morphological impersonal constructions of this kind (see also Blevins 2003: 486–489) in Balochi.

Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990), on the other hand, ground their study in different uses of pronouns and define the concept of impersonality in semantic terms in connection with these pronouns. They discuss the distinction between referential, impersonal and vague uses of pronouns, where “[r]eferential uses identify specific individuals”, “[a]n ‘impersonal’ use of a pronoun applies to anyone and/or everyone”, and “[a] ‘vague’ use applies to specific individuals, but they are not identified, or identifiable, by the speaker” (Kitagawa and Lehrer 1990: 742). The distinction between ‘impersonal’ and ‘vague’ uses will here be applied to whole constructions rather than only to pronouns, particularly since Balochi is a pro-drop language.

The present article takes a semantic approach and focuses on the second category specified by Siewierska, namely situations or events brought about by a non-specified (impersonal or vague) human agent. This should, however, not be taken as the position of the present researchers on what should be regarded as impersonal constructions. Another interesting type of impersonal construction comprises those with a non-canonical subject, that is, a subject in the genitive or dative case (see Onishi 2001), which are frequent in Balochi and which will be the subject of a forthcoming study.

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1 Siewierska (2008) does not treat 2SG impersonal constructions (see below).
2 Siewierska (2008: 9) uses the term ‘impersonal’ the way Kitagawa and Lehrer employ the term ‘vague’ reference, and ‘generic’ for the concept Kitagawa and Lehrer call ‘impersonal’. The present article follows Kitagawa and Lehrer.
This investigation draws upon four Balochi corpuses available to the authors, namely Serge Axenov’s corpus of tales, reality-based stories, and procedural texts (dealing with, e.g., weaving, cooking, farming, etc.) from Turkmenistan (abbreviated BT), Behrooz Barjasteh Delforooz’s corpus of tales and reality-based stories from Sistan (abbreviated BS), Maryam Nourzaei’s corpus of tales, a reality-based story, and a procedural text in Koroshi, a dialect of Balochi spoken in Fars (abbreviated BK), and Carina Jahani’s corpus of modern short stories from Pakistan (abbreviated BP). These four corpuses comprise approximately 130,000 words.

The texts that contain the greatest number of impersonal constructions with a non-specified human agent are procedural texts, but the written texts (BP) also have a considerable number of such constructions. The tales contain, on the whole, fewer impersonal constructions. The examples are transcribed in a phonemic representation modelled on the system used by Jahani and Korn (2009). All examples are marked for dialect.

Different constructions for a non-specified human agent found in the corpus will be classified and discussed below. Special attention will be given to the referential properties of the agent in each construction. There could be a vague delimitation of possible agents in the context, but there could also be a totally impersonal reference to any possible agent, including the speaker and the addressee in these constructions (generic reference, see Siewierska 2008: 9–10). This difference will be discussed for each example below.

The purpose of the present article is thus two-fold: to analyse the nature of the constructions used for non-specified human agents in the corpus of Balochi under study, and to discuss whether Siewierska’s (2008) conclusions about referential properties for the agent in different types of constructions hold for this corpus.

2. Constructions with a non-specified human agent found in the corpus

In this corpus, two main types of constructions where the human agent is not specified are found, one type with an active verb and one type with a passive verb. There are three different constructions with an active verb, 3PL, 2SG, and 3SG constructions.

2.1 Constructions with an active verb, narrative texts

Constructions with an active verb are particularly common in procedural texts, but they are also found in reality-based stories and, although much less commonly, in tales. Since it seems that the constructions operate somewhat differently in narratives and procedural texts, the analysis of the procedural texts is separate from that of the narrative texts (see section 2.3). In narrative texts the verb is found either in 3PL, 2SG, or 3SG. In the ergative construction (ex. 3) the agent is expressed by a...
pronominal clitic. Only a limited number of examples have been included, but these examples are chosen to be representative of all the occurrences of the particular construction.

2.1.1 Verb in the third person plural

Ex. 1

ādrōgburr uskit ki bi plān šār-ā
DEM liar hear.PT.3SG CLM in so.and.so town-OBL
drōgburr=ē ast wa āī tārīp-ān-ā bāz=a
liar=IND be.PR.3SG and DEM.GEN praise-PL-OBJ much=VCL

kan-ant
do-PR-3PL

That liar heard that in such and such a town there was a liar who was widely praised (lit. and they praise him a lot). (BT)

The speaker here is the person in the story telling the addressee (the first liar) about a second liar. The presence of a speaker is, in fact, very weak, since the verb uskit ‘he heard’ is used to refer to what was said. The addressee is definitely excluded from the referential properties of the verb kanant ‘they do’. He was not even aware of the second liar until he heard about him from the speaker. It is not totally clear whether the speaker also would praise this second liar or not, i.e. if the speaker is part of the referential framework of the verb kanant ‘they do’ or not. Possible agents are to be found in the context of the story, which means that this is a vague rather than an impersonal or, to use Siewierska’s terminology, generic construction.

Ex. 2

šallāx ēšī čarm-ī-ēn dāšt
whip DEM.OBL leather-ADJZ-ATTR have.PT.3SG
gādīn-ā zābul ta bā kurt-ant čarm-ī-ēn
old-OBL Zabol MIR price.VCL do-PT-3PL leather-ADJZ-ATTR

A whip, he had a leather whip; in the past in Zabol, you know, they were sold, (whips) made of leather. (BS)

This sentence is found in a reality-based story. Possible agents are tradesmen in Zabol in former times, which makes the agent of kurtant ‘they did’ vague rather than impersonal. In this example, the speaker and the addressee must be seen as excluded from the referential framework of the verb, since the speaker is a storyteller from the region, and the addressee is a linguistic researcher.
Ex. 3

marō zahr=eš rētk-a=Ø mā xorāk=at
today poison=PC.3PL pour.PT-PP=COP.PR.3SG in food=PC.2SG

Today there is poison poured into your food. (BK)

The context of this sentence from a folktale is that the stepmother wants to kill her stepson, but his horse has supernatural powers and is able to warn him. The speaker is the horse and the addressee is the boy. Possible agents in this ergative construction with an agent clitic instead of the verb in 3PL are the people present in the story who want to kill the addressee. Thus, both the speaker and the addressee are excluded from the referential framework, since neither of them would have put poison in the food. These restrictions of the agent makes the sentence vague rather than impersonal.

Ex. 4

xān mnī pād-ān kawš-ān-i tā iškar
Khan PRON.1SG GEN foot-PL shoe-PL GEN in live ember
rēt-ag=ant ša dušmanāti-ā
pour.PT-PP=COP.PR.3PL from enmity-OBL

Khan, my feet! Somebody has poured live embers in my shoes out of enmity. (BS)

This example comes from a reality-based story, and the incident with live embers being poured into the speaker’s shoes took place at a wedding. Possible agents are people present at the wedding party, thus a vague subject from which speaker is excluded. It is also clear in the context that he does not suspect that the addressee (the Khan) would be the agent.

Ex. 5

nimāzliq bi awā bāl kurt=u ēšānā āwurt
prayer rug in air wing do PT.3SG=and DEM.PL.OBJ bring PT.3SG
am=ādā ki ważfr-ay jinikk-ā šōd-ant
EMPH=there CLM wizier GEN girl OBJ VCL wash PR 3PL

The prayer rug took off into the air and brought them to the place were the wizier’s daughter was being washed (lit. where they wash the wizier’s daughter). (BT)

This sentence is from a folktale. It is the narrator’s voice, which means that the speaker is excluded from the possible agents, as are the addressees, i.e. the audience, who are also outside the framework of the story. Possible agents of the verb šodant ‘they wash’ are people in the story who could be involved in washing the wizier’s daughter, which means that the agent is vague.
Ex. 6
xolāṣa  ar=r-ant  ahmad-ī  rannā
in.short  VCL=go.PR-3PL  NP-GEN  after
To make a long story short, Ahmad is asked to come (lit. they go to get Ahmad). (BK)

The sentence is from a narrative section in a folktale. This excludes the narrator and the audience, i.e. the speaker and the addressee, from the referential framework. Possible agents are the people at the court of the king who needs Ahmad’s services and therefore sends for him. The construction is thus vague rather than impersonal.

Summary
It is clear from ex. 1–6 that the 3PL construction is used with a vague rather than an impersonal (generic) human agent. The speaker and the addressee seem to be excluded from the referential properties of this construction in narrative discourse, which means that Siewierska’s conclusion for the 3PL holds in this type of text (see also below).

2.1.2 Verb in the second person singular
Ex. 7
bēšakkā  ki  pa  xudā  ta  yakk=ē  b-day-ay
undoubtedly  CLM  for  God  PRON.2SG  one=IND  SUB-give.PR-2SG
xudā  da=a  dant
God  ten=VCL  give.PR.3SG
Undoubtedly, if you give one (unit of something) for the sake of God, He will give you tenfold (back). (BS)

This is a generic statement meaning ‘Whoever gives something to God will get tenfold back’. The speaker, in this story the prophet Moses, definitely includes the addressee, a poor man who actually showed generosity and was rewarded, and there is no reason to believe that he would exclude himself either. Possible agents are not restricted to the framework of the story, which means that we are dealing with an impersonal construction.

Ex. 8
na-zān-ay  ēēā  āī  ċamm  ham=ē  kišk-ā
NEG-know.PR-2SG  why  DEM.GEN  eye  EMPH=DEM  side-OBL
sakk=at-ant
fixed=COP.PT-3SG
Nobody knows why his eyes were fixed in this direction. (BP)

This sentence is about a man who is expecting his son to come back home even long after the son has been killed. The agent of the verb naţānay ‘you don’t know’ could be anyone within the story, i.e. anybody who knew this man. But it could also be anyone hearing or reading this story. It therefore seems that an impersonal interpre-
tation is possible here. Thus, the speaker and the addressee can be included as possible agents in this example.

Ex. 9
ē nimāqliq-ay sarā ki nind-ay ā bāl=a kan-t
DEM prayer.rug-GEN on CLM sit.down.PR-2SG DEM wing=VCL do.PR-3SG
When you sit down on this prayer-rug, it takes off. (BT)

The sentence is uttered by a man who wants to sell a magic rug, and the addressee is a person who wants to buy this rug. The intention is, of course, not that it will take off only if this buyer sits down on it, which means that the verb ninday ‘you sit down’ is not to be interpreted as referring only to the addressee. It is an impersonal construction with general referentiality, including both the speaker and the addressee in the context where it is uttered.

Ex. 10
doros=en bās=en ġarīb-pasand be-bey
correct=COP.PR.3SG must=COP.PR.3SG stranger-accepting SUB-become.PR.2SG
Surely one must accept strangers. (BK)

This sentence is from a reality-based story and the intention of the person who said it is that everybody, including himself and the addressee, should accept strangers. It is open and generic in its referential properties, thus an impersonal construction.

Ex. 11
na-ma-bī-yū ġūbān-i kan-ey
NEG-IMP-become.PR-3SG shepherd-NOMZ SUB-do.PR-2SG
It is impossible to be a shepherd. (BK)

This sentence is uttered by a shepherd boy, and the addressee is his father. The boy wants to quit being a shepherd and argues that it is an impossible job. It is therefore clear that the speaker in particular is included here. The statement is, however, made in such a general way that also the addressee (the father) and anyone else who would attempt to be a shepherd can be included. It can therefore be interpreted as an impersonal construction.

Summary
Ex. 7–11 show that the 2SG construction in narrative text has wider referential properties than the 3PL construction. In all the examples an impersonal interpretation is possible. It is interesting to note ex. 11, where the speaker refers to himself in particular with this construction. However, this example also allows for an impersonal interpretation.
2.1.3 Verb in the third person singular

Ex. 12

\[\text{guš-ī} \ kɪ \ yag \ bādišā=yē=at\]
\[\text{say.PR-3SG} \ \text{CLM one} \ \text{king=IND=COP.PT.3SG}\]

The story goes (lit. he/she says) that there was a king. (BS)

Ex. 13

\[\text{ē} \ ʃ-ī \ \text{ančēn} \ sawt=ē \ ēširā \ allā=i \ pāk\]
\[\text{DEM say.PR-3SG such.ATTR voice=IND DEM.OBJ Allah=IZ pure}\]

\[\text{dāt}=\text{at}\]
\[\text{give.PT=COP.PT.3SG}\]

He, the story goes, the Holy God had given him such a (wonderful) voice... (BS)

Ex. 14

\[\text{š-ī} \ \text{yakk} \ xān=ē=at\]
\[\text{say.PR-3SG one} \ \text{Khan=IND=COP.PT.3SG}\]

The story goes that there was a Khan. (BS)

The construction with the verb in 3SG occurs only in narrative texts in one part of the corpus, namely BS, and only for the verb 'to say' (in full or reduced form), but it is common in BS, both in fiction and reality-based stories. It is found in the introduction of a story, but also later on in the narration. It is quite clear from the way this verb is used that it is linked to epistemic modality and expresses that the narrator does not have first-hand information about what follows after the introductory verb of saying. Rather, he expresses some uncertainty about the contents of the narration, but not to the extent that the listener feels that he expresses outright doubt about it. Thus, this construction does not include the speaker or the addressee in its referential framework and is therefore not impersonal. It has a vague reference to people who may have been eyewitnesses to the very story about to be told or being told.

2.2 Grammatical passive construction, narrative texts

The grammatical passive construction in Balochi consists of an infinitive or a past participle with an auxiliary verb, either 'to become' (ex. 15–17, 19–20) or 'to come' (ex. 18). The passive is normally not used with an overt agent in Balochi (see e.g. Farrell 1995: 231, Baranzehi 2003: 100, Axenov 2006: 200) but there are two such

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7 The 3PL is occasionally found in BS the same context, but not nearly as frequently as the 3SG.
8 All these stories were told by male storytellers.
9 For the passive construction in Balochi, see also Jahani and Korn 2009: 662–663.

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examples in the whole corpus, which thus do not belong in the discussion of a non-specified agent.  

Ex. 15

dawlatxān-ārā kayz u band-ay sazā day-ag
NP-OBJ prison and prison-GEN punishment give.PR-INF

ma-bū
PROH-become.PR.3SG

Dawlatkhan should not be punished by imprisonment (lit. imprisonment should not be given to Dawlatkhan). (BP)

This is the verdict in a murder case. The person writing it issues an order to those involved in the process, particularly to the addressee (the receiver of the verdict), who would be the actual person to imprison Dawlatkhan. The agent here is, however, vague rather than impersonal, including the addressee as well as others who are part of the process, though not the writer himself, who stands above the process.

Ex. 16

agan māt=ē kuš-ag ma-būt-ēn du čār
if mother=PC.3SG kill.PR-INF PROH-become.PT-SUB.3SG two four
rōč-ā rand zahg allamā wadī būt-ag=at
day-OBL after child surely born become.PT-PP=COP.PT.3SG

If the mother had not been killed, the child would definitely have been born a couple of days later. (BP)

A woman has been killed and the prosecutor is trying to find out more about the murder. The sentence above is spoken by the father of the killer (i.e. the agent), quoting the midwives about the birth of the child with whom the woman was pregnant. Either the speaker did not know that his son (actually the father of the illegitimate child, who tried to conceal his adultery) killed this woman, or he did not want to disclose this information. He would hardly include himself as a possible agent though, and the addressee, the prosecutor, is definitely not one of the potential killers, which makes the agent vague rather than impersonal.

Ex. 17

ham=ē rōč-ā bēgāh-ay wahd-ā āsmān-ay dēmā
EMPH=DEM day-OBL evening-GEN time-OBL sky-GEN on

10 E.g. pādiṣā ki kušt-a būt-ē sa ragjan-ay dastā
king CLM kill-PP COP.3SG from bloodletter-GEN hand
mubmā ā ragjan-ā bi dār-ā jān-an
PRON.1PL.INCL Dem bloodletter-OBJ to wood-OBL.VCL hit.PR.1PL

When the king has been killed by the bloodletter (lit. at the hand of the bloodletter), we will hang that bloodletter. (BT)
That same day, in the evening, one could see clouds in a few places in the sky. (BP)

This sentence is in a narrative part of a modern short story. Here the agent includes everybody who is part of the framework, including the ‘omnipresent narrator’. The persons to whom the story is told (the addressees), i.e. the readers of this short story, are not a natural part of the framework, however.

Ex. 18
dīga āl bi mālūm na-bū ki
other state to PRON.1SG evident NEG-become.PT.3SG CLM
mnī mard kušt-a bū yā na
PRON.1SG.GEN man kill.PT-PP become.PT.3SG or no

It was actually not clear to me if my husband was killed or not. (BS)

This sentence is from a folktale and the speaker is the wife of the man who may have been killed. The addressees are her parents. The potential agents are to be found within the framework of the story, but exclude the speaker and the addressees. The construction is therefore not an impersonal construction but a construction with a vague human agent.

Ex. 19
dēb-ay sarag ki sist-a būt dēb murt
demon-GEN head CLM remove.PT-PP become.PT.3SG demon die.PT.3SG

When the head of the demon was removed, the demon died. (BT)

This sentence is found in a narrative section of a folktale. The potential agents of this construction are to be found within the framework of the story. The speaker and the addressee are excluded from the referential framework of this construction with a vague human agent.

Summary

In this corpus, the grammatical passive is the preferred strategy for a vague human agent in written texts (BP), where no instances of the otherwise common 3PL construction are attested. In the oral texts, the grammatical passive is rather rare, although not totally absent. It thus seems that the grammatical passive construction plays the same role in written literary style as the 3PL construction does in oral literary style to denote vague human agents excluding the speaker and the addressee in most instances (ex. 16, 18–19), but that it also can be used with wider referential properties to include the speaker (ex. 17) or the addressee (ex. 15). It is, however, not used in impersonal contexts in the same way as the 2SG construction is used. Siewierska’s (2008: 22) conclusion that the most open reference is found in agent-
less passives, which she finds referentially unrestricted, is thus not readily applicable to this corpus.

2.3 Constructions with an active verb, procedural texts

In procedural texts, which in this corpus are available for BT and BK, the two constructions 3PL and 2SG are used interchangeably. They are therefore not separated into different sections here. Two slightly longer examples (ex. 20–21) from procedural texts are presented to illustrate the way these constructions are used in procedural texts. They are taken from a text about weaving and a text about traditional cures for various diseases.

Ex. 20

masalan har raṣṭ-e ke gēṣ bokā-n=et estefāda
for.example every colour=IND CLM more want.PR=PC.2SG use
kan-e(y) ā raṣṭ-e gēṣ=a kan-e(y) hālā yā
SUB.do.PR-2SG DEM colour=PC.2SG more=VCL do.PR-2SG now or
zard yā ġermez yā ke ez... har raṣṭ-e... ābī
eyellow or red or CLM from... every colour=IND... light.blue
aksaran gāṭī-bār-e(y) zamīn-ā ġermez=a kan-ant hā
mostly carpet-PL-GEN ground-OBJ red=VCL do.PR-3PL yes
ġermez=a kan-an
red=VCL do.PR-3PL

You know, any colour you want to use more, you dye more wool in that colour (lit. make that colour of yours more) now, either yellow or red or...any colour...light blue. You (lit. they) mostly make the ground of the carpet red. Yes, you (lit. they) make it red. (BK)

Here the narrator starts out by using constructions in the 2SG (bokā-n=et estefāda kaney, gēṣ=a kan-e(y)) and then switches to the 3PL construction (ġermez=a kan-ant, ġermez=a kan-an) in the very same passage. It is clear that she includes herself in the referential properties of these constructions, since she is a weaver and therefore sometimes herself performs the tasks she describes. She potentially also includes the addressee, the linguistic researcher, in case she would like to try the craft of weaving. If the addressee was a weaving apprentice, she11 would definitely be included in the referential framework of the construction. It is thus possible to apply an impersonal interpretation both to the 3PL and the 2SG construction in this example.

Ex. 21

pa aḍddārdī-ā pas-ay pōst-ā gwarā=a kan-ant pas-e(ā)
for bone.ache-OBL sheep-GEN skin-OBJ on=VCL do.PR-3SG sheep=IND

11 In this culture it is only the women who weave.
For pain in the bones, you (lit. they) put on a skin from a sheep. When you kill the sheep, you pull off its skin. You (lit. they) fold the skin and heat it up. At night you (lit. they) pull off the clothes of the sick person and you (lit. they) put the skin on him. (BT)

This example allows for a similar interpretation as ex. 20. The speaker, who himself knows about traditional medicine and therefore can be expected to cure people with pain in the bones, is included in the referential framework. He starts out with a 3PL construction (gwaray-ā), then uses two 2SG constructions (kuš-ay, kašš-ay), and then again four 3PL constructions (patāy-ant, sōč-ant, kašš-ant, day-ant). The addressee, although in this case a linguistic researcher, i.e. an outsider, could probably also be included in the referential framework of this construction in case he would need to treat somebody with pain in the bones. It is also likely that the very same construction would be used to instruct somebody from within the culture who would like to learn this skill (see also ex. 20).

Summary
An interesting observation is that the two constructions with 3PL and 2SG verbs seem to be interchangeable in procedural texts, making the referential framework of the 3PL construction able to also include the speaker and the addressee, thus allowing for an impersonal interpretation. The distinctive features of the 3PL construction versus the 2SG construction encountered in narrative texts are thus not present in procedural texts. This observation contradicts Siewierska’s conclusion that the 3PL construction does not readily include the speaker and the addressee within its referential framework.

3. Conclusions
The present corpus proved to be a rich source for the investigation of constructions with an impersonal or vague human agent in Balochi. There are three main constructions found in the corpus, those with the verb in 3PL, those with the verb in 2SG, and those with a passive verb.12

12 The construction with 3SG verb is limited to one specific verb and is also found only in BS. Another interesting impersonal construction has, in fact, been observed by the authors in spoken Balochi, but it is not attested in the corpus. This construction uses mardum ‘people’ with the verb in the singular for an impersonal human agent. The same subject with a plural verb would denote a vague human agent (mardum=a kant ‘one does, you do (impersonal)’ versus mardum=a kanant ‘people do (vague)’).

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It seems that in Balochi the 3PL construction allows the speaker to distance himself/herself from the event somehow, particularly in narrative texts, but that this interpretation cannot be applied to the 3PL construction in procedural texts. Thus, the 3PL construction does follow the referential properties described by Siewierska (2008: 14–17) in narrative texts but allows for wider reference in procedural texts.

The referential properties of the passive construction do not seem to be as unrestricted as Siewierska suggests. In most examples of the passive construction a vague interpretation lies closer at hand than an impersonal interpretation. There is one example (ex. 15) where the addressee is definitely included and one where the speaker can be seen as included (ex. 17), but in most examples both the speaker and the addressee are definitely excluded.

The 2SG construction in narrative texts allows for an impersonal interpretation. It is also used totally interchangeably with the 3PL construction to include the speaker, and probably also the addressee, in procedural texts, which makes an impersonal interpretation possible for both these constructions in this type of texts. Thus, the 2SG construction in the examples from narrative texts (ex. 7–10) and the 2SG and 3PL constructions in the examples from procedural texts (ex. 20–21) are open to a truly impersonal (generic) interpretation.

These conclusions are similar to the conclusions drawn by Shokri (in the present volume) about the use of 3PL and 2SG impersonal constructions in Mazandarani, another Iranian language closely related to Balochi.

List of abbreviations and symbols

- separates a morpheme
= separates a clitic
Ø zero morpheme
1 first person
2 second person
3 third person
ADJZ adjectivizer
ATTR attributive
BK Balochi, Koroshi (Maryam Nourzaei’s corpus)
BP Balochi of Pakistan (Carina Jahani’s corpus)
BS Balochi of Sistan (Behrooz Barjasteh Delforooz’s corpus)
BT Balochi of Turkmenistan (Serge Axenov’s corpus)
CLM clause linkage marker
COP copula
DEM demonstrative
EMPH emphatic particle
GEN genitive
IMP imperfective
INCL inclusive
IND indefinite
INF infinitive
IZ ızāfa
LOC  locative
MIR  mirative particle
NEG  negative
NOMZ  nominalizer
NP  proper noun
OBJ  object
OBL  oblique
PC  pronominal clitic
PL  plural
PP  past participle
PR  present
PROH  prohibitive
PRON  personal pronoun
PT  past
SG  singular
SUB  subjunctive
VCL  verb clitic

References


Abstract
The aim of this article is to investigate impersonal constructions in the Sari and Ziyarat dialects of Mazandarani, a language spoken in the north of Iran. The language data used in this study are oral narratives, stories, and ethnographic texts.

Kitagawa (1990), Blevins (2003), and Siewierska (2008) are among those general linguists who have paid attention to this type of construction in recent years. Siewierska (2008: 3) defines impersonal constructions as “subjectless constructions, constructions featuring only a pleonastic subject, and constructions which lack a specified agent.” This study concentrates on the latter type, specifically on the use of 3PL and 2SG constructions to denote a non-specified agent.

Sometimes 3PL impersonal constructions are in the past tense, where there is a separation in time from the moment of speech, but some examples are in the present tense, which means that there is no time separation. In most examples, the addressee is excluded, but this is mainly due to the situation in which the corpus was gathered. In some of the examples it is obvious that the speaker wants to create a mental distance between him/her and the verb action. The construction is also used when talking about a taboo, perhaps to avoid the embarrassment of having to identify with the verbal action. In other examples, the 3PL construction lends more generality, and therefore more importance, to the verbal action. It can also exclude both the speaker and the addressee from the group of possible agents. The 2SG construction is used both in a similar way to the 3PL construction to talk about customs in a specific context in the past or present, thus excluding the addressee from the referential framework in this specific context, but probably not in all contexts. But this construction is also used to include both the speaker and the addressee as potential agents.

The general conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the 3PL construction is less inclusive than the 2SG. If the speaker wants to mark an exclusive interpretation (-speaker, -addressee) the only possible construction is the 3PL, and if the speaker wants to focus on the inclusive interpretation (+speaker, +addressee) the only possible construction is 2SG, but there is also a grey zone where both constructions are possible.

Introduction
This article deals with impersonal constructions in Sari and Ziyarat dialects of Mazandarani. The language data used in this study are oral narratives, stories, and ethnographic texts. Mazandarani is spoken in the north of Iran, south of the Caspian Sea and belongs to the northwest Iranian languages. It is thus closely related to Gilaki, Balochi, and Kurdish.

There is extensive discussion about impersonal constructions among linguists.

1 The text corpus emanates from two projects on which Carina Jahani and I have worked together; one project on Mazandarani, Sari dialect (here abbreviated S), and another project, supported by the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project with the cooperation of Dr Hossein Barani from Gorgan University, on the dialect of Mazandarani spoken by the Galesh of Ziyarat (here abbreviated Z), a village south of Gorgan. After Z, I use letters referring to the names of my informants.

2 For impersonal constructions in Balochi, see Jahani (in the present volume).
Kitagawa (1990), Blevins (2003), and Siewierska (2008) are among those who have paid attention to this type of construction in recent years. Their studies are interesting from a typological perspective. According to Siewierska (2008: 3) “the term impersonal is used in the literature to denote subjectless constructions, constructions featuring only a pleonastic subject, and constructions which lack a specified agent.” Blevins (2006: 237) takes a morphological approach and finds that some languages have “a distinctive type of impersonal construction occupying the communicative niche associated with passive constructions. This construction is obligatorily subjectless and usually receives an ‘active indefinite’ interpretation, in which the subject is construed as referring to an unspecified human subject, or to people in general.”

Impersonal subjects have different grammatical codings in different languages. One common construction described by Siewierska (2008) is the 3PL impersonal structure. Another common construction, not treated by Siewierska, is the 2SG construction found in, e.g., English.

Siewierska (2008: 23) concludes that “the referential range of the 3PL is the most restricted. 3PL impersonal constructions denote third person referents among which the speaker and/or addressee are hardly ever included.” Also Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990: 740, quoting Huddleston 1984: 288) argue that “[t]he personal pronouns are typically deictic and referential, especially in the 1st and 2nd person. That is, the 1st person forms refer to the speaker/writer, while the 2nd person refers to the addressee or a group including at least one addressee but not the speaker/writer.” They also distinguish between referential, impersonal and vague uses of pronouns, where “[r]eferential uses identify specific individuals”, “[a]n ‘impersonal’ use of a pronoun applies to anyone and/or everyone”, and “[a] ‘vague’ use applies to specific individuals, but they are not identified, or identifiable, by the speaker” (Kitagawa and Lehrer 1990: 742). Siewierska (2008: 9) uses the term impersonal for what Kitagawa and Lehrer call specific, and generic for what they describe as impersonal.

There are different constructions to denote an impersonal subject in Mazandarani. In this article I limit my study to the 3PL and 2SG impersonal construction. I focus on two dialects, for which there are corporuses available, the Sari dialect and the Ziyarat dialect, and my aim is to show how 3PL and 2SG constructions function as impersonal structures in my corpus. I want to study how and where 3PL and 2SG impersonal constructions include or exclude the speaker and the addressee; in other words the referential framework in these constructions will be discussed and compared with Siewierska’s conclusions. Each example will be discussed separately. The aim is thus to investigate whether Siewierska’s conclusions about the referential properties of the 3PL construction are also applicable to my study and what referential properties can be applied to the 2SG construction.

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3 It is worth noting that Blevins’s article is not directly connected to mine. However, his descriptions about differences between passive and impersonal construction specially on pages 486–487, 409, 507–508, where he characterizes impersonal construction and how they differ from passives, made many things clear to me while I was writing this article.
3rd person plural impersonal constructions

Our data contain many narrations about culture, customs, and ceremonies, as well as about village life in the past and present, cooking, weaving, etc. It is interesting to note that when the linguistic informants are speaking about their private life, their autobiography, and children, they often start out in the first person (either SG or PL depending on context), but when they speak about their culture, customs, and ceremonies, e.g. taboos in the society, and about cooking, curing diseases, or weaving and other handicrafts, they seemingly distance themselves from the situation by using the 3PL construction.

Ex. 1  ruznānenegār gut-en dige
       journalist tell.PST-3PL other
       (He) was called a journalist, you know. (ZA)

This is said by a woman describing the profession of a fellow villager. Here it seems that the speaker does not include herself in the referential frame of this construction. By using the 3PL she somehow indicates that this is a word she was not familiar with from the beginning. It may have been said by others, and she then learned it from them. Now, as is shown in the interview, she can use it herself. The addition of the word dige seems to indicate that the speaker thinks that the addressee is familiar with the word and would use it herself. The addressee, however, is not expected to know about this specific man, and therefore appears to be outside the referential frame of this example.

Ex. 2  vaxtike ejle=je dar=bi-yum-en
       when bridal.suite=from out=PREV-come.PST-3PL
       masan mard=re mard berd-e hammum
       for.example man=ACC man bring.PST-3SG bath
       When they came out of the bridal chamber, you know, the man was taken to
       the bath by a man. (ZA)

The speaker here narrates a popular custom in which she herself has also taken part at her own wedding. Here, however, she is referring to this custom with some distance and keeps using 3PL even though she is part of the referential framework. In this way she can speak more neutrally about a taboo subject, namely the customs surrounding the wedding night. The addressee, an outsider, is not part of the referential frame here.

Ex. 3  un me-br-e am=un kārxāne pāstorize
       DEM IMP-carry.PRS-3SG EMPH=DEM factory pasteurization
       me-go-n čiši me-go-n
       IMP-tell.PRS-3PL what IMP-tell.PRS-3PL
       unjā me-br-en unje me-raš-en
       there IMP-take.PRS-3PL there IMP-sell.PRS-3PL
       He takes (the milk) to the factory, it is called “pasteurization factory” or
       whatever it is called. They take it there (and) there they sell it. (ZAB)
There are two instances of the use of the 3PL in this example. By using the 3PL in the second part of the first sentence, the speaker wants to say he does not know if his usage of the word *pāstorize* is correct or not. He thus distances himself from this modern concept to a certain degree but at the same time he uses the word. Thus, he includes himself in the referential framework of this 3PL construction, but at the same time stresses that he is not a natural part of the framework. Again, the addressee may be expected to use the word *pāstorize*, but at the same time she is totally outside the referential framework of this example. The second sentence is an impersonal way of presenting what the milkmen do, and since neither the speaker nor the addressee is a milkman, they are not part of the referential framework of this sentence.

Ex. 4. *yek seri=re zamin e-dā-n a jangal*

one group=DAT land PREV-give.PST-3PL from forest

*ke birun ārd-en*

CLM out bring.PST-3PL

When the herdsmen were driven out of the forest, some of them were given land. (ZAB)

Here the 3PL construction is used by the speaker to refer to the government, which neither he nor the addressee is a part of.

Ex. 5. *gut-en bis ādem me-xā injе*

tell.PST-3PL twenty person IMP-want.PRS here

*da-bu hār-š-en ke in ārūs*

PREV-be.PRS.3SG PREV-look.PRS-3PL CLM DEM bride

*če kār hā-kerd-e čiši ēbe=e*

what work PREV-do.PST-3SG what become.PST.3SG=COP.PRS.3SG

People said that twenty persons must be there (and) see what this bride had done, what had happened. (ZN)

Here the narrator speaks about customs in her village in the past. People used to say that the wedding night and what happened that night in the house of the groom must be supervised by twenty people related to the bride. It seems that the speaker wants to mark a distance both mentally and in time to this old custom, or she may want to address a taboo with this impersonal construction. There is a feeling that she wants to exclude herself somehow from having said this herself. The addressee is an outsider and does not belong to the referential framework of this impersonal construction.

Ex. 6. *doxtar-ā=e de hame=re davat me-kon-en*

girl-PL=EZ village all=ACC invite IMP-do.PRS-3PL

All the village girls are invited. (ZR)

The narrator speaks about wedding customs in her village, of which she is also a part. In fact, she had just recently arranged a wedding and invited all the village girls and must therefore be regarded as part of the referential framework in this example.
It is possible that she uses the 3PL construction to show that this is not something only she would do, but that it is an important custom which everybody follows. The addressee is outside the referential framework of this example.

Ex. 7. *dige da-ne-m-gerd-ān-en ba-ver-en*
other PREV-NEG-IMP-return.PRS-CAUS-3PL PREV-take.PRS-3PL

*piyar=eš xāne*
father=PC.3SG house

Then they don’t take (her) back to her father’s house any more. (ZR)

Ex. 8. *ārus=e me-br-en hammum*
bride=ACC IMP-take.PRS-3PL bath

They take the bride to the bath. (ZN)

Ex. 9. *in jur rasm-ā dāšt-an*
this kind custom-PL have.PST-3PL

They had this kind of customs. (ZN)

Ex. 10. *nardebān=e m-ešt-en injē ābkaš-ā*
ladder=ACC IMP-put.PST-3PL here strainer-PL

*de-m-čind-an=o berenj-ā=re de-m-rit-en*
PREV-IMP-set.PST-3PL=and rice-PL=ACC PREV-IMP-pour.PST-3PL

*del=eš digē un vax de-m-rit-en*
inside=PC.3SG other DEM time PREV-IMP-pour.PST-3PL

*del=e deq*
inside=EZ pot

They put a ladder here, they put out strainers, and they poured the rice in them (lit. it), you know. Then they poured (it, i.e. the rice) in the pot. (ZN)

Again, in these examples, the narrators use the 3PL to describe wedding customs, of which all the villagers and also they themselves are a part. Two of the examples are in the past (ex. 9–10), where there can thus be a separation in time from the moment of speech, but two are in the present (ex. 7–8), which means that there is no time separation. Actually, even if the sentence about rice cooking is in the past, the addressee observed during her travels that rice is still cooked in the same way today. Again, the addressee is an outsider, and therefore not part of the referential framework.

Ex. 11. *gān-nene mardi ba-merd-e*
say.PRS-3PL man PREV-die.PST-3SG

The man is said to have died. (S)

The person who said this uses the 3PL construction to indicate that she does not have first-hand information about the death. She has heard about it from someone else. Thus she is not part of the referential framework of the 3PL construction. De-
pending on the context, it may or may not be known to the speaker whether the addressee has first-hand information about the death but the possibility cannot be excluded. In a context where the addressee has asked about the death, it is clear that he/she has no information, but in another context, the speaker may ask an addressee for confirmation. Thus, here the speaker is not part of the referential framework but the addressee may be part of it.

Ex. 12. dar-e da-vend mere vind-ene  
   door-ACC PREV-close.PRS 1.ACC see.PRS-3PL
   Close the door, people are seeing (can see) me. (S)

In this example, the speaker and the addressee are excluded from the discourse. The two of them see each other, but that is not relevant in the context. The 3PL construction here refers to others, who are not supposed to be able to see the speaker.

2nd person plural impersonal constructions

In this section examples of the 2SG impersonal construction will be discussed.

Ex. 13. e har liāz-i ba-gu-i bā mard-ā  
   from every aspect-IND PREV-say.PRS-2SG with husband-PL
   sāzeš dāšt-en  
   adaptation have.PST-3PL
   They cooperated with their husbands in all areas (of life) that one could think of. (ZR)

Here the referential frame of the verb bagui ‘you.SG say’ is very wide and includes any possible referent, including the speaker and the addressee. The addressee is particularly in focus here.

Ex. 14. ba-gu-i sevā hā-kārd=bu-n  
   PREV-say.PRS-2SG separate PREV-do.PST=COP.PRS-3PL
   ārus ba-še=bu xāne dige  
   bride PREV-go.PST=COP.PR.3SG house other
   ne-m-bie  
   NEG-IMP-become.PST.3SG
   If you assume that the new bride would become independent (and) go somewhere else (to live), that would never happen. (ZN)

Like in the previous example, the referential frame of the verb bagui ‘you.SG say’ is very wide and includes any possible referent, including the speaker and the addressee, with a special focus on the addressee. Note also the other impersonal construction in the 3PL in this sentence, which here refers to a more specific group of people, namely those living in the village in former times.
Then, from here, you had to take the child and go on foot to the town.  (ZA)

This sentence refers to the difficult communications in past times, and the troubles a parent, including the speaker, had to go through when the child needed to visit a doctor in town. Thus, the speaker is here included in the referential properties of the 2SG, but since the addressee is an outsider, this situation would not apply to her.

It was difficult for people, you know. You took (the child) to the town (and) brought (it back). (ZA)

In the first sentence the noun ādem ‘man’ is used in the impersonal construction; in the second sentence it is the 2SG, which here, like in the previous example, refers to anyone who had a sick child, including the speaker, but not the addressee (see above).

Now it is easy for you, the car comes to your doorstep, you put (the child in it) and go. (ZA)

This example is uttered in the same context as the two previous examples, and the impersonal construction definitely includes the speaker and anyone else who would need to take someone from the village to town. Again, since the addressee does not live in the village, she is somehow excluded from the whole discourse.

For example, you had to go to Gorgan at 11 o’clock. (ZA)
The context is the same as the previous examples and, again, the speaker, but not the addressee, is part of the referential framework of this construction.

Ex. 19.

\begin{verbatim}
are ande unvax āzād bi-ye xu=re
yes so.much then free be.PST-3SG boar=ACC
ba-di=bu-i palang=re
PREV-see.PST=COP.PRS-2SG leopard=ACC
ba-di=bu-i... esā koje m-ell-an
PREV-see.PST=COP.PRS-2SG now where IMP-allow.PRS-3PL
molitezist age tefang=et sedā ba-kord-e
environment if gun=PC.2SG sound PREV-do.PST-3SG
m-ā-d denbāl=et
IMP-come.PRS-3SG after=PC.2SG
\end{verbatim}

Yes, then it was free; if you saw a boar, if you saw a leopard…

Now they don’t allow this. If your gun makes a sound, the (representative of the) Environment(al Agency) will come after you. (ZN)

Here the informant uses the 2SG form about a situation in the past that has changed in the present, which happened and happens to everybody in the village including the speaker herself, since she later in the text says that she has shot a lot of animals. The 3PL form mellan ‘they allow’, however, excludes the speaker, since it refers to an activity in which the speaker is not involved, i.e. to forbid hunting. The addressee is, as already noted, an outsider.

Ex. 20.

\begin{verbatim}
māye ba-zen-i lur dāšt-e=bu
leaven PREV-hit.PRS-2SG kind.of.cheese have.PST-PP=CO P.PRS.3SG
\end{verbatim}

If you use leaven, you can get lur (a kind of cheese). (ZAB)

In this sentence, the informant is describing how to make cheese. Here the 2SG refers to anyone who would like to make cheese, despite the fact that this is the local way of making cheese in this particular village. Everybody from the village and from outside who would like to try could make cheese this way. Therefore, this construction, which definitely includes the speaker, can also include the addressee.

Ex. 21.

\begin{verbatim}
čiz=e garm ke bo-xor-i sargijā
something=EZ warm CLM PREV-eat.PRS-2SG dizziness
me-ger-i
IMP-take.PRS-2SG
\end{verbatim}

If you eat something fiery you will get dizzy. (ZA)

Again, this statement with the 2SG impersonal construction applies without limitations and includes the speaker and the addressee.

The informant does not finish her sentence, but it is clear that she is implying that in former times the villagers were free to shoot animals, whereas nowadays the Environmental Agency will not allow them to do so.
Ex. 22. peyγambar nemāz va-xez-i nemāz=et=e
prophet prayer PREV-get.up.PRS-2SG prayer=PC.2SG=ACC
be-xān age vaçe=t yakvax mariz be
PREV-read.PRS if child=PC.2SG sometimes sick be.PST.3SG
hanu tārik be xās-e be-r-i maslan
yet dark be.PST.3SG must.PRS-3SG PREV-go.PRS-2SG for.example
(You had to) get up for the prophet’s prayer, do your prayer, if your child
was sick, (and) it still was dark, you (still) had to go. (ZA)

Here the 2SG construction is of a more limited nature, including the speaker but not
the addressee, who is an outsider. It also applies to a specific context in the past; i.e.
it is not relevant without any limitations.

Ex. 23. ha yaxte ke yām-i hanti bi ke
yes when CLM come.PST-2SG such be.PST.2SG CLM
kufte=o dige ba-tefte dige helāk=e zār
exhausted=and yet PREV-hot yet dead=and deplorable
bi dige
be.PST.2SG yet
When you came back you were exhausted, all hot, you were dead (tired) and
in a deplorable state. (ZA)

Again, the 2SG construction is of a more limited nature, including the speaker but
not the addressee, who is an outsider. It applies to a specific context in the past, and
here it is of particular relevance that the speaker herself has experienced this state.

Conclusion

The goal of this article is to demonstrate how the 3PL and 2SG constructions are
used in impersonal constructions in two dialects of Mazandarani; Sari and Ziyarat.

In most of the sentences with 3PL construction, the verbs are transitive, but also
intransitive verbs appear. Sometimes 3PL impersonal constructions are in the past
tense, where there is a separation in time from the moment of speech, but some ex-
amples are in the present tense, which means that there is no time separation. In
most examples, the addressee is excluded, but this is mainly due to the situation in
which the corpus was gathered. The addressee is not from the village, and is there-
fore not part of the cultural setting of these ethnographic texts. In ex. 11, the ad-
dresse could be part of the referential framework. The speaker, on the other hand, is
normally part of the referential framework of the 3PL constructions, contrary to
Siewierska’s conclusions (Siewierska 2008: 23). In some of the examples, however,
it is obvious that the speaker wants to create a mental distance between himself/her-
self and the verbal action (ex. 1, 3). The construction is also used when talking about
a taboo, perhaps to avoid the embarrassment of having to identify with the verbal ac-
tion (ex. 2, 5). In other examples, the 3PL construction lends more generality, and
therefore more importance, to the verbal action (ex. 6–10). Ex. 4 stands out as definitely excluding both the speaker and the addressee from the group of potential agents (see also ex. 19).

The 2SG construction is used both in a similar way to the 3PL construction to talk about customs in the specific village context in the past (ex. 15, 18, 19, 23) or in the present (ex. 16, 17, 22), thus excluding the addressee from the referential framework in this specific context, but probably not in all contexts. This construction is also used to include both the speaker and the addressee as potential agents (ex. 13, 14, 20, 21). Thus, Kitagawa and Lehrer’s (1990: 740, quoting Huddleston 1984: 288) argument that “the 2nd person refers to the addressee or a group including at least one addressee but not the speaker/writer” does not apply to impersonal constructions.

It is thus clear that the 3PL construction is less inclusive than the 2SG. If the speaker wants to mark an exclusive interpretation (-speaker, -addressee) the only possible construction is the 3PL, and if the speaker wants to focus on the inclusive interpretation (+speaker, +addressee) the only possible construction is 2SG, but there is also a grey zone where both constructions are possible. This conclusion is very similar to the conclusion drawn by Jahani for the related language Balochi, and makes it clear that adequate descriptions of impersonal constructions in a number of languages are indeed needed to refine the general linguistic analysis of these constructions from a typological perspective.

Abbreviations:
- separates a morpheme
= separates a clitic
1 first person
2 second person
3 third person
ACC accusative
CLM clause linkage marker
COP copula
DEM demonstrative
DAT dative
DEF definite
EMPH emphatic particle
EZ ezāfe
IND indefinite
IMP imperfect
NEG negative
NP proper noun
PC personal clitic
PL plural
PP past participle
PREV preverb
PRS present
PST past
SG singular

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References

Review Article

One Epos and Some Ruckus: In Search of Lost Sources of the Shāhnāme

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Abstract

Mohl, an early editor and translator of the Shāhnāme, began the discussion on Ferdowsi’s sources in the Shāhnāme in 1878. From that time until now, it has been one of main issues of discussion among experts on the Shāhnāme and Iranian culture. One can find various theories on Ferdowsi’s sources in the numerous works and articles which are published ever so often. One of the latest works in this field is Kumiko Yamamoto’s book The Oral Background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and Poetry.

In the present article, first, various theories about Ferdowsi’s sources are classified in three groups with reference to their proponents, and then each of these theories is critically and briefly analysed. After a detailed introduction to Kumiko Yamamoto’s work, it is evaluated in view of the different theories proposed for the sources of the Shāhnāme. The present author favours the theory of both oral and written sources in the genesis of the Shāhnāme, and, in light of this, some strengths as well as weaknesses of this work are discussed in this extended review.

Background

In the Qajar period, under the reign of Nāṣer al-Din Shāh (1848–1896), Mohl (1878), an early editor and translator of the Shāhnāme, started doing methodological research about the sources of this book.1 In his preface, even though he mentioned two types of sources, oral and written, he implicitly took a stand for oral sources. However, he started an interesting, long and, of course, important discussion, full of commotion. After some time, questioning Mohl’s view, Nöeldeke (1920: 62) claimed that the Shāhnāme was based only on one written source, most likely the book of Abu Maṣṣūr ʿAbd al-Razzāq, i.e. the Shāhnāme-ye maṣṣūr, of which only the preface remained.2 Minorsky (1964: 260–73), Taqizāde (1921: 17–33, 1362) and Qazvini (1363: 20) followed Nöeldeke and supported his theory. Following the theory of a written source, de Blois (1992: 122–124; 1998) added that Ferdowsi used more than one such source for his work. On the other hand, Mary Boyce (1957: 36; 2002) demonstrated the role of oral tradition in the transmission of the national legend and its influence on the Middle and New Persian epics.

1 Sincere thanks to Carina Jahani for comments on an earlier version of this review.
2 The Persian version of this preface was edited and published by Qazvini (1363: 30–90) and its English translation was published by Minorsky (1964: 260–73).

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From that time until now, the fire of this discussion has lived on and remained. Its flame has sometimes been very low, as if it was a clear and obvious matter that needed no further discussion or research; and sometimes it was so bright and shiny that researchers have assumed it definitely to be their task to write something about this important matter. After the publication of Lord’s (especially 1960, 1991) and Parry’s research (1971) about the oral storytelling tradition and poetry in Homer’s works and also on oral traditions of the Slavonic peoples, some scholars applied their findings to the case of Ferdowsi’s sources. This brought forth a new discussion about the sources of the Šāhnāme. After that, we constantly find new articles and books in this case trying to prove one of the above outlined views. Therefore, it is safe to state that the discussion is still alive.

In fact, these scholars can be divided into three groups according to their opinions on the sources of the Šāhnāme. The first group consists of those scholars who advocate a written source, mainly the Sassanian Khwatāynāmag through Abu Mansūri’s Šāhnāme. From this group we can mention Khāleqi Motlaq (1372; 1998; 1381; 2009) and Omidsālār who, in an interview (published in Ruyānī, 1386: 32), declared: “Ferdowsi had Abu Mansuri’s prose Šāhnāme in front of himself and his art was that he changed it into verse as simply as he could”.

The second group are the supporters of oral sources who hold the narrations of ancient minstrels, named Gōsān, and storytellers in the early Islamic period to be the main source of the Šāhnāme. Boyce (1957; 2002), Davidson (1994; 2000), and Davis (1996; 1999) can be placed in this group. Among them, Davidson (1994; 2000) attempted to interpret the Šāhnāme as an oral composition; Ferdowsi, according to her view, not only inherited the older Iranian oral tradition, but also as an oral poet re-created new Persian oral poetry. 4

Finally, in the third group, we can see the scholars such as Ṣafā (1333; 1374) and Bahār (1374) who take the middle way and believe that Ferdowsi used both written and oral sources. According to this view, the old, rich, and popular tradition of oral storytelling, performed by narrators, was prevalent among all Indo-Europeans, especially the Aryan tribes that inhabited the Iranian plateau. For a very long time, this tradition had preserved and transmitted ancient Iranian myths, fictions, and epic legends, as well as historical events. Most probably, even some religious texts, such as the Avesta, were also preserved and transmitted in the same way. In each period, the oral storytellers have had different names, e.g. gōsān, xonyāgar, mohaddež, naqqāl, pahlavān, ‘āsheq. After the wider spread of writing, some of those narrations were written down.

The most famous work to appear by this process, the Sassanian Khwatāynāmag, was composed in western Iran with religious and political intentions. In the Islamic

3 Khāleqi Motlaq supports a written source of the Šāhnāme. In his various works, especially the latest one, i.e. Az Šāhnāme ta Khodāynāme (2009) he points to some of the books which were written before Ferdowsi as direct and indirect sources of the Šāhnāme. In this book, he, with a peremptory tone, wants to close the door on any further research in this field.

4 As Hanaway (2008: 106) has pointed out, although Komiko has used an analytical method derived from the excellent work done by Gaillard (1987) on the prose romance Samak-e ‘Ayyār, she has also been influenced by Lord and Parry’s theory.
period, probably with patriotic motives, this book was translated into Persian as the Abu Manṣūrí’s *Shāhnāme*, and shortly after Ferdowsi used it for the *Shāhnāme*. An important neglected point is that the writing down of those narrations did not cause the extinction of this popular and important tradition. Thus it continued up to the time of Ferdowsi and he borrowed widely from it. Moreover, most of the later epics and mythological-fictional works in the Islamic era have been formed under the influence of this oral tradition. It is obviously clear that writing and versifying them in the *Shāhnāme* and other epic and fictional works did not annihilate this important and popular tradition. Even down to the present day, before the wider spread of mass media, especially radio and television, the tradition of oral storytelling was commonly encountered.

Among the latest efforts to answer the question about the sources of the *Shāhnāme* is Kumiko Yamamoto’s book, *The Oral Background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and Poetry*. Kumiko Yamamoto has a PhD (2000) in Persian literature and Iranian studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. The book is based on her doctoral dissertation supervised by Philip G. Kreyenbroek. Now she is an independent researcher on Persian literature specializing in Persian epics and oral studies. She has written on the storytelling tradition (*naqqāli*) for the forthcoming *New History of Persian literature*.

**Introduction to the book**

Yamamoto believes that the question whether Ferdowsi used oral or written sources for the *Shāhnāme*, which still dominates academic discussion, has already been answered and that further research in this matter is fruitless. It seems, according to her, that this issue cannot be proved with certainty in the absence of the relevant information on the textual tradition of the *Shāhnāme*; none of the potential written intermediate sources between the *Khwātāynāmag* – a hypothetical source of the *Shāhnāme* and other related works – and the *Shāhnāme* itself have been preserved down to the present. Therefore, the main aim of Yamamoto’s book is to determine how the oral tradition interacted with the written one in the emergence of the *Shāhnāme*. It is not her intention to argue that the *Shāhnāme* is an oral epic because much evidence and strong reasons suggest that we are faced with a written and literary epic. Nonetheless, she maintains, it is questionable to pursue the traditional approach of arguing for written sources, because none of the primary texts have survived. This approach has, moreover, kept many from recognizing other aspects of the *Shāhnāme*, notably its stylistic and formal characteristics, which theories of oral composition may help to explain: e.g., recurring story motifs, formulaic expressions, and particular plot structures of stories of the *Shāhnāme*. Thus, Yamamoto wants to recognize the *Shāhnāme* as a written epic strongly influenced by oral tradition.

This work, as she maintains, will not deal with whether Ferdowsi used written or oral sources, but rather how oral tradition interacted indirectly with writing in the

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5 See more about these three groups, in Hassanābūdī (1386; 1387).

6 When the writer of this paper was a child, he was personally present at some storytellers’ gatherings in Mashhad, Khorāsān.
genesis of the *Shāhnāme*. The main question, as she claims, addressed in this book is therefore the broader one of the role and the influence of oral tradition in the early written Persian epics (Yamamoto 2003: xix). To find the truth about the sources of Ferdowsi’s work, she believes that instead of relying on external evidence, we should rely on the *Shāhnāme* itself.

There are some references to both types of sources, oral and written, in the *Shāhnāme*. Phrases such as *I heard* (شنیدم), and *it is narrated* (روایت گردید) refer to oral sources, and at the same time phrases such as *I saw or read in a book* (در کتاب خواندم/شدیدم) or *someone read from the ancient book* (برخواند از گفته باستان) clearly refer to written sources. Yamamoto’s purpose, of course, is to search deeply in both the surface and the deep structures of the *Shāhnāme* (in a non-linguistic sense), and to make comparison with the structure of stories narrated by storytellers and minstrels.

In her introduction, the author maintains that in order to recognize the role of oral tradition in the genesis of the *Shāhnāme* and other written epics, she will review the spread and transmission of Iranian national legends, beginning from antiquity and ending with the written epic tradition. Ancient material was synthesized and recast into a new literary form intended for a Muslim audience.

In order to fully recognize both what Ferdowsi inherited and what he himself created, it is necessary to understand the process in which both written and oral traditions played a part in transmitting the national legend. Up to now, the written tradition, i.e. the *Shāhnāme* itself, has been studied extensively. However hardly any studies have been made about the oral tradition as of yet. Yamamoto therefore intends to concentrate on the role of oral tradition in the predominantly written environment in which the *Shāhnāme* was composed or compiled. After this introduction, she proceeds to present a brief history of the discussion about Ferdowsi’s sources.

The first chapter deals with the technical nature of oral tradition and its methodological problems as well as the roots and the sources of the *Shāhnāme*. Since the inquiry into the background of the *Shāhnāme* has reached an impasse, another line of approach can be used which is, in fact, more useful and helpful. It is actually time, she says, to shift our attention from the background of the *Shāhnāme* to its actual characteristics and to its influence on later Persian literature. This new perspective will enable us to concentrate on specific features of the *Shāhnāme*, some of which may be explained by the factors of oral tradition and folklore as Rypka has suggested (Yamamoto 2003: 8). She has also reviewed the Oral Formulaic Theory (OFT),7 one of the key theories about oral literature. In the rest of this chapter, she briefly introduces this theory and some of its criteria, claiming that

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7 The Oral Formulaic Theory (OFT) began with Parry’s studies on the Homeric works and became widely known with the publication of Lord’s The Singer of Tales in 1960. In this book, Lord expanded Parry’s unfinished study with an emphasis on South Slavic oral poetry. According to this approach, a set of tests were proposed to determine the orality of a work. These tests had been applied to as many as 150 separate epic traditions. Some of what scholars had once considered “defects” of the *Shāhnāme* (e.g., repetition of phrases, scenes, and episodes) were, in fact, positive signs of orality (for more information, see Foley 1985; 1988; 1990).
the *Shāhnāme* has many features that can be reviewed from the point of view of this theory.

In the second chapter, beginning with a brief explanation of the Oral Performance Model and of *naqqālī* (Iranian oral storytelling), the author seeks to explore the universe of *naqqālī*: its historical background, its formal features, audience, and environment (a coffee house, a naqqāl, a disciple, and the people), and the manner of its performance. The narrative material was generally drawn from the Persian epics like *Shāhnāme*, *Garshāsp-nāme*, *Farāmarz-nāme*, *Borzu-nāme*, *Bahman-nāme*, *Jahāngir-nāme*, *Sām-nāme*, *Khāvarān-nāme*, *Rostam-nāme*, and *Mokhtar-nāme* or from the romances like *Abu-Moslem-nāme*, *Dārāb-nāme-ye Tarsusi*, *Hamze-nāme*, *Samak-e ‘Ayyār*, *Eskandar-nāme*, *Dārāb-nāme-ye Bigāmi*, *Hoseyn-e Kord-e Shabestari*, and *Amir Arsalān*. She then proposes an Oral Performance Model (OPM) and a set of criteria for explaining the possible influence of oral tradition on written text. This forms the basis of her Oral Performance Model in which she focuses on the influence of oral tradition on written records.

Then, referring to a *tunḏumāt* (more or less complete notes used by the storyteller at a performance) and its structure, she has reviewed an oral narrative, Zariri’s *Dāstān-e Rostam va Sohrāb: Revāyat-e naqqālān* (The story of Rostam and Sohrab: the storyteller’s narrative), as an Oral Performance Model. In this analysis, she applies some formal and thematic criteria based on various features of oral performance, which she claims have been obtained from some samples of *naqqālī* performances.

In chapter three, based on some evidence from *Tārikh-e Beyhaqi*, the author has shown that in the Ghaznavid period, poets, musicians, minstrels, and storytellers had an important position at the court. Among them, the role of storytellers was the most important, due to their access to the private quarters of the princes – which poets and minstrels did not have. Yamamoto therefore provides a historical framework of the role of naqqāls in the Ghaznavid period. After that, and before applying the Oral Performance Model to the *Shāhnāme*, she proposes the possibility of indirect influence of oral tradition on the *Shāhnāme* based on internal and external evidence provided from the *Shāhnāme*. She quotes Ferdowsi’s statements about his sources, oral or written, and shows their distribution in a table, together with a list of the names of the different kings mentioned in the *Shāhnāme* (Yamamoto 2003: 68–73). At the end of this chapter, she concludes that Ferdowsi was at once both a transmitter and an evaluator of ancient traditions, which he preserved in written form. Ferdowsi’s dual perspective on the traditions is most discernible in the stories of the Rostam cycle, where he sought to incorporate popular, and perhaps oral, stories into his work (Yamamoto 2003: 80).

In the fourth chapter, the author’s aim is to apply the Oral Performance Model to one of the stories of the *Shāhnāme* (the story of Rostam in the reign of Keykhosrou) and thus to develop the OPM and apply it to a written text. She begins with the episode of Forud and ends when Keykhosrou kills Afrasiyāb and Garsivaz. By applying formal criteria of OPM to the story, she explains how it can be divided into suc-

* For his complete biography and this work, see: Doostkhāh (2003).
cessive parts. Then she applies thematic criteria of OPM to determine to what extent these divisions can affect the thematic structure of the stories. She finds some or several repetitions and two major digressions. One of the obvious repetitions is found in the stories where Tus is sent to fight with Afrasiyāb to avenge Syāvosh, where everything, for the most part, goes the same way until Rostam arrives. Other repetitions are found in the story of Keykhosrou in Gang-Behesht and in Gang-Dezh. The digressions, as Yamamoto maintains, are the stories of Akvān-Div and of Bizhan and Manizhe, where there seems to be no organic connection with Keykhosrou’s war with Afrasiyāb, the central theme of the section. She holds that these repetitions and digressions can be seen as signs of influence from oral tradition and can be explained by OPM as well.

After comparing this part of the Shāhnāme with the same narrative in Tabari and Sa’ālebi, Yamamoto divides this section of the Shāhnāme into several parts and, although she holds that the formal criteria do not apply so much in this section, she analyses its parts based on the formal and thematic criteria. She claims that by applying such criteria to this story one can determine the extent of the influence of oral tradition on its structure. After this, she concludes that this story is strongly influenced by oral tradition, or perhaps that Ferdowsi even based it wholly on oral tradition. The results of the Oral Performance Model appear to indicate that Ferdowsi may have used oral performances conducted in a form comparable to naqqālī as his sources in composing some parts of the Shāhnāme but, in spite of this, she holds that Ferdowsi’s work is worthy of appreciation.

In the last chapter, Yamamoto argues that if oral tradition played a role in the genesis of the Shāhnāme, as she tried to prove in the previous chapters, the question arises as to whether it continued to be influential in later epics. To find an answer, after providing some explanations about later epics, she applies the same model to the Garshāsp-nāme of Asadi. Then she deals with the influence of the Shāhnāme in the formation of later epics or secondary epics, based on their poets’ understanding of the Shāhnāme. Of course she frequently emphasizes that although the compilers of later epics have constantly paid attention to Ferdowsi, and the later epics have been created under the influence of the Shāhnāme and its success, those authors, contrary to common opinion, do not merely imitate or reproduce the Shāhnāme. As a result, these later epics have their own characteristics of style, motifs, and content, which means that they must be redefined as a different genre. One of the most important differences is that the later epics are not necessarily concerned with the national tradition. They focus not on kings, but on heroes of the Sistani tradition, which is different from the national legend. Furthermore, the shift from kings to heroes is accompanied by structural and generic changes in the epics. In this, Asadi, the author of the Garshāsp-nāme, is the first. Therefore, after a general introduction to the Garshāsp-nāme, the author tries to apply OPM to one of its stories to determine the extent of influence of the Shāhnāme on the Garshāsp-nāme as well as the degree of similarity and difference between them. In addition, she tries to evaluate

9 Apparently, the basis of this division, in addition to the linkage of content, is the possibility of performance at one gathering by a naqqāl (storyteller).
the influence of oral performance on the Garshāsp-nāme, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

In her short conclusion, the author emphasizes again that this study has sought to clarify the role of oral tradition in the development of the Persian written epic tradition. In order to accomplish this, Yamamoto’s perspective has shifted from the origin of the Shāhnāme – the issue in which everything is examined except the text in question – to the characteristics and structure of the text itself. She holds that this study is an attempt to understand to what extent the epic poets’ understanding of the nature of heroic stories was shaped by storytelling; and to answer the question, she has proposed an alternative approach to the study of oral tradition. She holds that what ultimately distinguishes oral literature from written literature is the factor of “performance”, and therefore she has paid particular attention to the naqqālī performance, and has proposed a set of criteria for determining the influence of oral tradition on written epics. Such criteria are, in this study, called the “Oral Performance Model” including formal and thematic criteria (Yamamoto 2003: 140). Her final remark is that the influence of oral tradition on Persian epics was pervasive but indirect; Ferdowsi was not a naqqāl himself. In some parts of the Shāhnāme, such as the stories of Rostam, one can see characteristics ultimately derived from the requirements of oral performance; afterwards these characteristics became integral elements of the new genre of written epic poetry as can be seen in the later epics.

Review

Considering the Shāhnāme as a written epic, Yamamoto tries to clarify the concept of oral tradition and evaluate its role in written tradition. Therefore, she first tries to specify the elements of oral tradition, and then to extract them through a tumār-e naqqāl, and after that, to demonstrate them in the Shāhnāme, as the greatest sample of written tradition and in the Garshāsp-nāme, a later epic. By doing so, she wants to increase our knowledge of oral tradition and cast new light on this less studied point of Iranian culture. Based on naqqālī as a living sample of Iranian oral tradition in heroic stories, the work demonstrates some formal and stylistic aspects of oral performance and reveals the ways by which oral performance influenced the structure of written texts. Due to the shortage of estimable works about naqqālī, Yamamoto’s description and analysis of this tradition is very important and useful, and it may be relevant to both oralists and Iranists. The author’s approach is to shift the attention from Ferdowsi’s sources to certain specific features of the Shāhnāme itself to determine what role oral transmission might have played in its formation. She reviews the Oral Formulaic Theory developed by Lord and Parry and Propp’s theory of function in Russian fairy tales (1968) and other formalist approaches, while she herself knows that Lord and Parry believed that oral and written tradition are mutually exclusive and cannot coexist in the same text. In order to gain knowledge about probable features of oral tradition, she has noticed Iranian naqqālī and

10 The tumār-e naqqāl (the scroll of a storyteller) is a more or less complete story text, a kind of manuscript transmitted from master to disciple and used as notes to aid the memory in the oral performance.
has tried to obtain an example for the Oral Performance Model. By doing so, she has
defined two groups of criteria: formal criteria for dividing the text into successive
parts, and thematic criteria, which explain how these divisions can be influential in
the thematic organization of the text. These criteria, according to her, are based on
evidence from the tunmārs (see fn. 9), which are used in the process of traditional
oral storytelling. By reviewing the naqqāli’s narratives, she divides them into different
parts such as chapter and episode according to main motifs and narrative de-

vice. In the episode divisions, she considers narrative markers, which are generally
used to indicate a shift of focus, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>از آن/این جانب، از آن/این روی</td>
<td>on one/the other hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اما بشنو از</td>
<td>but listen from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اما چند کلام عرض کنیم از</td>
<td>now it must be known that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حال بايد دانست كه</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and temporal markers which signal a temporal sequence of events or internal divi-
sions of an event or action, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>که در آن وقت</td>
<td>at the time when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>گاه</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ناگاه</td>
<td>suddenly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>چيچ</td>
<td>When</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>پس</td>
<td>afterwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She then divides each of them into subsets. She believes that Oral Performance
Model (OPM) can reflect the orality of written epics. She reconstructs the OPM with
these criteria for determining the influence of oral tradition on written narrative. By
applying this model to the Shāhnāme and the Garshāsp-nāme, she tries to investi-
gate the general or overall influence of pre-existing oral tradition on written story
texts and to assess the extent of this influence. In fact, this study demonstrates the
complex process whereby orality interacts with written tradition in the genesis of the
Shāhnāme and the Garshāsp-nāme. In both cases, the explanation is somewhat
over-ambitious and it seems that Yamamoto wants to make up for deficiencies in the
OPM when it is applied to a written text by quoting numerous examples.

In her book, Yamamoto has shown that the Shāhnāme is an important text that we
can use to examine the theories of epic compilation and the interaction of folklore
and literature. With this description of the Shāhnāme, it is clear in advance that she,
following Lord and Parry, will be a proponent of oral sources for the Shāhnāme. In
addition, she criticizes the earlier approaches to the epic, in particular Davidson’s re-
cent efforts, in her two latest works Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings
(1994) and Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Literature (2000), which
have applied the Oral Formulaic Theory to the work of Ferdowsi to an extreme de-
gree. This criticism is itself very admirable. In fact, Yamamoto disapproves of
Davidson’s view that the Shāhnāme has come into being as part of an oral tradition,
a view which, also in my opinion, rests on a series of assumptions that cannot be
supported by the Shāhnāme. She finds that Davidson has not paid enough attention
to the internal evidence within the Shāhnāme (Yamamoto 2003: 66–67).

Yamamoto’s book is constructive in that it introduces a new approach to the
Shāhnāme and produces a consistent and systematic analysis of its stylistic features. It is also critical of previous approaches to the Shāhnāme. In addition, such findings about the Shāhnāme can increase our perception and understanding of later epics which, known as imitations of the Shāhnāme, have generally been neglected from a theoretical perspective. Although the compilers of later epics have viewed the Shāhnāme as a model, at the same time they have been the best critics of the Shāhnāme and the neglect of them is indeed a problem. To make up for this important neglect, Yamamoto has examined the Garshāsp-nāme and tried to apply her model to this work too. Thus, she has reviewed how it diverges from the Shāhnāme. She has paid particular attention to the differences in element, which are related to oral tradition in these secondary epics.

Consistency, as Venetis (2006) maintains in his review, is one of the distinctive features of Yamamoto’s work in terms of applying a useful transliteration system in her text, footnotes, and bibliography. She is also consistent in her arguments and general analysis of her topic. However, I find her strong stance in favour of oral sources of the Shāhnāme questionable. There is, of course, no evidence at hand, which refers to the Abu Mansuri’s Shāhnāme as the only direct source for the Shāhnāme; although it probably has been the latter’s most important written source. It certainly seems that Ferdowsi has used several other sources as well, many of which have now been lost. Due to the complete loss of Abu Mansuri’s Shāhnāme, apart from its preface, as well as its main source, the Sassanian Khwātāyānāmag and the Arabic translation of the latter by Ebn-e Moqaffa’, to determine the Shāhnāme’s sources with certainty is not only difficult but seemingly impossible. Of course, we know that before the compilation of the Sassanian Khwātāyānāmag, Iranian historical legends and epic narratives were orally transmitted by storytellers. There is no evidence for the destruction of this way of transmission; on the contrary, there is clear evidence that this tradition was alive until not only the time of Ferdowsi, but also until recent times especially in the east of Iran, the homeland of this oral tradition.11 It seems that Ferdowsi, in writing of the Shāhnāme, had access to both types of sources: a large number of written historical-epic works and a multitude of oral heroic-fictional narratives. These two types of sources will have provided a large and probably confused mass of mythological, heroic, and historical information in a narrative form. They were full of numerous characters and episodes, and many non-epic elements such as magic, demons, jinnees, and fairies, which could be both confusing and puzzling. We may consider Haft Lashkar (Afshārī & Mādāyeni 1377), which is based on oral narratives and thus can represent the characteristics of oral tradition, as a sample of what can have reached the hands of Ferdowsi.

Above all, the most important thing not considered by Yamamoto is Ferdowsi’s lofty purpose with his work, and his complete confidence in it. If we do not take that into consideration, we will obviously do him an injustice. Ferdowsi had a deep belief in this purpose, along with a marvellous talent for understanding his time, a great mastery of the Persian language, proficiency in poetry, a correct knowledge of epic poetry and its characteristics, etc. Helped by all of this, he made a perfect selec-

11 For more information, see Hassanābādi (1386).
tion among those numerous chaotic oral and written narratives and with a poetic spirit, set them to serve his patriotic aim. In the Shāhnāme, there are many references implicitly referring to both oral and written sources of the work, but the most direct one is this verse which refers both to “heard”, i.e. oral, and “seen”, i.e. written information, in this case a lack of such information about the Arsacid dynasty.

&azir
dr
nA
nA
h
m
m

Because I have heard nothing except their names
Nor have I seen (anything about them) in the book of the kings

After the Shāhnāme, the later written epics were not only strongly influenced by it, but it can even be said that, from the viewpoint of stylistic characteristics and linguistic-literary features, their writers imitated it. In other words, the Shāhnāme’s greatness and popularity and Ferdowsi’s mastery caused all of the epic poets to follow it so closely that one can even find some of the Shāhnāme’s phrases and hemistichs in their works. In addition, although it is in the naqqāli tradition that we find out what the Shāhnāme’s stories were like in popular and oral versions, it is also true that afterwards the naqqāli tradition versions were derived from the Shāhnāme. The naqqāli tradition now at hand is not the pre-Ferdowsi tradition. In fact, we have few sources for the stories in the Shāhnāme that predate Ferdowsi’s version. Thus, the epic and heroic stories of naqqāls cannot have remained free from influence and imitation of the Shāhnāme. In fact, those stylistic characteristics, which Yamamoto has extracted from the stories of the naqqāls and on which she has based her argument to prove orality in the Shāhnāme, are indeed derived from the Shāhnāme.

Some of the formal and thematic criteria Yamamoto refers to might be found in both oral and literary tradition. What is written and what is oral? How can we define as oral a phrase or a motif that is attested in a text probably written centuries before the oral tradition? How can we prove that this oral criterion is indeed oral, when we do not have the actual paradigms of storytelling from that period? The characteristics of the Shāhnāme may well instead have been transferred to the naqqāli tradition, and the Shāhnāme is the first place where we can see these formal and thematic features, since there is nothing available of the pre-Ferdowsi oral tradition and its features. So, to extract these features from a later tradition than the Shāhnāme, to prove the influence of orality on a prior written tradition, i.e. the Shāhnāme, as Yamamoto does, does not appear to be logical and reasonable. On the other hand, is the empirical approach of contemporary storytelling processes a safe guide to use retrospectively when studying classic Persian literature? This point always seems to be at stake in works about the oral and/or literary character of a text. Yet Yamamoto in her analysis does not address this issue adequately. However, as Elton Gay (2006) also notes, Yamamoto’s book offers an important approach for reading the Shāhnāme and understanding the relationship between oral tradition and literary tradition.

The author has dedicated a part of the book to reviewing the storytelling in the Gaznavid court based on Tārikh-e Beyhaqi, thus illustrating the importance of storytelling in its historical context, which is very useful. Yamamoto has paid specific at-
tention to the structural topics of the *Shāhnāme* and the *Garshāsp-nāme*. If she had reviewed the historical and political features of the time which resulted in the genesis of such a great work as the *Shāhnāme*, her achievement would have been more useful and more comprehensive. It would also have been useful if she had paid attention to storytelling in the early Islamic period, to how the pre-Islamic Iranian national legends were preserved in the *Shāhnāme* and Persian secondary epics, and to how they interacted with other cultural and political frameworks in Arabic and Turkish. Even in making a broader assessment about the storytelling in the Gaznavid court, as Venetis maintains (2006), these points could be more useful and practical.

One of the most important differences between the *Shāhnāme* and other Persian fictional works, whether epic or non-epic, whether written or oral, is the difference in motivation of their authors, which directly or indirectly originates from the social and political conditions of the time. One of the most important incentives, perhaps Ferdowsi’s main motive in composing the *Shāhnāme*, as far as we know, was a political-national (patriotic) motivation, which the later epic-fiction authors as well as oral tradition storytellers did not share. Such a motivation is very important but Yamamoto, as Aquil (2004) also maintains, has not noticed this important matter and the political features of the time that influenced Ferdowsi’s decision to write the *Shāhnāme*. This was a time of foreign intervention, after the Arab invasion, and when Turkish dynasties were established in eastern Iran. Even though these Turks managed to end the Arab power and influence in this area, they were inattentive to Iranian heroic and epic stories, and, were considered as aliens and enemies by the Iranians. The research in this field, i.e. the political and social issues of the time as well as Ferdowsi’s purpose when he versified the *Shāhnāme*, is not directly related to Yamamoto’s research, but these factors have caused differences between the *Shāhnāme* and other Persian literary works, and could effectively explain some unsolved issues.

One of the faults of the Oral Composition Theory is that it disregards written aspects of a text. This is a serious failing when studying the *Shāhnāme* because literary techniques and written devices, to various degrees, are clearly visible in this epic. It seems that the way of investigation and analysis of written epics, especially the *Shāhnāme* is completely different and totally separated from that of oral tradition, and that each of them requires its own specific methodology. Although one may be able to find some common features in both of them, they belong to two entirely different traditions. These differences can be seen in terms of their authors, their audiences, and their ways of narration. Moreover, as it was said above, the most important difference is the aims of their authors. Apparently, Lord and Parry were aware of these differences and, as Yamamoto herself says, they believed that oral and written traditions conflict with each other and cannot be gathered in a single work.

The narrative traditions of each nation are different from those of other nations. Thus, theories and methods applied to Homer’s poems or the south Slavic oral traditions are not readily applicable in the case of the Iranian epic tradition. For a more correct judgment and proper achievement, Yamamoto would have had to take the whole *Shāhnāme* into account, as well as many oral performances and *ṭumārs*, but

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she has reviewed only one section of the Shāhnāme and just one tumār. Her Oral Performance Model is based on very little direct evidence, which is a fundamental weakness, of which, however, the author is aware. It is based on only one published tumār, Zariri’s Dastān-e Rostam va Sohrāb: revāyat-e naqqālān (1369), which was all she had at her disposal at the time of writing.

On the other hand, because the oral traditions have so far usually not been written down (i.e. there are very few tumārs which present the full oral narration), a study of the kind Yamamoto undertakes is a very difficult project. Nevertheless, Yamamoto could have paid more attention to unpublished tumārs. As Hanaway (2008) maintains, the tumārs in manuscript form contain interesting information that Yamamoto has missed since it was missing in the published version of the tumār which Yamamoto has used, for example, handwritten narrative markers related to the mode of narration, or the special arrangement given to the story by the storytellers. It is no secret that tumārs can provide us with important information beyond the words written on the page, and the manuscript of Dastān-e Rostam va Sohrāb is a good example of this. Facsimiles of only two pages are provided, but each page has marginal notes in the author’s hand within a frame around the main text block. Page 41 (showing the final page of the story) has five sectional sub-headings in the margin, with no obvious place marked in the text for them to be inserted. In the published version, four of these five headings have been inserted into the printed text (which ends before the place for the fifth heading) (Zariri 1369:369–371). Exactly where to insert these headings was a decision of the editor, not the author, and can therefore be questioned. There are also blank spaces in the middle of sentences in the tumār, which are sometimes followed by what could be a temporal or narrative marker, but sometimes not, and in the latter cases, it is difficult to see what the function of these gaps could be. Finally, a small symbol is used to mark the divisions between migra’s and bayts in the lines of verse. The editor has inserted much punctuations (commas, periods, exclamation marks, question marks) and paragraph indentation that are not in the original. If all this is evident from two pages, more would surely appear with a careful scrutiny of the entire manuscript.

As the author has compared the oral naqqāli tradition to the written Shāhnāme and has found some similarities in phrases and structure in both traditions, she should also compare the Shāhnāme with some written Pahlavi texts prior to or contemporary with the Shāhnāme to find some probable common features between them. It is clear that the Shāhnāme reflects both oral and written characteristics. Thus, any attempt to limit the text to one of these two and to prove that it is based on only one type of source is condemned to failure and reduces the magnitude of Ferdowsi. The logical result of such an approach would be that Ferdowsi was either a professional storyteller without any esteemed goal or a poet whose only achievement was to versify already written narrations.

There are also some points to mention about Yamamoto’s final bibliography. She

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12 Akbarzāde (1379), of course, has done such a study of the historical part of the Shāhnāme and has achieved some interesting results.

13 For more discussion, see Hassanābbādi (1387).
has frequently used books which generally advocate oral sources of the *Shāhnāme* and confirm her theory such as the works of Mahjub (1383), Davis (1992; 1996), and Davidson (1994; 2000), while ignoring some useful works, such as Khāleqi Moṭlaq’s important and critical studies (1372; 1377; 1381; 2009), which are not included in her bibliography. The most important and strange thing is that we cannot see any references to the books of Bahār (1374), who was also an advocate of the oral transmission of Iranian epic materials. This is a fundamental weakness of her study.\(^{14}\)

### Conclusion

By writing the *Shāhnāme*, Ferdowsi became one of the founders of the Persian literary language and, at the same time, he is a protector of Iranian culture and civilization. The *Shāhnāme* has an important place in any study of comparative epics or theories of epic composition, as well as in the studies of comparative mythology and interaction of oral and literate cultures. From this viewpoint, Yamamoto’s book must be appreciated due to the fact that it introduces a new approach to reading the *Shāhnāme* and offers a comprehensive and systematic sample for analysing stylistic features of this Iranian epic.

As Venetis (2006) notes, it may also be viewed as a useful contribution to the scholarly debate about the oral or literary origins of the *Shāhnāme* and an important introductory work to the study of later epics that were heavily influenced by Ferdowsi’s work. One hopes it will stimulate further analysis in this important and largely unexplored field of Persian literature.

### Sources


\(^{14}\) In my opinion, any study in the field of the *Shāhnāme* and other Iranian epics would be incomplete without reference to the scholarly works of Khāleqi Moṭlaq and Bahār.
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Majzub, Moḥammad Ja’far (1383). Adabi-yār-e ʿāntīyā-ne Irān, Tehrān.


Ruyānī, Vahid (1386). Rowzane-i be Šāh-nāme (Gīftogu bā Šāh-nāme-pazhūhān), Tehran.


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Trotz dieser Verdienste übertreibt der Klappentext, wenn er verspricht: „There is no other book which considers the topic so systematically […].“ Denn der Leser muß schon sehr bald feststellen, daß der Anspruch auf systematische Behandlung des Themas schon auf den ersten Seiten in sehr ernüchternder Weise an seine Grenzen stößt, so daß Cooks Buch in puncto Systematik mit den Klassikern der wissenschaftlichen Literatur zum islamischen Märtyrertum, selbst wenn diese schon bedeutend älter sind, bei weitem nicht konkurrieren kann (es sei hier nur auf Kohlberg 1997, Noth 1966 und Wensinck 1922 verwiesen).


Cooks Verständnis des Märtyrertums ist aber nicht nur in historischer und philologischer Hinsicht angreifbar. Auch inhaltlich verfügt sein Begriff des Märtyrers nicht über feste Grenzen und ist somit über weite Strecken seines Buchs hinweg nicht viel mehr als eine inhaltlich
leere Floskel, die er auf beliebige Figuren nach nicht klar nachvollziehbaren Kriterien anwendet. Zu einem kaum akzeptablen Resultat führt diese fehlende Festlegung etwa bei der Einordnung des ersten Muezzins Bilāl als „one of the paradigmatic first martyrs because of his suffering for the sake of Islam“ und zwar „although he did not die“ (!) (S. 14; vgl. auch S. 13) sowie von Ahmad b. Hanbal als „an example of a martyr figure who did not actually die“ (S. 50). Wenn es jedoch ein Merkmal des Märtyrers gibt, das über alle Epochen und Kulturen, Disziplinen und Herangehensweisen hinweg nie in Frage gestellt worden ist, dann ist es die Notwendigkeit, daß der Märtyrer für sein Bekenntnis sterben muß – Cooks zögerlicher eingeklammter Hinweis, daß das Ende von Märtyrern „usually death“ sei (S. 2), reicht da zur Klärung natürlich nicht aus. Der Tod eines Märtyrers ist kein akzidentielles oder fakultatives Merkmal dieser Figur, sondern ein unverzichtbares Wesenselement, ohne das jegliche Unterscheidung zwischen Märtyrern und Opfern, Diskriminierten und Verfolgten unmöglich wird und jede Auseinandersetzung mit dem Märtyrertum einem ziellosen Herumfahren auf einem uferlosen Ozean gleich. Indem Cook mit Bilāl eine Person, die nicht in Folge ihres Islam-Bekenntnisses stirbt, in seinen Kanon der Märtyrer aufnimmt, gibt er diesen von praktisch der Gesamtheit der Märtyrерforschung respektierter theoretischer Konsens ohne erkennbaren Grund oder Nutzen, sondern zum großen Nachteil seiner Darstellung auf. Zwar bleibt diese methodische Inkonsequenz über weite Strecken des Buches unsichtbar, dies aber nur deshalb, weil sie durch eine weitere Folgerichtigkeitsverletzung neutralisiert wird. Diese zweite Inkonsequenz besteht in dem (vor dem Hintergrund dessen, was man vor der Lektüre von Cooks Buch schon über das Märtyrertum weiß, wenig überraschenden) Verzicht darauf, in Analogie zu Bilāl jegliche Figur, die für ihren Glauben oder ein sonstiges Bekenntnis mißhandelt wird, aber ebenfalls nicht stirbt, als Märtyrer zu klassifizieren (was Cook nach seinem eigenen Maßstab eigentlich hätte tun müssen). Die theoretische Verwässerung und Untauglichkeit von Cooks Märtyrerbegriff fällt einem also deshalb nicht ständig ins Auge, weil Cook die sich aus ihr ergebenden Konsequenzen nicht sieht und rein intuitiv nicht die zahlreichen Figuren behandelt, die er aufgrund seiner offenkundigen Verwässerung des Märtyrerbegriffs eigentlich aufnehmen müßte. Cooks einsame Klassifikation Bilāls als „Märtyrer“ ist im übrigen auch deswegen kaum nachvollziehbar, weil die von ihm gegebene Begründung, der erste Gebetsrufer sei „one of the paradigmatic first martyrs“ gewesen, auch im Hinblick auf die autochthone islamische Tradition ohne Beleg auskommen muß. Bilāl wurde niemals von signifikanten Strängen islamischer Überlieferung als Märtyrer verehrt, und schon gar nicht hat er ein Märtyrer-Paradigma gebildet, sondern höchstens ein Opfer- oder Verfolgten-Paradigma.

Der von ständigem Hin und Her gekennzeichnete schwankende Umgang Cooks mit dem zentralen Terminus seines Themas zeigt sich vor dem Hintergrund des im letzten Absatz Festgestellten auf Seite 46 dann noch einmal in typischer Weise. Dort heißt es: „Given the sensitive issue of Muslims killing Muslims there can be no accurate or absolute definition as to who precisely is to be counted as a martyr“ [Hervorhebung M.H.]. Indem Cook hier ganz offensichtlich das Merkmal des Tötens in seine Definition des Märtyrertums aufnimmt, widerspricht er seiner oben kritisierten Vorgehensweise indirekt selbst, wobei das Charakteristische für seinen Umgang mit der Terminologie ist, daß er diesen Widerspruch selbst entweder nicht bemerkt oder ernst nimmt und ihn jedenfalls auf einer unterschwelligen Ebene bestehen läßt. Cook macht einander widersprechende Aussagen, ohne erkennbares System. Genau dasselbe gilt im übrigen für die oben zitierte Feststellung, daß Ahmad b. Hanbal „not actually“ gestorben sei. Irgendwie scheint sich Cook also intuitiv bewußt zu sein, daß Märtyrer eigentlich für ihre Sache sterben – er verfügt aber nicht über die nötige begriffliche Klarheit, um die theoretischen Konsequenzen daraus zu formulieren.

Von entlarvender Oberflächlichkeit bleibt die Charakterisierung des Märtyrertums auch im Rest des ersten Kapitels. So liest man auf Seite 2 zwar den Satz „Therefore the martyr himself/ herself becomes a living definition of the intrinsic nature of the belief system for which he or she was willing to die“. Hier ist zwar einerseits das volitionale Element korrekt benannt, das in jeder Märtyrerfigur enthalten ist. Martyrium setzt nämlich selbstverständlich einen aktiven,
bewußten und eigenständigen Entschluß und das Bekenntnis des zukünftigen Märtyrers voraus. Umso überraschender ist es dann aber, zu lesen, daß Cook einigen Märtyrern attestiert, sie würden „unwilling(ly)“ auftreten. Denn es heißt auf Seite 2: „The martyr changes that equation (whether he or she is willing or unwilling).“ [Hervorhebung M. H.] und auf Seite 7: „Martyrdom in Judaism during the millenia after Eleazar became increasingly important as many Jews, both willingly and unwillingly, followed in his footsteps.” Wenn die Juden, die „auf den Fußspuren Eleazars wandelten“, nun aber teilweise „unwilling“ waren, dann waren sie eben keine Märtyrer im Sinne der notwendigen Eigenschaft ihres vorab erfolgten Bekenntnisses, auf dessen Wichtigkeit Cook selbst in Form der willingness to die auf Seite 2 hinweist.

In beiden Zitaten ist sich Cook offensichtlich nicht bewußt, daß es einen unwilling Märtyrer überhaupt nicht geben kann. Jemand, der getötet wird, ohne zuvor in irgendeiner Form seine Anerkennung oder sein Bekenntnis eines bestimmten Glaubenssystems öffentlich gemacht zu haben (was eben nur „willingly“ geschehen kann), ist „nur“ ein Todesopfer. Die oben angeführten Zitate gehörten daher umformuliert oder durch einen Hinweis ergänzt, daß in ihnen die Grenze des selbst unter eine erweiterte Märtyrerdefinition Subsumierbaren überschritten wird.


Vor dem Hintergrund des über die Maßen schwammigen und willkürlichen Gebrauchs des Terminus martyrdom durch Cook ist seine despektierliche Kritik am säkularisierten Gebrauch des arabischen Wortes shahīd, daß nämlich „this broadened terminology for martyrdom reaches the ridiculous when we find secular or even communist parties calling their fallen shuhada‘“ (S. 136), ein geradezu spektakuläres methodologisches Eigentor. Denn zum einen wirft seine Behauptung „In general, these secular (or at least not overtly Islamic) martyrdoms do not have the characteristics of classical martyrdom, and need not be discussed further“ (ebenfalls S.
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136) natürlich die Frage auf, warum Cook diese angeblich nicht diskussionswerten Fälle dann doch als „martyrdoms“ qualifiziert. Vor allem jedoch haben wir ja im vorausgehenden Absatz gezeigt, daß Cook selbst an anderen Stellen seines Buches durchaus auch „martyrdoms“ berücksichtigt, die er selbst offensichtlich nicht als „classical“ ansieht. Indem er den angeblich nicht „klassischen“ Status kommunistischer und anderer „Martyrien“ als Argument ins Felde führt, begeht er also einen theoretischen Selbstwiderspruch. Abgesehen davon gibt Cook an keiner Stelle seines Buches einen Anhaltspunkt dafür, was denn unter einer „klassischen“ islamischen Märtyrergeschichte eigentlich zu verstehen sei (so wie er im übrigen auch an anderer Stelle eine Märtyrer-Kategorie einführt, ohne sie zu definieren, und zwar den „literal martyr“ auf S. 153).

Den Höhepunkt der terminologischen Unstimmigkeit erreicht Cook im Umgang mit seinem Thema, das ja „Martyrdom in Islam“ (Hervorhebung M.H.) lautet, dann schließlich mit der Bemerkung „not all of the martyrdoms recorded from this jihad were of Muslims“ (S. 91), worauf in vollem Ernst die Darstellung des Todes einer christlichen (!) Märtyrerin folgt, die von muslimischen Invasoren im Äthiopien des 16. Jahrhunderts einer Kirche verbrannt wurde. Man fragt sich natürlich unwillkürlich nicht nur, was das Martyrium einer Christin in einem Buch über islamisches Märtyrertum überhaupt zu suchen habe, sondern auch, warum Cook dann nicht ebenfalls die wohl in die Zehntausende gehenden Opfer der muslimischen Expansion der vorausgehen den Jahrhunderte (die aufgrund seiner nebulösen, jeden Getöteten und sogar auch andere Person als „Märtyrer“ würdigen Terminologie analog miteinbezogen werden müßten) ebenfalls als Märtyrer in seinem Buch würdigt.

bemitleidenwerten Opfer angeglichen wird, was er per definitionem jedoch nie ausschließlich sein kann. Es liegt nahe, daß die selektive Blindheit Cooks bei der Diagnose dieses Märtyrer-Mechanismus in den von ihm analysierten Texten auch etwas mit einer anachronistischen, durch die christliche Kultur entscheidend mitgeprägten und diese nicht zu relativierenden fähigen Herangehensweise zu tun hat, die summa summarum auf eine (wenngleich möglicherweise unbewußte) Verletzung des Objektivitätsbestrebens, im Dienste eines christlichen Vorurteils hinausläuft. Man braucht wohl nicht zu betonen, was dieser Verlust an Objektivität im Hinblick auf die Akzeptanz seines Werkes als unvoreingenommene Darstellung des muslimischen Märtyrertums bedeuten kann.

Zum Teil eine Folge des sorglosen Umgangs mit der Terminologie, zum Teil aber auch Resultat des dadurch beeinflußten selektiv blinden Umgangs mit den Quellen ist auch Cooks Interpretation der dschihadistischen Märtyrerdichtung des Mittelalters (S. 121–124). Obwohl es in den zitierten Gedichten eindeutig um den Aufruf zum Dschihad im Sinne einer aktiven und aggressiven militärischen Bekämpfung der Feinde des Islams geht, beschränkt sich Cook am Ende seiner Textanalyse auf die Hervorhebung der Todesverachtung, die in derartiger Kriegsdichtung zum Ausdruck komme: „Death is often spoken of as a treasure that needs to be claimed, and contempt for the fear of death is a major feature in the jihad and martyrdom poetry“, S. 124. Indem er sich auf den todesverachtenden Aspekt der dschihadistischen Märtyrerdichtung beschränkt, kommt er dann im nächsten Satz zu der Schlüßfolgerung, daß „this theme can hardly be said to be confined to Islam.“ (ebenfalls S. 124). So weit, so gut. Daraus in einem weiteren Nachsatz jedoch die These zu entwickeln, daß „the poetry of martyrdom in general contains few overtly Islamic references and usually employs these heroic themes“ ist ein Irrtum, der auf der durch die obige verkürzende Interpretation herbeigeführten zweifelhaften, jedoch Cooks Analyse beherrschenden These beruht, daß „contempt for death“ das wichtigste oder sogar einzig charakteristische Merkmal des islamischen Dschihad-Märtyrertums sei. Die in langen Jahrzehnten der Märtyrerforschung (begonnen bei Wensinck) zur Genüge herausgearbeitete Tatsache, daß nicht nur die Bereitschaft, selbst zu sterben, sondern vor allem die, andere zu töten, ein Merkmal derartiger dschihadistischer Interpretationen des islamischen Märtyrertums ist, bleibt völlig unerwähnt. Auch wenn man angesichts militärisch aggressiver christlicher Märtyrerfiguren wie des Hl. Georg nicht behaupten kann, daß diese Eigenschaft „con fined to Islam“ sei, ist es in der Dschihad-Literatur dennoch quantitativ und qualitativ so dominant, daß seine Würdigung als zentrales islamisches Merkmal der besprochenen Märtyrernarrative unvermeidlich gewesen wäre.


Wie in historischen Überblicksdarstellungen, die eine extrem große chronologische und geographische Bandbreite abzudecken versuchen, nicht selten anzutreffen, führt die Not-
wendigkeit zum Verkürzen und Raffen in einigen Passagen Cook zu Darstellungen, die ergänzungs- oder nuancierungsbedürftig sind. So erweckt der folgende Passus den Eindruck, daß die von Muḥammad angeführte islamische Urgemeinde durch ihnen zugefügte Verfolgungen und Folterungen zur Emigration nach Yathrib gezwungen worden sei, wogegen der durchaus vorhandene sehr aktive und radikale Beitrag der Muslime zum Bruch mit der mekkanischen Gesellschafts- und Religionsordnung unterbetont bleibt: „What persecutions did go on were directed against a fairly small section of the group, [sc. die frühen Muslime – M. H.] and only one person is said to have died. The tortures that were inflicted upon Bilal and Sumayya were individual rather than institutional in nature and were not sustained over a lengthy period of time. However, for the early Muslim community itself there is no doubt that these experiences were traumatic and ultimately led to the emigration (hijra) of the community to the oasis town of Medina, approximately 150 miles north of Mecca.“ (S. 14). Hier wird eine Kausalität zwischen Verfolgung und Folter einiger, wie Cook betont, weniger früher Muslime und der Auswanderung der ganzen Gemeinschaft suggeriert, die den historischen Fakten nicht gerecht wird.

Einem in der jüngeren Zeit in umfassenden Darstellungen über „den“ Islam nicht selten anzutreffenden und offenkundig eine Erwartungshaltung breiterer, auch nicht-wissenschaftlich interessierter Leserkreise bedienenden Hang zur Generalisierung und zu Vergleichen disparater historischer Perioden gibt sich Cook dann auf Seite 96f. hin. Obwohl es in dem Kapitel konkret über sufische Strömungen des Hochmittelalters an der islamischen Peripherie geht, weitet Cook seine Schlußfolgerung unversehens auf „Islam“ (in general) und „Gemütlichkeit“ (in general) und „Vergleich“ (in general) und „Vergleich“ aus: „Compared to Christians, Muslims have tended to missionize using syncretistic tactics that did not emphasize the testimonial value of martyrdom to win over a given population. Part of this trend is probably due to the fact that missionization and conversion in Islam has not been (in general) until the present time the result of some group-initiated intensive drive“. Liest man jedoch zum Vergleich, daß Cook wenige Seiten später über den abbasidischen Chefrevoluti- när Abū Muslim schreibt, er sei ein Teil der abbasidischen „propaganda and military machine“ gewesen und „began to acquire the aura of a martyr among the Persian-speaking population“ (S. 109), dann hat man an einem der zentralen und folgenreichsten Wendepunkte der islamischen Geschichte doch an äußerst prominenter Stelle genau jenen „testimonial value of martyrdom“, dessen Zweck die Missionierung war und der nicht auf synkretistische Methoden, sondern auf die blanke Gewalt setzte.

Ganz unhaltbar ist ferner die Behauptung Cooks, daß das Märtyrertum in der türkisch-is- lamischen Welt eine im Vergleich zur arabischen nur untergeordnete Rolle spiele (Seite 84: „But overall, the role of martyrs (as opposed to Sufi holy men) within Turkish history does not appear to have been that great.“). Schon dadurch, daß er sogar in seinem fast ausschließlich auf arabischsprachigen Quellen beruhenden Buch immer wieder auf türkische Quellen zurückgreift, widerlegt er diese These selbst. So weist er zu Recht auf die Bedeutung der Märtyrer-Figur des al-Ḥallāj in der türkischen (und persischen) Literatur hin (S. 68). Auf Seite 111–113 werden sodann „Turkish epics“; darunter die Leyla und Madschnun-Version Füzülis und das Baṭṭāl-nāme, zu Recht als türksprachige Interpretationen des islamischen Märtyrertums behandelt. Die von Cook in Verkennung dieser von ihm selbst ausgewerteten Texte postulierte vermeintliche geringe Bedeutung des Märtyrers in der türkischsprachigen islamischen Welt ist eine Fata Morgana. Ihr Erscheinen beruht auf einer Perspektivverschiebung, die vielleicht mit einer bewußten oder unbewußten Geringerbewertung nicht-arabischen und vor allem türkischen Materials (als ‚weniger repräsentativ‘ für den ‚wahren‘ Islam) durch Cook erklärt werden könnte. Tatsächlich gibt es zahllose türkische Quellen mit vielfältigen Märtyrervergeltungen (vgl. Heß 2006a, Heß 2006b, Heß 2008a), die allerdings zum großen Teil noch der wissenschaftlichen Erschließung harren. Im übrigen wird man wohl nicht falsch liegen, wenn man hinter der essentialisierenden Beschränkung Cooks auf arabische Quellen jene Form des proarabischen Vorurteils vermutet, in dem sich konservative Muslime und ein Großteil der modernen Orientalisten bis heute einig sind und bei der die (im Vergleich zu den arabisch

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Eher störend wirken in Cooks Buch schließlich auch verschiedene Bemerkungen über den Buddhismus, die entweder nicht nachprüfbar oder effektiv falsch sind. So ist auf Seite 14 die Rede von „faiths which were either deprived of worldly success for their formative period of existence (like Buddhism and Christianity)“. Warum sollte man den Buddhismus angesichts seiner klassischen Literatur ausgewiesener raschen Bekehrungserfolge jedoch als „deprived of worldly success“ bezeichnen? Der von Cook angestellte Vergleich mit dem Christentum legt nahe, daß er sich unter „Erfolg“ hier vermutlich politischen beziehungsweise militärischen „Erfolg“ vorstellt. Da der Buddhismus zumindest in seiner Formationsphase auf solchen im Gegensatz zu den abrahamitischen Religionen jedoch überhaupt nicht abzielte, ist es natürlich unangemessen, hier von einem Mißerfolg sprechen zu wollen. Auf welche Figur sich die Behauptung „Buddhism allows for martyrs to be aggressive in certain ways“ (S. 23) bezieht und ob es für diese These Nachweise gibt, bleibt ebenfalls offen.

das Martyrium des 1191 hingerichteten Šihāb ad-Dīn as-Suhrawardī besprochen worden ist, beginnt der letzte Absatz auf der Seite mit „Another similar figure was Šihāb ad-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, usually called Suhrawardi al-maqtul ...“. Dies erweckt den Eindruck, als ob man es hier mit zwei Personen des Namens Šihāb ad-Dīn as-Suhrawardī zu tun hätte – in Wahrheit handelt es sich um ein und dieselbe. Eine logische Inkonsequenz im Aufbau liegt auch auf Seite 70f. vor, wo von der chronologischen Darstellung von Figuren, die selbst Märtyrer geworden sind (‘Ayn Al-Quḍāt Al-Hamadānī, Šihāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī), mit Rūmī plötzlich zu einer Figur übergegangen wird, die selbst kein Märtyrer wurde, aber über solche schrieb. Hier fehlt es an einer klaren Darstellungsmethode. – Ob Cook schließlich zumindest die Titel der von ihm zitierten Literatur in anderen Sprachen als Englisch und Arabisch in allen Fällen selbst lesen und verstehen kann ist angesichts diverser bizarrer und falscher Titelwiedergaben fraglich (siehe etwa S. 28, Fußnote 22 ad Conrad, wiederholt auf S. 187, oder S. 195, s.v. Martyrologium).

Insgesamt stellt Cooks Buch alles andere als eine erschöpfende und befriedigende Behandlung des gestellten Themas dar, wenn es für den Anfänger auf dem Gebiete auch nützliche Elemente bietet mag. Insbesondere die Tendenziosität und die groben handwerklichen Mängel zwingen aber selbst den Amateur zur Heranziehung anderer Werke, will er sich eine einigermaßen verlässliche Vorstellung vom Märtyrertum im Islam bilden.

Zitierte Literatur

Michael Reinhard Heß, Berlin
In the 19th century, the French Orientalist Jean Joseph Bargès pioneered the modern study of Medieval Karaism by publishing three works by the 10th century Karaite translator and commentator Japheth ben Eli: in 1846, *Rabbi Yapheth ben Heli Bassorensis Karaïtae in librum Psalmorum comentarii Arabici*, a selection of his commentary on the Psalms; in 1861, *Kitāb az-Zubūr li-Dawud al-malik wan-nabīy: versio à R. Yapheth ben Heli Bassorensis Karaitâ*, an edition (in Arabic script) of his translation of the Psalms into Arabic; and in 1884, *In Canticum canticorum commentarium arabicum*, an edition (in Arabic script) of his translation and commentary on the Song of Songs. Each was accompanied by a translation into Latin. For the editions he relied upon MSS in Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The edition of the Song of Songs is said to be made *ex unico Bibliothecae Nationalis Parisiensis manuscripto codice* (MS Hébreu 293, copied in 1626). Since then a number of his works have been published, and the early 21st century has witnessed the publication of *Königspsalmen und karäische Messiaswartung: Jefet ben Elis Auslegung von Ps 2.72.89.11 0.132 im Vergleich mit Saadja Gaons Deutung*, by Friedmann Eissler (2002); *The Arabic translation and commentary of Yefet ben ‘Eli the Karaite on the book of Esther*, by Michael Wechsler (2008); *Japheth Ben Ali’s book of Jeremiah: A critical edition and linguistic analysis of the Judaeco-Arabic translation*, by Joshua Sabih (2009); and *Perush Yefet ben ‘Ali le-Sefer Hoshe’a*, by Meira Polliack and Eliezer Schlossberg (2009). To this revival of editions can be added a similar revival within studies on Medieval Karaism, no doubt enhanced by the renewed access to the magnificent collections of manuscripts in Russia. Now Joseph Alobaidi, Professor of Bible Theology and Languages at the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception, Dominican House of Studies, Washington DC, has published Japheth ben Eli’s commentary on the Song of Songs as volume 9 in the series *Bible in History*. This series was inaugurated with another work by another Karaite translator and commentator edited by Professor Alobaidi, *Le commentaire des Psaumes par le qaraïte Salmon Ben Yeruham: Ps 1–10* (1996), and in volume 2 of the series, *The Messiah in Isaiah 53: the commentaries of Saadia Gaon, Salmon ben Yeruham and Yefet ben Eli on Is 52:13–53:12* (1998), he edited the translations and commentaries of the two Karaites on this pivotal text.

In the Preface, Alobaidi indirectly suggests why he has published the present work, namely that Judeo-Arabic texts are essential for the history of Biblical interpretation and for the history of Judaism. Unfortunately he does not discuss his reason for not making a critical edition of the text, i.e. for not using all the MSS available today. Instead he introduces the only MS he has used, MS Bibliothèque Nationale Hébreu 293, the same MS used by Bargès in 1884, as “the only complete Manuscript known to date of the commentary of Yefet ben Eli on the Song of Songs”, and provides no further discussion. This is a major disadvantage of the present work. A search in the database at the *Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts*, Jerusalem, reveals that there are at least 15 MSS of this work. To them can also be added another MS, MS O Nova 791 at Uppsala University Library (Hebrew script, beginning absent and without date). Several of these are, to be sure, incomplete but, one would hope that MSS from as early as the 11th century would excite any editor. One reason for making what is in fact a re-edition of the work by Bargès may be more or less pragmatic, namely to make the text of Japheth ben Eli available for the purposes outlined in the preface rather than establish a critical text of the translation and commentary. Yet we now know that the transmission of the texts of the works by Japheth ben Eli was complicated: originally composed in Arabic in Arabic script, they were later transliterated into Hebrew script, the significance of which is discussed by Michael Wechsler in the introduction to his edition of Esther. The very late Hebrew script MS used in this work may thus be understood to represent a final stage of this transmission. Of the other MSS available, two (unfortunately incomplete) MSS are from the 11th century, one of which, MS British Library Or. 2554, is in Arabic script and is understood to have been finished in

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1005, i.e. when Japheth ben Eli was possibly still alive. Such an understanding may explain a number of the textual problems commented upon by Al obaidi, e.g. on Cant. 1:8, ban-nāšîm rendered (in the MS) al-nās. Rather than speculating about whether “Yefet seems alluding to the original meaning” of nāšîm (p. 165) we may here have an example of the vicissitudes of the text during the transmission.

After the presentation of the MS with its prescript and postscript (pp. xi–xii), follows the section Masoretic text of the Song of Songs with Yefet ben Eli’s translation, together with an English translation of the Arabic text in Hebrew script, i.e. as it appears in the MS (pp. 1–24). After that follows The commentary of Yefet ben Eli on the Song of Songs. The Judeo-Arabic text by Yefet ben Eli (pp. 25–145), i.e. the edition proper. The text is thus to be understood as a transcription of the text in the MS, although the language at times is “corrected” by the editor, just as deviations from Classical Arabic are frequently noted in the comments accompanying the translation. Checking his text against the text of the first verse of the Song of Bargès reveals a number of differences, but this may only indicate different readings of the same MS. To this should be added at least one misprint, Hebrew ḫē instead of ḥē in a quotation of Cant. 8:11 (p. 3). Likewise there are a number of differences between the Uppsala MS on the one hand, and either edition of MS Hébreu 293 on the other hand. The longest section of the book is the English translation of the commentary (pp. 145–328), accompanied by notes on the text. On page 145 it is explicitly stated that the translation is not a translation of the Masoretic text of the Song of Songs but of the text as understood by Japheth ben Eli. This is not the place to discuss the translation in detail, but a few remarks are not out of place. Crucial for the Karaites, including Japheth ben Eli, was how to understand the concept of maskiлим, i.e. the preachers and teachers who settled in Jerusalem in the 10th century. From an early gloss on Ps 74:1 by the Karaite David al-Qūmîšî (late 9th century), it is evident that the Karaites understood the Biblical word as meaning “teacher”, not “master” as translated by Al obaidi. Here, as well as elsewhere, Al obaidi seems to prefer to remain independent of scholarship on the Karaites, referring only to his own research in the comments. Finally the translation is accompanied by an index of Biblical quotations.

A major problem is to understand who the assumed reader of the book is. It was suggested above that the work may have been published for more or less pragmatic reasons. Striking, however, is the lack of any introduction contextualizing the work with a biography of Japheth ben Eli, not to mention any presentation of the Karaites, their history, and teaching. The only information of this type is found on the back of the book where it is mentioned that Japheth ben Eli was active in the second half of the 10th century, and the scattered pieces of information in the notes to the translation. Any reader not initiated into the history of Biblical interpretation and the history of Judaism, including the history of Medieval Karaism, is thus unfortunately more or less left without proper guidance in this respect.

The book is mainly to be commended as a re-edition of the work by Bargès, all the more so as this no doubt may be rare today, just as a translation into English is more helpful than the Latin translation of Bargès. It is only to be regretted that Al obaidi does not pay his respects to the founder of Karaite studies, Jean Joseph Bargès. Instead we are left still awaiting a modern critical edition of Japheth ben Eli’s Arabic translation and commentary on the Song of Songs.

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1 The life of Japheth ben Eli is summed up in the introduction to Michael Wechsler’s edition of Esther mentioned above.
2 See for instance Daniel Frank, Search scripture well (2004), p. 18, where this is discussed.
In recent years we have witnessed an upsurge in Karaite studies, including editions of Karaite Bible translations and commentaries. In the course of a few years, the commentary by Japheth ben Ali of Hosea has been edited by Meira Polliack and Eliezer Schlossberg (2009) and his translation and commentary of Esther has been edited by Michael G Wechsler (2008). An edition of his translation and commentary on Psalms 2, 72, 89, 110, and 132 has also been produced by Friedmann Eissler (2002). To these editions can now be added an edition by Joshua A Sabih of Japheth ben Ali’s translation of Jeremiah. This is not the first time that Japheth ben Ali’s text on Jeremiah has been edited. In 1969 Philip David Wendkos edited it as The Arabic Commentary of Yefet b. Ali the Karaite on the book of Jeremiah: 150 folios edited from three MSS with critical notes. Here is should also be mentioned that Eliezer Schlossberg has suggested that the translation of the latter prophets in MS Hunt. 206 actually is the translation by Japheth ben Ali.3

The work here reviewed was originally submitted at Copenhagen University in 2006 as a thesis for the degree of Doctor Theologiae. In chapter 1, Introduction, Sabih states that the point of departure for his investigation is the poly system theory of Itamar Even-Zohar. This theory holds that linguistic features are to be described and explained in terms of functions within a system of meaning and within a socio-cultural context, and it has been applied to Medieval Jewish literature in the Islamic world by the late Rina Drory in her discussions of the functions of Hebrew and Arabic among Jews during the High Middle Ages.4 The stated goals of the thesis are (1) to investigate the status and function of the Arabic language and Arabic script in the medieval Karaite literary system [part I, chapters 1-6] and (2) to make a linguistic and textual investigation for the purpose of editing Japheth ben Ali’s [Hebrew] Biblical text, transcribed into Arabic script, and his Arabic translation of the Book of Jeremiah. This edition is followed by a translation of the edited text into English as well as the linguistic discussion [part II, chapters 7-13]. Not found in the book is any presentation of the medieval translator, Japheth ben Ali, or of the Karaites, a heterodox Jewish group with roots in the 8th century Iraq. Japheth ben Ali’s verse-by-verse commentary is also excluded.

Chapter 2, Middle Arabic, discusses Middle Arabic and concludes by defining it as a literary variety that expressed the aspirations of the urban middle class much like the educated spoken Arabic of today, and competed with Classical Arabic for the same role and function. Noteworthy is that Sabih never touches upon the problems of the transmission of the texts, i.e. the role of the copyists in creating Middle Arabic. The importance of this is confirmed by a statement by Malachi Beit-Arié, quoted by Sabih, to the effect that at least in the Medieval Jewish society, copying a text was normally not assumed to be a task of exactly reproducing a text but rather of editing it. Thus one of the merits of Simon Hopkins’s Studies in the grammar of early Arabic is that it is based upon autograph documents penned by their writers without the interference of copyists. Accordingly, in order to properly investigate a linguistic variety one should, as far as possible, base the study upon autographs or at least fair copies authorized by the authors.

Chapter 3, Judaeo-Arabic, tries to define Judaeo-Arabic as well as to make a periodisation. One crucial question posed – and answered in the affirmative – is whether Judaeo-Arabic

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should be assigned the status of a distinct language or not. The answer is based upon the criteria set up by Joshua Fishman, namely that a Jewish language is to be understood as Jewish because Jews and non-Jews believe it to be Jewish, because it is employed in identifiable Jewish pursuits by identifiable Jewish networks and because it is structurally different in some ways from the language(s) of co-territorial or neighbouring non-Jews. As for the first criteria, however, Sabih does not adduce any evidence by any Medieval writer, Jewish or non-Jewish that the Arabic written by Jews was understood as a specific variety of Arabic peculiar to the Jews. As for the second criteria, Sabih adduces the often quoted statement that Maimonides wrote in flawless Classical Arabic when addressing a Muslim readership but in a Middle Arabic variety when addressing his co-religionists. First of all it is evident that Maimonides was sensitive to language and script. Yet empirical studies of his written autograph legacy in this respect are only in their early stages, including an investigation by Simon Hopkins of Maimonides’s autograph fair copy and autograph draft of the commentary of the tractate Shabbat. However, to the best of my knowledge, no empirical studies, of the autograph drafts of any of his medical treatises have been made. As for the third criteria, whether or not it applies naturally depends on the type of discourse in question as well as with what it is compared. This is also the place to comment upon Sabih’s view that non-Jewish works in Arabic transliterated into Hebrew script are to be understood as Judaic-Arabic. A natural question is then: what about Judaic-Arabic works originally written in Hebrew script but transliterated into Arabic script for circulation among Muslims and Christians, the most famous example being Maimonides’s own Guide. He finally discusses the possibility of pre-Islamic Judaic-Arabic, translating one hadith mentioning kalimah min kitāb al-yahūd and a passage from Ibn Sa’ad mentioning a certain ‘Abdallah ibn ‘Atīk who yartamn bi-l-yahūdiyyah as evidence of its existence. This is, however, done without a proper philological analysis. Although there are no literary or documentary remnants whatsoever of this yahūdiyyah, he nevertheless argues that there was a pre-Islamic Judaic-Arabic written in Hebrew script and with its own distinctive phonological and/or dialectal characteristics.

Chapter 4, The linguistic status and cultural function of Medieval Judaic-Arabic language, is inspired by the Rina Drory and polemizes mainly against the views of Joshua Blau. On the whole, however, Sabih does not seem to be aware of that a number of paradigm shifts have occurred within Jewish Studies including within the scholarship on Medieval Jewish literature. Among other things, in this chapter (as well as earlier in the book) he takes up the by now outdated view that Jews seldom or never wrote poetry in Arabic, refuting it by quoting a number of examples of Medieval poetry written by Jews in Arabic. Research on Medieval Jewish poetry the last few decades has, however, altered the picture and this view (which Sabih quotes from Joshua Blau) is rarely heard anymore. Rina Drory (1992) furthermore pointed out that the Jewish poets writing poetry in Arabic (and mentioned by name by Sabih) were poets whose poetical oeuvre in Arabic was wholly composed within the framework of Arabic literature and transmitted in Muslim sources. Of them one certainly converted to Islam (Ibrāhīm ibn Sahl, died 1251) and another probably did so (Abū al-Fadl Ḥasādīyya ibn Ḥasādīyya, ca. 1050). A poet writing in Arabic within the framework of Jewish literature was Judah al-Ḥarizī (born Christian Toledo, ca. 1170, d. Aleppo, 1225). An ardent champion of the superiority of Hebrew over Arabic, he finally settled in Aleppo. Of his maqamāt, all of which were composed for a

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5 S. Hopkins, Maimonides’s commentary on Tractate Shabbat: the draft commentary according to autograph fragments from the Cairo Geniza (2001), The autograph drafts of some of his medical writings are found in Maimonides Commentaries in Mishnah e codicibus Hunt. 117 et Pococke 295 in Bibliotheca Bodleiana Oxfoniensi servatis et 72–73 Bibliotheca Sassooniensis Letchworth (1956).

Jewish readership, at least one was composed in two versions, one Arabic, one Hebrew just as he composed trilingual poetry. It is now also known that he was a poet within the framework of Arabic literature as well as is evident from the Arabic narrative of his life now available in original and in a French translation. This is also the place to mention the extraordinary Yemenite poetry with poems in a mixture of Hebrew and Arabic or wholly in Arabic. Finally, the discussion of the *kharajāt* is thoroughly confused, no doubt because the author is unfamiliar with the scholarship on the *kharajāt*.8

Despite being titled *The function of scripts in Medieval Arabic scriptolect*, the subject of chapter 5 is “The function of scripts in Medieval Judaeo-Arabic scriptolect”, as it deals with the function of scripts among Jews, i.e. the use of Hebrew and Arabic script to write Hebrew and Arabic and, above all, the use of Arabic script among the Karaites. As is well known, not only did the Karaites use Hebrew script to write Arabic but, up to the 12th century, they also transcribed Biblical texts in Hebrew into Arabic script concomitant with writing Arabic in Arabic script. The transcription of Biblical texts in Hebrew into Arabic script is a unique Karaite feature, and this is in a way the very core of the book at hand. Following Geoffrey Khan, Sabih argues that this was due to sectarian opposition to the Rabbanites. Yet he does not mention that this probably was a pre-Crusade practice among Karaites in Palestine just as he has overlooked autograph Karaite documents in Arabic and Hebrew, including private correspondence, in Hebrew script. Therefore some discussion concerning in what types of texts the Karaites used Arabic script, as well as during what period, would have been of interest.9

As for the Rabbanites, circumstantial evidence suggests that the use of Arabic script when writing Arabic was probably more widely spread among them than usually assumed. Thus Abraham ibn ‘Ezra’ reports in his commentary on Gen. 2:11 that Saadia Gaon translated the Pentateuch into the Arabic language and script, a statement that may be corroborated by the presence in the Cairo Genizah of fragments of his translation in Arabic script. Likewise, it is well to keep in mind the possibility that Moses ibn ‘Ezra’ used Arabic script in his Kitab al-Muhādara wa-al-mudhākara, not to mention autograph documents from a Rabbanite framework in the Cairo Genizah.10 It was thus not the use of Arabic script *per se* which was more or less unique to the Karaites, but the use of Arabic script when copying Biblical texts in Hebrew.

Part II is devoted to the edition of the text, which comprises chapter 7, *Description of the manuscripts*, chapter 8, *Description of the Hebrew text in Arabic script*, chapter 9, *The edited text*, and chapter 10 *Translation*, and to a linguistic analysis of the edited text, comprising chapter 11, *Orthography and phonetics*, chapter 12, *Morphology and syntax*, and chapter 13, *Discursive analysis*. First of all it would have been prudent to consult the earlier edition by Wendkos. As for Sabih, he has had five (or rather four) manuscripts at his disposal, two in

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8 E.g. *Love songs from al-Andalus* by O. Zwartjes (1997) and *Poesía dialectal árabe y romance en Alandalús* by F. Corriente (1997). The literature on strophic poetry and the *kharajāt* is by now very extensive, as is evident from O. Zwartjes and H. Heijkoop (eds.) *Mawsāh, zajal, kharja: bibliography of eleven centuries of strophic poetry and music from al-Andalus and their influence on East and West* (2004).

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Arabic script and two in Hebrew script. None of these, however, is complete. Two were unknown until now: his MSS B and C. His MSS A and C, according to his analysis, were originally parts of one and the same MS, while his MS B is independent in this respect. Unfortunately Sabih does not make any independent analysis of the dates and geographical provenances of the previously known MSS, and he does not attempt to date his MS B at all. His MS E is said to have been copied in Yemen, the only indication of provenance, but no authority for this is given or for its date. The significance of the geographical provenance is, of course, great, e.g. for determining the spread of Karaism. Nor does he attempt to make a stemma of the MSS at his disposal, thereby neglecting to engage in any discussion of the transmission of the text. This is all the more important as his two Hebrew script MSS represent the final stage of the transcription of the original Arabic text into Hebrew script, an editorial problem Sabih does not touch upon. Instructive here are Michael Wechsler’s editions of Japheth ben Ali’s translation of Proverbs 31:1–31, which reveal a number of characteristics of the transmission of the text. Random checks of Sabih’s text suggest that the same characteristics are found there as well. Applying the statement by Malachi Beit-Arié, what is presented here are thus amounts to four versions of Japheth ben Ali’s translation of Jeremiah rather than a “critical edition”.

Chapter 8, *Description of the Hebrew text in Arabic script*, is the most useful part of the book as we have here a detailed description of the unique trait of Karaite codicology: writing the Biblical Hebrew text in Arabic script. One objection is whether it should be placed here, as it is organized in paragraphs, numbered from 1–29, a sequence picked up again in chapter 11. Likewise it would have been valuable if the habits of the scribes represented here had been correlated with the description of such habits as made by Geoffrey Khan. As for the edition proper, there is no information whatsoever as to his principles of editing the text. Far from establishing a text, Sabih has obviously transcribed one of his MSS, adding variants from his other MSS in the apparatus. But we are left in the dark as to which MSS are used as his base in the different parts of his text. This is all the more remarkable as he, due to the nature of the MSS, by necessity has had to switch from one MS to another. Most likely Sabih has here been left to his own devices, without proper guidance. According to the introduction to chapter 12, Sabih wants to prove his theory of the linguistic structure of “our text, i.e. Middle Arabic”. If he by “our text” means the text as transcribed by him, this is, however, not what is done. What he does is to cherry-pick examples, from his own text, from the apparatus of this text, from the (by him) un-edited text of Japheth ben Ali’s commentary, from other of Japheth ben Ali’s translations, or from other Karaite translators in order to achieve a coherent description of the grammatical traits of Middle Arabic as understood by him, but nevertheless representing a conglomerate of multiple varieties of Middle Arabic from different periods and geographical provenances. For each grammatical trait, a single example is usually quoted, leaving the reader in the dark as to the frequency of the trait treated in the paragraph. Chapter 13, *Discursive analysis*, is the most interesting part of the linguistic analysis. Translations are a genre of their own, and he equates the text and its extreme literalness with the genre of the Late Medieval Maghrebi sharḥ. This could be seen as in contrast to the interpretive translations of Saadiah Gaon, who is generally understood to have tried to achieve a good Arabic style, a point never made by Sabih, however, but an argument in favour of his view of the Karaite translations as a system opposed to the Rabbanite system. Unfortunately Sabih has not benefited from the minute analysis made by Eissler in his edition mentioned above, even less from Meira Polliack’s *The Karaite tradition of Arabic Bible translation* (mentioned in the bibliography).


12 G. Khan, “Karaite transcriptions of Hebrew”
He also makes the interesting observation that the structure of the translation is conspicuously different from the structure of the, by him not edited, commentary – a frustrating remark, however, for a reader who cannot consult the commentary. One observation concerning the transmission of the translation, that should have been of interest to discuss, is the significance of the new Arabic lexemes and dialectal features stretching from Iraq to Iberia, but they are just mentioned without any comments. While Hebrew lexicical interference is duly noted, there is no mention of what may be called lexemes with Islamic connotations, although this is a characteristic feature of Medieval Christian and Jewish texts in Arabic.

Also included are a bibliography and an index. The bibliography lacks editing, and it is marred by numerous flaws. To mention just a few, it would have been very helpful if extant editions of Japheth ben Ali’s works were listed separately. Oriental sources are furthermore listed under the name of the editor, not the author as would have been the normal procedure. That the work edited by Dayf, 1953–1955 is by Ibn Sa’id is thus not mentioned, nor is the fact that the Kitāb al-lumma’ (!) edited by “Villenski” in 1931 actually is the Medieval Hebrew translation called Sefer ha-riqma of Kitāb al-lumma’ by Jonah ibn Janāḥ as edited by Michael Wilensky. But why use the Hebrew translation when the Arabic original has been published? To this may be added that authors are mixed up: for instance C. H. M. Versteegh is said to be the author of The Arabic language (1997) instead of Kees Versteegh (it is correct in the index), just as Benjamin Richter throughout the book is called Benjamin Richter. In a number of cases Sabih has obviously used translations without always mentioning this. The examples could easily be multiplied. Unluckily for Sabih, Joshua Blau’s A dictionary of medieval Judaeo-Arabic texts appeared in 2006, the same year the thesis was presented. Otherwise it would no doubt have been of great value for the work.

Sabih’s book is an attempt to apply the theories advanced by Itamar Even-Zohar and Rina Drory to Medieval Jewish literature in Arabic with the views of Joshua Blau serving as a point of contrast. These are, no doubt, interesting theories and there are a number of acute observations in the book. This literature presents, however, a disorderly world and the more material that is discovered the more disorderly this world turns out to be. To this should be added that Sabih is not familiar with recent scholarship on Medieval Jewish literature and Genizah material as well as on Medieval Karaism. Karaite Judaism: A guide to its history and literary sources (2003), for instance, provides a good introduction to the scholarship on Karaism, as does The Oxford handbook of Jewish studies (2002) for other branches of Jewish studies, and The Cambridge Genizah collections: their contents and significance (2002) and A Jewish archive from old Cairo (2000) for Genizah studies. Sabih also seems to draw upon handbooks to a very high degree rather than personally wrestling with different types of source-material, including different genres of the Rabbanite literature juxtaposed by him with Karaite literature. Furthermore, three years passed between the submission of the thesis and the publication of the book. No mention is made of any editing of the text before publication, but this would, no doubt, have improved it. The text is in need not only of editing but also reworking in order to improve both the first part of the book as well as the edition of the Arabic text.

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The Yearbook was a popular platform among South Asian linguists for many good reasons. When it started in 1998 it had four main sections: Invited Contributions, Open Submissions, Regional Reports, and Reviews. Over the years the Yearbook has attracted eminent linguists.
such as Jayaseelan, Bh. Krishnamurti, Paul Kiparsky) who have written about important topics. The regional reports were as illuminating as the detailed review articles whenever a new and important publication came up. The 2006 Yearbook, for instance, includes not only country reports (e.g. on Pakistan, by Elena Bashir, on Nepal, by Yogendra Yadava, but also provides reports on Kashmiri (by O.N. Koul), on Mon-Khmer (by Normal Zide et al.) and on Indo-Aryan (by Udaya Narayana Singh). Over the years the Yearbooks have also been a resource for various kinds of information on South Asian languages and linguistics (for instance bibliographic databases, recent doctoral dissertations). Since South Asia houses a large number of the world’s languages, the idea was that a thorough report on each aspect would contribute to “our understanding of language, society, and language in society on a global scale”, as the editors have stated.

This founding idea of the Yearbook also shines through in its latest volume - Annual review of South Asian Languages and Linguistics (ARSALL 2009). The organization of the present volume is similar to the organization of previous Yearbook volumes, with the exception of the section entitled Dialogues, which is a new addition in this volume. The General Contribution section includes three excellent essays, beginning with Probal Dasgupta’s substantial piece on “Strategies and their shadows”. This section is followed by the Special Contribution section, the focus of which is on Indian Sign Language (ISL). Next is the Regional Report section (The Middle East, Japan, and Nepal). The Review section contains five book reviews, followed by two articles in the Dialogues section. Thereafter come the announcements.

That Dasgupta’s concept of strategy shadow draws its kernel idea from research in urban geography should not be surprising, as he has been a prolific reader and consumer of ideas and concepts from a large number of disciplines. In fact, if one looks into his idea of green linguistics or substantivism in translation, one can surmise what he must have been reading at that point in time. The present essay in morpho-syntactics of Bangla has grown out of his stance in the area of translation theory. Soon after he joined with Rajendra Singh and Jayant Lele to come up with appealing formulations in the broad disciplines ranging from word formation to language teaching, or from multilingualism to language planning, one could see that his interest and reading had an interesting range. The choice between a formalist and a substantivist conceptualization of language phenomena has been his concern in this essay too. He raises a number of unresolved issues including how specific forms or trends have to be accommodated vis-à-vis more general forms or tendencies, or how extensively irregular items should be handled, with copious examples from Bangla. The basic idea is to see if the WWM Framework of Morphology could be fitted into a Substantive Research Programme in South Asian Linguistics. Some of the finest and clearest examples appear in the section under “Arbitrariness” which examines the relationship between lexical storage with appropriate economy and syntactic assembly processes in Bangla.

In Hook and Pardeshi’s essay on the Eat expressions in Marathi, we find 70-odd such expressions classified according to argument structures plotted on a scale of idiomaticity, and then examined for their syntactic characteristics. Eventually, we not only get to see these types and sub-types but we also find a fairly detailed statistical table of the occurrence of such expressions. The questions of their utility or extent of idiomaticity or their utility as transitivity-raising devices make this rich discussion of data interesting.

Shakuntala Mahanta’s essay on Assamese morpho-phonology once again focuses on the issues of markedness and exceptions with special reference to vowel harmony. How and why and to what extent particular morphological affixes trigger or block the Assamese pattern of regressive vowel harmony are discussed here. This is undoubtedly one of the best available phonological descriptions of a South Asian language that I have come across. In working out the constraints, a large number of examples, formulae, and patterns have been presented in tabular form by the researcher. The work has implications for indexation of universal markedness constraints and language-specific subversion mechanisms. The main argument that comes out of this extensive data-oriented work is that there cannot be any default unmarkedness, but
only emergent unmarkedness that is triggered by language-specific phonological patterns. In the “Dialogues” section, however, we find comments by Luc Baronian who seems to think that this paper was yet another instance of treating different modules of grammar in a uniform manner. The commentator suggests that a purely morphological account of Assamese vowel harmony was perfectly possible. In at least one instance of allomorphy analysis (namely, in hiatus-avoidance instances), this has been demonstrated.

In the Special Contribution section, Michael Morgan’s paper on the extension of the areal universal thesis of Emeneau vis-à-vis South Asian varieties of Sign Languages seems to be an interesting work for language typologists. As is well known, the experience verb construction and the Dative/Genitive Subject pattern offer challenges to analysts who work on widely varying languages of this region. It seems that these have been significant for ISL as well. The hypothesis with which the author has begun here cannot be taken too far because the work is based on limited patterns and samples. But he has been able to sensitize us, as students of typology, to taking ISL data into account also in making propositions in different areas of grammar.

The emergence of a Sinhala-Arabic Pidgin is at best a conjecture now, but it may turn into a reality given another couple of decades of contact situation. If that were to happen, this report on the Middle East linguistic confluence would seem very useful. But I wish that the work could be repeated with more in-depth data and analyses drawing from several other South Asian languages such as e.g. Malayalam. What must be happening to the structure and use of Malayalam there? Or take the Urdu-Arabic situation in West Asia, where the code-mixing patterns demonstrate secular expressions making inroads into the emergent pidgin morpho-syntax.

Based on the NNC (Nepali National Corpus), Hardie, Lohani, Regmi & Yadava have presented a categorization scheme for Nepali morpho-syntactics, which could perhaps be shortened and made more to the point as it presents some details of corpus linguistics that seem elementary at this point of time, now that a large number of people are familiar with the basics. The specific issues that make the task of compiling Nepali corpora difficult for Nelraec tagset could perhaps have been given more space. Moreover, when a comparison of Nelraec and other tagsets are discussed (esp. in section 5), I would have expected that either IIIT-Hyderabad and University of Hyderabad based tagsets or the LDC-IL tagsets of CIIL would have also been used for comparison, as both would have far reaching implications for Nepali corpus linguistics.

The reviews have been uniformly well-done, with all necessary information and commentaries. Shishir Bhattacharjya’s work and review would perhaps be better taken together with Probal and Shakuntala’s work in the near future, and a workshop could be planned around them for other eastern languages as well. In the country-specific report, the one on Japan reads well, except that under certain categories, it looked as if Indian linguists settled in Japan have been doing most of the work.

All in all, the ARSALL 2009 provides very good reading for all those currently engaged in descriptive linguistics and language typology with respect to South Asian languages. There has been very little on Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic this time, for which I hope subsequent volumes would make up.

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