

# Tense and Text in Classical Arabic

A DISCOURSE-ORIENTED STUDY OF  
THE CLASSICAL ARABIC TENSE SYSTEM

MICHAL MARMORSTEIN

BRILL

## Tense and Text in Classical Arabic

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By

Michal Marmorstein



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# Introduction

This is a discourse-oriented study of the indicative tenses of Classical Arabic. The pivot of the analysis is the verbal form *yafʿalu* and the functional paradigms associated with it. The study is based on a large and varied corpus of Classical Arabic prose, composed or compiled by the end of the tenth century CE.

## 1.1 The Problem

The syntactic analysis of the verbal system in Classical Arabic is considered by many to be a difficult endeavor.<sup>1</sup> Grammars of Classical Arabic present a relatively compact system, consisting of only two main tenses or states: a ‘perfect’ and an ‘imperfect’; then a list, specifying a great number of uses of both tenses, is usually appended.<sup>2</sup> The beginner student is puzzled: how should the perfect and imperfect be understood? Under which conditions is the perfect ‘past’ or ‘perfect’, or something entirely different such as ‘gnomic’ or ‘optative’? When is the imperfect used as an ‘imperfect’ and when does it serve to indicate ‘present-future’? The advanced student, on the other hand, is intrigued: how is it that all these functions are carried out by only two forms? What is the ultimate meaning of these forms? How should one formulate the logic underlying the system as a whole?

Indeed, these types of questions have been the focal interest of generations of Arabists for the past two hundred years. When it comes to the tense system, Western scholars have departed to a great extent from their Arab predecessors, whose views of the problem were considered to be too simplistic in terms of their semantic analysis, and too obscure as far as their terminology was concerned. The insights offered by the Arab grammatical tradition were for the most part disregarded.

Many suggestions have been raised to resolve the intricate problem of the Classical Arabic tense system. However different the analyses may be, they all

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1 Thus Reckendorf, *Syntaktischen Verhältnisse*, 1, 52, in a much-quoted passage, says: *Wenn man die Schwierigkeit syntaktischer Probleme nach dem Grad der Schwierigkeit, die syntaktischen Formen nachzufühlen, bemessen will, so ist die Tempuslehre das schwierigste Kapitel der semit. Syntax.*

2 E.g. Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 1ff.

start out from the basic premise that the tense system of Classical Arabic is based on an opposition between two forms: the suffixed *fa'al-a* and the circumfixed *yaf'al-u*. The problem which these analyses set out to resolve is defining the real essence of the semantic opposition marked by *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*. Indeed, they aim to identify *the* temporal/aspectual/modal/other meaning which these forms are designed to convey.

In the present study I wish to take a different path. The problem, as I see it, is not semantic, but rather theoretical and methodological. It resides in the premise that the Classical Arabic tense system has a binary structure and that this structure corresponds to an asymmetrical opposition at the content level. This premise is clearly refuted when considering the following facts:

- (a) The opposition between *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* is not found in every syntactic or textual environment. In fact, there are quite a few clausal and textual environments where these forms do not form part of the same substitution class. For instance, in conditional clauses *fa'ala* commutes with the jussive, whereas in setting and circumstantial clauses *yaf'alu* commutes with the participle (see below 8.4.1). Or considering, for example, narrative texts: *fa'ala*, as is well known, is the narrative, plot-carrying, form. It does not interchange with *yaf'alu* in this environment the same way as, say, the *passé simple* and *imparfait* in French may interchange. In fact, *yaf'alu* is never a free form in the narrative, but always dependent upon a previous *fa'ala* form. Thus, the opposition between *yaf'alu* and *fa'ala* is not only constrained to certain types of clauses, but also cannot always be accounted for at the same level of syntactic analysis.
- (b) The tense system consists of forms other than *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*. Although the verbal system is not rich in forms, Arabic is known for its productive mechanism of modification and augmentation of the simple forms. In fact, not only *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*, but also the participle, the modified *qadfa'ala* and *sa-yaf'alu*, and the compounds *kāna fa'ala* and *kāna yaf'alu*, among other combinations, are part of the system of oppositions constituting the indicative tenses in Classical Arabic.<sup>3</sup>
- (c) The meaning of *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* is not a single, basic, and fixed one. This point, which is perhaps the most important one, is supported by a more general argument, namely, that the meaning of a verb, or to be more precise, its function or value, is not equivalent to a plain notion or idea. The 'basic', 'general', or 'absolute' meaning of a form is only found

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3 Cf. also Goldenberg, *Semitic Languages*, 205 ff.

at a very abstract level of semantic analysis. In practice, the meanings of a form are always determined with respect to a given opposition in a given context of communication. Obviously, there may be an historical and/or associative links between various meanings of a form; however, these do not necessarily boil down to a single notion, nor can they always be reconciled by means of logical derivation. Rather than a single, basic, and fixed meaning, what we do find in practice is a cluster of meanings emerging from the interaction of the form with various lexical, syntactic, textual, and pragmatic elements of the context.

An empiric investigation and a careful analysis of the data shows that the functional opposition between *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* is not as pervasive as taken to be, and that both forms are used to indicate a number of meanings. Overlooking these facts or undermining them, we are at risk of moving too far from the linguistic reality we set out to describe in the first place. What is the merit of a neat and elegant analysis if it is only half-true or if it only works sometimes? How would it help the puzzled student in understanding the text? Surely, as the history of Arabic linguistics has shown, yet another analysis of this kind will not put an end to the controversy over the basic meaning of the forms, which by now has become a notorious characteristic of the *Tempuslehre* in Arabic grammar.

If indeed we acknowledge that there is not one, basic, and fixed meaning to pursue, but rather a cluster of meanings, and that the system is not built upon a binary opposition between *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*, then a whole new set of questions opens up. What is the syntactic distribution of *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*? What are the verbal paradigms they are associated with? In which syntactic and textual environments are these paradigms found? What types of meanings are expressed by the verbal forms and how are these affected by the context? What are the syntactic and semantic relations between the various paradigms? Notice that this last question calls for a synthesis of the more local or context-dependent findings; the goal, however, is not to reduce these into a clear-cut, absolute resolution—i.e., to identify *the* meaning of *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*—but to identify the mechanism, the system of functional relations underlying the use of the tenses in Classical Arabic.

In the present study I wish, then, to reframe the discussion of the Classical Arabic tense system as follows:

- (a) Rather than focusing on the presumed dichotomy between *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*, I aim to define the relations between all the forms constituting the ensemble of the indicative tenses.

- (b) I do not treat *fa'ala* as the semantic pivot or marked element, in respect to which the unmarked or neutral *yaf'alu* is defined (e.g., perfect : imperfect, past : non-past, certain : uncertain). Rather, I take *yaf'alu* as the starting point of my investigation, precisely because of its indefinite semantic character, which calls for an inspection of the extended pattern in which the verbal form is realized.
- (c) The unit under examination is not the plain verbal form, but the verbal form within a well-defined syntactic or textual context. My basic assumption is that language always occurs in context, thus, rather than an absolute meaning, I aim to define the functions of the verbal form as they emerge in different contexts.
- (d) The shift of focus, from the invariant meaning of the verbal form to its contextual meanings, should not be taken as a fragmentation of the discussion. The system as a whole is coherent and displays a certain logic; however, this logic is not to be sought in some autonomous meaning of its parts, but in the regularities of their distribution and paradigmatic relations with each other.

## 1.2 Autonomous or Contextual Meaning(s) of the Verb

Theories of language position themselves quite differently with respect to the following question: is there an exclusive, isomorphic relation between grammatical forms and their meanings? Does each form have a single invariant—general or basic—meaning, common to all of its uses in specific contexts? Although this question bears on nearly every grammatical element in the language, linguists in the twentieth century have been contemplating and debating it most often in connection to the semantic analysis of the verb.

In traditional linguistics, a positive answer to the question of semantic invariance was considered as self-evident: ‘the search for the *Gesamtbedeutung* of each tense’, as Binnick points out, ‘was the assumed task of the traditional grammarian’.<sup>4</sup> This general meaning was understood as an absolute concept (e.g. ‘past’), controlling all of the normal or typical uses of the verb, i.e., all of the uses that could be logically reconciled with that concept. According to this view, atypical uses of the verb proceed from the context and do not form part of its core meaning.

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<sup>4</sup> Binnick, *Time and the Verb*, 104.

This position does not seem to have gone out of fashion also in modern times. Comrie, for instance, advocates the view that ‘tenses have meanings definable independently of particular contexts’.<sup>5</sup> While admitting that tenses may well ‘receive particular interpretations in particular contexts’, Comrie holds that ‘these are always explainable in terms of the interaction of context-independent meaning and context, and do not therefore form part of the meaning of the tense category in question’.<sup>6</sup> For Comrie, then, the problem is resolved by assuming the existence of an autonomous grammatical system which, though coming to interact with the context or discourse (in whatever sense he ascribes to these concepts), is not affected by them.

As a theoretical construct, the concept of *Gesamtbedeutung* was elaborated to the utmost by Jakobson, in his influential works on the verb and other grammatical categories in Russian.<sup>7</sup> Semantic invariance, according to Jakobson, is inherent to the structure of language as a communicative system: the proper production and adequate interpretation of grammatical forms would not be possible if they were not associated with semantic constants.<sup>8</sup> Jakobson did not only advance the theoretical postulate of semantic invariance, but also proposed a methodological framework to account for it. According to this framework, the invariant meaning of a form is not absolute, but relational and oppositional: it is determined in contrast to the meaning of another form, constituting its binary pair. In a given syntactic environment, one member of the pair is semantically ‘marked’ (i.e., more specific and delimited), while the other is ‘unmarked’. The concept of markedness also explains the relationship between the invariant meaning of the form—as defined in respect to its mutual opposite—and its distribution and use within specific contexts.<sup>9</sup>

While it is indisputable that language, as a vehicle of communication, consists of some content that is equally shared by the communicating parties, the exact semantic nature of this content and the ways in which it is organized and

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5 Comrie, *Tense*, 28.

6 Ibid.

7 E.g. Jakobson, *Shifters*; Cf. also the introduction of Waugh to the volume *Invariance and Variation*, reviewing the main theoretical issues brought up in Jakobson's work on the topic.

8 García, *Grasping the Nettle*, 33–34, provides a logical explanation to the phenomenon of invariance, arguing that ‘[...] open-ended communication among human beings presupposes the infinite [...] exploitation of finite sources. The fundamental reason, then, for assuming that any linguistic unit must make a constant and invariant contribution to communication are (cognitive) considerations of economy: the principle of invariance can be viewed as a particular instantiation of that distinctness on which all of language depends’.

9 For an elaborate definition of the concept of markedness, see Waugh, *Marked and Unmarked*.



processed, specifically in relation to the context of interaction, remain hard to determine. As is often pointed out, the difficulty in positing semantic invariance is to find formulations that are neither too narrow and specific to cover all of the uses of the form, nor too general and abstract to account for its uses in actual practice. While there may be competing analyses of invariant meanings, there are no clear and obvious criteria to decide which is more pertinent and correct. Another intricate issue has to do with the postulation of binary oppositions and the concept of markedness. In many cases, grammatical systems involve more than just two members, and the semantic oppositions marked by these are far more delicate than a simple dichotomy can capture. Moreover, the identification of a certain form as *semantically marked* (e.g., 'past' or 'perfective' vs. 'non-past' or 'imperfective') relies ultimately on its high distribution in a specific context where it is *pragmatically unmarked* (e.g. 'narrative'). It is hard to tell, therefore, which part of the meaning of a form consists of its semantic core and which is imparted by the context (the fact that the terms 'past' and 'narrative form' are often used interchangeably attests, *inter alia*, to this reality).

Invariant meanings of grammatical forms are generally assigned to the referential or ideational level of the functional-semantic system.<sup>10</sup> In the traditional—and still most prevalent—view, the grammatical category of the verb is essentially associated with the concept of time, as defined in logical terms:<sup>11</sup> verbal forms are designed to indicate temporal relevance (or its absence), the explicit or external location in time, or the implicit or internal unfolding of time.<sup>12</sup> Some modern linguists, though coming to acknowledge the great many functions which verbs fulfill in actual discourse, still consider time reference as the primary meaning of the verb.<sup>13</sup> This meaning interacts with various elements at the higher, textual or expressive levels, so that more specific meanings of the verbal form are produced in particular contexts.<sup>14</sup> Only a few suggestions

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10 For an exception, see Waugh, *Tense-Aspect*, who regards also the verb's pragmatic and textual meanings as invariants.

11 For a basic and straightforward outline of this view, see Comrie, *Tense*, 2 ff.

12 Cf. Guillaume, *Immanence et transcendance*; Comrie, *Aspect*, 5.

13 E.g., Monville-Burston and Waugh, *Multiple Meanings*, in discussing the contextual meanings of the present tense in Modern French, start out by saying that 'as a general rule, one can say that the French tense system is dominated by considerations of deictic placement in time' (183).

14 Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 26 ff., present an hierarchical model of the functional-semantic system, in which tense is located at the 'ideational' level and not assigned any 'interpersonal' or 'textual' roles; Fleischman, *Theory of Tense-Aspect*, departs to some

have been made to invert the hierarchy and identify the textual or discursive functions of the verb as constitutive components of its meaning. Hopper, for instance, maintains that the essential role of tense-aspect morphology is to mark the fundamental and universal distinction between foreground and background.<sup>15</sup> A yet more radical approach, notably advanced by Weinrich, suggests to 'forget all about time and aspect'.<sup>16</sup> According to Weinrich, the primary function of the verb is pragmatic in nature: the verb is designed to mark the discursive or narrative 'speech-situation' in which the interlocutors are engaged (see also below 10.1).

The variety of opinions and analyses presented above evidences a real theoretical and methodological difficulty to deal with the multi-functionality of the category of the verb. Evidently, different assumptions regarding the question of autonomous meaning vs. contextual meanings of the verb underlie each analysis. At yet a deeper level, these assumptions derive from the linguist's conceptualization of that part of the language which consists of its system, i.e., that part which in Saussurean terms is designated as *la langue*. In this work, a rather broad understanding of this concept is implemented: in my view, the goal is not to reach a definition of the general meaning of the verb, but rather to analyze all that is *generalizable* and thus systematic in a context where a verbal form occurs, at the syntactic, lexical, semantic, and pragmatic levels. Temporal distinctions are one component in the overall meaning of the verb; however, as will be further shown in this work, they are neither the only component, nor a privileged one. A close inspection of the text shows that there are symbiotic relations between the verbal forms and the contexts of their use, so that the meaning of a form is also determined by the extended syntactic unit in which it is realized, the lexical content realized by it, and the discursive conditions of its realization.

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extent from this view by acknowledging that 'the functions of tense-aspect categories *in narrative* are not limited to these basic referential meanings; rather, tense and aspect do as much if not more of their work in the two pragmatic components (textual and expressive) and in the metalinguistic component' (78).

15 Hopper, *Aspect and Foregrounding*.

16 Weinrich, *Tense and Time*, 32.

## 1.3 The Method

### 1.3.1 *Methodological Principles*

The present work is a descriptive and synchronic study of the system of the indicative tenses, as this emerges from an empirical examination of a well-defined corpus of Classical Arabic prose.

The methodology used in this study is interdisciplinary in nature, influenced by several schools of linguistic theory. It fundamentally draws on concepts developed in early (European) Structuralism, specifically as presented in de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*, and further shaped by the Prague school and other linguistic circles, such as the Copenhagen school.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, this study draws on applications and elaboration of this theory in descriptions of specific, Semitic and other, languages.<sup>18</sup> In these works, analytical problems not fully addressed by early structural linguists, specifically problems of syntactic analysis above the clause unit, are dealt with. Indeed, supra-clausal structures, cohesion, and texture have become the focus of interest of later linguists, working in the frameworks of Text-Linguistics and Discourse Analysis. It is important to note that these labels, as with Structuralism, have come to subsume different, even contrasting, approaches to the study of language or discourse. These various approaches are often grouped into two main paradigms, conventionally designated as 'formal' and 'functional'. At a rather general level of abstraction, one may say that in a formal perspective, language is studied as a self-contained system of rules, while in a functional perspective, language is studied as an instrument shaped by and used for communicative purposes.<sup>19</sup>

17 See de Saussure, *Cours*; Vachek, *The Linguistic School*; Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena*.

18 Notably Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Categories, Structural Sketches and Topics*. Further solidification of structural analysis methodology is found in Cohen, *Modal System and Syntax of Neo-Aramaic*.

19 For a detailed discussion of the distinction between the 'formal' and the 'functional' paradigms, see Dik, *Functional Grammar*, 2 ff., and Schiffrin, *Approaches*, 20 ff. It is important to note that Structuralism, specifically in its later American manifestations, is often taken to be synonymous with formal linguistics. Yet, it should be reminded that in its earlier continental manifestations, and specifically as shaped by the Prague school, structural linguistics was oriented toward the functional aspects of language. As Vachek, *The Linguistic School*, 6–7, points out: '[...] the Prague movement claimed for its approach not only the epithet "structuralist" (pointing out that no element of language can be duly evaluated if considered in isolation from the other elements of that same language) but the epithet "functionalist" as well [...] according to the Prague conception language is not a self-contained whole, hermetically separated from the extra-lingual reality, but, in fact, its main function is to react to and refer to this reality'.

As the title of this work suggests, the analysis proposed here follows the latter paradigm: it is not concerned with the construction of an abstract semanto-syntactic system, but with discovering and describing regularities in language as used in actual communications.<sup>20</sup>

In this study, I describe syntactic units of various size and order, at the clause level and above it. Since larger units are not just accumulations of smaller units but exhibit a distinct internal organization, they have been regarded as structural units in their own right. I did not decide *a-priori* which units to describe, but sought for any unit which is systematic, i.e., which is regular, consistent, and common enough to form part of the system represented in Classical Arabic prose. In this frame, not only simple clauses or constituents of clauses were included (e.g., declarative or predicative clauses), but also whole textual units, such as narratives. To be sure, there are considerable differences between the analysis of micro-syntactic and macro-syntactic units, specifically as far as the import of the extra-linguistic and meta-linguistic components are concerned. Nevertheless, rather than excluding each other, these two practices were taken here as complementary, each dealing with questions of a different scope.

In the following, I will shortly present the main concepts and principles which make up the approach implemented in this study:

**The sign**—Language is a semiotic system. The linguistic sign consists of a relation between form (signifier) and function (signified). Signs range from simple morphemes to complex syntactic structures. The analysis of signs is commensurate with their degree of complexity, so that a complex sign, e.g., a clausal pattern, can be described at a number of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. Simple signs constituting a more complex sign are referred to as ‘elements’ or ‘components’.

**The syntagm and the paradigm**—The systemic coordinates by which the linguistic sign is defined.

**The syntagm** is a phrasal, clausal, or textual sequence in which a given sign is located in speech. The syntagmatic relation is realized through the *compati-*

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20 Cf. Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 22–23, discussion of ‘rules’ vs. ‘regularities’. The authors define regularity as ‘a linguistic feature which occurs in a definable environment with a significant frequency’; the discourse analyst, like the descriptive linguist, ‘will attempt to describe the linguistic forms which occur in his data, relative to the environments in which they occur’.

*bility* and inter-dependence of the adjacent constituents in the sequence. The distribution of a sign amounts to all the syntagms in which it can occur, i.e., to its syntagmatic identity.

**The paradigm** is a functional slot in a sequence (syntagm) in which a class of signs figures. The paradigmatic relation is realized through the *commutability* of the signs which occur in the same functional slot. The signs may pertain to different formal classes (e.g., nouns and verbs), or to be of different order (e.g., noun-phrases and clauses). For example, in the syntagm *ǧā'a Zaydun rākiban* 'Zayd came riding' the participle *rākiban* functions as a circumstantial expression. The verbal form *yaf'alu* may occupy the same position as the participle in this syntagm and function as a circumstantial clause, e.g., *ǧā'a Zaydun yarkabu* 'Zayd came riding'. Since the participle and the verb fulfill the same function in the given sequence, they are considered to be paradigmatic.

**The function**—The value of a sign (i.e., the signifier-signified entity) is relative: it is determined with respect to its paradigm, i.e., by opposition to other signs which may occupy the same functional slot in the sequence. In this technical sense, 'function' may refer to both the semantic content of a form and its pragmatic use. A function is distinct from a 'notion', which is an abstract category definable in positive terms. The term 'meaning' is used here in a more general and less technical fashion, to refer to both functions and notions.

**Paradigmatic opposition and featural opposition**—The function of a sign is determined with respect to an opposition, paradigmatic and/or featural. The first was explained above as the substitution of a class of signs in a given location in the sequence. However, some complex signs do not form part of a substitution class in the conventional sense. I refer specifically to complex-clause constructions (e.g., setting-presentative constructions, see below 8.4.1) or to text units (e.g., narrative chains, see below 10.2) which do not simply commute with other complex signs. Rather, they can be defined in contrast to other signs of the same order, using a selection of pertinent features. Featural opposition is useful, though not necessary, in defining signs of whatever size; however, in the case of complex signs like text types, it is the only analytical procedure by which these can be evaluated.

**Text**—Text is any type of record of verbal communication. I use the technical term text type to refer to the cohesive structure underlying a certain segment of text. A detailed discussion of the concept of text types is found below in 4.3.

**Context**—The term ‘context’ may designate various aspects of the communicative situation in respect to which a certain text is interpreted. Context may refer to extra-linguistic aspects such as the general knowledge of the interlocutors or the nature of the social interaction, or to linguistic elements such as the immediate sequence of the text or its overall structure. Given that in this work a corpus of classical literature is studied, it is the latter textual and structural features that are viewed as the most accessible and relevant to the analysis. In chapter 4, a model of context as a structural construct is outlined. This model accounts for the referential (deictic), textural, syntactic, and lexical parameters which factor in the *actualization* and *interpretation* of a certain segment of text. Occasionally, I may use the terms surrounding context, to refer to the adjacent stretch of text (also known as co-text), and context of situation, to refer to extra-linguistic aspects of the communication.

### 1.3.2 *An Outline of the Analytical Procedure*

This study is based on data gathered from a relatively large corpus of Classical Arabic prose (around 2000 printed pages). The database, organized in Access Forms, records over 5500 examples extracted from the corpus. The examples were sorted into four groups according to the minimal verbal form they cite: *yafʿalu*, *faʿala*, *qad faʿala* and the participle. *qad faʿala*, though formally a modification of *faʿala*, was considered as a minimal form due to its distinct functional identity vis-à-vis *faʿala* (see below 5.2.2.1). Each group also comprises the compound formations of the minimal forms.

Below, two records (henceforth R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub>) are presented as an illustration of the analytical procedure applied in this study. Each record has an ID number. The Reference slot indicates the textual source and the page number from which the example was extracted. Both records cite examples from the same page in the *Kitāb al-Maǧāzī* text:

ID		Reference																
		4 Maghazi 413																
Example																		
نعزل																		
D	N	G	1	2	3	Aff-Indep	Aux	Akt	Mot	Per	Other	Conj	no-Conj	Neg	res-Neg	sub-Neg	wa	Fol
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
qad		la		sa		Q		No										
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Record (1)

ID		Reference																
		1 Maghazi 413																
Example																		
إني كنتُ أَعزلُ عنها																		
D	N	G	1	2	3	Aff-Indep	Aux	Akt	Mot	Per	Other	Conj	no-Conj	Neg	res-Neg	sub-Neg	wa	Fol
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
qad		la	sa	Q	No													
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>														

Record (2)

The Example slot cites (in the Arabic script) the shortest stretch of text relevant for the analysis. Thus, R<sub>1</sub> cites the one word clause *na'zilu* 'we will abstain' (lit. 'separate ourselves'), while R<sub>2</sub> cites a larger unit comprising the compound *kuntu 'a'zilu* 'I was abstaining' in which the targeted *yaf'alu* is realized. The rest of the Form contains a checklist of features in respect to which the verbal form is profiled. The boxes D, N and G, abbreviating 'dialogue', 'narrative' and 'generic' respectively, refer to the overall text type. In R<sub>1</sub>, D is checked since the example is a dialogue clause; in R<sub>2</sub>, none of the text types boxes are checked since the targeted form is embedded, thus not relating directly (but only through its matrix clause) to the text level. The boxes 1, 2, 3, refer to the person of the targeted form. The box Aff-Indep, abbreviating 'affirmative-independent', is mutually exclusive with Neg, res-Neg, sub-Neg and Q, abbreviating 'negation', 'restricted negation' (e.g. *'illā*-clauses), 'subordinate negation' and 'question', and also with Aux, Akt, Mot, Per, Other, representing types of matrix verbs initiating verbal complexes, viz., 'auxiliary', 'aktionsart' (modification), 'motion', 'perception' or other verb. In R<sub>1</sub>, the Aff-Indep box is checked, whereas in R<sub>2</sub> the Aux box is checked. Also incompatible with Aff-Indep are the boxes referring to various types of explicit and implicit operators initiating non-independent clauses, viz., Conj(unction) and no-Conj(unction), the connective *wa* (*wa-*) and a Following location in the sequence. The last three boxes are specific to *yaf'alu* and refer to possible modifications of the form, via *qad*, *la* (*la-*) or *sa* (*sa-*, *sawfa*). Special remarks are occasionally inserted in the Notes slot.

The features presented above were worked out in the course of my examination and analysis of the data. They reflect my understanding of the pertinent elements in the discursive, textual, and syntactic context which interact with the grammatical form of the verb. They do not exhaust all the pertinent elements. For instance, lexical classes were sorted manually, after the data was gathered and processed. Also in regard to some syntactic features, a further classification of the tokens needed to be carried out (e.g., the breaking down

of the ‘conjunction’ category to substantival, adjectival, and adverbial clauses). To be sure, in every segment of speech, far more features are involved in the dynamic construction and interpretation of its meaning. The static procedure presented above is inevitably selective and approximative, focusing on those features which are taken to lie at the heart of a structural analysis of the text.

## 1.4 Language and Corpus Definition

### 1.4.1 *Classical Arabic*

There is no strict consensus on the definition of Classical Arabic, specifically on the demarcation of its initial and final boundaries. According to a narrow definition, Classical Arabic designates the ‘poetic koine’ that emerged in pre- and early-Islamic Arabia and was described by the Arab grammarians of the eighth century, called by them *al-‘Arabiyya*.<sup>21</sup> According to a broader definition, Classical Arabic designates the *Kultursprache* used for literary and formal purposes from the early centuries of Islam to the revival of modern literary Arabic in the nineteenth century CE.<sup>22</sup> Thus Classical Arabic has come to indicate both a formative stage in the history of Arabic and the standard which evolved from it and continued to serve as the model of elevated and eloquent (*fuṣḥā*), mostly written, Arabic until fairly recent times.<sup>23</sup> In both these senses, Classical Arabic contrasts with the Arabic vernaculars of the so-called Neo-Arabic type.

Besides obvious differences in the vocabulary, Classical Arabic is distinct from the Arabic dialects with regard to some phonemic, morphophonemic, and syntactic features.<sup>24</sup> Admittedly, the most important of these is the phe-

21 Cf. Fleisch, *L’arabe classique*, 4; Fischer, *Classical Arabic*, 397. The origins of Classical Arabic are a matter of an unsettled dispute among Arabists; specifically, the scholars are divided as to whether Classical Arabic was ever used as the spoken language of certain Bedouin tribes or rather was it a standard literary idiom from its very start, cf. Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, 17 ff., and more recently Levin, *Spoken Language*.

22 Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, 3, proposes to distinguish between ‘Classical Arabic’, as the language of pre-Islamic poetry, and ‘Literary Arabic’, as the standardized international language of the Abbasid empire.

23 In the Arabophone world, a strict functional distinction between standard Arabic and colloquial Arabic was strongly kept until recent decades. Yet, in some countries, notably in Egypt, the penetration of the dialect into the literary and formal domains is constantly increasing, thus challenging the old balance between *al-luġa al-fuṣḥā* and *al-luġa al-‘ammiyya*.

24 Fischer, *Classical Arabic*, 397–398.



nomenon of *ʾirāb*, i.e., the change of the endings of the noun and the circum-fixed verbal pattern, characteristic of Classical (or Old) Arabic only. Interestingly, some of the texts on which the norms of Classical Arabic were established, specifically the Qurʾān and the ancient poetry, show occasional deviations from these norms, due to the influence of the dialects in background. For this reason, the Qurʾān and the ancient poetry are sometimes classified as ‘Pre-Classical’ or ‘Pre-Standardized’ Arabic; by the same token, later texts introducing some grammatical and lexical innovations are classified as ‘Post-Classical’ Arabic.<sup>25</sup> Ideally, texts rendered in ‘proper’ Classical Arabic should have been intact and shown no deviations from the strict norms established by the grammarians. Yet, such texts can scarcely be found: even if minor and random, nearly every composition in Classical Arabic includes some linguistic peculiarities, motivated by the preservation of an archaic (‘pre-classical’) form, or by the (deliberate or overlooked) intrusion of dialectal forms. It is obvious, then, that ‘Classical Arabic’ does not designate a pristine form of the language, but rather a well-preserved standardized variety of Arabic. The fact that Classical Arabic is a prestigious standard language is reflected in its highly homogenous, regular, and stable morphosyntactic structure.

#### 1.4.2 *Classical Arabic Prose*

The corpus examined in this study includes prose excerpts from a variety of literary works, composed or compiled between the eighth and the tenth centuries CE. In the common periodization of Arabic literature, this span of time is considered the golden age of pre-modern Arabic prose.<sup>26</sup> Fostered by the intellectually-minded early Abbasid rulers, this was the time when foundational compositions in all fields of humanities were created, new literary forms and techniques were established, and older traditions were given the shape in which they entered wide circulation. Indeed, this was the time when writing in Classical Arabic has reached its fullest scope, extending from the traditional fields of religion and poetry to administration and the growing fields of science and belles-lettres. In the course of this process, new genres and styles were developed for the expression of different types of discourse: ordinary and oratory, expository and narrative. However different, all these share in common the (relatively) fluent and less patterned style of prose, standing in clear contrast to the metered and rhymed style of the ancient poetry, and to some extent, of the Qurʾān.

25 Ibid., 399 ff.

26 Cf. Brockelmann, *GAL*, 1, 14, 106 ff.; Gibb, *Arabic Literature*, 46 ff.

A characteristic feature of works in Classical Arabic prose is that they do not consist of prose only.<sup>27</sup> Prose passages are often juxtaposed with poetry or conflated with verses from the Qurʾān. In this study, I have disregarded those parts of the text which are not written in prose. With one exception, the adaptation of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* from Pahlavi, all the works included in the examined corpus are of Arabic provenance and are considered to be masterpieces of the Arab culture. In listing the works, we may sort them into three general fields:

**History**—While history is transmitted also in belletristic works (e.g., the stories of *ʿayyām al-ʿarab* ‘the battles of the pre-Islamic Arab tribes’ in the *Kitāb al-ʿAġānī*) and in *ḥadīth* collections, in Arabic literature, there have evolved specific genres dedicated to the documentation of historical matter. These can be roughly divided into earlier works, collecting records about the Prophet’s life (*sīra*) and military expeditions (*maġāzī*), and later works, in which the writing of annalistic history (*taʾrīḥ*) comes to the fore. In the examined corpus, the first are represented by the foundational work of Ibn Hišām (after Ibn ʾIshāq), *Sīrat Sayyidīna Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh* (‘The life of our Master Muḥammad the Messenger of God’) and that of al-Wāqīdī, *Kitāb al-Maġāzī* (‘The book of expeditions’), and the latter by the chronicles of al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḥ al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* (‘The history of the messengers and the kings’).

**Tradition**—Closely related to the field of history, *ḥadīth* collections are yet another fundamental branch of Arabic literature. While the *sīra* is concerned with the recording of the Prophet’s life, the *ḥadīth* is concerned with the sayings and doings of the Prophet in relation to particular issues and occasions which, in this framework, obtain the force of a binding doctrine, second only to the Qurʾān. In the examined corpus, the *ḥadīth* is represented by the authoritative work of al-Buḥārī, *Al-Ġāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ* (‘The comprehensive collection of authentic reports’).

**Belles-lettres**—As far as themes and artistic expression are concerned, belletristic prose is by far the most broad and diversified among the three fields mentioned. It is therefore hard to give a definitive description of this genre in Classical Arabic. Still, what one may safely argue is that the uniqueness of

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27 Leder and Kilpatrick, *Classical Arabic Prose*, 2, define classical Arabic prose literature as follows: ‘works principally in prose, in which there is a pervasive concern with artistic expression as well as the communication of information’. The juxtaposing of prose and poetry is, according to the authors, ‘one of the characteristic features of this literature’.

Classical Arabic belles-lettres resides in the artful combination of encyclopedic content and didactic aims, with an entertaining style and a highly embellished language, all encapsulated in the traditional name of this type of literature, namely, *ʿadab*.<sup>28</sup> The works examined in this study include translated and original compositions, as well as compilations of existing traditions. These include the famous animal fables of Indian provenance, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, translated and adapted from Pahlavi to Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ; two works by al-Ġāhiz, the most important figure in classical Arabic literature, *Kitāb al-Buḥalāʾ* (‘The book of misers’) and *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (‘The book of animals’), in which anecdotes related to the general topics of ‘misers’ and ‘animals’ are collected; Ibn Qutayba’s literary thesaurus *ʿUyūn al-ʾaḥbār* (‘The springs of knowledge’); *Rannāt al-maṭālīt wal-maṭānī fī riwāyāt al-ʾAġānī* (‘The sounds of the second and third cords in the traditions of the songs’), an abridgment of *Kitāb al-ʾAġānī* (‘The book of songs’), the great anthology on poets, singers and poetry by ʾAbū al-Faraġ al-ʾIṣbahānī.

For the purpose of quick orientation, the following table listing the titles of the works, their authors, and the edition used in this study, is appended (full details are given in the references section):

Title and abbreviation	Author/compiler	Editor
<i>Sīrat Sayyidīna Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh (Sīra)</i>	Ibn Hišām (d. 834)	Wüstenfeld
<i>Kitāb al-Maġāzī (Maġāzī)</i>	al-Wāqidī (d. 823)	Jones
<i>Taʾrīḥ al-rusul wa-l-mulūk (Taʾrīḥ)</i>	al-Ṭabarī (d. 923)	De Goeje
<i>Al-Ġāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ (Ṣaḥīḥ)</i>	al-Buḥārī (d. 870)	Krehl
<i>Kalīla wa-Dimna (Kalīla wa-Dimna)</i>	Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 757)	Cheikho
<i>Kitāb al-Buḥalāʾ (Buḥalāʾ)</i>	al-Ġāhiz (d. 869)	ʾAbd al-Sātir
<i>Kitāb al-Ḥayawān (Ḥayawān)</i>	al-Ġāhiz (d. 869)	Hārūn
<i>ʿUyūn al-ʾaḥbār (ʿUyūn)</i>	Ibn Qutayba (d. 889)	Ṭawīl/Qamīḥa
<i>Rannāt al-maṭālīt wal-maṭānī fī riwāyāt al-ʾAġānī (Riwāyāt) abridgment of Kitāb al-ʾAġānī</i>	al-ʾIṣbahānī (d. 967)	Ṣāliḥānī

28 For a discussion of the term *ʿadab*, its development, and the notions it has come to convey, see Bonebakker, *ʿAdab*. After much contemplation, the author arrives at a rather technical definition of *ʿadab*, based on ‘one particular aspect of the ʿAbbasid meaning of *adab*, such as the “passive” meaning of “the literary scholarship of a cultivated man” presented in systemic form’ (30).

Although the texts mentioned above are concerned with a wide variety of contents, the corpus as a whole shows a great uniformity, not only in its language, but also in the literary techniques and the overall organization of the texts. While linguistic uniformity is rather obvious, given that all writers were masters of the Classical Arabic standard, literary uniformity is not as predictable, but may be explained by the more or less concomitant development of the various genres mentioned above and their influence on each other. It is far beyond the scope of this study to go into the details of this development; however, I would like to point out one important fact that I deem as relevant to a linguistic analysis of these texts such as proposed here. In the majority of the works, text units are enclosed within the external frame (or frames) of their transmission, so that bits of text are bracketed and separated from each other by a chain of transmitters (*'isnād*), specifying the source(s) of the texts or the situation in which they were gathered. This practice is obviously pertinent in the fields of history and tradition, where the veracity of the *'aḥbār* 'reported accounts' relies on the authenticity of their transmission. However, one finds similar structures of transmission also in belletristic prose, where the related narrative, even if fictional, is also anchored in the reality of a certain individual, the author or some other transmitter. The organization of narratives as short *'aḥbār* conveys the impression of authenticity and keeps the reader conscious of what may be described as the situation of narration.<sup>29</sup> This external framing of the text bears on the issue of temporal reference and our interpretation of the verbal forms, as will be further discussed in this work (see below 4.3 and 10.2.1).

It remains to say something about the preference of prose over poetry in this study. Considering its idiosyncratic and often obscure nature, some modern scholars have argued against the priority given to poetry in the Arabic grammatical tradition. According to their view, the study of Classical Arabic syntax would have a greater validity if based on its more 'normal' and predictable, hence generalizable, manifestations in prose.<sup>30</sup> I, too, find prose easier to handle in the study of syntactic phenomena, at the clause level and above it. Yet, I do not regard such a study as generally valid for all the manifestations of Classical Arabic. As I hope to show in this study, language and text are interdependent and mutually constitutive, so that the study of classical Arabic prose

29 According to Leder and Kilpatrick, *Classical Arabic Prose*, 11, the 'purported relation to reality is suggested by the term *'aḥbār*, which means "news", and the impression is strengthened by the fact that the narratives are ascribed to eye-witnesses or reporters close to the events in question'.

30 Cf. Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 83–84, extensively quoting previous literature on the subject.

is essentially the study of Classical Arabic prose language. Although part of the findings may well accord with what one finds in poetry, I do maintain that the study of Arabic's poetic syntax deserves its own consideration, specifically the intriguing phenomena brought about by the predominance of the verse's structure over that of the simple clause.

## 1.5 The Structure and Scope of the Study

This study is divided into three parts. The first part is introductory: it comprises the general introduction in chapter 1 and the discussion of the relevant medieval and modern literature in the following two chapters: chapter 2 presents the Arab grammarians' views as to the semantological nature of the verb and its distinctive grammatical features; chapter 3 reviews the ongoing dispute over the semantic opposition marked by the two basic verbal forms *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* in the Arabistic literature.

In the second part of the study the structural components of the analysis are presented and discussed. In chapter 4, I propose a model of the structure of context, comprising five components: referential (deictic), textual, macro-syntactic (supra-clausal), micro-syntactic (clausal) and lexical. In chapter 5, I present the inventory of the verbal forms in Classical Arabic. The classification breaks down into (a) affirmative and negated forms, (b) indicative (modally unmarked) and modal forms, and (c) simple, modified, and compound forms. In chapter 6, I discuss the exponents of the inter-clausal and the intra-clausal syntagm in which the verbal form is realized. These include conjunctions, clausal operators, word order, and subject-predicate agreement patterns.

The third part of the study presents an empiric examination and analysis of the verbal paradigms at the clause level and at the text level. Chapter 7 discusses the semantic oppositions marked by the verbal forms in a selection of substantival, adjectival, and adverbial embedded clauses. Chapter 8 discusses the paradigm of *yaf'alu*, the participle, and *qad fa'ala* which function as predicative forms in complex predications. Chapter 9 discusses the main functions of the verbal forms in dialogue texts, and specifically, their role in signaling a variety of inter-subjective categories such as: emotional involvement, personal identification, cognitive evaluation, current relevance and actuality, directness and rapport. Chapter 10 discusses the main types of clauses that are found in Classical Arabic narratives: plot-line *fa'ala*-initiated chains, free and dependent, eventive and descriptive background units, and setting-presentative constructions, which contribute to the creation of dramatic effect in the narrative. Chapter 11 discusses verbal generic utterances in Classical Arabic, and exam-

ines the distinction between the non-episodic *yafʿalu* and the episodic *faʿala*, as well as ‘normative’ generics in which the modal forms are used. Final conclusions and synthesis are presented in Chapter 12.

Though this study focuses on the system of the indicative tenses in Classical Arabic, brief mention of the modal forms is made in chapter 5, when surveying the entire inventory of the verbal forms in Classical Arabic. Moreover, the functions of some modal forms are discussed in chapter 11 in connection to generic clauses. It is important to note that the material presented in this study is based on data found in the corpus. There is no attempt to encompass all that is reported to exist in grammars of Classical Arabic.

## 1.6 Technical Remarks

The Arabic material in this work is rendered in a fully vocalized phonemic transcription. The transcription follows the DMG (*Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*) system. Notice also the following conventions:

- Word units are internally divided, using hyphens, to the lexical units they consist of;
- In connected speech, the silent *alif al-waṣl* is not transcribed;
- In connected speech, the definite article is always rendered as *l-* and separated with a hyphen from the defined noun;
- Long vowels not indicated in the Arabic script are marked in the transcription (including length of the third person singular bound pronoun and of the demonstrative morpheme *hā*);
- Final long vowels (including *alif maqṣūra*) are always represented by the long vowels signs, viz.: *ū*, *ā* and *ī*;
- In connected speech, final word syntactic vocalization (*ʾirāb*) is fully indicated;
- Auxiliary vowels are separated with a hyphen from the preceding word unit;
- In the translation of the examples, proper names of people and places which have an accepted form in English retain their English form (e.g., Noah, Mecca); other names are accurately transcribed (e.g. ʾAbū Sufyān).

The Arabic verbal forms are referred to either by their Latin conventional names (e.g. imperative) or by their morphological patterns. The latter are given in the first stem, third person masculine singular (e.g. *yafʿalu*).

# The Verb in Arabic Grammatical Tradition

## 2.1 Two Frames of Discussion

The category of the *fi'l* 'verb' is discussed in the Arabic grammatical tradition within two frames: (a) the general classification of the three parts of speech and (b) the grammatical characterization of each part of speech. In Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* these two frames are kept distinct: the first chapter is dedicated to the exposition of the types of *kalim* 'words' in Arabic, whereas the second chapter deals with the *ʾrāb* 'declension' distinguishing between these types. Later grammarians, though not maintaining such a neat separation in practice, further develop the 'rational' and 'descriptive' methods to distinguish the three parts of speech:<sup>1</sup> the first is concerned with their internal essence (*dāt*, *hadd*), the latter with their distinctive features (*ʾalāmāt*). In the following, these two frames of discussion, here labeled the semantological and the grammatical, will be presented.

## 2.2 The Semantological Frame

Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* opens with the exposition of the three parts of speech: the *ism* 'noun', the *fi'l* 'verb' and the *ḥarf* 'particle'.<sup>2</sup> Admittedly, this tripartite classification has its sources in the Greek grammatical tradition, which in itself was influenced by Greek philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Although Sībawayhi refers to the three types of words in Arabic, later grammarians stress that this taxonomy is universal in nature and follows from the internal essence of each type of word.<sup>4</sup> According to Ibn al-ʿAnbārī, the tripartite division is the only one possible, since

1 According to Weiss, *Parts of Speech*, 23–24, the Arab grammarians employed two methods of distinguishing the three parts of speech: a 'descriptive' and a 'rational' one. The first is inductive and concerned with the 'observed features' of the parts of speech, whereas the latter is non-empirical and relies upon 'pure reflection'.

2 Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 1.

3 For a discussion of the influence of Greek grammar on the theory of the three parts of speech in Arabic grammatical tradition, see Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, chapter 3.

4 Cf. al-Mubarrad, *Muqtaḍab*, 1, 141; Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, 4, 205.

it exhausts all the expressions in language, those thinkable and imaginable.<sup>5</sup> Universal and given as it is, al-Zağğāğī argues that the classification of noun, verb, and particle cannot be supported by (external) evidence, but can only be conceived by the mind's intuition.<sup>6</sup>

The rationale underlying the division into noun, verb, and particle is not presented in a systematic way in the *Kitāb*. In chapter one, the nature of the noun and the particle are not explained at all, but only illustrated. The verb, on the other hand, is defined as a morphological pattern derived from the verbal noun, which is 'constructed to [indicate] what has gone, what will be and has not happened [yet], and what [still] is and has not stopped'.<sup>7</sup> In this preliminary definition, Sībawayhi clearly repeats the classic conception of the three physical times. Later on, in chapter ten, we are told that the verb is designed to indicate both the meanings of *ḥadaṭ* 'happening' and *zamān* 'time'.<sup>8</sup> For later grammarians, it is this double meaning of the verb which constitutes its hallmark vis-à-vis the noun and the particle. Thus, Ibn al-Sarrāğ defines the noun as 'that which indicates a single meaning' whereas the verb 'indicates a meaning and time'.<sup>9</sup> Al-Zamaḥṣarī states that the verb is 'that [word] which indicates an event coupled with [the expression of] time'.<sup>10</sup> A further systematization of these definitions, employing the features of *ma'nā fī nafsi-hī* 'meaning in itself' and *iqtirān bi-zamān* 'coupled with time', is found in late grammars, such as al-Suyūṭī's *Ham' al-hawāmi'*. Al-Suyūṭī distinguishes between the three parts of speech by assigning them either a positive or a privative value of the two features. The verb, characterized by a positive value of both features, is distinct from the noun, which is not 'coupled with time', and from the particle, which indicates 'a meaning in something else (*ma'nā fī ḡayri-hī*)'.<sup>11</sup>

Sībawayhi's discussion of the temporal meaning of the verbs may appear to be inconsistent at first sight. In chapter one he mentions three intervals of time indicated by three verbal forms: the past indicated by *fa'ala*, the future indicated by *if'al* ('in ordering') and *yaf'alu* ('in reporting'), and the present indicated, too, by *yaf'alu*. In chapter ten, however, Sībawayhi speaks of only two

5 Ibn al-'Anbārī, *Asrār*, 2.

6 al-Zağğāğī, *ʿIdāh*, 42.

7 Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 1.

8 Ibid., 11.

9 Ibn al-Sarrāğ, *ʿUṣūl*, 1, 38.

10 al-Zamaḥṣarī, *Mufaṣṣal*, 108.

11 al-Suyūṭī, *Ham'*, 1, 7.



times, the past (*mā maḍā min-a l-zamāni*) and the future (*mā yastaqbilu min-a l-zamāni*), the first is illustrated by *ḍahaba* and the latter by *sa-yadhabu*. The fact that Sībawayhi ‘designed a system with three tenses’, although ‘there are only two verbal forms’ in Arabic, is regarded by Versteegh as ‘remarkable’.<sup>12</sup> Also for Mosel, Sībawayhi’s inconsistency in counting the tenses is quite peculiar, and may suggest that rather than time, Sībawayhi recognized that the tenses in Arabic signify, in fact, aspect.<sup>13</sup> A close examination of the context in both chapters seems, however, to obviate the need for such far-reaching conclusions. In chapter one, Sībawayhi states the common conception as to the three intervals of time and the corresponding three types of verbs. Since a complete rigorous analysis of the tense system is not intended at this point, there is nothing remarkable in having the future marked by two forms, or having *yafʿalu* standing for both present and future. In chapter ten, however, the starting point is different: Sībawayhi is concerned with explicating a basic grammatical phenomenon, namely, the transitivity of the verb and its formal exponents, i.e., the assigning of the accusative case to nouns governed by the verb. In this context, Sībawayhi uses plain and unequivocal examples to demonstrate his argument that verbs, by indicating time themselves, govern time-denoting nouns. Thus *ḍahaba* is adduced to illustrate a past verb governing a noun such as *ʿamsi* ‘yesterday’, while *sa-yadhabu* (rather than the ambiguous *yadhabu*) is adduced to illustrate a future verb governing a noun such as *ḡadan* ‘tomorrow’. For Sībawayhi, it appears, the trinity of tenses is not holy: when discussing the issue of transitivity and the grammatical effect of the verb on time-denoting nouns, he may do with the dichotomy of ‘past’ and ‘non-past’; elsewhere, when referring to the trichotomy of time, he mentions the three types of verbs corresponding to it (see below 2.3).

While Sībawayhi is hardly concerned with the logical concept of time *per se*, later grammarians—probably due to the increasing influence of Greek logic—discuss at length the concept of three times and the way in which the Arabic verbal system may be adapted to it. In general, the grammarians maintain that the verb is designed to express events and time; time may be either past, present, or future.<sup>14</sup> Time, as expressed by verbs, is relative in nature. Al-ʿAstarābādī, for instance, makes it plain that the past form indicates time *qabla zamāni talaffuẓi-ka bi-hī* ‘prior to the time you pronounce it’.<sup>15</sup> Ibn Yaʿīš, too,

12 Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, 77.

13 Mosel, *Syntaktische Terminologie*, 32.

14 Cf. Ibn al-Sarrāḡ, *ʿUṣūl*, 1, 38.

15 al-ʿAstarābādī, *Šarḥ al-Kāfiya*, 4, 7.

explains that the time of the verb is relative to the time of the utterance, so that the past exists prior to it, the future exists later than it, and the present coincides with it.<sup>16</sup>

While the past and the future are considered to be relatively solid concepts, in the sense that they refer to well-delimited physical domains, the present domain is fuzzier and vague, thereby harder to perceive and define.<sup>17</sup> Some grammarians, like Ibn Yaʿīš, argue that the present is the interval which separates (*tafṣilu*) the past from the future.<sup>18</sup> Others, like al-ʿAstarābādī, see the present as residing in ‘both sides of the now’, i.e., as consisting of both past and future parts.<sup>19</sup> A third option is to discard the concept of present altogether. Thus, al-Zaǧǧāǧī admits of only two times, past and future; the present is not an interval in itself, but constitutes the first part (*ʿawwal*) of the future.<sup>20</sup> The terminology employed also attests to the unequal status of the three times: the past and the future are consistently referred to as *al-māḍī* and *al-mustaqbal*, respectively; the present, by contrast, is variously referred to as *al-ḥāḍir* ‘the present’, *al-ḥāl* ‘the current’ or *al-dāʾim* ‘the continual’.<sup>21</sup>

The longwinded debate over the ontological definition of the present was not just philosophical entertainment for the Arab grammarians. The fact that Arabic has only one indicative verbal form to indicate both present and future posed a real challenge for them in terms of their overall theoretical framework. The explanations to this fact vary among the grammarians. Ibn al-Sarrāǧ contends that *yafʿalu* is essentially a present form, since the present time is more ‘entitled’ to the plain form, being the only interval which exists in effect.<sup>22</sup> Al-Zaǧǧāǧī presents the opposite view: since the flow of time starts with the future (proceeding to the past), *yafʿalu* is genuinely a future form which may also refer to the present, conceived by al-Zaǧǧāǧī as the first part of the future.<sup>23</sup> For al-ʿAstarābādī the problem is settled by assuming that the

16 Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, 4, 207.

17 Greek thinking apparently had much influence on the Arabic theory of time. Cf. Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, 75–76, for a short discussion of the category of present in Greek grammar and logic.

18 Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, 4, 207.

19 al-ʿAstarābādī, *Šarḥ al-Kāfiya*, 4, 12.

20 al-Zaǧǧāǧī, *ʿIdāh*, 86 ff.

21 Since time is essentially a *ḥaraka* ‘movement’, the latter term, *al-dāʾim*, is severely criticized by some grammarians, cf. al-Zaǧǧāǧī, *ʿIdāh*, 86, specifically the editor’s footnote on this page.

22 Ibn al-Sarrāǧ, *ʿUṣūl*, 1, 39.

23 al-Zaǧǧāǧī, *ʿIdāh*, 87. Al-Zaǧǧāǧī, however, appears to contradict himself when claiming

present marked by *yaf'alu* is not strictly delimited, but consists of 'many successive times'.<sup>24</sup>

Evidently, at the time when Greek philosophy penetrated their intellectual world, the Arab grammarians could not overlook the discrepancy between the universal model of three times and the bipartite system found in Arabic (when excluding *if'al*, the imperative). Since no grammatical phenomenon is arbitrary but all phenomena follow from a well-designed order, the Arab grammarians sought to explain the dual nature of *yaf'alu* by employing the tools of structural hierarchy and logical derivation. In contrast, Sibawayhi, who predated the extensive penetration of Greek thinking into Arabic linguistics, does not betray in his *Kitāb* any interest in such ontological questions. Rather, shortly after presenting the three types of words, Sibawayhi moves on to deal with their distinct grammatical properties, specifically with their relative ability to inflect. In this frame, a whole more original and insightful treatment of *yaf'alu* is to be found.

## 2.3 The Grammatical Frame

### 2.3.1 'ī'rāb and binā'

The basic distinction between the three types of words is briefly stated and illustrated in the first chapter of the *Kitāb*. In chapter two, Sibawayhi discusses the main grammatical phenomenon with respect to which the three types of words are distinguished. This phenomenon is generally described as *mağārī 'awāhīri l-kalimi* 'the ways of the endings of the words'.<sup>25</sup> According to Sibawayhi, all types of words may be defined with respect to two opposite concepts: *'ī'rāb* 'declension' and *binā'* 'no-declension' (lit. 'fixed structure'). The *'ī'rāb* is realized through the changing of the word's final vowel or morpheme, due to the effect (*'amal*) of a certain grammatical operator (*'āmil*). The *binā'*, by contrast, is ultimately marked by final vowellessness, and more generally, by the word's unchanged final vowel or morpheme. The *'ī'rāb* and *binā'* determine, in fact, a scale upon which all types of words can be placed. There are two sets of terms distinguishing the final vowels which mark *'ī'rāb* from those

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that the present is the first part of the future (*'awwalan 'awwalan*) while the future is the first of times (*'awwalu l-waḡti l-mustaḡbalu*); if this is the case, then the present should have been considered the last part of the future.

24 al-'Astarābādī, *Šarḥ al-Kāfiya*, 4, 12.

25 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 1.

marking *binā'*, although both refer to the same vowel quality. These terms are presented in the table below:

TABLE 2.1 *Two sets of terms for final vowels in the Kitāb*

Vowel quality	<i>ʾiʿrāb</i> (declension)	<i>binā'</i> (no-declension)
<i>u</i>	<i>rafʿ</i>	<i>ḍamm</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>naṣb</i>	<i>fath</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>ǧarr</i>	<i>kasr</i>
∅	<i>ǧazm</i>	<i>waqf</i>

The *ʾiʿrāb* is not equally exercised by all words. In fact, the three types of words are distinct in their relative ability (or, in later terminology, *ḥaqq* 'right') to undergo declension.<sup>26</sup> Nouns are typically declinable and thus may end in *rafʿ* ('nominative'), *naṣb* ('accusative'), or *ǧarr* ('genitive').<sup>27</sup> Particles are typically indeclinable and thus end in *waqf* (lit. 'pause'), or in one of the fixed vowels, i.e., *ḍamm*, *fath*, or *kasr*. Verbs hold a middle position between nouns and particles: some are declinable, some are indeclinable but end in a vowel, and some are indeclinable and vowelless. The declinable verbs end either in *rafʿ* ('indicative'), viz. *yafʿal-u*, *naṣb* ('subjunctive'), viz. *yafʿal-a*, or *ǧazm* ('jussive', lit. 'apocopate form'), viz. *yafʿal-∅*; those which are indeclinable end in *fath*, viz. *faʿal-a*,<sup>28</sup> or in *waqf*, viz. *ifʿal*. The table below illustrates the relative position of each type of word on the scale of declension:

26 E.g. Ibn al-Sarrāǧ, *ʿUṣūl*, 1, 50: *wa-ʿlam ʿanna l-ʾiʿrāba ʿinda-hum ḥaqqu-hū ʿan yakūna li-l-ʾasmāʾi duna l-ʾafʿāli wa-l-ḥurūfi* 'Know that the declension for them (i.e. the Arabs) is due to the nouns but not to the verbs and the particles'.

27 Nouns which are fully declinable are termed by Sibawayhi *ʾasmāʾ mutamakkinā*, i.e., nouns which are 'firmly established in the nominal character', see Levin, *Kalīma*, 432. Some nouns are indeclinable and thus end in a fixed vowel. For instance, the noun *kayfa* 'how' ends in *fath*.

28 The form *faʿala* may come in the place of a simple adjective or interchange with *al-muḍāriʿ al-maǧzūm* (in conditionals), thus it bears some resemblance to both the noun and the 'resembling verb', cf. Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 2–3. For this reason it does not end in *waqf* but gets closer to declension by ending in *fath*. See also below 2.3.2.

TABLE 2.2 *The scale of 'irāb and binā'*

<i>binā'</i> ←		→ <i>'irāb</i>		
Particle	← Verb →	Noun		
<i>min</i> from, of	<i>if'al</i> <i>fa'al-a</i>	[sa-] <i>yaf'al-u</i>	<i>hādā Zayd-un</i>	This is z.
<i>bi-</i> in		[lan] <i>yaf'al-a</i>	<i>ra'aytu Zayd-an</i>	I saw z.
		[lam] <i>yaf'al-∅</i>	<i>marartu bi-Zayd-in</i>	I passed by z.

Although nouns and verbs are two distinct types of words, Sībawayhi uses the same terms to refer to both the nominal 'case endings' and the verbal 'moods' (to the exclusion of *ǧarr* and *ǧazm* which are not shared by both word classes). This is explained by the fact that, as far as their declension is concerned, all word classes form part of the same system, whether they are essentially declinable, like nouns, or declinable only by virtue of analogy to nouns and extension of the system, like verbs. Considering the opposite end of the scale, the same logic holds true: the inability to decline is essentially associated with particles, yet it may also characterize verbs which depart from the group of declinable verbs and thus come closer to the prototypical indeclinable particle.<sup>29</sup>

Sībawayhi's 'scalar' approach, adopted by later grammarians, is indeed very useful: it not only defines the prototypes of declinable and indeclinable words, but also accommodates the intermediate forms characteristic of verbs. As mentioned above, the verbs are divided into three kinds: the pattern initiated by prefixes (*hurūf al-zawā'id*) is fully declinable, the pattern ending in a fixed *-a* shows a weak declension, and the pattern initiated by no prefixes and ending in no vowel is totally deprived of declension. Notice that in this division, the final  $\emptyset$  of *yaf'al*, which stands in (formal) opposition to the endings *-u* and *-a*, is ascribed a different value than the final  $\emptyset$  of *if'al*, standing for sheer vowellessness. Sībawayhi defines the declinable verbal pattern as *al-'af'āl al-muḍārī'a li-'asmā' al-fā'ilīna* 'the verbs resembling the agent nouns/participles', and terms it in short *al-fi'l al-muḍārī'*, or simply, *al-muḍārī'*.<sup>30</sup> This has become

29 Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 3, explains that the imperative *iḍrib* 'Hit' is assigned the *waqf* due to the fact that *ba'udat min-a l-muḍārī'ati bu'da kam wa-'iḍ min-a l-mutamakkinati* '[the imperative] is so distanced from the resembling [declinable] verbs as [the indeclinable vowelless-ending nouns] *kam* and *'iḍ* are distanced from the fully declinable nouns'. According to Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 2, indeclinable nouns 'resemble' (*muḍārī'a*) particles.

30 Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 2.

the common name of the pattern *yaf'alu* in the grammatical tradition, alongside *al-māḍī* 'the past' and *al-'amr* 'the imperative', designating the patterns *fa'ala* and *if'al*, respectively. While the latter terms, referring to the semantic meaning of the verbal patterns, are rather self-evident, *al-muḍāri'* 'the resembling' is a less obvious term. In order to fully understand the grammatical theory encapsulated in it, I will turn now to examine the ways in which this term was employed in the *Kitāb* and in later grammars.

### 2.3.2 The Term *al-muḍāri'*

In his *Lexique-index*, Troupeau enumerates over a hundred instances of the verb *ḍāra'a* and its derivatives in the *Kitāb*.<sup>31</sup> As is generally the case, Sibawayhi uses the *ḍāra'a*-terms without explaining their technical meaning. Later grammarians, however, felt obliged to explain the less obvious term *ḍāra'a* by adducing its synonym *šābaha* 'to be like, resemble'. Some even go on to provide an etymology of *ḍāra'a*. Ibn Ya'īš, for example, mentions that *ḍāra'a* is derived from the word *dar'* 'udder'. The association of *ḍāra'a* and *dar'* is explained by an extension (and abstraction) of the narrow sense of two twin-lambs meeting in the sheep's udder to suck (*raḍ'*, a close etymon in itself).<sup>32</sup> Whatever the real value of this etymology may be, it is clear that for later grammarians *ḍāra'a* and its derivatives were not transparent and therefore had to be explained. With the exception of *al-muḍāri'*, the *ḍāra'a*-terms, as Carter noticed, were not used much after Sibawayhi, giving way to the more common term *šābaha* and its cognates.<sup>33</sup>

In the *Kitāb*, however, *ḍāra'a* and its derivatives are extensively used. Sibawayhi describes a *muḍāra'a* 'resemblance' between different kinds of elements at all levels of linguistic analysis. The term *muḍāra'a* may refer to either phonological assimilation, analogical word formation, or similar syntactic behavior. The later *muḍāra'a* is the most elusive and abstract; no doubt, it takes a keen eye as that of Sibawayhi to identify syntactic resemblance between elements so different as, for example, the conditional particles and the agent noun.<sup>34</sup> Going over the instances where *muḍāra'a* is used to signify syntactic resemblance, it becomes apparent that the nature of the *muḍāra'āt* is quite diverse, as well as the motives which bring them about.

Obviously, *muḍāra'a* is but one of a host of terms used by Sibawayhi to refer to different kinds of analogy and similarity in the grammatical system. It is not

31 Troupeau, *Lexique-index*, 129.

32 Ibn Ya'īš, *Šarḥ al-Mufašṣal*, 4, 210.

33 Carter, *Muḍāri'*, 8.

34 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 406 (apud Carter).

easy to demarcate the specific meaning of each; however, some suggestions have been made by Carter as to the functional difference between *muḍāraʿa* or *muḍāriʿ* and other concepts, such as *qiyās* and *mušabbah*. According to Carter, *muḍāraʿa* is a ‘descriptive’ term, referring to ‘empirical resemblances in the data’, while *qiyās* is a ‘systematic’ term, denoting ‘abstract regularities in the system’.<sup>35</sup> Following the same line of reasoning, Carter maintains that the active participle *muḍāriʿ* is associated with ‘inherent’ resemblance, whereas the passive participle *mušabbah* stands for ‘similarity that has been imposed on the word by speakers’.<sup>36</sup> In what follows, I wish to further examine these observations, and explore in greater detail the term *al-muḍāriʿ* and the nature of the resemblance which it serves to indicate. For this purpose I will go back to the *locus classicus* where the *muḍāriʿ* is discussed in the *Kitāb*.

The term *al-muḍāriʿ* is first introduced in chapter two of the *Kitāb*. Sībawayhi uses this term to refer to the prefixed verbal pattern *y-afʿal-V* which, like nouns, exhibits final vowel/morpheme change, due to the effect of a certain grammatical operator. Sībawayhi explains this fact by saying: *wa-ʾinnamā ḍāraʿat ʾasmāʾa l-fāʾilīna ʾanna-ka taqūlu ʾinna ʾabda llāhi la-yafʿalu fa-yuwāfiqū qawla-ka la-fāʾilun ḥattā kaʾanna-ka qulta ʾinna zaydan la-fāʾilun fimā turīdu min-a l-maʾnā* ‘And [*yafʿalu* forms] resembled the agent nouns [for] you say ʾinna ʾabda llāhi la-yafʿalu “Indeed ‘Abdallāh does” and it corresponds your saying *la-fāʾilun* so much as if you were saying ʾinna zaydan *la-fāʾilun* “Indeed Zayd is doing” in the [same] meaning you intend’.<sup>37</sup> Shortly after that, Sībawayhi repeats that *ʾanna-hā ḍāraʿat-i l-fāʾila l-iḡtimāʾi-himā fi l-maʾnā* ‘[...] that they (i.e. *yafʿalu* forms) resembled the agent noun since both converge (lit. ‘come together’) in meaning’.<sup>38</sup> Sībawayhi thus contends that the resemblance of the verbal pattern *yafʿalu* to the agent noun *fāʾilun* is due to their common meaning. In order to fully understand what is meant by *maʾnā* in this context, we turn to al-Mubarrad who makes it plain that *ʾinna-mā qūla la-hā muḍāriʿatun li-ʾanna-hā taqaʾu mawāqiʿa l-ʾasmāʾi fi l-maʾnā* ‘They were termed [the] resembling [forms] because they take the same position of the [agent] nouns in [conveying the same] meaning’.<sup>39</sup> In a similar manner, Ibn Yaʿīš states that *yafʿalu* forms resemble the agent noun because they *yaqaʾu mawāqiʿa l-ʾasmāʾi wa-yuʾaddi maʾāniya-hā* ‘occupy the place of the nouns and convey their mean-

35 Carter, *Muḍāriʿ*, 5.

36 Ibid., 6.

37 Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 2.

38 Ibid.

39 al-Mubarrad, *Muḥtaḍab*, 2, 1.

ings'.<sup>40</sup> Putting it in modern terms, we may say that the *muḍāra'a* of *yaf'alu* to the agent noun is semantic and paradigmatic in nature: it stems from the fact that *yaf'alu*, occupying the same position as *fā'ilun* in the clause, conveys the same meaning.

Sibawayhi mentions two other features by which the *muḍāra'a* of *yaf'alu* to the agent noun is established. The first is the compatibility (illustrated in the examples above) of the 'emphasizing' *la-* with both *yaf'alu* and *fā'ilun*, a compatibility not attested with *fa'ala*. The second is the prefixation of the 'future' particle *sawfa/sa-* to *yaf'alu*, compared to the prefixation of the definite article to the noun.<sup>41</sup> This latter feature is explained by Sibawayhi's commentator, al-Sīrāfi, as follows: the plain verb *yaf'alu*, which indicates either a present or a future time, resembles a *mubham* 'indefinite' noun such as *rağulun*, which does not refer to a specific man. The adding of the definite article to *rağul* makes its reference to a certain man specific, the same as the adding of *sawfa/sa-* to *yaf'alu* marks its specific reference to future time.<sup>42</sup> The semantic vagueness (*ibhām*) or polysemy (*iḥtilāf al-mā'nī*) of *yaf'alu* is further compared to that of a noun like 'ayn, which (depending on the collocation) may be used to indicate such diverse meanings as 'eye' ('ayn al-*insān*), 'well' ('ayn al-*mā'*), 'direction of prayer' ('ayn al-*qibla*), and the 'cavity of the knee' ('ayn al-*rukba*).<sup>43</sup> Some grammarians after Sibawayhi took up all these (as well as other) features and composed lists of *wuğūh* 'aspects' in respect to which *yaf'alu* resembles the agent noun.<sup>44</sup> It is important to keep in mind, however, that these additional features of resemblance, i.e., the compatibility with *la-* and the concretization through a prefixed modifier, are only secondary to the more fundamental feature of common meaning. As al-Suyūṭī comments, *la-* and *sawfa/sa-* are added *ba'da stiḥqāqi l-irābi* 'after the declension was rightly claimed [by the resemblance]'.<sup>45</sup> In other words, the resemblance of *yaf'alu* to *fā'ilun* is not preconditioned by the presence of these features, but only corroborated by them.

An obvious though often overlooked fact is that the resemblance of the verbal pattern *yaf'al-V* to the agent noun is discussed only in relation to the form ending in *raf'* (*u*), namely, *al-muḍāri' al-marfū'*. This stands to reason, since the features of resemblance mentioned above apply only to *yaf'alu*. The

40 Ibn Ya'īš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaššal*, 4, 211.

41 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 2.

42 al-Sīrāfi, *Šarḥ Kitāb*, 1, 27 ff.

43 Ibid., 19.

44 E.g. Ibn Ya'īš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaššal*, 4, 210 ff.; Ibn al-'Anbārī, *Asrār*, 12 ff.

45 al-Suyūṭī, *Ham'*, 1, 54.



two other forms ending in *naṣb* and *ğazm*, viz. *yaf'ala* and *yaf'al*, are called *muḍāri'* only by extension: they share the same morphological pattern with *yaf'alu*, but they do not occupy the position of a noun in the clause or convey its meaning. Moreover, *al-muḍāri' al-marfū'* is distinct from *al-muḍāri' al-manṣūb* and *al-muḍāri' al-mağzūm* in being affected by an 'abstract operator' (*'āmil ma'nawīyy*) rather than a 'literal operator' (*'āmil lafẓīyy*), such as the negative particles *lan* or *lam*, preceding *yaf'ala* and *yaf'al*, respectively.<sup>46</sup> According to Sībawayhi, the form *yaf'alu* is assigned the *raf'* due to the fact that it occurs in the clause in a position where a noun could occur (not necessarily an agent noun!). Thus *yaf'alu* is found in the position of the subject, predicate, second object or circumstantial, or in the position of an adjective, in apposition or in a genitive construction.<sup>47</sup> Sībawayhi admits that the substitution of *yaf'alu* and *fā'ilun* is limited: in some positions the occurrence of *yaf'alu* is precluded, e.g., the subject position after *'inna*, while in other positions the agent noun is not featured, e.g., the predicative position after the verb *kāda*.<sup>48</sup> This is explained by the fact that, however similar, *yaf'alu* is not a noun but ultimately a verbal form.

So far I have discussed the resemblance of the verbal form *yaf'alu* to the agent noun, however, the similarity between the two forms also works in the opposite direction. Sībawayhi attributes the ability of the agent noun to govern an indefinite noun in the accusative to the fact that it is similar to *yaf'alu* in both its grammatical effect (*'amal*) and meaning (*ma'nā*).<sup>49</sup> Thus, in a clause such as *hādā ḍāribun Zaydan ḡadan* 'This one is going to hit Zayd tomorrow', the agent noun *ḍāribun* governs the object *Zaydan* since it has the same meaning and grammatical effect that *yaḍribu* has in the clause *hādā yaḍribu Zaydan ḡadan* 'This one will hit Zayd tomorrow'. If the agent noun does not indicate the same meaning as *yaf'alu* but refers to a past occurrence, it will not govern an accusative object but a genitive complement, e.g., *hādā ḍāribu Zaydin* 'This one has hit Zayd'. In the Sībawayhian terminology, the verb is *muḍāri'* 'resembling' the agent noun and thus entitled to *'irāb* 'declension', while the agent noun *ḡarā maḡrā* 'follows the course' of the verb and is thus entitled to *'amal* 'grammatical effect'. In both cases, the similarity is motivated by the common meaning of both forms.

46 For a general discussion of the theory of *'amal* and the distinction between both types of *'awāmil*, see Levin, *'Amal*.

47 Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 363.

48 Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 3, 364–365.

49 Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 70.

The similarity between *yaf'alu* and the agent noun is not strictly reciprocal or of equal status, as one could argue.<sup>50</sup> Careful attention to the terminology used by Sībawayhi is revealing of the different nature he ascribes to the similarity in each case: the agent noun is not *muḍāri'*, but *ǧarā maǧrā al-fi'l al-muḍāri'*.<sup>51</sup> This brings us back to the question of the meaning of *muḍāra'a* against other terms indicating analogy and similarity. Sībawayhi does not interchange between *muḍāri'* and *ǧarā maǧrā*; however, he substitutes the latter term with *ʾašbaha* or *šubbiha* 'to be or be made similar'. Sībawayhi argues that the agent noun was made similar (*šubbiha*) to the verb that resembled it (*ḍāra'a-hū*), the same way that the verb was made similar (*šubbiha*) to the agent noun in declension.<sup>52</sup> It is evident that *šubbiha* refers to the 'gains' of the resemblance: the grammatical effect in the case of the agent noun, and the declension in the case of the verb. We recall that the agent noun is not similar in all circumstances to the verb whereas the resemblance of the verb to the agent noun is built-in. This accords well with Carter's insight that *muḍāra'a* indicates inherent resemblance. We can refine Carter's observation by saying that *ḍāra'a* refers to the acquiring of an inherent property through resemblance whereas *ǧarā maǧrā*, *ʾašbaha*, or *šubbiha* refer to a conditioned behavior brought about by similarity.

Later grammarians are not as careful as Sībawayhi in maintaining the distinction between *ḍāra'a* and other terms indicating analogy. Thus Ibn al-Sarrāǧ draws an equation between *yaf'alu* and *fā'ilun* saying that the first *ʾaraba li-muḍāra'ati l-ismi* 'declined due to resemblance to the noun' while the latter *ʾamalā bi-muḍāra'ati l-fi'li* 'governed [the object] by virtue of resemblance to the verb'.<sup>53</sup> Ibn Yaʿīš, too, freely interchanges between *muḍāra'a* and *mušābaha*, conceived by him as two synonymous terms, thus saying that *l-mušābahatu ʾawǧabat la-hū l-ʾirāba* 'the resemblance granted it [i.e. the verb] the declension'.<sup>54</sup> However, also in these formulations, it is clear that the syntactic resemblance is what brings about (or results in) morphological similarity. In other words: the *muḍāra'a* (or *mušābaha*) is the cause and the *ʾirāb* is the effect.

50 Carter, *Muḍāri'*, 6–7, argues that the resemblance between the imperfect verb and the agent noun is not only reciprocal but also circular. It is true that the mechanism of resemblance can work in both directions; however, it is not simply bi-directional: the nature of the resemblance is different in each case and resides in distinct domains.

51 See Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 70ff.: *šubbiha bimā ḍāra'a-hū min-a l-fi'li kamā šubbiha bi-hī fi l-ʾirābi*.

52 Ibid., 73.

53 Ibn al-Sarrāǧ, *ʾUṣūl*, 1, 123.

54 Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, 4, 210.

Apparently, this causal relation was not wholly understood or maintained in the writings of some modern scholars. Brockelmann, for instance, translates *muḍāriʿ* as ‘(dem Nomen in der Annahme der Kasusendungen) ähnelndes.’<sup>55</sup> More explicitly, Ryding argues that the term *muḍāriʿ* ‘was adopted because of the fact that the present tense mood markers on the verb [...] resemble the case markers on nouns’, so that the present tense “resembles” a noun in this ability to change its desinence.<sup>56</sup> Evidently, Ryding describes an inverse relation between *muḍāraʿa* and *ʾirāb*, so that the similarity in declension is the underlying reason for the resemblance. Also Versteegh explains that, apart from resemblance in the ‘syntactic function’, the *muḍāriʿ* is so designated ‘since the verbal forms of the imperfect have almost the same endings as the nouns.’<sup>57</sup> Even Carter’s insightful article on the term *muḍāriʿ* in the *Kitāb* of Sibawayhi falls short when classifying the resemblance of the ‘imperfect verb’ to the agent noun as morphological (while the resemblance of the agent noun to the verb is classified as syntactical).<sup>58</sup> To be sure, the resemblance of *yafʿalu* to the agent noun has morphological exponents. Yet, according to the Arab grammarians’ view, these are but the surface expressions of the resemblance at the deeper semantic and syntactic levels.

## 2.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the Arab grammarians views as to the semantological nature of the verb and its distinctive grammatical features. The verb, as generally accepted, is designed to express events in time. According to Sibawayhi, the verbal system consists of three types of verbs corresponding to the three physical times: *faʿala*, *yafʿalu*, and *ifʿal*. According to later grammarians, the tripartite division of the timeline is matched with a bipartite tense system in Arabic, by establishing a certain hierarchy between the present and future, both marked by *yafʿalu*. While *faʿala*, the *māḍī* ‘past’, and *ifʿal*, the *ʾamr* ‘imperative’, were termed after their semantic meanings, the term for *yafʿalu*, *al-muḍāriʿ* ‘the [verb] resembling [the agent noun]’, originated in the grammatical analysis of the verb. The resemblance of *yafʿalu* to the agent noun is semantic and paradigmatic in nature: taking the same place of the agent noun in the clause and conveying the same meaning, *yafʿalu* resembles the agent

55 Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, 2, 145.

56 Ryding, *Modern Standard Arabic*, 442, no. 7.

57 Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, 78.

58 Carter, *Muḍāriʿ*, 10–11.

noun and thus assumes final word declension. The agent noun, when conveying the same meaning as *yafʿalu*, may also follow its course and govern an indefinite accusative noun. However, the resemblance of *yafʿalu* to the agent noun is inherent in the verbal form whereas the similarity of the agent noun to *yafʿalu* arises only in certain defined occasions.

It appears that the Arab grammarians maintained a rather profound view of the verbal system in Arabic, more profound than the one accredited to them by some modern scholars.<sup>59</sup> It is a striking fact that of the two basic tenses *faʿala* and *yafʿalu*, the second is defined in comparison to a nominal form. Indeed, as their terminology suggests, the Arab grammarians considered the semantic and syntactic resemblance of the verb *yafʿalu* to the agent noun as its most prominent characteristic. This view of *yafʿalu* is doubtless original and, as will be further shown in this work, may be corroborated by ample data from Classical Arabic prose.<sup>60</sup>

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59 Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, 2, 145, points out the seeming negligence of the Arab grammarians in giving the verbal forms names that are not of the same logical order, see also below chapter 3.

60 Versteegh, *Greek Elements*, 79, argues that the comparison of the verb to the noun is 'not as original as it appears to be at first sight'. As evidence, he points at the Greek doctrine, according to which a finite verb such as *louéi* 'He washes' is equivalent to the periphrastic form *estì louún* 'He is washing'. It is clear, however, that the Greeks had something else in mind when posing this equivalence: they referred to the complex structure of the finite verb, whose constitutive elements are transparent in the periphrastic participial structure (cf. Goldenberg, *Verbal Structure*, 153 ff.), and not to its syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations with the participle.

## The Verb in Arabistic Literature

### 3.1 The Verbal System in Arabic and Semitic

Unlike the Arab grammarians, whose grammatical description of the *ʿArabiyya* was for the most part self-contained, betraying no interest in parallels found in the sister languages, Western scholars in the past two centuries have studied Classical Arabic as an exemplar—albeit prominent—of the overall Semitic bundle of languages. Consequently, their analysis of Arabic data usually involved some comparison, active or latent, to data found in other Semitic languages, as well as some assumptions as to the evolution of the Semitic system in general. As native speakers of modern European languages, also well-versed in the Greco-Latin tradition, Western scholars had a different set of categories and questions in mind than their Arab predecessors. We shall see below how all this shaped their view of the tense system, contributing to its becoming what Goldenberg has described as the ‘weakest point in the Semitic verbal grammar’.<sup>1</sup>

For Western scholars, the problem of the tenses in Semitic languages, and specifically in Arabic, has been essentially a problem of translation. As many of them admitted, even a partial correspondence between the tenses in Semitic and in Indo-European languages is hard to identify.<sup>2</sup> This lack of correspondence resides first of all in the compactness of the Semitic system, which consists of a relatively small number of verbal forms.<sup>3</sup> However, more acute is the problem of defining the meaning of these forms. As Reckendorf puts it: *Wir sollen Verba finita begreifen, die zeitlos sind und zumal unsere Perfekta und Imperfekta zur Übersetzung verwenden, ohne dabei etwas Praeteritales zu denken*.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, the view that the verbal forms in Arabic are ‘timeless’ is radically different from the one held by the Arab grammarians (see above 2.2), and presents a genuine rethinking of the subject matter. This new view of the verbal system was affected by the Classical and European background of these scholars, as well as by the introduction of the historical-comparative method into Semitic linguistics in the nineteenth century.

1 Goldenberg, *Amharic Tense System*, 88.

2 E.g. Cohen, *Système verbal*, 14.

3 E.g. Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, 2, 144.

4 Reckendorf, *Syntaktischen Verhältnisse*, 1, 52.

In his comparative grammar, Brockelmann approaches the problem of the tenses in Semitic languages by going back to its (pre-)historical roots. Following Bauer, he suggests that Proto-Semitic had only one verbal form, the prefixed *y-aqtul*, indifferent of time distinctions. Later on, a second form developed from the nominal clause, namely, the suffixed *qatal-*, which has come to indicate the 'present' in East-Semitic and the 'perfect' in West-Semitic.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, this theory may explain the temporal indefiniteness characteristic to *y-aqtul* or the traces of a stative meaning of *qatal-* in various Semitic languages. However, a more significant point in this reconstruction is the idea that the verbal system in West-Semitic languages is built upon the opposition between two simple forms only: a prefixed one and a suffixed one.

As a matter of fact, the idea that the Semitic verbal system is based on a binary opposition was established long before Brockelmann. In Arabic linguistics, one can go back as far as de Sacy's grammar, who described two simple tenses in Arabic, a 'preterit' and an 'aorist'.<sup>6</sup> A systematic analysis of the verbal system identifying a binary opposition between the suffixed and the prefixed verbal patterns was first presented by Ewald. In his textbook of Biblical Hebrew from 1870, Ewald explains the logic underlying his analysis in the following words: '[...] no language, when it introduces distinctions, can start from anything threefold; antithesis is almost always merely simple and thoroughgoing, because elicited by its [counter] thesis [...] Thus, both in thought and language, every distinction is at first drawn between no more than two things'.<sup>7</sup> According to this view—which has become a basic tenet in subsequent literature—an opposition between two forms (or sets of forms) is inherent to the Semitic verbal system. However, the attempts to define this semantic opposition have generated a long dispute among scholars, a dispute which by now 'fills a whole library'.<sup>8</sup> In the following section, I will shortly review the various opinions as to the ultimate meaning of the verbal forms in Classical Arabic, specifically whether this meaning is regarded as primarily temporal or aspectual.

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5 Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, 2, 145–146.

6 de Sacy, *Grammaire arabe*, 1, 148.

7 Ewald, *Hebrew Syntax*, 2. For a detailed discussion of the development of the terms 'perfect' and 'imperfect' in Semitic linguistics, see Goldenberg, *Amharic Tense System*, 88–94.

8 Sasse, *Theory of Aspect*, 210.

### 3.2 The Question of Tense or Aspect

In a rather simplified fashion, one could say that the dispute among Western scholars revolves around the question of whether the verbal system is *basically* tense-oriented or aspect-oriented. Indeed, most scholars do not preclude any of these (and other) semantic notions when listing the various uses of the verbal forms. Rather, it is the identification of the *grundbedeutung*, the underlying meaning from which all of these uses are derived, which spurs on the controversy.

While the concept of external or relative time was commonly employed by the Arab grammarians (see above 2.2), the concept of the internal time of the verbal situation penetrated Arabic linguistics only in the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> In his Arabic grammar, Ewald was the first to introduce the pair of terms *perfectum* and *imperfectum* to account for the semantic distinction marked by the suffixed and the prefixed verbal patterns.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, Ewald 'set right' the confusing terminology of the Arab grammarians who, according to Brockelmann, 'gave up logical correctness' by naming one pattern after its use (i.e. *māḍī* 'past') and another after its form (i.e. *muḍāri* 'resembling').<sup>11</sup> Rather than a temporal value, Ewald ascribed to the verbs meanings which would later on be referred to as aspectual. The terms perfect and imperfect became the conventional terms in the Western tradition for the two verbal patterns. It is noteworthy that a further distinction between these two patterns pointed out by Ewald, namely, the modal distinction between *certum* and *incertum*, was not maintained in the subsequent literature.

The category of aspect, as was generally defined in regard to Arabic (and Semitic in general), refers to the grammaticalized expression of the distinction between a completed situation and an incomplete situation, signified by the perfect-imperfect pair. Fleischer, for example, argued that a temporal definition of the verbal forms, such as suggested by de Sacy, obscures the 'real essence' of the two verbs, which mark the opposition between 'completion' and 'incompletion'.<sup>12</sup> Reckendorf, too, described an opposition between a 'realized' situation and a situation 'in the process of realization' signaled by the *Perfekt* and *Imperfekt*. However, unlike Fleischer, Reckendorf does not regard

9 Although Sibawayhi speaks of a verbal situation which *lam yanqati* 'has not ceased' (*Kitāb* 1, 1), and of a situation which *qad waqa'a wa-nqa'a* 'has happened and ceased' (*Kitāb* 1, 73), these occasional comments hardly amount to a systematic theory of aspect.

10 Ewald, *Grammatica critica*, 112 ff.

11 Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, 2, 145.

12 Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*, 1, 95 ff.

aspect as a pure concept: he recognizes the correlation between completion and anteriority as expressed by the perfect, and (like Ewald before) points out the relation between the aspectual meaning of both forms and their modal and textual functions. The perfect, accordingly, marks 'certainty' and is used to make statements; the imperfect refers to a non-realized situation and is used for descriptions.<sup>13</sup> Such semantic relations are also identified by other scholars such as Wright, who lists the various temporal uses of the perfect and imperfect,<sup>14</sup> or Brocklemann, who stresses the contrast between the 'stating' function of the perfect and the 'describing' function of the imperfect.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, it is still the 'opposing aspects inherent in the perfect and the imperfect' which are considered to be fundamental to the verbal system as a whole.<sup>16</sup>

The theory of aspect in Semitic, and particularly in Arabic, was further developed by French scholars. In his monograph on the Semitic verbal system, Marcel Cohen presented a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of aspect in Semitic languages and its peculiar traits (compared to Greek or Slavic).<sup>17</sup> Cohen's theory had great influence on later French Arabists, who endorsed the view that the *accompli* and the *inaccompli* in Arabic do not signify a subjective 'situated time', but have an objective aspectual value, such that correlates with certain temporal and modal distinctions. Thus, according to Gaudefroy-Demombynes and Blachère, when not affected by the context, the *accompli* and the *inaccompli* have an 'absolute' temporal value: the former is psychologically related to the idea of past, while the latter bears an analogy to the notion of the present or the future.<sup>18</sup> David Cohen, in his study on the general category of verbal aspect, also identifies a fundamental opposition of aspect between the two verbal forms in Classical Arabic. However, he defines (after Benveniste) two 'temporalizing' contexts, i.e., narrative and dialogue, in which the *accompli* and *inaccompli* acquire a specific temporal value.<sup>19</sup> Fleisch, too, maintains that the opposition between the *accompli* and the *inaccompli* is

13 Reckendorf, *Syntaktischen Verhältnisse*, 1, 53 ff.

14 Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 1 ff.

15 Brocklemann, *Arabische Grammatik*, 118. Elsewhere, the functional distinction between 'stating' (*konstatieren*) and 'describing' (*schildern*) is regarded as a grammatical distinction between a 'constative' and a 'cursive' aspect, cf. Brocklemann, "*Tempora*", 139 ff. The latter terms were borrowed by Rundgren, in his studies of the Semitic aspect, and later on by Reuschel, in his study of tense and aspect in the Qur'an (see *Aspekt und Tempus*, 24).

16 Fischer, *Classical Arabic Grammar*, 102.

17 Cohen, *Système verbal*.

18 Gaudefroy-Demombynes and Blachère, *Grammaire de l'arabe*, 246.

19 Cohen, *L'aspect verbal*, 84–85.



in principle aspectual. However, he admits (like Reckendorf before) that while the *accompli* can indicate time in itself, when serving as the narrative tense, the *inaccompli* is never capable of indicating time in itself.<sup>20</sup>

The conclusion that the perfect, as opposed to the imperfect, embodies a temporal component, was arrived at in the Arabistic literature several times. Beeston, for instance, argues that the semantic opposition between the two verbal patterns lies in the value of their ‘predicate element’, which may be either dynamic or static. This opposition—though not strictly grammatical, but also lexical—is also defined by him as ‘aspectual’.<sup>21</sup> According to Beeston, ‘the only definitely time-marked verb [...] is the suffix set verb in cases where it has dynamic aspect, being then explicitly past’.<sup>22</sup> Keeping with the same general idea, Götz, too, contends that a form like *kataba*, signaling ‘retrospective’, is marked for time-perspective, whereas a form like *yaktubu* has no temporal value, its ‘relevance’ lies solely in its lexeme.<sup>23</sup>

Although the theory of aspect became prevalent in the majority of grammatical descriptions, the tense-oriented approach was not discarded by all. Some one hundred and fifty years after de Sacy, it was Aartun who advocated anew the analysis of *qatal-* and *yaqtul-* as plain tense forms, the first marking ‘preterit’ the second marking ‘non-preterit’, ‘present’.<sup>24</sup> A more sophisticated analysis of the system, following the so-called ‘noetic’ model, was proposed by Denz. In this model, the verbal forms fit into a grid whose main coordinates are temporal; aspectual distinctions do not exist by themselves, but are logically entailed by the temporal ones.<sup>25</sup> A similar analysis was advanced by Kuryłowicz, who determined a hierarchy of functions of the binary pair *qatala-yaqtulu*. The primary function of the first, which is the positive member in the opposition, is to indicate anteriority, while the primary function of the latter, which is the neuter-negative member, is to indicate non-anterior or simultaneous action.<sup>26</sup> In a more recent study, Bahloul, too, employs the tool of markedness to account for the semantic opposition indicated by the perfect and imperfect. According to his analysis, the perfect embodies the positive features of ‘+anteriority’ and

20 Fleisch, *Verbe arabe*, 177.

21 Beeston, *Arabic Language*, 76.

22 Ibid., 79.

23 Götz, *Tempora*, 96.

24 Aartun, *Altarabischer Tempora*.

25 Denz, *Verbalsyntax*, presents the noetic model in the introduction to his description of the dialect of Kwayriš. A short theoretical outline of this model is also presented in Denz, *Tempus und Aspekt?*.

26 Kuryłowicz, *Studies in Semitic*, 80 ff.

'+dimensionalization', whereas the imperfect embodies either the negative (-) or the neuter ( $\pm$ ) values of these features.<sup>27</sup>

The question as to the basic meaning of the suffixed and prefixed patterns in Classical Arabic continues to intrigue modern scholars. Most of them agree that both patterns indicate temporal and non-temporal meanings, however, the exact definition of these is yet a matter of dispute.<sup>28</sup> It is noteworthy that Comrie's paragraph-long description of the tenses in Classical Arabic has gained currency in recent years, even among Arabists. Comrie cuts to the point by stating that, in addition to their aspectual values, the perfect and the imperfect also embody a component of relative time reference.<sup>29</sup> Appealing as it is, such a compact analysis can hardly capture the complexity of the system. In fact, one may rightly doubt whether an abstraction at such level reflects at all a linguistic reality, thus whether it brings us any closer to understand the mechanism found in practice in Classical Arabic.

### 3.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the ongoing dispute over the semantic opposition marked by the two basic verbal forms *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* in the Arabistic literature. While the binary structure of the verbal system has been commonly accepted (and, in fact, regarded as self-evident), the scholars have been divided as to the basic semantic opposition marked by *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*. We have seen that most scholars, while aiming at compact and clear-cut definitions, come to admit the differences between *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* with respect to their having a temporal value. When applied to these forms, the terms 'perfect' and 'imperfect' turn thus to be misleading in more than one sense: not only do they stand for different meanings than those generally associated with them (considering

27 Bahloul, *Arabic Verb*, 140 ff.

28 Bubenik, Hewson, and Omari, *Tense, Aspect and Aktionsart*, outline a general model for the tense system of Arabic or better, the Arabic 'type' (Arabic, in this article, stands for all forms of the written and spoken language). The authors contend that 'the familiar morphological opposition *katab-a* versus *ya-ktub-u* is best described by double temporo-aspectual labels past/Performative versus non-past/Imperfective' (45). Although the authors introduce some innovations, specifically the analysis of *fa'ala* as Performative rather than Perfective (the first fits into the cognitive scheme of 'ascending time', the latter into the scheme of 'descending time'), their study follows by and large the same basic conception of the verbal system as binary and non-symmetrical.

29 Comrie, *Tense*, 63.

either the Slavic perfective and imperfective, or the perfect and imperfect in Romance languages), but also, they do not indicate a single functional opposition. While *fa'ala* is generally described as the complete-anterior form, most scholars have difficulty to capture the content of *yaf'alu* in positive terms, thus coming full circle to the 'illogical' asymmetry suggested by the Arab grammarians in the first place.

The ongoing controversy over the basic meaning of *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* leads one to think that, while there are certain obvious tendencies, there is no one, basic, category that could crack the logic of the Arabic verbal system. The pursuit of a neat formal definition which will fit all the cases is bound to fail. At the synchronic level, the uses of both forms are too many and diverse; also from a historical perspective, it is hard (if not impossible) to trace the development of the verbs from a primitive state of simple oppositions. Rather, we can only approach a functional definition of the verbal forms by giving due consideration to the particular, concrete, contexts in which they are used. The following chapters are dedicated to a discussion of the structure of context and a close examination of the functions of the verbal forms in different contexts.

## The Structure of Context

### 4.1 The Conceptualization of Context

Linguistics in the twentieth century has been largely concerned with the fundamental question of defining language as an object of scientific observation in and of itself. This endeavor proceeded in two divergent paths, often referred to by contrasting pairs of terms such as: ‘sentence-centered’ vs. ‘text-centered’ theories,<sup>1</sup> ‘micro-linguistics’ vs. ‘sociolinguistics’ or ‘stylistics’,<sup>2</sup> ‘*a priori* grammar attitude’ vs. ‘emergence of grammar attitude’,<sup>3</sup> or simply ‘formal linguistics’ vs. ‘functional linguistics’.<sup>4</sup> Recalling the Saussurean program, we may say that the contrast reflected in this terminology lies in different understandings of the *langue-parole* dichotomy.<sup>5</sup> However diverse (and even contradicting) general theories of language may be,<sup>6</sup> it appears that all pursue the same basic question: what constitutes the linguistic system and to what degree should it be abstracted away from its actual instances? Put differently, to which extent should the contextualization or de-contextualization of linguistic data be carried out?

Context, as a pre-theoretical notion, is readily understood as the particular situation of communication in which a certain spoken or written text is produced. However, as far as its linguistic analysis is concerned, context is rightly

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1 Petöfi, *Beyond the Sentence*.

2 Lyons, *Semantics*, 2, 585 ff.

3 Hopper, *Emergent Grammar*.

4 Dik, *Functional Grammar*, 2–3.

5 De Beaugrande, *Text Linguistics*, 168, neatly summarizes this problem in twentieth century linguistic theory: ‘the toughest problems have stemmed from the assumption that a “language” has a quite different mode of organization than does “actual speech” (or texts), and from the corresponding aspiration to describe language independently of actual speech’.

6 Two radically different approaches are outlined, for instance, in the works of Chomsky and Firth. Chomsky, *Aspects*, 3–4, sets forth a clear-cut distinction between ‘competence’ and ‘performance’, of which only the first, in its ‘perfect’ and ‘ideal’ manifestation, is considered as a valid object for linguistic investigation. In contrast, Firth, *Technique*, presents a theory of language based entirely on the notion of context. As is often the case with extreme ideas, both theories (influential as they were) were severely challenged in the attempt to render them to actual practice.

viewed as a 'lumpen mass' that is extremely hard to disentangle.<sup>7</sup> Lyons provides a general definition of context as 'a theoretical construct, in the postulation of which the linguist abstracts from the actual situation and establishes as contextual all the factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants in the language-event, systematically determine the form, the appropriateness or the meaning of the utterances'.<sup>8</sup> The point to be stressed in this definition, as Lyons himself admits, is that of systematicity. Indeed, the challenge in the analysis of context is to identify what Hymes (after Pike) has referred to as the 'emic' features,<sup>9</sup> i.e., those features which are relevant to the production and interpretation of a specific instance of communication and which are further generalizable to a set of such communications. In other words, in defining context the linguist is confronted with the question of what are the discursive, textual, social, and cultural variables which correlate with the grammatical forms in a systematic and predictable manner and what are the local or contingent elements which defy any formalization so as to fit a generally valid linguistic account.

Both theoretical and descriptive linguists have always made ample use of context as an explanatory device, to refer to the cognitive, social, and textual background which affects the interpretation of a certain stretch of discourse. The cognitive and social aspects of context (context as 'knowledge' and 'situation', respectively) have been of interest to linguists working in the fields of pragmatics and sociolinguistics; some (notably conversation analysts) have regarded the sequential progression of interaction, i.e., the textual sequence, as essential to the notion of context.<sup>10</sup> However, not many attempts have been made to accommodate context into the structure of the linguistic system. One comprehensive model of context as a linguistic construct was proposed by Halliday, in a number of works, and Hasan.<sup>11</sup> Their model (in the various forms it assumed over the years) attempts to incorporate the 'interpersonal' or 'situational' and 'textual' components into the semantological and grammatical system of the language. Fleischman, too, proposed a multi-layered model of the linguistic system, in which the meanings of a grammatical form reside in the referential ('propositional'), pragmatic ('textual' and 'expressive') and 'metalin-

7 Cf. Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 50.

8 Lyons, *Semantics*, 2, 572.

9 Hymes, *Foundations*, 11.

10 For a detailed review of the various approaches to context as 'knowledge', 'situation', and 'text', see Schiffrin, *Approaches*, 365–378.

11 Halliday, *Text as Semantic Choice*; Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 26 ff.; Hasan, *Systemic-Functional Model*.

guistic' levels.<sup>12</sup> In a similar manner, Waugh presents a hierarchy of 'contextual meanings', which are categorized as 'pragmatic', 'textual', 'modal', 'discursive', 'expressive' and 'referential'.<sup>13</sup> Both Fleischman and Waugh employ the tool of markedness in order to unpack the cluster of functions associated with the grammatical form, and to establish the correlation between form and function in a given situation of communication. Another comprehensive approach to language in context, stemming from the analysis of everyday conversations, was proposed by Schiffrin.<sup>14</sup> According to Schiffrin's model of discourse (or 'coherence in talk'), language as used comprises interactional and social dimensions such as 'exchange', 'action' and 'participation', alongside 'ideational' and 'informational' dimensions. These dimensions are not autonomous, but rather interrelated components which come into play in each instance of discourse.

Naturally, every theory of context has at its background a certain text.<sup>15</sup> A general model of context structure is to be viewed, therefore, as a grid or an elastic mold which can accommodate various kinds of texts. This grid may vary to a great extent with respect to the medium, style, and register in which a certain text is produced. Modern spoken texts allow for a delicate inspection, both at the phonetic or prosodic level and at the situational or interpersonal level, an inspection to which an ancient written document cannot be submitted. The themes and goals, as well as the discursive conventions and strategies, also differ to a great deal among such kinds of texts. Nevertheless, the postulation of a definable contextual matrix, within which semantogrammatical elements assume a certain function, appears to be universally valid for all texts.

The present work is concerned with classical written texts. Contextualization in this case is bound to have a more limited potential, especially as far as the (extra-linguistic) interactional dimensions are concerned. Yet, at the textual level, the overall contour will prove to be more solidly definable, due to the inherently structured nature of classical literary texts. Since context has a highly complex structure, its unpacking (as the above mentioned models suggest) can only be reached through a multi-layered analysis. In this work I will deal with some features of the discursive situation, mainly the deictic context,

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12 Fleischman, *Theory of Tense-Aspect*.

13 Waugh, *Tense-Aspect*, 241–242.

14 Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers*, 24 ff.

15 Cf. Schiffrin, *Approaches*, 362, commenting that 'contextual information is always information that is identified in relation to something else that is the primary focus of our attention [...] the identity of that "something else" (and what kind of sense we are trying to make of it) influences our decisions about what counts as context [...]'.

as well as the structure of text, at the macro- and micro-syntactic levels. Lexical input will also be considered in this analysis, as one of the main factors which affect the distribution and interpretation of the verbal forms. In the succeeding sections, this cluster of features will be treated under the following five headings:

- (a) Deictic reference
- (b) Text types
- (c) Interdependency
- (d) Clause types
- (e) Lexical classes

## 4.2 Deictic Reference

Reference, as intended here, is the relation between a linguistic expression and its referent, established with respect to the deictic center of discourse. The act of referring relates the linguistic sign to the personal sphere, i.e., it anchors it in the situation of the speaking/narrating subject.<sup>16</sup>

The deictic center determines the coordinates in relation to which the entire discourse is organized. It is sometimes regarded as the objective situation of speech, whereby the present moment and spot, as well as the roles of the speaker and hearer, are determined.<sup>17</sup> However, the (typical) deictic center is better conceived of as the subjective situation of the speaker/narrator, located in a certain time and space, being in a certain mental disposition, and concerned with a certain topic. Tense, aspect (as distinct from *Aktionsart* or lexical aspect), and modality, as well as other subjective indices, are accordingly refer-

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16 It is precisely the anchoring of the expression in the situation of the speaking (or narrating) subject which distinguishes reference from mere denotation. Cf. the definition of reference given by Lyons, *Semantics*, 1, 174, as 'the relationship which holds between an expression and what that expression stands for on particular occasions of its utterance'.

17 By 'objective' it is meant that the speech situation rather than the speaker's situation is considered to be the reference point. Comrie, *Tense*, 14, defines the most typical 'reference point' as the 'speech situation', which equally determines the time, space, and persons involved in it; the category of tense refers accordingly to the 'present moment' of speech. As a matter of fact, the orientational (time, space) as well as the mental (or modal) categories are not established in respect to the situation, as an objective locus, but in respect to the subjective position of the speaker.

ential or deictic grammatical categories. The notions of 'absolute' and 'relative' tenses are therefore somewhat misleading: the former do not refer to an objective time-layer, but indicate a certain relation to the subjective situation of the speaking/narrating subject; the latter are referential to the first. The same tense form can refer either directly or indirectly to the deictic center. The type of reference is entailed by the form's syntactic status, i.e., by its being syntactically independent or dependent, as will be discussed in 4.4.

The deictic center changes according to the type of discourse or text. One can define three possible reference points: (a) the first person speaker or narrator, (b) the third person narrator, and (c) the third non-personal or generic person.

**The first person** is the pivot on which the entire situation of speech revolves. It is the deictic center, in respect to which temporal, spatial, and modal relationships are defined. The first person also determines inter-subjective relationships, in projecting its epistemic and affective stance on the second and third persons. The first person may also serve as the deictic center of narratives. Such personal experience narratives converge to some extent with personal reports that are embedded in dialogues. The problem of distinguishing between these two text types is addressed below in 4.3.

**The third person narrator** is different from the third person in direct speech, since its identity is not determined in respect to the first person. The third person narrator marks a self-contained, self-anchored world, detached from the deictic situation of narration itself. The detachment from the concrete ('real') situation in which the story is told may provide the narrator with an omniscient epistemological position.<sup>18</sup>

**The third non-personal or generic person** is distinct from both the third person in direct speech and the third person narrator, as it is not anchored in any situation, either of speech or of narrative. As far as reference is concerned, the generic person has a privative value, i.e., it is non-referential. Being a deictic 'signal', the generic person has thus a unique function: it does not

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18 According to Hamburger, *Logic*, 73–74, the definition of epic fiction rests upon the fact that 'it contains no real I-Origo, and secondly in that it therefore must contain fictive I-Origines, i.e., reference or orientational systems which epistemologically, and hence temporally, have nothing to do with a real I who experiences fiction in any way—in other words with the author or the reader'.



relate linguistic ‘symbols’ to a particular situation of communication, but rather denies their relation to such one.<sup>19</sup>

Subjective anchoring, in the sense of reference to the speaking/narrating subject or its privation, as was discussed above, is not overlapping with the general notion of subjectivity. Subjectivity is omnipresent in language, whatever the referential point may be.<sup>20</sup> The difference between discourse types in this regard lies in the extent and explicitness in which subjectivity comes into play. Direct speech is naturally imbued with subjectivity, traceable in nearly every segment. Subjectivity is also discerned in third person narratives (‘epic-fiction’), when the presence of the narrating subject, whom we are usually unconscious about, may become apparent through artful means.<sup>21</sup> Subjectivity is sometimes expressed in generic utterances, albeit in an implicit and restricted fashion. Due to the inherently non-anchored nature of generic utterances, markers of subjectivity (e.g. focus particles) which otherwise indicate a specific relation to the situation of discourse (e.g., to the speaker’s stance), are somewhat fossilized, as part of the ‘fixation’ of the utterance as a whole (see also below 11.3). The following table summarizes the discussion on the three reference points:

TABLE 4.1 *Three reference points*

Deictic center	Type of reference
first person speaker/narrator	explicit subjectivity, personal, external to text
third person narrator	implicit subjectivity, personal, internal to text
third generic person	implicit subjectivity, non-personal

19 Bühler, *Theory of Language*, introduced the distinction between ‘symbols’ and ‘signals’ to account for the distinction between linguistic signs whose function is to ‘represent’ and linguistic signs which are used to ‘appeal’; the latter are compared with traffic signs.

20 In his much-quoted article on this topic, Benveniste, *Subjectivity*, 225, says: ‘Language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a *subject* by referring to himself as *I* in his discourse’. His further observation is even more firmly stated: ‘Language is marked so deeply by the expression of subjectivity that one might ask if it could still function and be called language if it were constructed otherwise’.

21 This includes both explicit intrusions of the narrator in the stream of narration, such as by addressing his audience, or implicit intrusions, using, for instance, the ‘free indirect style’. I agree with Hamburger, *Logic*, 155–156, that such intrusions do not disrupt the illusion of fiction, by reflecting real genuine direct speech, rather, they are poetic devices by which ‘narrative function [is] turned upon itself’.

### 4.3 Text Types

The notion of text, as worked out by linguists, has emerged by contradistinction to the notion of the sentence.<sup>22</sup> A text is not just a sentence cluster but, as Halliday and Hasan define it, 'a unit of language in use' which forms a meaningful 'unified whole'.<sup>23</sup> The text is that through which language is produced and that through which it is made accessible to observation. The text is a 'communicative process': it gains meaning only in a particular context of communication.<sup>24</sup> Thus, in a more technical way, the text is defined as 'a unit of situational-semantic organization: a continuum of meaning-in-context, constructed around the semantic relation of cohesion'.<sup>25</sup>

The text is realized through structural units such as paragraphs, complex sentences, and simple clauses, which constitute its hierarchical structure. These are not self-contained units, but rather segments which are interlocked in one another by many and diverse grammatical and semantic devices, e.g.: connectives and focus particles, pronouns and pro-verbs, agreement and consecutive markers, introduction and closure expressions, etc. The discourse strategies of ellipsis and repetition are also means to indicate the cohesiveness of units in the text. At a higher level, a particular thematic or argumentative organization of a text segment marks its internal structural unity, its 'uniform orientation', and gives rise to the specific identity of the text as a whole.<sup>26</sup> Even the simplest clause in a text betrays its inclusion in a higher level of the overall structure, by virtue of these cohesive elements. A simple clause within a text, a 'text-sentence' in Lyon's terminology, presents therefore a different structure than that of a simple decontextualized or idealized 'system-sentence'. This is not to say that a simple clause cannot constitute a complete text in itself. In real language use, to be distinguished from abstractions made by linguists, clause units which constitute coherent text units do exist, for instance, in the form of generic propositions.

The typology of texts which will be outlined here is based on two parameters: (a) the reference point and (b) the overall cohesive structure of the text.

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22 Cf. the many contributions in Petöfi, *Text vs. Sentence*, dedicated to the definition of the linguistic unit of text relative to that of the sentence.

23 Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 1–2.

24 Oomen, *Texts and Sentences*, 272.

25 Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 25.

26 Hinds (following Grimes, *Thread of Discourse*, 102 ff.) defines paragraph as 'a unit of speech or writing that maintains a uniform orientation', *Organizational Patterns*, 136. This uniformity may be of space, time, theme, or participants.

Each type of text is associated with a certain reference point and is realized through a certain 'organizational pattern'.<sup>27</sup> The basic distinction is drawn here between the dialogue, the narrative, and the generic utterance. Obviously, this distinction is far from being exhaustive; it rises from the analysis of the particular body of texts studied in the present work. This taxonomy corresponds in part to the one of reference outlined above; the difference lies in the fact that the first person is not exclusive to a single text type, but has a double association with both the dialogue and the narrative.

The reference point determines the distribution of an array of syntactic features by which a text type is structurally defined.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps the most prominent of these features, that has been discussed at length by linguists, is the different distribution and function of verbal forms in the dialogue and the narrative.<sup>29</sup> The dialogue is the domain of forms marked for 'current relevance' (e.g. perfect) whereas the epic narrative is the domain of the 'historical' forms (e.g. simple past). This distinction is entailed by the direct involvement of the speaking subject in the first case and by its total detachment from the latter. In the same vein, markers of subjectivity abound in dialogues while in third person narratives, and even more so in generic utterances, they are expressed only implicitly.

Besides their reference point, text types are distinct from each other in their overall cohesive structure or texture. Without delving into the enormous literature on narratives and dialogues, we can yet point at some significant structural differences between these two text types:

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- 27 Hinds, *Organizational Patterns*, demonstrates how various discourse types, e.g., 'procedural', 'expository' or 'conversational', assume their particular identity through a different linear and hierarchical organization of their constitutive segments.
- 28 Cf. Cohen, *Tense-Aspect*, for the characterization of the dialogue and the narrative textemes in the Old Babylonian epic, in view of a cluster of syntactic features, e.g.: personal sphere, modality, the information structure of the clause, and forms of verbal and non-verbal predication.
- 29 In the attempt to explain 'otherwise puzzling gaps and asymmetries' (Lyons, *Deixis and Subjectivity*, 117) in the tense system of European languages, linguists such as Benveniste, Weinrich, and Lyons have all resorted to a basic distinction between two essentially different discourse types or modes: 'history' and 'discourse' (Benveniste, *Correlations of Tense*), *Erzählen* and *Beschprechen* (Weinrich, *Tempus*) or 'historic' and 'experiential' mode of description (Lyons, *Semantics*, 2, 688; Lyons, *Deixis and Subjectivity*). One should note, however, that the overall approach of each of these writers to the problem is considerably different.

- (a) The dialogue is structured as an exchange of relatively short and segmented stretches of discourse. The narrative, by contrast, exhibits an organized, relatively longer, sequence of interrelated events.
- (b) The dialogue is co-constructed by a speaker and an addressee. The narrative is transmitted through a single channel (even if polyphonic) at a time.<sup>30</sup>
- (c) The dynamics of dialogues is that of stimulus-and-response.<sup>31</sup> The dialogue proceeds in exchange pairs, some of which are intrinsically related, e.g., adjacency pairs such as: greeting-greeting, question-answer, offer-acceptance/refusal, etc.<sup>32</sup> Narratives, on the other hand, are the medium by which situations and experiences are (chrono)logically shaped so as to be comprehended and further communicated.
- (d) The dialogue is strongly anchored in the here-and-now of the interlocutors, while the narrative is characterized by being spatiotemporally distant from the situation of narration.<sup>33</sup>
- (e) The dialogue *reflects* the information transmitted while the narrative *describes* it.<sup>34</sup>

Not only from a literary but also from a linguistic point of view, the category of narratives is notoriously hard to define. For one thing, narratives display a complex structure, consisting of (at least) two subunits or modes: the 'evolution mode', through which the plot is unfolded, and the 'comment mode', through which descriptions, evaluations, and other amplifications of the plot are transmitted.<sup>35</sup> Another intricate issue concerns the discursive sphere to which the narrative belongs. It appears that such a restriction of the narrative either to the 'fictive' or 'unreal' sphere or to the 'factual' or 'historical' sphere is unten-

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30 In literary works, a common device by which polyphony is expressed is through 'free indirect style'. Polyphony, however, is most pervasive in ordinary conversations. In her study of conversational discourse, Tannen, *Talking Voices*, 99ff., follows Voloshinov and Bakhtin in arguing that in dialogues the speech of others is not merely reported; rather, it is (re-)constructed in a new context while keeping the traces of the prior text from which it is derived.

31 Shisha-Halevy, *Topics*, 138ff., defines this dynamics more specifically as the alternation of two subsystems: the 'allocutive' and the 'responsive'.

32 Cf. Schegloff and Sacks, *Opening up Closings*, 295ff.

33 Toolan, *Narrative*, 1.

34 Ibid. 3.

35 For the distinction between the 'evolution mode' and the 'comment mode' in the narrative see Shisha-Halevy, *Topics*, 34ff.

able.<sup>36</sup> The narrative is a linguistic device that may be exploited in various ways. The important factor is the position assumed by the narrator, and more specifically, to what extent he is involved in the narrative. As is well known, stories are not only related by an impersonal narrator, but quite often by a personal 'I', whether imaginary or real. From a grammatical point of view, it seems best to keep with the distinction between first person narratives and third person narratives: the first are characterized by an internal narrating voice and an external reference point (which results in a double point of view), while the latter are inversely characterized by an external narrating voice and an internal reference point. Thus, the first person narrator has a privileged position: he is not just an observer, but an actor and evaluator of the dramatic events. In contrast, the third person narrator is not agentive but only instrumental. Not only the stream of events, but also the characters' evaluations and reflections are channeled through him.

The major distinction between dialogues and narratives can be further refined if one considers other textual structures which assume an intermediate position between these two types. One such subtype is the report. Similar to the narrative, the report has a linear organization and it proceeds as an account of interrelated events. Unlike the narrative, the report is strictly informative and does not have an evaluative function.<sup>37</sup> It lacks (or makes only minor use of) dramatic or fictionalizing devices which characterize the narrative, e.g.: suspensions, repetitions, shifts in focalization and voice, etc. Moreover, the report has current relevance: it is anchored in the here-and-now of the reporter and presents a topic in a more economic and straightforward fashion than one would expect to find in a proper narrative. Formally, the distinction between narratives and reports may be approached by the examination of the relative frequency and syntactic distribution of grammatical indices of either 'dramaticity' (e.g. presentative particles) or 'actuality' (e.g. perfect forms).

Besides the dialogue and the narrative there exists a third type of text which is sometimes subsumed under the more general type of expository discourse. Here this type of text is referred to as the generic utterance, with the

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36 A rather restrictive view of the narrative is proposed by Hamburger, *Logic*, who identifies proper fiction with the third person and the 'fictive', non-historical time only. Benveniste, *Correlations of Tense*, 206, on the other hand, defines the 'historical' utterance as the 'narration of past events'. Genette, *Fictional/Factual*, in examining the question of whether there exists a genuine difference between factual and fictional narrative, arrives at the conclusion that both types of narrative can approach one another by means of fictionalizing or de-fictionalizing, respectively.

37 In the words of Fleischman, *Tense and Narrativity*, 103, the report does not 'make a point'.

intention to emphasize that property which is viewed as its hallmark, namely, the reference to the generic person, or inversely put, the non-referentiality to the personal sphere. The generic utterance is not anchored in the situation in which it is pronounced, nor does it mark internal deixis like the third person narrator. The generic utterance is not bound to a certain context of situation, therefore it can be infinitely reproduced without any change or adaptation. Generic utterances are usually self-contained propositions, often taking the form of topicalized clauses (see below 4.5).

It is important to stress the distinction (which is not always carried out) between text types as structural units, and speech situations as the communicative events in which they are put to use. In an ordinary conversation, a public address, or a literary work, dialogues, narratives, and generic utterances are not isolated from each other but constantly interwoven in one another. Literary dialogues may be conceived of as yet another mode of narrative transmitting ('narrative' in the sense of the pre-shaped story material).<sup>38</sup> Everyday conversations naturally abound with storytelling sequences. Narratives may be embedded in expository texts, explicating and illustrating a certain topic, while generic utterances are often introduced into dialogues to support and reinforce a particular statement. It is important to keep in mind, however, that as far as their structural identity is concerned, these text types are nevertheless distinct from each another: each is associated with a different reference point and each exhibits a particular organizational pattern. The table below summarizes the discussion of the three text types:

TABLE 4.2 *Three text types*

Text type	Reference point	Cohesive structure
dialogue	first person speaker	exchange pairs, short and segmented
narrative	first person narrator third person narrator	chains, sequences of events
generic utterance	third generic person	self-contained propositions

38 Thus, according to Hamburger, *Logic*, 179: 'the narrative act is a formative, shaping function, of which one can just as well say that it is set beside other shaping functions such as dialogue, monologue, and *erlebte Rede*, as one can also say—indeed, more precisely—that, *fluctuating*, it assumes now this, now that form'. For the distinction between the 'narrative text' and the 'story' levels, see Bal, *Narratology*.

#### 4.4 Interdependency

Within a text, clauses are interdependent in various degrees and forms. Interdependency is a syntactic phenomenon correlating with a set of semantological relations, which construct the hierarchical structure of the text.<sup>39</sup> The typical patterns in which interdependency is realized endow the text with a particular 'juncture contour', thus differentiating between narration, commentary, direct speech, exposition, and subtypes or modes thereof.<sup>40</sup>

The traditional dichotomy between coordination and subordination has been reckoned by many modern linguists as insufficient in accounting for all the configurations subsumed under the notion of clause linkage. Two main issues were given the most attention in this regard: (a) the definition of subordination and (b) the correlation between syntactic dependency and the functional distinction between foreground or background. The first issue was dealt with in the frame of universal typologies of clause linkage. The second issue was discussed in relation to narrative discourse and the functional or cognitive aspects of the text.

General linguists have rejected in the last decades the dichotomous model of coordination versus subordination. Rather than mapping clauses into one of these categories, a set of grammatical parameters has been proposed, in respect to which the grade or 'strength' of the linkage between two clauses can be determined. The models that have been proposed are either combinatory or scalar. Van Valin derives his typology from the primitive features which define linkage relations, i.e., embeddedness and dependency. Thus, besides coordination and subordination there exists a third intermediate configuration, 'co-subordination', which realizes the features '-embedded' '+dependent'.<sup>41</sup> Hai-man and Thompson also propose a set of formal properties or processes by which the distinction between coordination and subordination can be defined, e.g.: identity of subject, tense or mood, reduction, incorporation, intonational

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39 Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 216 ff., discusses two dimensions of inter-clausal relations, i.e., a 'syntactic' one and a 'logico-semantic' one; Matthiessen and Thompson, *Discourse and Subordination*, discuss the correlation between clause combining and the rhetorical organization of texts.

40 The notion of 'juncture contour' is defined by Shisha-Halevy, *Topics*, 478, as 'distinctive linkage and delimitation profile over boundaries inside a specific domain frame'. Juncture, according to this view, is a much broader phenomenon than that of clause-linkage; it is reflected 'from the graphemic level to longer stretches of text'.

41 Van Valin, *Syntactic Relations*.

linking, order of clauses, and identity of speech act perspective.<sup>42</sup> Lehmann, in a comprehensive study on clause linkage in the languages of the world, bases his typology on a number of continua, all extending 'from a pole of maximal *elaboration* to a pole of maximal *compression* (or condensation) of lexical and grammatical information.'<sup>43</sup> Lehmann's continua refer to the syntactic level and sententiality of the subordinate clause, the grammaticalization of the main predicate, the interlacing of actants and the explicitness of the linkage between the two clauses. In a similar manner, Raible's monograph (drawing on Seiler's universal theory of language dimensions) outlines a scale of 'junction', ranging between the two ends of 'aggregation' and 'integration'. According to Raible, a fundamental aspect of the distinction between parataxis and hypotaxis resides in the locus of assertion: in the first case, two states of affairs are separately asserted, while in the latter case it is the relation between them that is asserted.<sup>44</sup> Raible also accounts for the distinction between junction patterns at the pragmatic level. Thus, aggregation is characterized as more open and complex while integration is less open and more simple to interpret.<sup>45</sup>

All these models attempt to redefine the concept of subordination by drawing a distinction between what was previously conceived of as two overlapping notions, namely, hypotaxis and embedding. Hypotaxis is accordingly understood as 'subordination of a clause in the narrow sense', or as the non-symmetrical relation between two clauses of unequal status (as opposed to parataxis).<sup>46</sup> Embedding, on the other hand, refers to the mechanism by which a clause comes to function as a constituent within another clause.<sup>47</sup> Thus, hypotaxis is a type of subordination which involves dependency while embedding is a type of subordination which results in constituency. Subordinate clauses which are not considered to form part of the predicative core of the clause, e.g. adverbial clauses, are accordingly described as hypotactic, while other types of clauses, such as substantival or adjectival clauses which occupy the position of a core argument (the subject or the object), are described as embedded.

Recent treatments of the topic of adverbial, and particularly, circumstantial clauses in Classical Arabic have addressed the problem of the syntactic status

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42 Haiman and Thompson, "Subordination".

43 Lehmann, *Clause Linkage*, 216.

44 Raible, *Junktion*, 29.

45 *Ibid.* 31.

46 Lehmann, *Clause Linkage*, 182; Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 221.

47 Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 242.



of the clause. Some writers, like Isaksson, adopt the distinction outlined above between hypotaxis and embedding, viewing circumstantial clauses as dependent but not embedded.<sup>48</sup> Isaksson's approach follows from both formal and semantic considerations, however the latter appear to play a more significant role: following Halliday, Isaksson correlates between the 'enhancing' function of the clause and its syntactic status. Other writers, like Waltisberg, do not maintain the same distinction between hypotaxis and embedding. Considering a set of formal criteria, Waltisberg outlines a scale according to which the degree of dependency of the clause (e.g. 'weak', 'clear', 'strong') can be qualified.<sup>49</sup> The main criterion which determines the scalar ordering is the linking device of the clause, specifically whether it is explicit, i.e. syndetic, or implicit, i.e. asyndetic.

Waltisberg refers to a fairly large number of clause patterns in his 'integration scale'. Though one may argue against the relative ordering of some of these patterns, the general principle still seems correct.<sup>50</sup> Rather than forcing a binary distinction on all clause patterns, which is often simply derived from an *a-priori* taxonomy of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, one can arrive at a more accurate characterization by examining a set of formal features through which the grade of interdependency is reflected. The following are the features considered in this work:

- (a) **Juncture contour.** As stated above, text types are different in their juncture contour: narratives are constructed as sequenced and complex chains of units, while dialogic utterances are characterized by what Givón has described as 'paratactic strategies of clause juxtaposition', resulting in a segmented and often fragmented structure of discrete units.<sup>51</sup>
- (b) **Position of the clause in the chain.** In Classical Arabic, main clauses occur in the initial position of a chain whereas dependent clauses occur in subsequent positions. One exception to this rule is the case of bipartite constructions (e.g. conditionals), whereby a seemingly dependent clause precedes its main clause. As a matter of fact, in such cases the inverted order is used to indicate a special type of interdependency, a mutual

48 Isaksson, *Circumstantial Qualifiers*, 2–4.

49 Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 69–81.

50 Marmorstein, *Review of Waltisberg*, 370–372.

51 Givón, *Syntax*, 2, 218. The characterization as segmented and fragmented applies to the structure of single propositions; it does not apply to the dialogue exchange itself, which proceeds in a systematic sequence of 'turns', 'pairs' or 'allocutions and responses', see above 4.3.

dependency between two parts of one and the same construction (see also below 8.4).<sup>52</sup>

- (c) **Symmetry of the verbal syntagm.** The syntactic relation between an initial and a subsequent slot in the chain may be either symmetrical or non-symmetrical. Symmetrical relations are marked by the repetition of the same verbal syntagm or by the introduction of a syntagm that has the same syntactic status. By 'verbal syntagm' I mean the clause type, the linking device preceding it, and the verbal form realized in it. Symmetrical relations are exhibited, for instance, in a narrative chain, where the clause type ('verbal clause'), the paradigm of linking devices ('connective particles'), and the verbal form (*fa'ala*) are reproduced in each link.<sup>53</sup> The symmetrical relation is maintained as long as the same verbal syntagm is repeated. Symmetry is broken once the chain presents a switch to another verbal syntagm. Asymmetrical relations are harder to discern when the verbal form is repeated but not the linking device, as in the sequence #*yaf'alu* ∅-*yaf'alu* (#, representing initiality, belongs to a different class of devices than ∅, representing asyndesis, see below 6.1.2).
- (d) **Substitution class of the verbal form.** As Goldenberg defines it, 'embedding' refers to the operation whereby a sentence occupies 'the position of a part of another sentence' in such way that it 'assumes the status of some linguistic form, thus syntactically equivalent of some morphological category'.<sup>54</sup> Such an understanding of syntactic subordination goes back to the Arabic grammatical tradition, in which embedded clauses are conceived as 'paraphrases' of the simple nouns whose position in the clause they occupy.<sup>55</sup> Embedding is thus strongly connected with the structural notion of paradigm, i.e., the set of grammatical patterns which forms a substitution class in a given syntactic environment (see above 1.3.1).

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52 According to Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 75–77, such structures exhibit a lower grade of integration between a 'fronted' dependent clause and the following matrix clause. In my view, it is not a matter of grade but of kind of interdependency: this order shows that the construction is exocentric: neither clause is a modification of the other and neither can be reduced without giving up the meaning of the entire construction.

53 I use the term 'symmetrical relations' to refer to the equal syntactic status of two successive clauses; it is not to be inferred that, within a given sequence, the order of these clauses is reversible.

54 Goldenberg, *Contribution of Semitic Languages*, 2.

55 Ibid.

Some modern linguists, such as Matthiessen and Thompson, have argued against substitution as a test by which embedding of certain clauses can be demonstrated. The fact that adverbial clauses (e.g. 'before leaving') can be replaced by nominalizations (e.g. 'before his departure'), but not by ordinary nouns, shows that the substitution (or paraphrase) in this case is only a 'metaphor'.<sup>56</sup> Substitution is also not as pertinent in scalar models of clause linkage, whose main focus is the particularities of each clause (which determine its relative position on the scale) and not the paradigmatic relations between different types of clauses.

It appears, however, that a comprehensive account of dependency relations cannot dispense with the dimension of paradigmatics. It is correct that different clause types show different grades of syntagmatic interdependency. For instance, the predicative participle is more integrated with its main clause than a finite verb such as *yaf'alu*, due to its degradation in finiteness. Yet, the participle commutes with *yaf'alu* in the same syntactic environments (see below chapter 8). Commutation is understood here as a syntactic operation rather than a semantic process of paraphrasing. Naturally, a certain amount of information is lost when replacing a more finite form with a less finite form, yet the same syntactic relation with the matrix clause is maintained in both cases. The important thing in this regard is that both forms (whether finite or degraded) are associated with the same syntactic configurations and occupy the same functional slot.

#### 4.5 Clause Types

Moving one further step down in the hierarchical structure of the text, the simple clause is the immediate frame in which the verbal form is realized. The verbal form is a minimal clause in itself, consisting of a verbal lexeme, a pronominal theme, and the predicative relation between them.<sup>57</sup> The simple clause is an extended pattern, including also a slot for the explicit (overt) nominal theme or topic. The relation between the verb and its explicit theme is marked by the position of the latter relative to the verb, and its agreement with it.

Classical Arabic distinguishes between two basic clause types in which the predicate is (or may be) verbal: the so-called *ǧumla fi'liyya* 'verbal clause' and

56 Matthiessen and Thompson, *Discourse and Subordination*, 280.

57 Goldenberg, *Verbal Structure*, 173.

the *ǧumla ismiyya* ‘nominal clause’. The distinction between these two types of clauses was first defined by the Arab grammarians. The verbal clause consists of a *fiʿl* ‘verb’ followed by a *fāʿil* ‘agent’. The initial verb (in the third person) does not agree in number and possibly in gender with its agent. The nominal clause consists of a *mubtadaʾ* ‘subject’ and a *ḥabar* ‘predicate’, which may be either nominal, adverbial, or verbal. The verbal predicate agrees in number as in gender with its subject. The Arab grammarians distinguished between the nominal theme of the verbal clause, which they perceived as merely ‘indexal’ (*ʿalāma*) and the nominal theme of the nominal clause, which they perceived as pronominal (*ism*).<sup>58</sup>

The formal distinction in the relative order of the verb and its theme and in their agreement marks a functional distinction between the two clause types. The verbal clause may be described as a ‘block predication’, centered on the event expressed by the verb. The nominal clause, consisting of a topical noun-phrase to which a verbal predicate is assigned, may be described as ‘entity-oriented’.<sup>59</sup>

The choice of a clause type correlates on the one hand with the verbal form realized in it, and on the other, with the text type or mode in which the clause is realized. In verbal clauses expressing narrative events *faʿala* forms prevail, while *yafʿalu* forms are more common in nominal clauses, which are characteristic of expository or descriptive texts.<sup>60</sup> Khan regards the aspect of the verb as the ‘operative factor’ behind this distribution.<sup>61</sup> However, his use of the terms ‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect’ seems not to imply what is generally meant by this terminological pair in Arabic linguistics, namely, the opposition between ‘complete’ and ‘incomplete’, but it refers to the distinction between ‘dynamic’ and ‘static’ modes of depicting a situation, as suggested, e.g., by Beeston.<sup>62</sup> The table below summarizes the outlined distinctions between the verbal clause and the nominal clause:

58 For a detailed account of the distinction between the verbal clause and the nominal clause according to the Arabic grammatical tradition, see Levin, *Nominal and Verbal Sentences*.

59 Cf. Goldenberg, *Verbal Agreement*, for the functional distinction between verb-initial sentences and topicalizations in Arabic, and Holes, *Modern Arabic*, 251–253, for a similar distinction between ‘event-oriented’ and ‘entity-oriented’ clauses.

60 This observation is outlined by Khan, *Studies*, 30–31, and further elaborated by Holes, *Modern Arabic*, 251–253.

61 Khan, *Studies*, 30–31.

62 Beeston, *Arabic Language*, 76–79.

TABLE 4.3 *The verbal clause vs. the nominal clause*

Clause type	Formal structure	Verbal form	Text type/mode
verbal	[verb+theme]	<i>fā'ala</i>	narrative
nominal	[topic]+[verb]	<i>yaf'alu</i>	expository, descriptive

#### 4.6 Lexical Classes

A verbal lexeme represents a certain conceptualization of an experience or a state of affairs in the real world. The semantic nature and structure of this conceptualization are both described in the literature as 'aspectual'. The aspectual nature of a verbal lexeme (referred to by many names, among which *Aktionsart* is still very common) is not conceived by modern linguists as necessarily ontological or categorial, but as a potential set of properties (or constraints) which allows for a certain construal of a specific verb, and which distinguishes classes of verbs in general.<sup>63</sup>

The traditional distinction which underlies the study of aspect is drawn between grammatical aspect, encoded by morphological inflection and indicating the subjective viewpoint of the speaker regarding the verbal situation, and lexical aspect, expressed by lexical derivation and reflecting intrinsic properties of the verbal lexeme. This dichotomy has given rise to an enormous body of literature in the past decades, in which the semantic essence and the grammatical scope of that which has been neutrally termed 'ASPECT<sub>1</sub>' and 'ASPECT<sub>2</sub>' is constantly debated and redefined.<sup>64</sup> However, as Sasse points out, a major point of consensus among linguists is that any theory of aspect is fundamentally concerned with 'the modeling of the linguistic encoding of situations with respect to their boundaries'.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, such semantic features as durability and telicity, stativity and dynamicity, as well as inception, progression,

63 Cf. Dahl, *Tense and Aspect*, 26–27; Rothstein, *Structuring Events*, 4, argues that lexical classes are 'sets of constraints on how the grammar allows us to individuate events'; Croft, *Verbs*, § 2.2.1, argues against Vendler's use of the term 'senses' to refer to what are in fact alternative 'aspectual types or construals' which a certain verb may possess.

64 In his extensive review of the current literature on the subject of aspect, Sasse, *Theory of Aspect*, uses the notations ASPECT<sub>1</sub> and ASPECT<sub>2</sub> to refer to the two dimensions of grammatical and lexical aspect, respectively.

65 *Ibid.*, 201.

and completion, refer all to some kind of boundary defining. The distinction between perfectivity and imperfectivity, which has originated in Classical and Slavic linguistics, also relates to the notion of external and internal bounding, as corresponding to a certain morphological—rather than lexical or syntactic—marking system.

The fact that there exist some clear correlations between grammatical and lexical aspects (e.g.: perfective and telic, imperfective and atelic), alongside the absence of explicit morphological marking of grammatical aspect in many languages (e.g. Germanic, and notably English), has led some theoretical and general linguists to question and, in fact, dispense with the distinction between grammatical and lexical aspect altogether, proposing instead a unidimensional approach to aspect.<sup>66</sup> Rather than a property of the verbal form or lexeme, aspect is viewed as a global property of the clause, brought about by a delicate interplay between the verb, its arguments, and complements. Such an approach to aspect has indeed much more to it. However, there is one level of analysis, namely, the text level, at which the distinction between grammatical and lexical aspect appears to be yet relevant and evident. Distinct text types have a different effect on situation types, so that a possible construal of the verb in one form of discourse may become irrelevant in another. For instance, the distinction between ‘states’ and ‘activities’ which, depending on the grammatical form of the verb, entails various temporal and modal nuances in direct speech, is by and large neutralized in a narrative chain, in which events or scenes are framed (bounded) and placed in a sequence, regardless of their inherent semantic constituency. Such observations and others have long been made by linguists stressing the inherent relation between discourse structure or ‘taxis’ (i.e., the cohesive ordering of two chronologically-related events) and the grammatical aspect of the verb (i.e., perfective vs. imperfective), even going on to suggest that the former is the ultimate *signifié* of the latter.<sup>67</sup>

Another dimension of lexical classes, which for some reason is fairly marginal in discussions of verbal aspect (though quite central in the literature on clause linkage) has to do with the informativity of the verbal lexeme. Naturally, every verb in the lexicon imparts knowledge about a certain experience, or bet-

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66 Sasse, *Theory of Aspect*.

67 According to Jakobson, *Shifters*, 135, the category of taxis ‘characterizes the narrated event in relation to another narrated event and without reference to the speech event’. Tactic relations such as simultaneity, anteriority, interruption, etc. are indicated by a particular combination of perfective and imperfective forms in the narrative. Hopper, *Aspect and Foregrounding*, 239, suggests that grounding may well explain the existence of elaborate tense-aspect systems in some languages.

ter, apprehension of experience, in the world. However, not all verbs are equal in terms of the extent of their 'informational load'. Informativity is inherently related to the transitivity of the verb-phrase. Transitivity, as defined by Hopper and Thompson, is a complex phenomenon, involving a number of semantic and grammatical properties of the verb-phrase which correlate so as to express a higher or lower degree of 'effectiveness' with which the action is carried over from one participant to the other.<sup>68</sup> The higher the verb is on the scale of transitivity, the more informative it is; that is, it provides a more specific and elaborated depiction of the situation. At the discourse level, verbs with a higher informative value are likely to form the pivot of the communicated message, while verbs with a lower informative value often fulfill the function of amplifiers or modifiers. The lexicon often comprises a class of descriptive or 'phase' verbs (e.g.: 'to start', 'to continue', 'to stop') whose dedicated function is to modify other events. Other groups of verbs, though higher on the scale of transitivity and informativity, may also assume a modifying function. Such groups include, e.g., motion and setting verbs and speech verbs (see below chapter 8).

#### 4.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have proposed a model of context structure which includes the relevant discursive, syntactic, and lexical features that interact in a systematic and predictable manner with the verbal form. The proposed contextual structure comprises five components: deictic reference, text and texture, macro-syntax (clause linkage), micro-syntax (clause type), and lexical classes. In the subsequent chapters, the interaction between the contextual structure and the verbal forms in Classical Arabic will be examined in greater detail.

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68 Hopper and Thompson, *Transitivity*.

## The Verbal Inventory

### 5.1 Inventory of Forms

The verbal system of Classical Arabic comprises a small number of simple verbal forms. The simple forms can be further augmented by modifiers or expanded by the auxiliary verb *kāna*. The morphological classification to simple, modified, and compound verbs does not reflect a functional hierarchy of more fundamental and more marginal forms; in a given syntactic environment, a modified or a compound form may prevail.

The opposition between a simple form and a modified or compound form can be either (a) functional, so that a semantic distinction is expressed by the simple and the non-simple form or (b) structural, so that the simple form is unmarked or ambiguous vis-à-vis the modified or compound form. The interpretation of the verbal form is sometimes imposed by the syntactic construction in which it is realized. In such case, the contrast between the simple and the non-simple form has to do with a certain (c) accentuation: the non-simple form provides an explicit expression to the meaning implied by the syntactic construction. Comparing, for instance, the simple *yafʿalu* and the modified *sa-yafʿalu*, we encounter these three possibilities (see also below 5.2.2.3):

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a. <i>yasmaʿu</i>	He hears	<i>sa-yasmaʿu</i>	He will hear
b. <i>yaqūlu</i>	He says/will say	<i>sa-yaqūlu</i>	He will say
c. <i>ʾin daḥala fa-yarā</i>	If he goes in he will see	<i>ʾin daḥala fa-sa-yarā</i>	If he goes in he will see

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The verbal system of Classical Arabic presents a distinction in the desinence of the prefixed forms which is often captured under the label of ‘mood’ (see below 5.2.1). The moods, however, do not signal the semantic contrast between realis and irrealis.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the forms belonging to the indicative system are modally unmarked and can express a wide range of meanings including desire,

<sup>1</sup> Palmer, *Mood and Modality*, 4, defines mood-systems as ‘basically (“prototypically”) binary’, marking the distinction between ‘realis’ and ‘irrealis’. In Classical Arabic, however, this semantic distinction does not correlate with two separate sets of grammatical forms.



possibility, and non-factuality. The modal forms, on the other hand, are much more limited in their semantic scope, and are used to indicate meanings which relate to the notion of volition. Modality, in particular the deontic type, can thus be conveyed by a marked or explicit form, such as the imperative or the energetic, or by an unmarked or implicit form, such as *yaf'alu* (see also below 5.3):

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<i>tadhulu</i>	You will/shall go in	<i>udhul</i>	Go in	(directive)
<i>'adhulu</i>	I will/shall go in	<i>la-'adhulanna</i>	I shall go in	(commisive)

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Verbal negation in Classical Arabic cannot be regarded as a form of modification of the simple forms. For one thing, negation particles have a different distribution than verbal modifiers, e.g., they are compatible with interrogatives. For another, negation particles may trigger the use of a verbal form otherwise not occurring as an affirmative form in the same circumstances. Negation particles may also call for a certain interpretation of the verbal form which is uncommon with the affirmative form (see also below 5.4).

In the subsequent sections a survey of the inventory of the verbal forms in Classical Arabic is presented. First, the affirmative indicative forms are surveyed, then the modal and the negated forms are presented.

## 5.2 Indicative Verbal Forms

The verbal forms presented in this section are modally unmarked. They may be simple, modified, or expanded by the auxiliary verb *kāna*. Syntactically, they have a wide distribution and may figure in both independent and dependent clauses.

### 5.2.1 Simple Forms

There are two simple finite verbal forms: *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*. The formal distinction between them lies in the position of their pronominal theme: *fa'ala* has a suffixed pronoun, hence it is labeled the suffix conjugation; *yaf'alu* has a prefixed pronominal index, hence it is labeled the prefix conjugation.<sup>2</sup> In fact, in

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<sup>2</sup> The prefixed pronoun exhibits a greater morphological degradation than the suffixed pronoun. For its description as indexical by the Arab grammarians, see above 4.5.

the second and third person, a morpheme distinguishing gender and number is suffixed to the form. For this reason, *yafʿalu* is also labeled the circumfix conjugation:

TABLE 5.1 *Suffix and prefix conjugations*

Suffix conjugation				Prefix (circumfix) conjugation			
sg.		pl.		sg.		pl.	
masc.	fem.	masc.	fem.	masc.	fem.	masc.	fem.
<i>fāʿal-tu</i>		<i>fāʿal-nā</i>		<i>ʿ-afʿal-u</i>		<i>n-afʿal-u</i>	
<i>fāʿal-ta</i>	<i>fāʿal-ti</i>	<i>fāʿal-tum</i>	<i>fāʿal-tunna</i>	<i>t-afʿal-u</i>	<i>t-afʿal-ī-na</i>	<i>t-afʿal-ū-na</i>	<i>t-afʿal-na</i>
<i>fāʿal-a</i>	<i>fāʿal-at</i>	<i>fāʿal-ū</i>	<i>fāʿal-na</i>	<i>y-afʿal-u</i>	<i>t-afʿal-u</i>	<i>y-afʿal-ū-na</i>	<i>y-afʿal-na</i>
du.				du.			
masc.		fem.		masc.		fem.	
<i>fāʿal-tumā</i>				<i>t-afʿal-ā-ni</i>			
<i>fāʿal-ā</i>		<i>fāʿal-atā</i>		<i>y-afʿal-ā-ni</i>		<i>t-afʿal-ā-ni</i>	

The prefix conjugation consists of a set of forms, distinguished from each other in the quality of their final short vowel and in the presence of a final morpheme *-n* or *-nn* (with several allomorphs). These endings signal the moods of the verb. The indicative forms whose base ends with a consonant are signaled by the vowel *-u*; forms ending with a long vowel (the gender/number morpheme) are signaled by the *-na/-ni* ending. The feminine plural shows a different pattern, as it does not have a distinctive mood morpheme:

TABLE 5.2 *The moods*

Moods	sg.	pl.	du.
<i>u</i> -form (indicative)	<i>yafʿal-u</i>	<i>yafʿal-ū-na</i>	<i>yafʿal-ā-ni</i>
<i>a</i> -form (subjunctive)	<i>yafʿal-a</i>	<i>yafʿal-ū</i>	<i>yafʿal-ā</i>
∅-form (jussive)	<i>yafʿal</i>	<i>yafʿal-ū</i>	<i>yafʿal-ā</i>
<i>n</i> -form (energetic)	<i>yafʿal-a-n(na)</i>	<i>yafʿal-ū-n(na)</i>	<i>yafʿal-ā-n(ni)</i>

Besides the two finite forms *faʿala* and *yafʿalu*, the participle is another simple form pertaining to the verbal system. The participle is an adjectival pattern of the verb. It is non-finite in the sense that it does not embody a pronominal theme, but only gender and number markers. Syntactically, it behaves in principle like a nominal: (a) it takes case endings, (b) it is determined by the article or the *tanwīn*, or (c) is bounded by a genitive complement. On the other hand, the participle, like finite verbs, may take an accusative complement.

As a predicative form with a verbal lexeme, the participle may enter the system of oppositions with the finite verbal forms. In such case, the participle does not serve a classificatory function: it does not assign a certain property to the theme, but it expresses its incidental state or disposition.<sup>3</sup> Formally, the two functions are not always easy to distinguish unless the participle is determined by the article, a fact which precludes its verbal reading.<sup>4</sup> Other adjectival patterns, such as *faʿīl* and *faʿīl*, derived mostly from stative verbs, can also enter the system of oppositions with the finite verbal forms (see below [8.14]). The participle and the ‘participle-like’ adjectives may be assigned either the nominative or the accusative case. As primary predicates, they take the nominative; as secondary predicates, they take the accusative.

### 5.2.2 *Modified Forms*

The modifiers are elements (perhaps of verbal origin) which co-occur with the simple verbal forms. The modifiers are: *qad*, *la-*, and *sawfa/sa-*. They are

3 Beeston, *Arabic Language*, 66, defines ‘classificatory predicates’ as those ‘assigning the theme to membership of a category’. Reckendorf, *Zum Gebrauch des Partizips*, 256–258, correctly observes that the participle is not inherently stative, but it indicates a state or disposition with respect to the theme.

4 A definite predicative participle has, according to Beeston’s classification, an ‘identificatory function’, cf. *Arabic Language*, 66ff. The participle assumes a verbal reading when it has deictic anchoring, i.e., when it is personally (hence spatiotemporally) bounded.

distinct from clausal operators such as *'inna* or *'anna* (see below 6.2.2) in that they have only the verbal form, rather than the entire clause, in their scope. Verbal modifiers are generally incompatible with either negation or interrogation particles and pronouns. They have an affirmative function, yet it is hard to define their precise semantic meaning. *qad*, *la-*, and *sawfa/sa-* operate in the domain of propositional modality: they express a degree of certainty or commitment with regard to the validity of the contents expressed by the verb.<sup>5</sup> The interaction of *qad*, *la-*, and *sawfa/sa-* with the simple verbal forms may result in the expression of certain temporal or aspectual meanings, although in most cases, these meanings are yet fraught with modal nuances.<sup>6</sup> The use of some modified forms is restricted to specific syntactic structures, while the use of others is highly subjective and opened to a variety of syntactic environments.

The modifiers *qad*, *la-*, and *sawfa/sa-* do not combine freely with all the verbal forms: the form *yaf'alu* is the only one compatible with all three modifiers. However, the co-occurrence of *qad* with *fa'ala* is far more frequent (or far less constrained) than its co-occurrence with *yaf'alu*, as summarized in table 5.3:

TABLE 5.3 *The verbal modifiers*

Modifiers	<i>fa'ala</i>	<i>yaf'alu</i>	<i>fā'ilun</i>
<i>qad</i>	+	+	–
<i>la-</i>	–	+	+
<i>sawfa/sa-</i>	–	+	–

#### 5.2.2.1 The Modifier *qad*

The use of *qad fa'ala* is far more extensive than that of *qad yaf'alu*. In fact, rather than being a sheer modification of the simple *fa'ala*, *qad fa'ala* has acquired

5 Palmer, *Mood and Modality*, 68–69, discusses cases in which markers of modality combine with declaratives so as to indicate strong assertion or various degrees thereof. Lyons, *Deixis and Subjectivity*, 110, mentions the modal particles of German as an example for a non-obligatory albeit very common device to express ‘the speaker’s attitude or degree of commitment’, in clauses that are unmodalized or declarative.

6 The assumption that the modifiers had originally a modal (assertive) function is corroborated by the fact that some modified forms, e.g., *la-yaf'alu* and *qad yaf'alu*, are not found in dependent clauses. The opposite also holds true: when a modified form occurs in a dependent clause, it loses much of its modal force in favor of the expression of temporal and aspectual nuances.

the status of a verbal form in its own right. This can be established in view of its relationship with the simple *fa'ala* and by comparison to the modified *qad yaf'alu*.

The syntactic distribution of *fa'ala* is distinct from that of *qad fa'ala*. Both forms belong to the same substitution class in affirmative independent clauses and in substantival and adjectival clauses. However, adverbial and predicative clauses (see below chapter 8), show a strong tendency to favor either *fa'ala* or *qad fa'ala*, or feature only one of them (we recall that *qad fa'ala* almost never occurs in interrogative and negative clauses, for exceptions see [9.76], [9.83]). In these clauses, *fa'ala* and *qad fa'ala* partake in different systems of oppositions, so that (synchronically speaking) the second cannot be regarded as a further extension or specification of the first.

Not only in terms of frequency, but also as far as syntactic and lexical features are concerned, *qad fa'ala* has a far larger scope of application than *qad yaf'alu*. The modified form *qad yaf'alu*, as opposed to *qad fa'ala*, does not occur, in principle, in dependent clauses. It is not used with every lexeme. In dialogues, *qad yaf'alu* is occasionally found with the verbs *ra'a* 'to see/comprehend', *'alima* and *'arafa* 'to know' (see below [9.16]); otherwise, it is mostly used in generic utterances (see below [11.5]). Furthermore, the syntactic juncture of *qad* and *yaf'alu* is less tight than that of *qad* and *fa'ala*: in *kāna*-compounds, *qad* precedes as a rule the auxiliary with *yaf'alu* (the same as it precedes the auxiliary with the participle), whereas it is often interposed between the auxiliary and *fa'ala* (see below 8.2.1):

TABLE 5.4 *qad fa'ala* vs. *qad yaf'alu*

	<i>qad fa'ala</i>	<i>qad yaf'alu</i>
Frequency	high	low
Dependency	independent /dependent cl.	independent cl.
Lexical class	not limited	limited
Juncture in compounds	<i>kāna qad fa'ala</i> <i>qad kāna fa'ala</i>	<i>qad kāna yaf'alu</i>

5.2.2.2 The Modifier *la-*

The modifier *la-* co-occurs with either *yaf'alu* or the participle in clauses introduced by the operator *'inna* (see below 6.2.2.2). Clauses introduced by *'inna* are either independent or enclosed in larger syntactic frames, following the conjunction *hattā* or the circumstantial *wa-*. The operator *'inna* may also head a mutually dependent construction (see below 8.4). Only in very rare cases, *yaf'alu* preceded by *la-* occurs outside the frame of an *'inna*-clause.

The verbal form *fa'ala* may also be preceded by an element *la-* in the apodosis of a conditional construction or in the content clause of an oath. Although formally identical, this *la-* has a different distribution than the verbal modifier *la-*. The *la-* of *ǧawāb* 'apodosis' introduces the second part of a conditional construction initiated by the particle *law* (or *lawlā*), or it may precede a protasis introduced by *'in*. The apodotic *la-* may also introduce the content of an oath. This is explained by the fact that the oath and its content are structurally similar to a condition, having two interconnected parts.<sup>7</sup> The apodotic *la-* is prefixed to *fa'ala* or to the energetic. It has in its scope the second clause of a bipartite construction. In contrast, the verbal modifier *la-*, known as the *la-* of *tawkid* 'emphasis', is prefixed either to *yaf'alu* or to the participle (see below 9.2.3),<sup>8</sup> and has in its scope the predicate of a single clause. That the apodotic *la-* and the emphasizing *la-* are functionally distinct is corroborated by the fact that the first can precede the negated form *mā fa'ala* (*law fa'ala ... lā-mā fa'ala ...*), while the latter is incompatible with negation.<sup>9</sup>

Modifiers can be accumulated: *la-* may be preposed to the modified form *qad fa'ala* or to the modified compound form *qad kāna+V*. The fact that *la-* may be preposed to *qad fa'ala* evidences the tight juncture of *qad* and *fa'ala* that allows the construction to be put as a single unit in the scope of another verbal modifier.<sup>10</sup> *la-qad fa'ala* occurs in various syntactic structures, among which

7 Sadan, *ǧawāb*, reviewing the use of the technical term *ǧawāb* in the Arabic lexicographical and grammatical tradition, renders it as 'an utterance following another utterance'. The adduced examples show, however, that a *ǧawāb* is not just a consecutive clause, but has an intrinsic semantic relation to the preceding clause (or part of clause). The meaning of *ǧawāb* should be therefore understood in a stricter sense, as a consecutive clause in a bipartite construction.

8 *la-* is not limited to verbal or adjectival forms only. It can also precede prepositions.

9 For a detailed survey of the various taxonomies of the occurrences of *la-* preposed by the Arab grammarians, see Testen, *Asseverative la-*, 1–56.

10 Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 19, quotes one example of the modifier *la-* preposed to *sawfa*. Such cases were not found in my corpus.

are the apodosis of *law*-conditionals and oath expressions. In the latter case, *la-qad fa'ala* is far more common than *la-fa'ala*.<sup>11</sup>

### 5.2.2.3 The Modifier *sawfa/sa-*

The modifier *sawfa*, or its shorter and more common form *sa-*, is only compatible with *yaf'alu*. The modified form *sawfa/sa-yaf'alu* can occur in independent clauses (see below [9.17]), in substantival clauses linked by *'anna* (see below [7.5]), and in raising constructions (see below [8.73]). It is also quite common in apodotic or comment clauses introduced by *fa-*. The modified form *sawfa/sa-yaf'alu* refers to a posterior event. The posterior meaning of *sawfa/sa-yaf'alu* arises most clearly with stative verbs, which would otherwise have a concurrent reading with the simple *yaf'alu*.<sup>12</sup> In other cases, e.g., in the apodosis of a conditional construction or in a comment clause, the modifier *sawfa/sa-* does not contribute to a temporal disambiguation or specification of *yaf'alu*, since the meaning of posteriority is already imposed by the syntactic structure. In such cases, the modifier *sawfa/sa-* may be said to serve as a heavier means by which the meaning of posteriority is expressed.

### 5.2.3 Compound Forms

A compound verbal form consists of the auxiliary verb *kāna* and the simple verbal forms *fa'ala*, *yaf'alu*, the participle (assigned the accusative), or the modified form *qad fa'ala*.<sup>13</sup> The auxiliary *kāna*, as opposed to the verbal modifiers, has in its scope a full clause, either nominal or verbal, and even an entire paragraph. It may immediately precede its predicate or it may initiate a long chain of predications, without being repeated. Thus, the realization of *kāna*-clauses, or more specifically of *kāna*-compounds, often takes place at the text level, as the 'minimal' clausal structure is extended to a multi-clausal stretch.

The auxiliary verb *kāna* operates as a temporal or a modal adapter: it adjusts the predicate to the deictic point of reference (see above 4.2), so that the predicate is left to indicate aspectual distinctions. One can distinguish between four

11 It appears that the preference of either *la-fa'ala* or *la-qad fa'ala* is in part lexeme-sensitive, cf. Kinberg, *Qad*.

12 The technical use of the term 'concurrent' in this work is explained below, see 7.2.

13 Modifying verbs other than *kāna* combine with simple verbs and form verbal complexes. However, these verbs are distinguished from *kāna* in that: (a) they impart an additional overlay of meaning to the temporal or modal meaning conveyed by *kāna*; (b) they are rather constrained in their possible combinations with a content verb, often combined only with *yaf'alu*.

manifestations of the auxiliary: the ‘anterior’ *kāna*, the ‘posterior’ *yakūnu*, the ‘subjunctive’ *ʾan yakūna* and the ‘conditional’ *ʾin yakun/kāna*. As far as their function is concerned, the latter two manifestations should have been presented together with the other modal forms. However, as the current discussion focuses on formal aspects of the verbal inventory, they will be subsumed under this section as well.<sup>14</sup>

The anterior *kāna* locates its predicate in a point previous to some other reference point. It can precede all the simple forms and the modified *qad faʿala* (see below 8.2.1). Anteriority can also be syntactically marked, by the asymmetrical juxtaposition of a matrix clause and a dependent clause (see below 6.1.2). Occasionally, the morphological and the syntactical markers converge, i.e., when a *kāna*-compound occurs in a dependent clause (see below [7.13], [7.14], [7.31], [7.33], [7.52]–[7.54], [7.77], [7.78], [7.80]).

The posterior *yakūnu* is far less common than the anterior *kāna*. Interestingly, it is not attested with the simple forms *faʿala* and *yafʿalu*. It does precede the participle and the modified form *qad faʿala*.

The subjunctive *yakūna* and the conditionals *yakun/kāna* accommodate the simple verbal forms into a fixed clausal pattern, triggered by operators such as *ʾan* or *ʾin*. The subjunctive *ʾan yakūna* is constructed with *faʿala*, the participle, and *qad faʿala*. Interestingly, in my corpus, *ʾan yakūna faʿala* stems from the *Taʾriḥ* and *Maḡāzī* texts, while *ʾan yakūna qad faʿala* is mostly found in the *Buḡalāʾ* text.

The conditional *yakun/kāna* form compounds with all the simple forms and the modified form *qad faʿala*.<sup>15</sup> The verb *kāna* can also precede the conditional particle. In such cases, its scope is extended to the entire conditional construction. Like the subjunctive, *yakun/kāna* allow forms which otherwise do not follow directly the conditional particle, viz., *yafʿalu*, the participle, and *qad faʿala*, to occur in the clause.<sup>16</sup> The use of *faʿala* after *kāna* brings about

14 The relatively uncommon *mā kāna li-yafʿala*, involving the so-called *lām al-ḡuḥūd* ‘the *lām* of denial’, will not be discussed in this section.

15 The term conditional does not refer here to the semantological notion of conditionality (‘possible and non-necessary’) but to a formal structure which is common to both hypothetical conditional constructions and non-hypothetical or temporal constructions. All these constructions exhibit the bipartite pattern *faʿala faʿala*, which is introduced by particles such as *ʾin*, *law*, *ʾidā*, and *lammā*, and such pronouns as *man*, *mā*, *kullamā*, etc. Proper conditional constructions introduced by *ʾin*, or one of the pronouns embodying ‘the meaning of *ʾin*’, exhibit also *yafʿal* forms.

16 The conditional particle *law* appears to be less restrictive than *ʾin*, allowing *qad faʿala* and *yafʿalu* (with certain lexemes) to follow it directly.



the opposition between the simple *fa'ala* and its compound counterpart *kāna fa'ala*. Within a conditional clause, this pair of forms does not mark the temporal opposition 'past': 'anterior past', but serves to indicate other oppositions. For instance, in *'idā*-constructions, *fa'ala* may depict an habitual occurrence which is temporally unbounded, while *kāna fa'ala* depicts a past habitual occurrence. In conditionals introduced by *'in*, the same pair indicates the modal distinction between hypothetic-yet-realizable events (with an implied future time reference) and impossible or unrealizable events (with an implied past time reference). In conditionals introduced by *law*, the simple *fa'ala* and the compound *kāna fa'ala* can be said to be distinct only in terms of markedness, since *law* dictates as a rule the impossible or unrealizable reading of the clause.

The anterior *kāna* and the conditional *kāna* may appear in a reductive analysis as one and the same thing: in both cases, *kāna* locates the verbal situation in a previous, actual or hypothetical, point in time. However, one can adduce a number of arguments against this analysis: (a) the conditional *kāna* forms a substitution class with the apocopate *yakun* and not with *yakūnu*, as elsewhere in the system; (b) the hypothetical sense of *kāna* arises not only in conditional clauses, but also in other types of clauses, where it forms compounds with *yaf'alu* and the participle (see below [7.76], [7.81]); and (c) the conditional *kāna* does not indicate a step back in time, neither in *'in* nor in *law*-conditionals: *'in kāna yaf'alu/fā'ilan* has an implied non-past reference while *law kāna fa'ala* has the same past time reference as *law fa'ala*. Table 5.5 below summarizes the above discussion on compound *kāna* forms:

TABLE 5.5 *Compound kāna forms*

Auxiliary	<i>fa'ala</i>	<i>yaf'alu</i>	<i>fā'ilan</i>	<i>qad fa'ala</i>
'anterior' <i>kāna</i>	+	+	+	+
'posterior' <i>yakūnu</i>	–	–	+	+
'subjunctive' <i>'an yakūna</i>	+	–	+	+
'conditional' <i>'in/'idā/law yakun/kāna</i>	+	+	+	+

### 5.3 Modal Verbal Forms

In a broad definition, the term modality refers to the expression of ‘certain attitudes of the mind of the speaker towards the contents of the sentence’.<sup>17</sup> Modality, in this sense, converges to a large extent with the notion of subjectivity, and thus may be considered as omnipresent in language.<sup>18</sup> In a more restrictive view, modality is regarded as the semantic domain corresponding to the grammatical category of mood (or some other formally defined category).<sup>19</sup> The category of modality covers thus only a certain part in the realm of subjectivity; the other, more elusive (and far less studied) part, is occasionally referred to as expressivity. In the traditional view, modal forms are classified into two basic types: epistemic and deontic.<sup>20</sup> According to more recent diachronic and typological studies of modality, four types of modality can be distinguished: agent-oriented, speaker-oriented, epistemic, and subordinating.<sup>21</sup>

In Classical Arabic, modality is often expressed through the verbal forms.<sup>22</sup> The verbal system consists of indicative and non-indicative moods. The indicative forms have a broad grammatical and semantic scope of application: (a) they are realized in both independent and dependent clauses, and (b) they are modally unmarked, so that they may be used to express both assertive and non-assertive meanings. Deontic modal forms are found only in independent clauses. The subjunctive, on the other hand, is never found in independent

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17 Jespersen, *Philosophy*, 313.

18 Lyons, *Deixis and Subjectivity*, 102, defines subjectivity in a very similar way as ‘the way in which natural languages, in their structure and their normal manner of operation, provide for the locutionary agent’s expression of himself and of his attitudes and beliefs’.

19 Narrog, *(Inter)subjectification*, 392–393, argues against the definition of modality in terms of ‘speakers’ attitudes and subjectivity’, since ‘the means of expression of the speakers’ attitudes are far too varied to be subsumed under one category label’.

20 Palmer, *Mood and Modality*, refines this classification by drawing a basic distinction between ‘propositional’ and ‘event’ modality, which in a modal system are further divided into ‘epistemic’ and ‘evidential’, ‘deontic’ and ‘dynamic’, respectively.

21 Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca, *Evolution*, 177 ff. The authors comment that agent-oriented modality, though part of the propositional content of the clause, is still included in their study, since ‘these modal senses are the diachronic sources of most senses that DO qualify as modality in other studies’. Narrog, *(Inter)subjectification*, proposes yet another model of modality, consisting of two dimensions: a dimension of ‘volitivity’ and a dimension of ‘speaker-orientation’.

22 Although modality is often expressed by verbs, it can also be indicated by other grammatical means such as the modal particles *layta* and *la’alla*, which are used to express wish and possibility, respectively.

clauses. Its use is not determined by semantic or pragmatic considerations, but by the syntactic structure of the clause.

The modal forms indicating deontic modality are the imperative *ifʿal*, the jussive *li-yafʿal*, and the energetic *la-yafʿalanna*. The imperative has the same base form as the apocopate form *yafʿal*, without the prefixes. It is inflected for the second person only. The jussive is one manifestation of the apocopate form *yafʿal*, preceded by the conjunction *li-*.<sup>23</sup> The apocopate *yafʿal* has yet another modal use: it functions as a conditional form (see also below).<sup>24</sup> In fact, *yafʿal* may be described as the non-assertive form par-excellence: it occurs only in the frame of ‘mands’ (command, request, etc.), conditions, or negations.<sup>25</sup> The energetic has the same base form as the subjunctive *yafʿala*, with the addition of the ‘energetic’ suffix *-n(na)*. The energetic, often following expressions of oath or serving as the apodosis of *law* and *la-ʿin* conditionals, is preceded as a rule by the ‘apodotic’ *la-*.

The subjunctive *yafʿala* occurs in dependent and embedded clauses. As such it differs to a great deal from the deontic forms, which occur as a rule in main clauses. As a dependent form, the subjunctive is merely propositional and therefore deprived of subjective illocutionary force. It is triggered by a set of operators and its use is determined by the overall syntactic structure of the clause.<sup>26</sup> The subjunctive occurs in complement clauses of mental verbs or in consecutive and final clauses introduced by *hattā*, *ʿanna*, and *li-* (and complex forms thereof). However, the subjunctive may also occur in a clause conveying an entailed, sequential, or responsive meaning. In these cases the subjunctive follows particles such as the *sababīyya* ‘causal’ *fa-* or *ʿidan* and marks modal congruence with the first part of the construction, which indicates a non-assertive (imperative, hortative, negative, interrogative) meaning (see also below 10.2.3).

23 In accordance with the traditional view (cf. Wright, *Grammar*, 1, 291), *li-* preceding the *maǧzūm* and the *manṣūb* forms is viewed here as different from the preposition *li-* preceding nouns. One formal difference between the two is the elision of the vowel *i* when *li-*, prefixed to the *maǧzūm*, is preceded by *fa-* or *wa-* (e.g.: *fa-l-yafʿal*). *li-* can be prefixed to the verbal form or it can be adapted to it by another conjunction, such as *ʿan* and *kay*.

24 The conditional *yafʿal* is distinct from the jussive *yafʿal* both grammatically and semantically: (a) it is not conjoined with *li-*; (b) it participates in a mutually dependent construction (conditional construction); and (c) it does not indicate deontic modality.

25 Giolfo, *Yaḡum vs. Qāma*, 156–158, proposes an overall analysis of the verbal system in Classical Arabic, based on the contrast between ‘certainty’ and ‘uncertainty’. In this analysis, *yafʿal* is the least ‘certain’ form, pertaining to the domain of ‘virtual uncertainty’.

26 For a comprehensive discussion of the subjunctive in Classical Arabic, see Sadan, *Subjunctive Mood*.

The indicative forms, though generally not marked for modality, may have in certain cases a specific modal function. This function is not viewed here as secondary to the main indicative or assertive function, but as yet another application of the same grammatical form. *fa'ala* expressing optative meaning is a case in point. Optative clauses are characterized by a distinct syntactic pattern (see below 9.4). In these clauses, *fa'ala* expresses a kind of volition (a personal wish projected on God) that is never conveyed by the modal forms. Another case where *fa'ala* has a modal function is in conditional constructions.<sup>27</sup> The paradigm of *fa'ala* and the apocopate *yaf'al* is used in both the protasis and the apodosis of the basic 'modally interdependent' conditional structure: *'in yaf'al/fa'ala yaf'al/fa'ala*.<sup>28</sup> Table 5.6 below summarizes the above discussion on the modal forms:

TABLE 5.6 *The modal forms*

Deontic	imperative	<i>if'al</i>
	jussive	<i>li-yaf'al</i>
	energetic	<i>li-yaf'alanna</i>
	optative	<i>fa'ala</i>
Neutral	subjunctive	<i>yaf'ala</i>
Epistemic	conditional	<i>yaf'al; fa'ala</i>

#### 5.4 Negated Verbal Forms

Negation in Classical Arabic cannot be simply regarded as a modification of the simple or compound verbal forms. Certain negation particles may trigger the use of a verbal form not having an affirmative counterpart used in the same circumstances. Or, they may impart to the verb a temporal or a modal sense that

27 For an analysis of the semantic opposition between *fa'ala* and *yaf'al* in conditional constructions, see Giolfo, *Yaquum vs. Qāma*.

28 Peled, *Conditional Structures*, 9, describes the relationship between a *fa'ala/yaf'al* protasis and a *fa'ala/yaf'al* apodosis as 'modal interdependence': each part induces the conditional sense of the other. Modal interdependence is contrasted with 'modal split', where each part of the construction indicates different modality.

is not indicated by the affirmative form. For these reasons, the negated forms are better viewed as a system of their own (see below 9.2.4).

The negation particles attested in the corpus are *lā*, *mā*, *laysa*, *lam*, *lan* and *ǧayr*. The most basic particle *lā* is detectable in other more complex negation particles (e.g.: \**la-ʾaysa*, \**la-mā*, \**la-ʾan*). Also in its distribution, *lā* is the most common negation particle, in both main negations and secondary or double negations ('neither ... nor ...'), where it functions as the default negation particle, regardless of the form which the first negation assumes.

Some negation particles, such as *lā*, *mā*, and *laysa*, are compatible with more than one verbal form. *lā* can negate the indicative forms *faʿala*, *yafʿalu*, and (rarely) the participle, as well as the modal forms *yafʿal* and *yafʿalanna*. *mā* negates all the indicative forms while *laysa* can only negate *yafʿalu* and the participle. Other negation particles are form-specific: *lam* is compatible only with *yafʿal*, *lan* with *yafʿala*, and *ǧayr* with the participle (as with other nominal forms). The combination of a certain negation particle and a verbal form marks various kinds of negations. Thus, *lam+yafʿal* indicates past negation while *lā+yafʿal* functions as prohibitive. The particle *lan* negates *yafʿala* in main clauses, whereas in dependent clauses *yafʿala* is negated by *lā*.

The negation of the participle is often doubly marked: besides the negation particle *mā* or *laysa*, the participle can be preceded by the preposition *bi-*, assigning it the genitive case. This structure is designed to express a strong negation of both the 'nominal' and the 'verbal' participle: in the first case, it indicates the dissociation of a certain property and the theme; in the latter, it emphasizes the negation of a certain state or disposition of the theme (both readings may conflate, see below [9.52]). Table 5.7 below summarizes the above discussion on verbal negation:

TABLE 5.7 *Negated verbal forms*

	<i>faʿala</i>	<i>yafʿalu</i>	<i>fāʾilVn</i>	<i>yafʿal</i>	<i>yafʿala</i>	<i>yafʿalanna</i>
<i>lā</i>	+	+	(+)	+	[ʾan cl.]	+
<i>mā</i>	+	+	+ [ <i>bi-</i> ]	-	-	-
<i>laysa</i>	-	+	+ [ <i>bi-</i> ]	-	-	-
<i>lam</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>lan</i>	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>ǧayr</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-

A compound form is negated once: either the auxiliary verb or the content verb is negated. The following negation patterns are attested in the corpus:

TABLE 5.8 *Negated compound forms*

Negation	Auxiliary	Content
<i>lam</i>	<i>yakun</i>	<i>fā'ala</i> <i>yaf'alu</i> <i>fā'ilan</i>
<i>mā</i>	<i>kāna</i>	<i>yaf'alu</i> <i>fā'ilan</i>
Auxiliary	Negation	Content
<i>kāna</i>	<i>lā</i>	<i>yaf'alu</i> <i>fā'ilan</i>
<i>kāna</i>	<i>ġayr</i>	<i>fā'ilin</i>

## 5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the inventory of the verbal forms in Classical Arabic. The classification of the forms was based mainly on their morpho-syntactic properties, although some semantic features were also taken into consideration. The forms were accordingly characterized with respect to their being: (a) affirmative or negated, (b) indicative (modally unmarked) or modal, (c) simple, modified, or compound. In the subsequent chapters, the formal and the functional properties of the verbal forms, specifically those constituting the indicative paradigm, will be further discussed and illustrated.

## The Syntagmatic Structure of the Clause

The verbal form, a minimal clause in itself, is part of the larger syntagm of the simple clause (4.5). The simple clause is defined with respect to (a) its internal constituency, the intra-clausal syntagm, and (b) its external relations with the adjacent clauses in the text, the inter-clausal syntagm. In this chapter, I will proceed from the larger configuration to the smaller. I will discuss first the dependency status of the clause and the linking devices introducing it into the textual sequence, then I will move on to discuss word order and the operators within the simple clause.

### 6.1 The Inter-clausal Syntagm

#### 6.1.2 *Dependency Status*

Interdependency, as discussed above (4.4), is a scalar phenomenon. The dependency status of a clause is determined by a combination of features: the overall juncture contour and the position of the clause in the sequence, the linking device, the clause type (nominal or verbal), the verbal form realized in it, and its substitution class. In analyzing the dependency status of a clause, the general juncture contour should be considered first. Independence and dependency may figure in very different ways in the narrative, proceeding in a continual flow of concatenated clauses, and in direct speech, proceeding in a staccato pace of short segments. Evidently, more complex configurations of interdependency are found in the narrative chain. Within a chain, the relation between two adjacent clauses is marked as symmetrical by the repetition of the same type (or class) of linking devices, clausal structure, and verbal form. In such case, the clauses are defined as main or independent. By contrast, a clause is regarded as dependent to some degree when it exhibits a certain structural asymmetry relative to the preceding clause.

In a fine analysis, taking into account each formal and semantic feature of the complex clause, one can identify as many degrees of dependency as the number of the clause structures he can distinguish. Such an analysis was carried out by Waltisberg, who attempted to establish a detailed scale of clause linkage in Classical Arabic.<sup>1</sup> In the present work I will settle for a less delicate

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<sup>1</sup> Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 70 ff.

slicing of the continuum, as my aim is not only to examine the distinct features of each clause, but also to identify those which are shared by a group of clauses and which make them a unified category. For the latter purpose, I will thus distinguish between four levels of clausal interdependency:

- (a) Main clauses (see below chapter 9, 10.2.1, 10.3.1, chapter 11)
- (b) Bidirectional or mutually dependent clauses (see below 8.4, 10.4)
- (c) Unidirectional dependent clauses (see below 8.3, 10.2.3, 10.3.1)
- (d) Embedded clauses (see below chapter 7, 8.2)

In a succinct account, we can capture this division of four levels by considering the following three variables: (a) the position of the clause, specifically, whether it can occupy the initial position in the chain; (b) the symmetrical relations with respect to the adjacent clause in the chain; and (c) the substitution with a simple morphological constituent. Table 6.1 presents the way in which these variables apply to each level:

TABLE 6.1 *Four levels of interdependency*

	Initiality	Symmetry	Substitution
main clause	+	+	-
mutually dependent clause	+	-	-
dependent clause	-	-	-
embedded clause	-	-	+

Clauses distinct in their dependency status belong to different strata in the hierarchical structure of the text. Consequently, the level of analysis of a given clause in the text varies with respect to its dependency status. Main clauses, which contain indicators of the text's reference point and its overall cohesive structure, can be fully analyzed only at the text level. Dependent and embedded clauses, on the other hand, which only indirectly relate to the text's reference point (via their matrix clause), are analyzed at the lower level of the (complex-)clause. However, there are some dependent and mutually dependent clauses which are only found in some text types. These clauses participate in the construction of the text's overall cohesive structure and thus should also be treated at the text level (see below 8.4 and 10.4).



### 6.1.3 Linking Devices

There are implicit and explicit exponents of linkage. The implicit exponents mark two different types of syntactic relations: initiality, symbolized as #, and asyndesis, symbolized as  $\emptyset$ . In Classical Arabic, a clause positioned in the absolute beginning of a text or in a resuming position is syntactically independent. Oftentimes it is not introduced by an explicit linking device:

- (6.1) *dahaltu yawman 'alā 'ishāqi bni 'ibrāhīma l-mawṣiliyyi*  
I came one day to 'Ishāq b. 'Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī. (*Riwayāt* 1, 65)

However, a clause in a subsequent position, that is dependent on the preceding clause, may also be introduced by implicit means. In such cases, the syntactic relation is marked by asyndesis.<sup>2</sup> A weak dependency is manifested in [6.2], in which an asyndetic *fa'ala* follows an initial *fa'ala*, thus the verbal form is repeated but not the same linking device. The pattern *fa'ala*  $\emptyset$ -*fa'ala* is distinct from the pattern *fa'ala* CONN-*fa'ala* (see below 10.2.1) in that it does not mark chronological sequence but a relation of specification. The second  $\emptyset$ -*fa'ala*, referring to the same state of affairs as the first *fa'ala* (often even repeating the same verbal lexeme), further specifies the identity of the actors or the particular form in which the action was carried out:<sup>3</sup>

- (6.2) *'atā-hu ḥabaru 'abī-hi 'atā-hu bi-hī raḡulun min 'iḡlin*  
The news on his father came to him, a man from 'Iḡl brought it to him.  
(Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 307)

Asyndesis may indicate a closer juncture between clauses and even embedding. Embedding is an inter-clausal relation inasmuch as it refers to the relation between two clauses within a complex clause. Embedded clauses are defined in respect to the simple morphological constituent in the matrix clause whose position they occupy (see above 4.4). Embedded adjectival and adverbial clauses may be asyndetically linked. The grammatical nucleus of an asyndetic adjectival clause, *ṣifa* in traditional terms, is an indefinite noun-phrase:

2 I draw the distinction between initiality and asyndesis in order to account for two essentially different junction patterns; namely, the outset of speech or 'anapocrisis', and the leaning of the clause on the previous speech or its being 'apocritic', cf. Goldenberg, *Amharic Tense System*,

3.

3 Cf. Reckendorf, *Syntaktischen Verhältnisse*, 2, 445–446.

- (6.3) *wa-ʿamara la-hum bi-ḥādīmin yaḥdimu-hum*  
 He ordered [to provide] them [with] a servant that would serve them.  
 (*Riwāyāt* 1, 7)

The grammatical nucleus of an adverbial, and specifically an adverbial-predicative clause, is a verb-phrase or some other form of nexus. What is subsumed here under the category of adverbial-predicative clauses is referred to by a number of terms in the Arabic grammatical tradition, namely, *ḥāl* ‘circumstantial’, *mafʿūl (ṭāni)* ‘(second) object’ and *ḥabar* ‘predicative’. The fact that the first two terms (*ḥāl* and *mafʿūl ṭāni*) may be used interchangeably with the latter term (*ḥabar*) is revealing of the special status ascribed to this category of clauses which, unlike other adverbial expansions, is considered as an essential component of the clause (see also below 8.2).<sup>4</sup> Since predicativity is viewed here as the distinctive feature of this type of clauses, I will henceforth refer to it simply as the predicative clause. Examples [6.4] and [6.5] illustrate predicative clauses in a verbal complex and a presentative clause, respectively:

- (6.4) *fa-ḥaraġnā nasʿalu ʿan rasūli llāhi*  
 We went out to seek the Messenger of God. (*Sīra* 1, 294)
- (6.5) *kunnā ġulūsan ʿinda ṣanamin [...] naḥarnā ġazūran fa-ʿidā ṣāʾiḥun yaṣiḥu*  
 We were sitting near an idol [...] we slaughtered a camel when suddenly someone was shouting. (*Taʾrīḥ* 3, 1145–1146)

It should be noted that the distinction between an attributive and a predicative asyndetic clause is not always clear-cut. In many cases where the nominal antecedent (the *mawṣūf* or *dū al-ḥāl*) is indefinite, it seems that both interpretations are equally plausible. Waltisberg suggests that the distinction be based on the content of the matrix verb, so that if it belongs to the group of ‘translocational’ verbs (i.e., verbs of motion or caused motion), the following clause is to be interpreted as ‘modal’ or ‘final’ rather than attributive.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, an attributive or a predicative reading of the clause is strongly affected by the matrix verb. However, suggesting that only a predetermined group of verbs may be followed

4 See Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 2, chapter 12, discussing the class of verbs whose second *mafʿūl* cannot be omitted due to its being the *ḥabar* of the first *mafʿūl*, and chapter 117, discussing presentative clauses in which the *ḥāl* constituent functions as the *ḥabar* of the (definite) presented entity.

5 Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 90–91, 317 ff.

by adverbial or predicative clauses, or that asyndetic clauses following other verbs cannot be interpreted as such, is evidently circular. In [6.6] and [6.7] both readings of the asyndetic clause are possible. In the first case the matrix verb is *marra* 'to pass by', a typical motion verb; in the latter it is *istaṣḥaba* 'to take as companion', a verb which does not pertain to the core of 'translocal' verbs (though it may imply movement):

- (6.6) *fa-marra fi ṭarīqi-hī 'alā wa'layni yatanāṭahāni*  
He passed in his way by two goats butting/that were butting one another. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 78)
- (6.7) *wa-staṣḥaba ma'a-hū raḡulan yadullu-hū 'alā l-ṭarīqi*  
He took as companion a man, to show/that would show him the way. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 26)

Explicit syndesis is commonly marked by the connective particles *wa-* and *fa-*. The connective *wa-* is more basic than *fa-*: it indicates a general additive relation between two or more simple or complex terms. The connective *fa-*, by contrast, embodies a vectorial component: it marks a connection that has an internal (chrono)logical order (*tartīb*). Both *wa-* and *fa-* introduce main clauses, in initial or subsequent positions, or dependent clauses. When introducing main clauses, *wa-* and *fa-* are paradigmatic with the implicit initiality marker; when introducing dependent clauses, they are paradigmatic with asyndesis. Consider the following examples:

- (6.8) *wa-'aqbala 'abū sufyāna bi-l-īri wa-ḥāfū ḥawfan šadīdan ḥīna danaw min-a l-madīnati*  
'Abū Sufyān came with the caravan and they feared a lot when they approached Medina. (*Maḡāzī*, 39)
- (6.9) *qadīma ḍamḍamu fa-ṣāḥa bi-l-naḡīri*  
Ḍamḍam came and shouted at the troop. (*Maḡāzī*, 34)
- (6.10) *wa-ṭala'at qurayšun wa-rasūlu llāhi yaṣuffu-hum*  
Qurayš appeared while the Messenger of God was aligning them (i.e. his companions). (*Maḡāzī*, 56)

In [6.8], both the initial and the subsequent clause are linked by *wa-* and present the same clause type and verbal form, thus the sequence features two interconnected main clauses. In [6.9], the linking device is switched; however,

since both # and *fa-* belong to the same paradigm of linking devices, and the same clause type and verbal form are repeated, symmetry is maintained. In [6.10], though the same exponent of linkage is used (*wa-*), the clause type and verbal form of the second clause are altered (verbal-to-nominal, *fa'ala-to-yaf'alu*). Thus, the relation between the second clause and the first clause is one of syntactic dependency.

Other less common means of explicit syndesis are *tumma* 'then(after)' and *hattā* 'until'. These particles have a special function in the narrative chain: *tumma* indicates the elapse of an interval of time between two succeeding events, while *hattā* introduces the final event in a series of events (*hattā* may also introduce consecutive dependent clauses, in which it also serves to indicate the *gāya* 'final destination' or 'endpoint' of the main event):

(6.11) *fa-ṣallā l-nabiyyu l-ʿiṣā'a tumma ġā'a ʿilā manzili-hī*  
The Prophet prayed the evening prayer and then he came to his house.  
(*Ṣaḥīḥ* 1, 42)

(6.12) *fa-raġa'ū ʿalā ḥāmiyati-him hattā qadimū al-madīnata*  
They went back to their garrison until they [finally] arrived at Medina.  
(*Riwāyāt* 2, 8)

Implicit and explicit linking devices are distinguished from operators at the intra-clausal level in that they do not affect the internal structure of the clause. In fact, they often co-occur with clausal operators. Table 6.2 presents the paradigms of implicit and explicit linking devices in a chain:

TABLE 6.2 *Implicit and explicit linking devices*

Chain	main clause + main clause		main clause + dependent clause	
	initial	subsequent		
implicit linking	#		#	∅
	<i>wa-</i>	<i>wa-</i>	<i>wa-</i>	<i>wa-</i>
explicit linking	<i>fa-</i>	<i>fa-</i>	<i>fa-</i>	<i>fa-</i>
	<i>tumma</i> <sup>6</sup>	<i>tumma</i>	<i>tumma</i>	
		<i>hattā</i>	<i>hattā</i>	

6 In the initial position of a chain, *tumma* is nearly always followed by the introductory *inna*.

## 6.2 The Intra-clausal Syntagm

The syntagmatic structure of the simple clause is determined by both (a) the word order and grammatical agreement between the subject/agent and the predicate, and (b) the clausal operators.

### 6.2.1 *Word Order and Agreement*

As already discussed (4.5), there are two basic clause types in Classical Arabic: verb-initial clauses and topicalization structures. In accordance with the Arabic grammatical tradition, these are referred to as the verbal clause and the nominal clause, respectively. The two clause types are distinct in the relative order of their subject/agent and verbal predicate, and in the grammatical agreement between them. In a verbal clause, the verbal predicate does not agree in number and possibly in gender with the following nominal theme. In a nominal clause, by contrast, the verbal form agrees in both number and gender with the preceding nominal theme.

This formal difference in agreement is evidently manifested in the third person only. The third person verbal clause incorporates what may be defined as a dummy pronoun; the nominal entity which follows the verb is newly introduced into discourse. Once introduced, this entity is referred to by means of full agreement in the subsequent clauses. Thus, the category of verbal clauses breaks down into ones which present new topics, in which agreement is not manifested, and ones which exhibit topic continuance, and hence show agreement. The transition from one pattern of agreement to the other may be carried out between two succeeding clauses, as in [6.13], or within the same verbal complex, as in [6.14]:

(6.13) *wa-ʾaqbala l-mušrikūna fa-staqbalū l-šamsa*  
The polytheists came forward and faced the sun. (*Maǧāzī*, 56)

(6.14) *wa-ǧaʿala ʾaṣḥābu rasūli llāhi yaqdamūna*  
The companions of the Messenger of God started to arrive. (*Maǧāzī*, 37<sup>1</sup>)

As far as their function is concerned, both subtypes of the verbal clause focus on the verbal event, rather than on the subject entity. Though the subject entity may provide ‘given’ information (in cases of topic continuance), the clause as a whole is not ‘about’ that entity.<sup>7</sup> The nominal clause, by contrast, has a

7 For the distinction between these two properties of the topic, i.e., ‘givenness’ and ‘aboutness’, see Halliday, *Transitivity*, 212; Schiffrin, *Conditionals as Topics*.

markedly different structure and function. In the nominal clause, a definite subject entity—a topic—precedes the verb. The topic is made definite by virtue of anaphoric reference to the third person, exophoric reference to the first and second persons, or by indicating a proper name. Rather than focusing on the verbal event, the structure of extraposition calls attention to the topic, thereby indicating the boundaries of a discourse span.<sup>8</sup> In some cases, this attention involves a comparison and even contrast between two topics:

- (6.15) *fa-naḥnu na‘budu l-malā’ikata wa-l-yahūdu ta‘budu ‘uzayran*  
 We worship the angels while the Jews worship ‘Uzayr. (*Sīra* 1, 236)

Objects and adverbial complements usually follow the verb. When positioned before the verb, especially at the head of the clause, they are put in focus:

- (6.16) *qāla ‘ayna turīdu qāla ‘yyā-ka ḡi’tu li-‘ūmina bi-ka*  
 He said: ‘where are you heading?’ He replied: ‘To you I came to believe in you.’ (*Majāzī*, 406)

- (6.17) *yā sayyid-ī l-sā‘ata wallāhi taḥruḡu rūḥ-ī*  
 My lord, now, by God, my spirit flies away. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 249)

As already noticed by Khan (see above 4.5), there is a strong correlation between the clause type and the verbal form realized in it: *fā‘ala* forms are more common in verbal clauses whereas *yaf‘alu* forms are characteristic of nominal clauses. A nominal clause featuring a *fā‘ala* form is thus highly marked in terms of distribution; it usually serves to lay emphasis on the proposed nominal theme:

- (6.18) *fā-qāla ‘abū bakrin ‘a-lā tarā mā yaṣna‘u hādā l-safīhu qāla ‘anta fā‘alta hādā bi-naḥsi-ka*  
 ‘Abū Bakr said: ‘Don’t you see what this fool does?’ He replied: ‘You did it yourself.’ (*Sīra* 1, 246–247)

### 6.2.2 Clausal Operators

Clausal operators form a heterogenic class of exponents, comprising both nominals and particles. The common denominator of these exponents can be defined negatively, by contrast to both verbal modifiers (5.2.2) and linking

<sup>8</sup> See Khan, *Studies*, 31 ff.

devices (6.1.2). Clausal operators have in their scope not only the verbal form but the entire clause. They do not mark inter-clausal order or sequence but affect the internal organization of the clause and the predicative relation. Clausal operators may head embedded clauses or non-embedded, main, mutually dependent, or dependent clauses. In embedded clauses, the operator serves as the grammatical nucleus, marking the substantival, adjectival, or adverbial identity of the clause. In non-embedded clauses, the operator serves as a modifier of the nexal relation, or it marks the internal segmentation of the clause. The semantic effect of these operators is not only confined to the simple clause, but may bear on the surrounding textual unit as well. In the following, I will briefly present the group of operators in embedded clauses and then the operators in non-embedded clauses.

#### 6.2.2.1 Operators of Embedded Clauses

Embedded clauses exhibit the tightest form of junction on the interdependency scale. Embedding implies the substitution of a finite clause with a simple non-finite morphological constituent of a clause or a phrase. We have already seen that embedded clauses can be simply juxtaposed to their grammatical nucleus, thus introduced into the inter-clausal sequence by means of asyndesis. Other embedded clauses incorporate their grammatical nucleus in the form of a pronoun or a particle, which are here simply referred to as operators. The term ‘operator’ or ‘embedding operator’ is preferred to the traditional term, ‘subordinating conjunction’, since the latter often implies a dichotomous conception of dependency, dividing the entire spectrum of clause linkage between subordination and coordination. As a matter of fact, subordinating conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions are syntactic exponents of different order and can therefore co-occur in the same sequence, the latter proposed to the first (e.g. *fa-mā*). Moreover, coordinating conjunctions do not necessarily introduce independent clauses (e.g. *wāw al-ḥāl*).

The embedding operators may be classified into those heading substantival (content or *maṣḍar*) clauses, adjectival (relative or attributive) clauses, and adverbial clauses. Some operators may head more than one clause type. For instance, the operator *mā* may head both content clauses and relative clauses.<sup>9</sup> Table 6.3 presents a partial list of embedding operators; it contains the operators which head the type of clauses that were studied in the present work:

9 For a detailed account of the discussion in both medieval and modern literature regarding the conjunctive or pronominal nature of exponents such as *mā* and *lladī*, which may introduce either a substantival or an adjectival clause, see Goldenberg, *Allaḍī al-Maṣḍariyyah*.

TABLE 6.3 *Operators of embedded clauses*

Embedded clause	Operator	Remarks
substantival/content clause	<i>'anna</i>	<i>'anna</i> occurs independently or preceded by a preposition, e.g. <i>li-'anna</i> . In the latter case, the embedded clause functions as the genitive complement of the preposition. <i>'anna</i> together with <i>mā</i> , can constitute a compound operator <i>'annamā</i> . The clause introduced by <i>'anna</i> exhibits the order of the nominal clause; the subject is assigned the accusative case.
adjectival/relative clause	<i>llaḍī</i>	The pronoun <i>llaḍī</i> is inflected for number and gender, and, in the dual, also for case. The pronoun <i>llaḍī</i> and its conjoined clause are related by apposition, as clearly observable with the plural form <i>llaḍīna</i> .
	<i>mā/man</i>	The pronouns <i>mā/man</i> occur independently or preceded by a preposition, e.g. <i>bi-mā</i> , <i>mim-man</i> . In the latter case, the embedded clause functions as the genitive complement of the preposition. <i>mā</i> and <i>man</i> may introduce the protasis of a conditional construction; <i>mā</i> may also introduce content clauses (the so-called <i>mā al-maṣdariyya</i> ) and temporal clauses (the so-called <i>mā al-daymūma</i> ). These cases will not be treated in the present work.
adverbial clause	<i>ḥīna</i>	The operator <i>ḥīna</i> is a nominal form in the construct state. Its conjoined clause has thus the status of a genitive complement.



### 6.2.2.2 Operators of Non-embedded Clauses

Non-embedded clauses include main clauses, mutually dependent clauses, and dependent clauses. Operators of non-embedded clauses consist of pronouns and particles whose function is to: (a) modify in some way the plain unmarked assertion, and sometimes (b) specify the semantic relation with the adjacent clause; (c) mark the internal segmentation of the clause, and sometimes (d) indicate the relation of the clause to the overall argumentative structure of the text. The operators can be divided into two large groups, according to their modificatory (a-b) or organizational (c-d) function. The list presented in table 6.4 is not exhaustive; it contains the operators that head the type of clauses which were studied in the present work. Notice that some operators assume both functions and thus reoccur in both groups:

TABLE 6.4 *Operators of non-embedded clauses*

Group	Sub-group	Operator	Remarks
Modificatory	Introductory	<i>'inna</i> [ <i>la-</i> ],	Clauses headed by <i>'inna</i> and its 'sisters' exhibit the order of the nominal clause. The nominal subject is assigned the accusative case. <i>'inna</i> has a number of functions: it introduces exposition and explication clauses; often when co-occurring with <i>la-</i> , it indicates asseveration. <i>lākinna</i> denotes contrast between clauses. <i>la'alla</i> and <i>layta</i> denote the modal meanings of possibility and wish, respectively.
	Modal	<i>lākinna</i> , <i>la'alla</i> ,	
	Focus	<i>layta</i>	
		<i>'innamā</i>	The compound restrictive particle <i>'inna-mā</i> marks the second part of the clause as focused; the part which follows it directly is thematic (or, in the case of verbal forms, made thematic by means of <i>mā</i> , the embedding operator or nominalizer).

Group	Sub-group	Operator	Remarks
	Interrogative	<i>ʾa, hal</i>	<i>ʾa, hal</i> introduce yes-no questions.
		<i>mā(dā), man, ʾayy</i>	The pronominal interrogatives <i>mā(dā), man, ʾayy</i> , and the adverbial interrogatives
		<i>kayfā, ʾayna, matā</i>	<i>kayfā, ʾayna, matā</i> , introduce WH-questions.
	Presentative	<i>ʾidā</i>	The particle <i>ʾidā</i> functions as a presentative in the narrative. The presentative clause consists of a nexus, i.e., a nominal entity and a predicative expansion. <i>ʾidā</i> -clauses are in complementary distribution with <i>ʾid-</i> clauses, in which a verbal form follows the presentative.
Organizational	Topic	<i>ʾammā [fa-]</i>	The particle <i>ʾammā</i> introduces the (nominal or other) topic and <i>fa-</i> the comment of a main clause.
	Setting	<i>ʾinna [la-]</i>	The particle <i>ʾinna</i> heads the first clause in a mutually dependent, setting-presentative construction in the narrative. The setting clause exhibits the nominal clause order; <i>ʾinna</i> precedes the subject (in the accusative) and <i>la-</i> the predicate.
		<i>bayna(mā)</i>	<i>baynā/baynamā</i> head the first clause in a mutually dependent, setting-presentative construction in the narrative. The setting clause exhibits the nominal clause order.

Clauses introduced by different operators may be nested in each other, as in the following example:

- (6.19) *fa-’ammā mā qāla bnu ’ishāqa fī dālika fa-’inna-hū ’innamā stadalla bi-za’mi-hī ‘alā ’anna dālika ka-dālika li-’anna llāha ‘azza dikru-hū faraġa min ḥalqi ġamī’i ḥalqi-hī yawma l-ġum’ati*

And as for what Ibn ’Ishāq said about that, he claimed to have found evidence that this was indeed so (i.e., that the creation of the world had begun on Saturday) because God had finished creating His entire creation on Friday. (*Ta’rīḥ* 1, 42)

The initial clause is introduced by the topicalizer *’ammā*. The comment, introduced by *fa-*, takes the form of an *’inna*-clause with a ‘dummy’ pronominal theme (*ḍamīr al-ša’n*), whose predicate clause is headed by the focus particle *’innamā*. The complement of the verb *istadalla* contains a substantival clause introduced by *’anna*. The first three operators, *’ammā*, *’inna* and *’innamā*, introduce main clauses: either a ‘high-rank’ topicalization (*ġumla kubrā*) or a ‘low-rank’ comment clause (*ġumla suġrā*); the last operator, *’anna*, introduces an embedded clause, the genitive complement of the preposition *’alā*.

### 6.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the exponents of the inter-clausal syntagm, specifically, the implicit and explicit linking devices which introduce the clause into the textual sequence, and the exponents of the intra-clausal syntagm. The latter were divided into two components: word order and subject-predicate agreement patterns, and clausal operators. Operators which head embedded clauses function as the grammatical nucleus of the clause. They mark the substantival, adjectival, or adverbial identity of the clause. Operators which head non-embedded clauses have either a modificatory or an organizational function. Their effect often exceeds the boundaries of the clause and bears on the surrounding textual unit as well. A detailed discussion will follow in the next chapters, devoted to the analysis of verbal patterns at the (complex-)clause level and at the text level.

## The Verbal Paradigm in Embedded Clauses

In this chapter, a selection of substantival, adjectival, and adverbial clauses is discussed. The discussion is centered on the functional oppositions marked by the verbal forms in these clauses. Each section starts with the analysis of the simple and modified forms, then the compound and the negated forms are discussed. Limited distribution or special uses of a form are specifically noted. Given that some observations are relevant for more than one type of clauses—sometimes even for all—a certain amount of repetition is inevitable. Some semantic notions and other relevant concepts are mentioned only in brief, awaiting further elaboration in the following chapters.

### 7.1 Preliminaries

In the hierarchical structure of the text, embedded clauses constitute the lowest stratum. Embedded clauses are constituents of complex clauses: they occupy the syntactic position of a noun-phrase or an adverbial. In most cases, they do not refer directly to the deictic center of the text (see above 4.2), but relate to it via their matrix clause (for an exception, see [7.72] below). Since embedded clauses do not refer directly to the situation of the speaking/narrating subject, the expression of certain modal meanings, in particular volition, is less salient in them. In general, indicators of subjective involvement are more limited in embedded clauses, though not entirely absent from them. Embedded generic clauses, like all generic clauses, have a privative referential value. However, within the generic domain, one verbal situation may refer to another, thus being assigned a location in time which is relative to it.

The verbal paradigm in embedded clauses consists of indicative forms: simple, modified, and compound. With simple forms, the non-symmetrical configuration of [main clause + embedded clause] is syntactically marked, by the embedding operator and the syntagmatic sequence; with modified and compound forms, it is also morphologically marked, by the modifier or the auxiliary (against the use of a simple form in the main clause).

An important feature which affects the interpretation of the verbal form is the nature of the verbal lexeme or verb-phrase. There are two pertinent semantic distinctions in this regard: the first, between potentially bounded (telic) and unbounded (a-telic) situations, and the second, between situations

analyzable into phases, i.e. (dynamic) activities, and ones which are not, i.e. (static) states.<sup>1</sup>

The verbal forms may be sorted into two groups: the first comprises the simple forms *yaf'alu*, *fa'ala*, and the active participle, which do not mark the verbal situation as necessarily bounded; the second group comprises the modified forms *sa-yaf'alu*, *qad fa'ala*, and the passive participle, which impose an initial or terminal bounding of the verbal situation.

## 7.2 Substantival (Content) 'anna-clauses

The operator 'anna introduces content clauses of verbs of knowledge and acquisition of knowledge (including perception). Rarely, they also follow desiderative verbs. Clauses introduced by 'anna may function as object complements of verbs or as genitive complements of prepositions, e.g.: *li-'anna*, *ka-'anna*, *ma'a 'anna*. The operator 'anna heads a nominal clause whose nominal theme is assigned the accusative case.

Given their high frequency in the corpus, substantival 'anna-clauses provide a good starting point for the exploration of the verbal paradigm in embedded clauses. The observations made henceforth regarding the semantic oppositions marked by the verbal forms are for the most part also pertinent in adjectival and adverbial clauses.

The contour of a verbal situation, including its temporal value, is largely determined by the interaction between the verbal lexeme and the verbal form, or to be more precise, between the internal and the external boundary-marking of the verbal situation. Modal nuances are more context dependent than aspectual and temporal meanings, thus not as easily predictable. The time reference of the verbal form is relative to the one established in the main clause. We observe that:

- Both *yaf'alu* and *fā'ilVn* indicate concurrence with unbounded (including stative) lexemes and posteriority with bounded ones.<sup>2</sup> The difference is that

1 Though correlating to a large extent, the distinction between these two sets of semantic oppositions should be kept, as the verbal forms interact differently with each of them. Cf. Rothstein, *Structuring Events*, 12 ff., for a classification of events according to the 'two aspectual properties' defined as [ $\pm$ stage] and [ $\pm$ telic].

2 I use the term 'concurrence' to refer to the temporal relation between two (or more) events which co-occur at the same time frame, though not necessarily at the very same instant. I use the term 'simultaneity' to refer to exact synchronicity.

*yaf'alu* marks the dynamic unfolding of the situation while *fā'ilVn* marks it as static. Futurity expressed by *yaf'alu* nearly always involves a modal flavor, whereas with *fā'ilVn*, a modal meaning does not surface as much.<sup>3</sup>

- *sa-yaf'alu* indicates that the situation is yet to occur and thus has a posterior time reference with all lexemes, regardless of their being bounded or unbounded, dynamic or static.
- *fa'ala* indicates persistence ('existing state') with stative lexemes and anteriority with dynamic, either bounded or unbounded, lexemes.<sup>4</sup>
- Both *qad fa'ala* and *maf'ūlVn* indicate a bounded verbal situation. The difference is that *qad fa'ala* depicts a state resulting from a previous process, thus it is analyzable into phases,<sup>5</sup> while *maf'ūlVn* refers to the resultant state alone.

Table 7.1 summarizes the aspectual and temporal distinctions marked by the verbal forms in *'anna*-clauses. The examples which follow illustrate each case referred to in the table. Notice that with *sa-yaf'alu*, *maf'ūlVn* and *qad fa'ala* only examples with potentially unbounded lexemes are adduced, to show the bounding force of the verbal form:

TABLE 7.1 *Temporal-aspectual distinctions in 'anna-clauses*

Verbal form	Time reference	
	Bounded lexeme	Unbounded lexeme
<i>yaf'alu</i>	posteriority [7.1]	concurrency-dynamic [7.2]
<i>fā'ilVn</i>	posteriority [7.3]	concurrency-static [7.4]
<i>sa-yaf'alu</i>	posteriority [7.5]	

3 For a more detailed discussion of futurity as expressed by *yaf'alu*, see below 9.2.1.

4 The meaning paraphrased as 'present state exists' emerges from the interaction of 'anterior' and stative predicates; see Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca, *Evolution*, 74.

5 I hold a different view than Beeston, *Arabic Language*, 78, who ascribes to *qad* a 'conversive force', by which the dynamic aspect of the 'suffix-set' is transformed into a static one. In fact, the modified form *qad fa'ala* embodies two phases: the (dynamic) process and its (static) result.

TABLE 7.1 *Temporal-aspectual distinctions in 'anna-clauses (cont.)*

Verbal form	Time reference	
	Bounded lexeme	Unbounded lexeme
<i>fa'ala</i>	anteriority [7.6]	persistence [7.7] (stative lexemes)
<i>maf'ulVn</i>	resultativity-static [7.8]	
<i>qad fa'ala</i>	resultativity-dynamic [7.9]	

- (7.1) *fa-'alima l-qawmu 'anna-hum yulāqūna l-qitāla*  
And the people knew that they will meet battle. (*Mağāzī*, 49)
- (7.2) *fa-'lam 'anna-hū yurīdu qatla-ka*  
Then know that he wants to kill you! (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 109)
- (7.3) *'a'lim-hum 'annī sā'irun 'ilay-him*  
Make them know that I am going to them!<sup>6</sup> (*Riwāyāt* 2, 11)
- (7.4) *fa-lammā ra'ā l-rağulu 'anna l-dī'ba qāšidun naḥwa-hū*  
And when the man saw that the wolf was proceeding toward him ...  
(*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 63)
- (7.5) *wa-'arafa 'anna-hū qad 'awqa'a fī nafsi-hī mā ṭalaba wa-'anna l-'asada sa-yahḍaru l-ṭawra wa-yatahayya'u la-hū*  
And he knew that he had planted in his mind what he wished, and that the lion will be wary of the ox, and will get prepared for him. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 95)
- (7.6) *'uḥbira 'anna 'amra bna sālīmīn wa-'aṣḥāba-hū rāḥū 'amsi*  
He was informed that 'Amr b. Sālīm and his companions had gone yesterday. (*Mağāzī*, 205)

6 The verb *sāra* may have either a bounded or an unbounded reading (i.e., 'to go away, depart': 'to go'). In [7.3], *sā'iran* is followed by the complement *'ilay-hi* which specifies the destination of the going, thus the participle is interpreted as bounded.

- (7.7) *ʾinnā naḥšā yā rasūla llāhi ʾan yazunna ʿaduwwu-nā ʾannā karihnā l-ḥurūǧa ʾilay-him ḡubnan ʿan liqāʾi-him*  
 We fear, O Messenger of God, that our enemy will think that we did not want to come out to them out of fear of encountering them. (*Maǧāzī*, 210)
- (7.8) *fa-ʾawwalu mā ʾawqaʿa fī rūʿī ʾanna māl-ī mahfūẓun ʾalay-ya*  
 The first thing that struck my mind is that the preservation of my wealth is incumbent upon me (lit. ‘that my wealth is preserved upon me’). (*Buḥalāʾ*, 78)
- (7.9) *ǧīʾtu ʾuḥbiru-ka ʾannī qad ʾāmantu bi-llāhi wa-bi-rasūli-hī muḥammadin*  
 I came to inform you that I have become a believer (lit. ‘that I have believed’) in God and in his Messenger Muḥammad. (*Sīra* 1, 230)

The meaning of the verbal form is not only affected by the lexico-grammatical features described above. Quite often, the surrounding context or other pragmatic features are involved in its interpretation. For instance, repetition or presupposition seem to explain cases in which *yafʿalu* forms, instead of indicating posteriority with bounded lexemes, indicate concurrence. In these cases, *yafʿalu* refers to a situation whose ‘actual referential concern’ is extended over a period of time including the one indicated in the main clause.<sup>7</sup> What calls for the ‘still actual or relevant’ interpretation of *yafʿalu* is its being conceived or presented as given or backgrounded. Consider, for instance, the following example:

- (7.10) *wa-saʿaltu ʾan-i l-muǧannīna ʾayna yaǧtamiʿūna [...] wa-qad balaǧa-nī ʾanna l-qawma yaǧtamiʿūna ʾinda-ka*  
 And I asked about the singers, where do they gather [...] I came to know that the people gather at your [place]. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 17)

The verb *yaǧtamiʿūna* in the substantival clause repeats the same information that was already mentioned in the question ‘where do they meet’, and whose abiding actuality and relevance are in fact presupposed by it. It indicates a frequentative situation taking place within the time frame indicated by *qad*

7 Janssen, *Preterit as Definite*, 168–169, explains the use of the present tense in such cases where the event ‘does not coincide temporally with the time the sentence is spoken’, as indicating ‘actual referential concern to the speaker from his vantage point’. See also below 9.2.1.



*balaġa-nī*. The same frequentative meaning of *yafʿalu* with bounded lexemes is also observed in generic *ʿanna*-clauses, which by definition refer to information that is presented as common ground shared by all:

- (7.11) *yā ʿaġaban man raʿā ʿaw samiʿa ʿanna l-buzāta taḥtaṭīfu l-ġilmāna*  
O how astonishing! Who [ever] saw or heard that falcons snatch children. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 119)

As opposed to the frequentative *yafʿalu*, a generic participial form, whether active or passive, yields a static meaning of the verbal situation, due to the non-phasal contour marked by this grammatical form:

- (7.12) *kāna bi-yaqīnin maʿlūman ʿanna l-zamāna muḥdaṭun*  
It was surely known that time is created. (*Taʿrīḥ* 1, 18)

Substantial *ʿanna*-clauses also feature compound forms with the anterior *kāna*. The situation expressed by *kāna yafʿalu* is located within a time span previous to the one indicated in the main clause; the situation expressed by *kāna faʿala* is located at a point in time previous to the one indicated in the main clause. Thus, *kāna faʿala* carries a double marking of anteriority: it accentuates the anterior meaning already indicated by the simple *faʿala* (see above 5.1):

- (7.13) *iʿlam ʿannī munḍu yawmi waladtu-hā [...] kuntu ʿarfaʿu min daqīqi kulli ʿaġīnatin ḥafnatan*  
Know, ever since I gave birth to her [...] I used to take a handful of flour from every piece of dough. (*Buḥalāʿ*, 55)
- (7.14) *fa-ʿaḥbara-nā ʿanna muḥammadan kāna ʿaraḍa li-ʿiri-nā fī badʿati-nā*  
And he informed us that Muḥammad had been observing our caravan since we started our [journey]. (*Maġāzī*, 28)

In my corpus, the negated forms *lā yafʿalu*, *mā faʿala*, and *lam yafʿal* were attested in *ʿanna*-clauses. The negative particles do not seem to have special bearing on the temporal interpretation of the verbal form: with bounded lexemes, *lā yafʿalu* has a posterior time reference, whereas with unbounded or stative lexemes, it has a concurrent meaning:

- (7.15) *wa-waqaʿa fī nafsi-hī ʿanna-hū lā yarġīʿu ʿilā makkata*  
It occurred to him that he is not going back to Mecca. (*Maġāzī*, 36)

- (7.16) *ma'a 'annī lā 'āmanu 'an takūna l-dā'iratu 'alay-kum*  
 Along with that, I am not sure that you will have any success. (*Mağāzī*, 63)

The negated forms *mā fa'ala* and *lam yaf'al* were both found to be used in the same syntactic environment. A functional distinction between the two, as the one found in main clauses (see below 9.2.4), could not be observed in embedded clauses introduced by 'anna:

- (7.17) *fal-ya'lam 'anna-hū lam yu'ta fī dālika min qibali-nā wa-'innamā 'utiya min qibali ba'di nāqilī-hi 'ilay-nā*  
 [The reader] should know that he was not given this [information] by us, but rather it was brought by some of its transmitters to us. (*Tarīḥ* 1, 7)

- (7.18) *wa-kāna man taḥallafa lam yulam li-'anna-hum mā ḥaraḡū 'alā qitālin wa-'innamā ḥaraḡū li-l-īri*  
 Whoever stayed behind was not scolded because they did not go out for a battle, but rather they set out for the caravan. (*Mağāzī*, 21)

On very rare occasions, 'anna-clauses follow desiderative verbs. In my corpus, such examples were only encountered in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* text, where 'anna-clauses followed the verb *wadda* 'to wish', featuring both *yaf'alu* and *fa'ala*. Given the scarce evidence, it is hard to tell the exact functional distinction between both forms. However, the particular contexts in which the examples are found suggest that *yaf'alu* is used to refer to a hypothetical yet possible state of affairs, while *fa'ala* is used to refer to a counterfactual one (see also above 5.3.2):

- (7.19) *wa-la-wadidtu 'annī 'uqtalu fī sabīli llāhi*  
 I wish that I would be killed for the cause of God. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 17)
- (7.20) *la-wadidtu 'anna-ka dakkarta-nā kulla yawmin*  
 I wish that you had reminded us every day. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 29)

In [7.19], 'uqtalu conveys the wish of the Prophet, which, at the time when pronounced, is still realizable. In [7.20], on the other hand, the wish *dakkarta-nā* is answered with an explanation as to why the desired action is not feasible.

### 7.3 Adjectival/Relative Clauses

Adjectival clauses may be adjoined directly to their nominal antecedent by means of juxtaposition, or they may join it via a *mawṣūl* 'conjunctive pronoun', semantically representing the nominal antecedent and syntactically appositive to it. The *mawṣūl*, here referred to by the general term 'operator', functions as the grammatical nucleus of the clause. In adjectival clauses where no such operator is explicitly present, one may assume, on the basis of paradigmatic opposition, that an implicit conjunctive pronoun occupies this slot.<sup>8</sup> Another way of analyzing this construction is to view the close syntagmatic contact between the clause and its antecedent as the marker of the adjectival relation.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, asyndetic adjectival clauses must immediately follow their nominal antecedent, and cannot be freely positioned in the text, unlike adjectival clauses which are headed by an operator (i.e., which incorporate their grammatical nucleus).

The pronominal operators which introduce adjectival (or, more generally, relative clauses) may be classified into two sets: (a) *llaḍī* and its inflection and (b) *mā*, *man*. The first set marks the grammatical categories of number, gender, definiteness, and sometimes case; the second set marks the distinction between persons and non-persons. The *llaḍī*-set often follows its nominal antecedent while the *mā/man*-set seldom follows an explicit noun-phrase. Both types of adjectival clauses can occupy any syntactic position in a complex clause or in a nominal phrase in which a simple noun can occur.

The verbal paradigm in adjectival clauses consists of the same set of indicative forms found in substantival 'anna-clauses. The (implicit and explicit) operators introducing adjectival clauses do not impose a certain word order on the clause. I exclude from the present discussion conditional constructions headed by the operators *mā* and *man*: the overall configuration of these bipartite constructions, as well as their verbal paradigm (comprising, besides *fā'ala*, the apocopate *yaf'al*), are clearly distinct from the ones found in adjectival clauses.

#### 7.3.1 *llaḍī*-clauses

The pronominal operator *llaḍī* heads adjectival clauses whose antecedent is determined. It marks the categories of number and gender in the singular

8 Cf. Goldenberg, *Allaḍī al-Maṣḍariyyah*, 252.

9 For such a view of 'contact clauses' in English (e.g.: 'this is the boy we spoke of') see Jespersen, *Modern English*, 3, 81 ff.

and plural and, in addition, the category of case in the dual. The nominal antecedent of *llaḍī*-clauses may be either particular and specific or generic.

The verbal paradigm in *llaḍī*-clauses consists of simple, modified, and compound indicative forms. In principle, the same observations outlined above with respect to *'anna*-clauses are pertinent also in *llaḍī*-clauses. There are, however, some modal nuances which appear to be more salient in this type of adjectival clauses.

The form *yaf'alu* indicates concurrence with unbounded lexemes:

- (7.21) *fa-taqaddama bi-hā 'ilā mawḍī'i-hā llaḍī yurīdu rasūlu llāhi 'an yaḍa'a-hā fī-hi*  
 And he proceeded with it to the place where the Messenger of God wanted him to place it. (*Maḡāzī*, 56)

Repetition or presupposition may bring about a concurrent reading of *yaf'alu* with bounded lexemes:

- (7.22) *man hāḍā l-raḡulu llaḍī yaḍribu 'alay-ki bāba-ki kulla laylatin*  
 Who is this man that knocks at your door every night? (*Sīra* 1, 335)

In [7.22], *yaḍribu* repeats the same piece of information that was already recounted in the previous narrative: *fa-ra'aytu 'insānan ya'tī-hā min ḡawfi l-layli fa-yaḍribu 'alay-hā bāba-hā* 'And I saw a man coming to her in the middle of the night and knocking on her door'. The adverbial phrase *kulla laylatin* makes it plain that the situation expressed by *yaḍribu* is frequentative.<sup>10</sup> The same frequentative meaning of *yaf'alu* is also observed in *llaḍī*-clauses whose antecedent is generic:

- (7.23) *wa-l-lāzibu huwa llaḍī yaltaziqu ba'ḍu-hū bi-ba'ḍin*  
 And the sticking [substance] is that which sticks to something else. (*Ta'riḡ* 1, 88)

The difference between *yaḍribu* in [7.22] and *yaltaziqu* in [7.23] resides in the bounded or unbounded time span in which the frequentative repetition takes place, a span determined by the reference to a particular thus bounded

10 The presence of the adverb *kulla laylatin* is by no means a necessary condition for the habitual interpretation of *yaf'alu*. It provides an additional, explicit marking of this meaning.

subject-entity ('this man') or to a generic thus unbounded subject-entity ('the sticking substance').

It is rather uncommon that *yafʿalu* within a *lladī*-clause indicates plain futurity. Consider the following example:

- (7.24) *ʿandiġ ħubz-ī lladī yūdaʿu bayna yaday-ya*  
 Prepare well my bread that is served to (lit. 'put in front of') me!  
 (*Buḥalāʿ*, 84)

It is the imperative *ʿandiġ* in the main clause that sets a future time reference for the situation in its entirety, while *yūdaʿu* retains a frequentative meaning. Rather than asserting a future occurrence, *yafʿalu* often conveys the meanings of possibility and ability:

- (7.25) *wa-man-i lladī yuḥriġu-nā min-hu ʿa-lasnā ʿaʿazza l-ʿarabi wa-ʿaktara-*  
*hum mālan wa-silāḥan*  
 Who will [be able to] take us out of it? Aren't we the strongest and most  
 wealthy and armed among the Arabs?! (*Riwāyāt* 2, 36)

The simple form *faʿala* has anterior meaning with dynamic lexemes. With stative lexemes it indicates persistence:

- (7.26) *naḥnu nuʿtī-ka lladī saʿalta*  
 We will give you that which you asked for. (*Maġāzī*, 373)
- (7.27) *fa-raġaʿa wa-ḥaddara ʿaḥāba-hū lladīna baqū*  
 And he came back and warned his friends who stayed [there]. (*Riwāyāt*  
 2, 14)

While anteriority is doubly marked by the compound form *kāna faʿala* (see [7.33] below), the modified *qad faʿala* emphasizes the complete realization of the verbal situation, as shown in [7.28]. We recall that both these meanings, i.e., anteriority and completion, may be conveyed by *faʿala*, although *faʿala* is not explicitly marked for any of them:

- (7.28) *ʿaštahī l-laḥma lladī qad taħarraʿa*  
 I crave for the meat that has been overcooked. (*Buḥalāʿ*, 91)

Participial forms, both active and passive, are not very common in *lladī*-clauses. In my corpus, there were only examples in which the participle could be interpreted as concurrent, with both unbounded and bounded lexemes:

(7.29) *'a-ra'ayta law qultu fī-ka ġayra llaḏī 'anta la-hū mustahiqqun min-a l-bāḏīli*

Look at that, if I would have composed false poems about you, which you are not worthy of ... (*Riwāyāt* 1, 7)

(7.30) *fā-mā llaḏī 'anta fī-hi l-'āna muġmi'un*

What is it that you are decided about now? (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 67)

In cases when the time reference indicated in the main clause is (concrete or fictional) past, the distinction between *yaf'alu* and *kāna yaf'alu* in the adjectival clause is subtle: the compound form reproduces the expression of past time reference, whereas the simple form is temporally unspecified, indicating only a frequentative repetition:

(7.31) *fā-ħaraġat min madħali l-mā'i llaḏī kāna yaħruġu min-a l-ġadīri*

And it came out from the mouth of the water that would flow out from the pond. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 90)

(7.32) *fā-waḏa'ā-hā 'alā šafīri l-nahri llaḏī yašubbu fī l-ġadīri*

And they both laid it on the edge of the river that flows to the pond. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 91)

Just as in *'anna*-clauses, in *llaḏī*-clauses, the use of the compound form *kāna fā'ala* accentuates the anterior meaning indicated already by the simple form (see above 5.1):

(7.33) *wa-'ayna llaḏī kunta ḥabbarta-nī bi-hī*

Where is that which you have told me about? (*Riwāyāt* 2, 193)

In my corpus, I have encountered very few examples of negated forms in *llaḏī*-clauses. The attested negated forms are *lā yaf'alu* and *lam yaf'al*, referring to future time and past time, respectively:

(7.34) *al-ħamdu li-llāhi llaḏī lā yubramu mā naqaḏa*

Praise be to God; what He has destroyed will never be re-established. (*Ta'riħ* 6, 3286)

- (7.35) *wa-kāna qad balaġa fī l-buġli wa-l-takdiyati wa-fī kaṭrati l-māli l-mabāliġa llatī lam yabluġ-hā ʾaḥadun*  
 He has attained, through his greed and mendicancy and [his] great wealth, sums of money that no one has ever attained [before]. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 71–72)

In [7.34], due to the divine nature of the antecedent, *lā yafʿalu* is interpreted as a certain prediction. In [7.35], due to the presence of a generic referee (ʾaḥadun ‘[no]one’), *lam yafʿal* is interpreted as a sweeping negation of the past (see below 11.3). In both cases, the verbal form does not negate the occurrence of a specific future or past event, but rather affirms the validity of a general truth.

### 7.3.2 *Asyndetic Adjectival Clauses*

Asyndetic adjectival clauses, *ṣīfa* ‘descriptive’ in the Arabic grammatical tradition, are not introduced by an explicit operator. Rather, they follow directly after their nominal antecedent, which may be analyzed as the nucleus of the clause (see above 7.3). The nominal antecedent in asyndetic adjectival clauses is not determined. It may be either particular and non specific or generic.

The verbal paradigm in asyndetic adjectival clauses consists of the same forms found in *llaḍī*-clauses. In general, the aspectual and temporal distinctions that were specified above with regard to ʾanna-clauses are also observed in asyndetic adjectival clauses. Yet, this type of clauses features some particularities which deserve a discussion of their own.

With stative lexemes, *yafʿalu* indicates concurrence with the situation expressed in the main clause, whether the overall temporal frame is past or non-past:

- (7.36) *wa-ġaʿalū kullamā hāġa-hum ʾaḥadun min-a l-ʾawsī wa-l-ḥazraġi bi-šayʾin yakrahūna-hū lam yamši baʿḍu-hum ilā baʿḍin*  
 Whenever someone from ʾAws or Ḥazraġ provoked them with something they hated, they stopped (lit. ‘began not’) going to one another [for help]. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 14)

- (7.37) *ibʿat maṯ raġulan min tiqāti-ka yafhamu bi-l-ʾarabiyati*  
 Send with me one of your trustworthy men who understands Arabic!  
 (*Riwāyāt* 2, 192)

The same concurrent meaning of *yafʿalu* is also evident with dynamic, unbounded lexemes:

- (7.38) *fa-laḳīya mraʿatan taḥmilu taʿāman*  
And he came across a woman carrying food. (*Sīra* 1, 320)

Rather than mere futurity, it is often the case that *yafʿalu* with bounded lexemes conveys the modal meanings of ability or possibility:

- (7.39) *ʿarā fi hādīhi l-ʿaḡamati samakan katīran naṣīdu-hū li-muddatin*  
I see in this swamp many fish that we could fish for a while. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 84)

- (7.40) *hal ḡaʿala fi yad-ī min hādā ṣayʿan ʿarḡīʿu bi-hī ʿilā bayt-ī*  
Did he thereby put anything in my hand I could take back to my home?  
(*Buḡalāʿ*, 49)

In certain cases the exact modal nuance expressed by *yafʿalu* is not easy to demarcate. Thus, the meaning of ability appears sometimes to be fraught with that of obligation. This is the case in [7.41]–[7.42], where people are appointed to some duty, specified in the adjectival clause:

- (7.41) *wa-staʿmala rasūlu llāhi ʿalā l-ḡarasi muḡammada bna maslamata fi ḡamsīna raḡulan yaṭūfūna bi-l-ʿaskari*  
The Messenger of God appointed Muḡammad b. Maslama as the head of the guard of fifty men, who would go around the army [camp].  
(*Maḡāzī*, 217)

- (7.42) *wa-ʿamara la-hum bi-ḡādīmin yaḡdimu-hum wa-ʿabdin yasqī-him l-māʾa*  
He ordered [to provide] them [with] a servant that would serve them and a slave that would provide them water. (*Rīwāyāt* 1, 7)

In all the above examples, the interpretation of *yafʿalu* as expressing plain futurity, devoid of modal nuances, does not seem to be supported by the context. However, the following example presents us with a different case:

- (7.43) *wa-ʿin lam tafʿalū kāna la-hū fi-kum dabḡun tumma buʿittum min baʿdi mawti-kum fa-ḡuʿilat la-kum nārun tuḡraqūna fi-hā*  
But if you do not act [as he calls you to] he will have you slaughtered; then you will be raised from the dead and put in fire, in which you will be burned. (*Sīra* 1, 326)



Although not directly uttered by the Prophet, this is a prophecy stating the general divine plan. In this context, the statement is granted the status of an absolute truth and, consequently, conveys the utmost certainty regarding its future execution (cf. [7.34] above). Thus, compared with the other examples, we may say that *tuhraqūna* indeed functions as an assertion of future event.

Just as in substantival *'anna*-clauses and adjectival *lladī*-clauses, in asyndetic adjectival clauses, *fa'ala* with stative lexemes indicates persistence, whereas with dynamic lexemes it indicates anteriority relative to the time frame established in the main clause:

(7.44) *su'ila l-nabiyyu 'an 'ašyā'a kariha-hā*  
The Prophet was asked about things he detested. (*Šahīh*, 36)

(7.45) *'utiya hiraqlu bi-rağulin 'arsala bi-hī maliku ġassāna*  
Heraclius was brought a man, whom the king of Ġassān had sent.  
(*Šahīh*, 9)

The modified form *qad fa'ala*, due to the bounding force of *qad*, indicates anteriority with both stative and dynamic lexemes, relative to the time frame established in the main clause:

(7.46) *inṭaliq bi-nā 'ilā 'adnā mā'i l-qawmi [...] bi-hā qalībun qad 'arāftu 'udū-bata mā'i-hā*  
Let us reach the nearest point to the water of the people [...] in it there is a well, whose sweet water I have already come to know. (*Mağāzī*, 53)

(7.47) *fa-ğalasadā 'alā sarīrin qad wuđī'a la-humā*  
They both sat on a bedstead that had been put down for them. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 24)

We observe a special use of *fa'ala* and *qad fa'ala* in asyndetic adjectival clauses whose nominal antecedent functions as an internal object, derived from the same root as the main verb (either in the form of a verbal noun or a *nomen vicis*). In these cases, *fa'ala* and *qad fa'ala* do not refer to an anterior situation, but to the immediate consequence of the preceding event. The nominal antecedent does not refer to a particular entity but to an outstanding exemplar of a certain type or kind ('such a x that'):

- (7.48) *fa-ṣāḥa ṣayḥatan sami'a-hā raḥtu-hū*  
 He shouted [such] a shout that it reached his troop (lit. 'that his troop heard it'). (*Riwāyāt* 2, 24)
- (7.49) *wa-'inna burġūtan dāfa-hā dāta laylatin fī firāši dālika l-šarīfi fa-laḍa'a-hū laḍ'atan 'ayqazat-hu*  
 And a flea was her (i.e., the ant's) guest one night, in the bed of that distinguished man, and he stung him [such] a sting that it awakened him. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 93)
- (7.50) *fa-'inna-hū qad 'afraṭa fī 'amri l-tawri 'ifrāṭan qad haġġana ra'ya-hū*  
 For he had exaggerated in the matter of the ox [such] an exaggeration that made him (lit. 'his mind') scorned. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 81)

In my corpus, the participle occurred only in very few cases as the predicate of an asyndetic adjectival clause. With bounded lexemes, active participial forms were found to indicate posteriority relative to the time frame established in the main clause. Compared to *yaf'alu*, the participle seems to not be imbued with the modal nuances of possibility and obligation; rather, a straightforward reference to the immediate or expected future is expressed by the participle:<sup>11</sup>

- (7.51) *wa-qad ruwiya 'an rasūli llāhi [...] 'axbārun 'anā dākiron min-hā ba'ḍa mā ḥaḍara-nī*  
 There have been reports transmitted on the authority of the Messenger of God [...] of which I shall mention some that have reached me. (*Ta'rīḥ* 1, 61)

Asyndetic adjectival clauses also exhibit compound forms. As elsewhere, *kāna* indicates an anterior point of reference (relative to the main clause), while the predicative forms *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* are left to indicate the aspectual opposition between bounded/incidental and unbounded/habitual situations. The compound *kāna fa'ala* accentuates the meaning of anteriority whereas *kāna qad fa'ala* marks both the anteriority and completion of the verbal situation:

11 For the notions of 'immediate future' or 'expected future', referring to 'events which are expected to occur in the near future, or to those which have been prearranged'; see Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca, *Evolution*, 249 ff. It may be that with immediate future one is not concerned with the expression of predictions in the strict sense, but with 'assertions announcing the imminence of an event' (273), see also below 9.2.1.

- (7.52) *hādihi riwāyatu l-kalbiyyi fī qaṣā'ida kaṭīratin kāna yaqūlu-hā fī-hi*  
This is al-Kalbī's version as to many poems he used to compose with regard to him. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 187)
- (7.53) *fa-staḥraġa sayfan kāna la-hū wa-dir'a ḥadīdin kānā duḥinā fī nāḥiyati l-mazra'ati*  
And he drew out a sword he had and an iron armor that had been buried at the corner of the field. (*Maġāzī*, 208)
- (7.54) *fa-lammā statqala nawman 'amadat 'ilā sammin kānat qad hayya'at-hu*  
And when he fell into heavy sleep, she took up a poison that she had fixed. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 78)

In my corpus, asyndetic adjectival clauses featured the negation of *yaf'alu* with either *lā* or *mā*. As is the case in main clauses, *mā yaf'alu* was mostly used with stative and unbounded lexemes, thus indicating concurrence with the main clause (see also below 9.2.4):

- (7.55) *la-qad-i staqbalta-nī bi-ʾamrin mā 'arā-ka qulta-hū li-ʾaḥadi ra'iyati-ka munḍu walayta*  
Indeed, you have welcomed me with something I don't think you have said to anyone of your citizens (lit. 'herd') since you became the ruler. (*Ta'riḥ* 3, 1145)

As already illustrated above, the negative *lā yaf'alu*, like the affirmative *yaf'alu*, may convey various degrees of certainty. The interpretation of the form as expressing a lower or a higher degree of certainty is determined, *inter alia*, by the particular or generic context in which the clause is situated. Consider the following examples:

- (7.56) *ḥattā ḥabasa-hū fī maḥbasin lā yadḥulu 'alay-hi fī-hi 'aḥadun*  
To the point that he put him in prison in which no one would/could come to [visit] him. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 187)
- (7.57) *'inna min-a l-šaġari šaġaratan lā yasquṭu waraqu-hā*  
There is a kind of tree (lit. 'a tree among the trees') whose leaves never fall. (*Šaḥīḥ* 1, 25)

In the narrative from which [7.56] is extracted, the characterization of the prison as such that ‘no one would/could visit’ is invalidated later in the story when someone in fact visits the person in prison. By contrast, the generic statement in [7.57] conveys a fact which cannot be invalidated.

The same consequential meaning indicated by *fa’ala* and *qad fa’ala* following an internal object was also attested with the negated form *mā fa’ala*. The negated form *lam yaf’al*, also when following an internal object, was used to indicate past negation:

(7.58) *wa-qad fuġi’at nafs-ī bi-faġi’atin mā ’aṣabtu min-hā ’iwaḍan*  
My soul was afflicted by [such] a disaster, for which I could not find consolation. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 120)

(7.59) *wallāhi la-’in ’ištu la-ka la-’aqtulanna-ka qitlatan lam yuqtal-hā ’arabiyyun qaṭṭu*  
By God, If I outlive you[r plot], I will kill you in a way by which no other Arab has ever been killed yet. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 195)

### 7.3.3 *mā*-clauses

The pronominal operator *mā* represents non-persons. The thing or matter indicated by *mā* may have either particular or generic, specific or non-specific reference. The clause headed by *mā* rarely follows an explicit nominal antecedent. However, it is often the case that the clause is preceded or followed by a prepositional *min*-phrase, which serves to specify the lexical content represented by the grammatical nucleus *mā* (see [7.63] and [7.72] below).<sup>12</sup> Clauses headed by *mā* may occur independently or as genitive complements of prepositions or nouns in the construct state.<sup>13</sup>

The verbal paradigm in relative *mā*-clauses comprises simple, modified, and compound indicative forms. In the following, the semantic oppositions between these will be discussed.

With unbounded (including stative) lexemes, *yaf’alu* indicates concurrence, whether the temporal frame established in the main clause is past or non-past:

12 The degree or kind of specificity indicated by a *min l-bayān* phrase vis-à-vis the definite article and the *tanwīn* is a subject well worthy of study.

13 Though relative *mā*-clauses may be paraphrased by substantives, they are distinct from other substantival *mā*-clauses, in that they do not express content (*mā* = ‘that’) but refer to an entity (*mā* = ‘what’).

- (7.60) *kāna rasūlu llāhi ʿid ʿamara-hum ʿamara-hum bi-mā yuṭiqūna*  
Whenever the Messenger of God ordered them, he ordered them to do what they were able to bear. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 13)
- (7.61) *fa-qad yaḥḍuru ṭaʿāma-kum l-šayḥu lladī qad dahaba famu-hū wa-l-ṣabīyyu lladī lam yunbat famu-hū wa-ʿaṭʿimū-hum mā yaʿrifūna*  
For the old man whose teeth (lit. ‘mouth’) are already gone, and the boy whose teeth haven’t come out yet, may well attend your meal, so provide them with what they are accustomed to! (*Buḥalāʾ*, 105)

Also with bounded lexemes, *yafʿalu* may indicate concurrence. In such cases, the content expressed by *yafʿalu* is presupposed or backgrounded, as in the following example:

- (7.62) *fa-lam yaʿriḍ ʿalay-hi l-ṭaʿāma wa-naḥnu naʿkulu [...] fa-qultu subḥana llāhi law danawta wa-ʿaṣabta maʿa-nā mim-mā naʿkulu*  
He did not offer him anything to eat while we were eating [...] so I said: ‘God forbid! If you could draw near us and have some of what we are eating.’ (*Buḥalāʾ*, 38)

The speaker refers to a state of affairs that was previously mentioned, and that is presented as still abiding at the time of the utterance. The concurrent reading of *yafʿalu* is occasionally corroborated by adverbs referring to the present situation of speech:

- (7.63) *wa-ʿinnamā kānat ʿiṣat-ī ʿilā l-yawmi mim-mā ʿaṣīdu hāhunā min-a l-samaki*  
For my living until today was [based] on those fish I catch here. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 83)

It is interesting to compare [7.62] and [7.64], where the same lexical content, i.e. ‘to eat’, is expressed by *yafʿalu*:

- (7.64) *ʿinnī qad taraktu la-ka mā taʿkulu-hū ʿin ḥafaḏta-hū*  
I have left you what you could eat (i.e. live from) if you are careful of it. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 73)

In [7.64], as is usually the case with bounded lexemes, *yafʿalu* indicates posteriority. The meaning of futurity is nevertheless coupled with that of possibility: the certainty of the prediction expressed by *taʿkulu-hū* is not only limited by the

subjective epistemological position of the predictor, but also by the following conditional. A somewhat different position for making predictions is assumed by the first person, when committing himself to doing something. In this case, the prediction is inevitably tinted with the subjective intention of the executer (see also below 9.2.1):

- (7.65) *yā 'āla 'awsin qātilū 'alā l-'aḥsābi wa-ṣna'ū miṭla mā 'aṣna'ū*  
 O people of 'Aws, fight for honor (lit. 'for the noble descents') and do as  
 I will do! (*Mağāzī*, 224)

When generically interpreted, *yaf'alu* is not located in a time relative to the temporal frame established in the main clause. The generic *yaf'alu* indicates a concurrent meaning, inasmuch as it conveys a general truth that is valid for all times (see below 11.3). This temporal relation is observed with both bounded and unbounded lexemes, the difference is that the first have a (dynamic) frequentative reading while the latter have a static one:

- (7.66) *māta ka-mā yamūtu l-nāsu*  
 He died [the same way] as people die. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 21)
- (7.67) *lammā qadīma 'alā l-nu'māni ṣādafa-hū lā māla 'inda-hū wa-lā 'atāta*  
*wa-lā mā yaṣluḥu li-malikīn*  
 When he arrived to Nu'mān he found him with neither money nor  
 property or whatever is appropriate for a king. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 187)

To see the difference between particular and generic reference, it is interesting to compare [7.75] below and [7.66]. In the first case, the characterization of the particular *l-nāsu* as 'those who used to stand at the door' is limited in time, while in the latter case the characterization of the generic *l-nāsu* as 'those who die' is an a-temporal fact.

The simple form *fā'ala* indicates with stative lexemes a persisting situation, as shown in [7.68]. With dynamic lexemes, *fā'ala* indicates anteriority relative to the time frame established in the main clause, whether that be past or non-past, as shown in [7.69]:

- (7.68) *naḥ'alu yā 'abā l-qāsimi mā 'aḥbabta*  
 O 'Abū Qāsim, we will do what you want. (*Mağāzī*, 364)

- (7.69) *ʿa-lā taḥmusu mā ʿaṣabta min banī l-naḍīri ka-mā ḥamasta mā ʿaṣabta min badrīn*  
 Will you not take one fifth of what you have taken [as booty] from Banū Naḍīr, the same as you took one fifth of what you had taken [as booty] from Badr? (*Maǧāzī*, 377)

As elsewhere, also in *mā*-clauses the modified form *qad faʿala*, with both bounded and unbounded (stative or dynamic) lexemes, depicts a static situation resulting from a dynamic process:

- (7.70) *ʿaṣāba-nā min-a l-ʿamri mā qad ʿalimta*  
 The matter that you know (lit. ‘you have come to know’) of has befallen us. (*Maǧāzī*, 411)
- (7.71) *wa-ʿinnā naḥṣā ʿalay-ka wa-ʿalā qawmi-ka mā qad daḥala ʿalay-nā*  
 We fear for you and your people [that you will face] that which has befallen us. (*Sīra* 1, 252)

The example below illustrates a special case: the modified form *qad maḍā* does not refer to a point in time previous to the narrative time indicated by *qāla*; rather, it indicates anteriority relative to the time of reporting itself:

- (7.72) *fa-qāla bnu ʿiṣhāqa mā qad maḍā dikru-hū*  
 Ibn ʿIṣhāq said what has already been mentioned. (*Taʾrīḥ* 1, 192)

Just as *yafʿalu*, the active participle *fāʿilun* may indicate either concurrence with unbounded lexemes or posteriority with bounded ones. The differences are that: (a) *fāʿilun* indicates a static rather than a frequentative situation, and (b) the future indicated by *fāʿilun* is not fraught with modal nuances such as ability and obligation. Rather, this form indicates imminence or an expected future (see also [7.51] above):

- (7.73) *wa-ʿin zaḥirtum lam nanam ʿan-i l-ṭalabi [...] wa-yašǧal-kum min šaʿni-nā mā ʿantum-u l-ʿāna min-hu ḥālūna*  
 If you overcome [us], we will not rest [from] looking for revenge [...] and you will be troubled by our matter which you are now free of [concern]. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 40)

(7.74) *wa-qad ġadat qurayšun fa-ġalasū fi 'andiyati-him yantażirūna mā 'abū ġahlīn fā'ilun*

Qurayš had already had breakfast and sat in their assemblies to watch what 'Abū Ġahl was about to do. (*Sīra* 1, 190)

In *mā*-clauses the compound form *kāna yaq'alu* is primarily used to refer to an unbounded or recurring situation, extending over a period of time previous to the one indicated in the main clause:

(7.75) *fa-waqafa 'alā mā kāna yaqifu l-nāsu 'alay-hi fi l-qadīmi*

And he stood [at the door] in the same way people used to stand in old times. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 252)

We observe a less common use of the compounds *kāna yaq'alu* and *kāna fā'ilan* in *mā*-clauses, where *kāna* serves to indicate a hypothetical meaning. In these cases, the *mā*-clause functions as the topic of a complex clause, whose following comment is preceded by *fa-*. This structure, similar to topicalizations marked by *'ammā fa-*, is reminiscent of conditional constructions. The resemblance, however, is syntactic rather than semantic, since the meaning of implication clearly does not emerge in these structures:

(7.76) *fa-mā kuntum turīdūna 'an tašna'ū yawman min-a l-dahri fa-min-a l-'āni*

And that which you would have liked to do some day—now is the time [to do it]. (*Mağāzī*, 364)

Anteriority is doubly marked with the compound form *kāna fa'ala*. The compound *kāna fa'ala* is not only used in the narrative, relative to the past or the fictional time indicated by *fa'ala*, but also in the dialogue, relative to the present time of speech:

(7.77) *wa-salaba-hū mā kāna 'atā-hu min mulki l-samā'i l-dunyā wa-l-'arḍi*

He deprived him of the rule that he had (lit. 'had come to him') over the lower heaven and the earth. (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 101)

(7.78) *qad 'alimta ḥaqqā-ka 'alay-ya wa-widda mā bayn-ī wa-bayna-ka wa-mā kuntu ġa'altu la-ka min nafs-ī wa-dimmat-ī 'ayyāma 'arsala-nī 'ilay-ka l-'asadu*

You know my duty to you, and the affection between us, and my devotion (lit. 'soul') and responsibility for you in the days when the lion sent me to you. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 96)



The contrast between a dynamic aspect marked by *yaf'alu* and a static aspect marked by the participle is most evident in *kāna*-compounds, comparing, for instance, [7.75] above and [7.79] below:

- (7.79) *tabayyana la-hum mā kāna 'an-hum mustatiran*  
They became aware of what had been concealed from them. (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 94)

The static (or non-phasal) structure of the verbal situation is indicated by both the active and passive participles with the anterior *kāna*. In [7.80], the topical *mā*-clause refers to a situation (*kāna mulaṭṭaḥan*) which came about prior to the past event indicated in the comment (*dulika*):

- (7.80) *fa-mā kāna min-hā mulaṭṭaḥan dulika dālika dalkan šadīdan*  
And that part of it (i.e., of the thick bread) that had been smeared—this was rubbed well. (*Buḥalā'*, 85)

Topical *mā*-clauses exhibit the hypothetical use of *kāna* also with the participle (see [7.76] above). In [7.81], the imperative *fa-šna'-hu* in the comment clause establishes a future time frame, in which the situation indicated by *kunta šāni'an* could be realized:

- (7.81) *fa-mā kunta šāni'an 'idā ḥallū bi-ka fa-šna'-hu*  
Then do what you would do when they stay with you! (*Mağāzī*, 204)

Clauses headed by *mā* feature the negation of *yaf'alu* with *lā* (the negation with *mā* is apparently precluded in order to avoid homonymy). With both bounded and unbounded lexemes *lā yaf'alu* was found to indicate the meaning of impossibility:

- (7.82) *'inna hāḍā l-'a'mā l-mulḥida l-zindīqa qad hağā-ka fa-qāla bi-'ayyi šay'in fa-qāla bi-mā lā yanṭuqu bi-hī lisān-ī wa-lā yatawahhamu-hū fikr-ī*  
This blind, unbelieving infidel has lampooned you [in verse]! He said: 'By saying what?' He replied: 'By [saying] what my tongue cannot utter and my mind (lit. 'thought') cannot imagine.' (*Riwāyāt* 1, 261)

Past negation in *mā*-clauses is indicated by the negated form *lam yaf'al*. Here, again, one can assume that the use of the negative particle *mā* is precluded since it is homonymic with the pronominal operator *mā*:

(7.83) *li-ʿanna-humā qarawiyāni yaṣīfāni mā lam yarayā*

Because they both are countrymen, describing what they have not seen. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 176)

### 7.3.4 *man*-clauses

The pronominal operator *man* represents persons. The person referred to by *man* is either particular or generic, specific or non-specific. Clauses headed by *man* rarely follow an explicit nominal antecedent (for an exception see [7.87] below). The identity of the person represented by *man* is often specified by a prepositional *min al-bayān* phrase (see [7.85] and [7.97] below). Adjectival *man*-clauses occur independently or as genitive complements of prepositions or nouns in the construct state.

The verbal paradigm in adjectival *man*-clauses consists of simple, modified, and compound indicative forms. The verbal forms in *man*-clauses present some deviations from the temporal-aspectual distinctions observed in other embedded clauses. These, as well as the common uses, will be henceforth discussed.

With unbounded (including stative) lexemes, *yafʿalu* indicates concurrence with the time frame established in the main clause:

(7.84) *iḡtamaʿa nāsun fī l-masǧidi mimman yantaḥīlu l-iqtisāda fī l-naḡaḡati*

In the mosque, there gathered people who profess the economy of expenditure. (*Buḡalāʿ*, 53)

With bounded lexemes, *yafʿalu* is normally interpreted as having a posterior time reference. As noticed above, the future meaning of *yafʿalu* is fraught with modal nuances, ranging from ability, possibility, or obligation—that is, lower certainty—to absolute validity or certainty as to the execution of the verbal event. The degree of certainty is affected by the epistemological position or authority of the predictor/executer, allowing him to make more or less ‘objective’ predictions. The following examples illustrate the difference between prediction made by a particular person, whose knowledge and ability to foresee the future is limited, and prediction made by a predictor who holds an absolute knowledge as to future happenings:

(7.85) *fa-lammā ḡtamaʿū bi-bābi-hī ʿamara riḡālan min ḡundi-hī ʿan yadḡulū l-ḡāʿira llaḡī banā tumma yaqtulū kulla man yadḡulu ʿalay-him min-a l-yahūdi*

And after they gathered at his door, he ordered men from among his soldiers to go into the cistern that he had built, and then kill all the Jews who will/may enter upon them. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 11–12)

- (7.86) *wa-la-‘amr-ī la-‘in kāna muḥammadun kāḍiban ‘inna fī l-‘arabi la-man yakfī-nā-hu*

By my life, if Muḥammad is a liar there are among the Arabs those who will/can save us from him. (*Maḡāzī*, 42–43)

- (7.87) *fa-ḥalaqa fī ‘awwali sā‘atin min hādīhi l-ṭalāṭi l-sā‘ati l-‘aḡāla man yahyā wa-man yamūtu*

And in the first one of these three hours he created the [fixed] terms, who will live and who will die. (*Ta‘rīḥ* 1, 20)

The pronoun *man* often represents a generic entity. In such cases *yaf‘alu* does not refer to a point in time relative to the one established in the main clause, but to a situation which is temporally unbounded, and which therefore appears as concomitant with any other point in time:

- (7.88) *fa-daqqa ‘alay-hi l-bāba daqqa wātīqin wa-daqqa mudillin wa-daqqa man yahāfu ‘an yudrika-hū l-‘asasu*

He knocked on his door [with] the knock of a confident person, and the knock of a presumptuous person, and the knock of someone afraid that the night guard would catch him. (*Buḥalā’*, 66)

The use of the form *fa‘ala* in *man*-clauses deviates to some extent from its use in other types of embedded clauses. With stative lexemes, *fa‘ala* indicates a persisting situation. The same meaning is also indicated by the negated form *lam yaf‘al*:

- (7.89) *‘ayyu l-‘islāmi ḥayrun qāla tuṭ‘imu l-ṭa‘āma wa-taqra’u l-salāma ‘alā man ‘arafta wa-man lam ta‘rif*

Which [way of practicing] Islam is best? He said: ‘Serve food and greet with “Peace [be upon you]” those whom you know and those whom you don’t know.’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 11)

With dynamic lexemes, *fa‘ala* may refer not only to anterior situations but also to posterior situations:

- (7.90) *wa-‘ašāra ‘ilay-hi man ḥaḍḍara-hū wa-qālū uskut fa-sakata*

Those who brought him in signaled to him and said: ‘Shut up!’ So he became silent. (*Riwayāt* 1, 254)

- (7.91) *fa-lammā nazala fī l-nahri kāda yağraqu fa-ra'ā-hu qawmun min 'ahli l-qaryati fa-'arsalū 'ilay-hi man-i staḥrağa-hū*

And when he went down in the river he almost drowned. Then, some people from the village saw him and sent to him someone who pulled him out. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 63–64)

In [7.91], the event of ‘pulling out’ clearly follows the event of ‘sending’. Notice that the syntagmatic order of the clauses conforms with the chronological order of the events: the embedded *man*-clause follows the main verb and depicts the next event in the narrative chain.

In generically interpreted *man*-clauses, *fa'ala* is also used to indicate persistence. In this case, however, persistence does not coincide with a particular period of time, but is interpreted as an ever-enduring state:

- (7.92) *al-muslimu man salima l-muslimūna min lisāni-hī wa-yadi-hī*

The Muslim is one who the Muslims are safe from [the harm of] his tongue and hand. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 11)

Since *fa'ala* in generic *man*-clauses does not indicate a temporally bounded event, one may encounter such cases where it interchanges with *yaf'alu*, the typical form in generic clauses:

- (7.93) *talātun man kunna fī-hi wağada ḥalāwata l-'imāni [...] wa-man yakrahu 'an ya'ūda fī l-kufri ba'da 'id' 'anqaḍa-hū llāhu ka-mā yakrahu 'an yulqā fī l-nāri* : (in the title) *bābu man kariha 'an ya'ūda fī l-kufri*

There are three [traits] that whoever has them in him finds the sweetness of belief [...] and [the third of which is] one who hates to revert to infidelity after God has saved him, the same way as he hates to be thrown into the fire [of hell].: The chapter on he who hates to revert to infidelity (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 13)

Adjectival *man*-clauses often follow the elative *'awwal* ‘(the) first’ as genitive complements.<sup>14</sup> In these cases, too, *fa'ala* is not used to indicate anteriority (unless the genitive construction is preceded by *kāna*):

- (7.94) *fa-'anā 'awwalu man 'ağāba 'ilā dālika wa-banū 'abdi manāfin ma'ī*

Then I am the first to agree to it and Banū 'Abd Manāf are with me. (*Mağāzī* 1, 200)

14 Cf. Reckendorf, *Syntaktischen Verhältnisse*, 2, 605.

Another special use of *fa'ala* in *man*-clauses is observed in 'tautological' constructions such as illustrated in the next example:

- (7.95) *'anta 'arsalta 'ilā qurayšin 'an tarǧī'a fa-raǧā'a man raǧā'a wa-maḍā man maḍā*  
*You have instructed (lit. 'sent to') Qurayš to come back, so some came back (lit. 'he who came back came back') and some went on (lit. 'he who went on went on'). (Maǧāzī 1, 45)*

It appears that *man* is used in these cases to mark the underspecification of a class of referents, relative to other markers of nominal determination: *man raǧā'a* is both indefinite (as opposed to *al-rāǧī'u*), and not quantified (as opposed to *rāǧī'un/rāǧī'ūna*).<sup>15</sup>

I could not find a single example in my corpus in which *qad fa'ala* was employed in a *man*-clause.<sup>16</sup>

In my corpus, there were very few examples in which the participle was attested in *man*-clauses. In the following example, the participle, with a bounded lexeme, is employed to indicate an immediate future (see [7.51] and [7.74] above):

- (7.96) *maqrūnan dīkru kulli man 'anā dākīru-hū min-hum fī kitāb-i hādā bi-dīkri na'mā'i-hī wa-ǧumali mā kāna min ḥawādiṭi l-'umūri fī 'ašri-hī*  
*To the account on everyone whom I mention in this book of mine, an account on his graces and a summary of the events which took place at his time is added. (Ta'rīḥ 1, 5)*

The compound forms are employed in *man*-clauses as elsewhere: *kāna yaf'alu* indicates an unbounded, recurring or ongoing, situation, which extends over a period of time previous to the one indicated in the main clause. With dynamic lexemes, *kāna fa'ala* depicts an event that has occurred prior to the time frame established in the main clause, and with stative lexemes, a situation that still persists at that time:

15 Cf. Fischer, *Classical Arabic Grammar*, 218, who describes the 'uncertainty' expressed by *man* in these cases.

16 Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 432, adduces one example of *qad fa'ala* within a *man*-clause: *'inna 'awsan man qad 'arafta* 'Aws ist einer, den du kennst'.

(7.97) *fa-bnu 'ubayyin lā yanšuru ḥulafā'a-hū wa-man kāna yamna'u-hū min-a l-nāsi kulli-him*

Ibn 'Ubayy would not help his allies and those who used to protect him from all the people. (*Mağāzī* 1, 369)

(7.98) *wa-ma'a rasūli llāhi 'ammu-hū ḥamzatu bnu 'abdi l-muṭṭalibi wa-'abū bakri bni 'abī quḥāfata l-ṣiddīqu wa-'alīyyu bnu 'abī ṭālibin fī riğāli min-a l-muslimīna mimman kāna 'aqāma ma'a rasūli llāhi bi-makkata*

And with the Messenger of God were his uncle Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, 'Abū Bakr b. 'Abī Quḥāfa the righteous, and 'Alī b. 'Abī Ṭālib, from among the Muslims who stayed with the Messenger of God in Mecca. (*Sīra* 1, 225)

The same as the affirmative *yaf'alu* (see [7.88] above), the negated *lā yaf'alu* also indicates a temporally unbounded situation in generically interpreted *man*-clauses:

(7.99) *wa-lā ra'ya li-man lā yuṭā'u*

There is no [significance to the] opinion of one who is not obeyed. (*Mağāzī*, 52)

#### 7.4 Adverbial *ḥīna*-clauses

The operator *ḥīna* 'at the time when' heads a temporal clause. Like other time-denoting nouns with adverbial function, *ḥīna* is in the construct state. The clause that follows it functions as its genitive complement.

Adverbial *ḥīna*-clauses follow the main clause as a rule.<sup>17</sup> The temporal relation expressed by *ḥīna* is that of coincidence or immediate adjacency between two events: the event in the main clause and the event in the embedded *ḥīna*-clause are presented as realized within a common time frame, whether in reality they precede, follow, or overlap each other.<sup>18</sup> The verbal forms occurring

17 I encountered one exception to this rule in my corpus: *fa-ḥīna ḍaraba faḥḍa-hū ḍarabtu ra'sa-hū bi-sayfin* (*Riwāyāt* 2, 23)—'And right after he hit his thigh, I hit his head with a sword.'

18 Declerck, *When-clauses*, defines the semantics of *when* as that by which a 'common frame' or 'coreferentiality' between two intervals of time is established. *When*, accordingly, does not express strict overlapping, but rather, 'all that is required is that the two [situations] should be conceived as falling within the same interval' (245).

in *hīna*-clauses are *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*, nearly always in the affirmative.<sup>19</sup> While *hīna fa'ala* indicates recentness with respect to the event in the main clause, *hīna yaf'alu* indicates simultaneity, with both bounded and unbounded lexemes:

(7.100) *fā-nṭalaqa hīna 'atā-hu kitābu-hū*

And he left as soon as his letter had reached him. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 193)

(7.101) *law nazarta 'ilay-hi hīna yadhulu 'alay-ka*

If you look at him, when he enters upon you ... (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 95)

(7.102) *'in ra'ayta l-'asada hīna yanḏuru 'ilay-ka*

If you see the lion, when he looks at you ... (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 109)

The distinction between *hīna* and other time-denoting operators, such as *lammā* 'after' and *baynā/baynamā* 'while', is described in the grammatical literature mostly in semantic terms. According to Reckendorf, *lammā* and *hīna* are different in that the first indicates the *Zeitpunkt* in which the event occurs, thereby marking a clear boundary between two succeeding events, whereas the latter indicates a short or long *Zeitraum* in which the event occurs.<sup>20</sup> Beeston defines the functional contrast between *lammā* and *hīna* as that between the marking of 'past time' (with stative aspect) and the marking of 'actual simultaneity'.<sup>21</sup> Though not incorrect, these descriptions overlook two important syntactic facts: (a) *lammā* co-occurs only with *fa'ala*, while *hīna* co-occurs with both *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*; and (b) *lammā*-clauses come first in the chain while *hīna*-clauses nearly always follow their matrix clause. In fact, from a syntactic point of view, *lammā*-clauses are better compared with *baynā/baynamā*-clauses, since both types of clauses partake in structures of mutual dependency as setting or background units (see below 8.4 and 10.4). Clauses headed by *hīna*, on the other hand, are embedded in the main clause and function as local adverbial expansions. Also from a semantic point of view, the definition of the

19 Reckendorf, *Syntaktischen Verhältnisse*, 2, 662, adduces one example in which *hīna* is followed by a negated form: *numsiku l-ḥayla [...]* *hīna lā yumsiku-hā 'illā l-ṣuburu* 'We hold the horses [...] as only the patient hold them'. In this case, it is not negation but restriction that is marked by the *lā 'illā* structure.

20 Reckendorf, *Syntaktischen Verhältnisse*, 2, 662.

21 Beeston, *Arabic Language*, 99. Beeston ascribes to *lammā* the same 'conversive force' he ascribes to the modifier *qad*, transforming the dynamic aspect of the 'suffix-set' verb into a static one.

contrast can be refined: while *lammā* marks the transition from one interval to another ('after'), and *baynā/baynamā* the inclusion of one interval in another ('while'), *hīna* indicates a temporal adjacency which may extend from a single point of contact (with *fā'ala*) to total overlapping (with *yaf'alu*). These observations are summarized in the table below:

TABLE 7.2 *The contrast between hīna, lammā, and baynā/baynamā*

	<i>hīna</i>	<i>lammā</i>	<i>baynā/baynamā</i>
Verbal form	<i>fā'ala, yaf'alu</i>	<i>fā'ala</i>	<i>yaf'alu</i>
Position	subsequent	initial	initial
Dependency status	embedded	mutually dependent	mutually dependent
Semantic relation	immediate adjacency (‘upon’, ‘when’)	succession (‘after’)	inclusion (‘while’)

## 7.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the semantic oppositions marked by the verbal forms in a selection of embedded clauses. I have tried to demonstrate how the interaction between the lexical content and the grammatical form defines the internal structure of the verbal situation and determines its relative time reference. Some aspectual and temporal properties of the verbal forms were observed in all types of embedded clauses. Other contextual features which were found to be pertinent across the board are: repetition and presupposition, deixis, specifically the distinction between particular and generic reference, and the epistemic position of the speaker/agent, which allows him to make more or less valid or confident predictions.

Special uses of the verbal forms were encountered in specific types of clauses. Thus, a consequential meaning of *fā'ala* and *qad fā'ala* was observed in asyndetic adjectival clauses whose antecedent is an internal object. In *man*-clauses, *fā'ala* displayed what may be described as loose temporality, allowing for both anterior and non-anterior readings of the form. Moreover, some operators were found to have greater bearing on the interpretation of the verbal forms than others. Adverbial *hīna*-clauses, for instance, express the meaning of ‘sloppy simultaneity’ with both *fā'ala* and *yaf'alu*,<sup>22</sup> regardless of the nature

22 For the concept of ‘sloppy simultaneity’ see Declerck, *When-clauses*, 231, 244–248.



of the verbal lexeme. The exclusion of *qad fa'ala* from this type of clauses may also be attributed to the semantics of the operator *ḥīna*. In contrast, the operators of substantival and adjectival clauses do not have such an effect on the temporal interpretation of the verbal forms. Rather, one may even discern in certain adjectival clauses the lack of temporal specificity or the preference of modal meanings over a strict temporal one.

## The Predicative Paradigm

In this chapter, a variety of embedded, dependent, and mutually dependent clauses is discussed. In the grammatical literature, these clauses are treated separately, as distinct types of verbal complexes or subordinate structures. Nevertheless, these clauses have a common trait which justifies their analysis under a single heading: they all present the same set of verbal forms which function as second predicates in complex predications. I shall therefore apply the term the predicative paradigm to this set of forms. The following discussion will focus on the paradigmatic regularity, which can be shown to cross-cut diverse syntactic levels, and the functional oppositions marked by the predicative forms in each clause type.

### 8.1 Preliminaries

The term predicative has a long history in general linguistics. It is traditionally associated with a nominal—usually adjectival—form, which completes the content of the primary verbal (mostly copular) predicate. The predicative is sometimes distinguished from other related categories, such as the ‘converb’ and the ‘co-predicative’, both referring to an adverbial constituent (whether verb-derived or not) which ‘expands’ or ‘restricts’ the content expressed by the primary verb.<sup>1</sup> However, the borderline between these categories is not clearly demarcated in every language. Moreover, there is no general consent as to their scope of application.<sup>2</sup> I prefer, therefore, the term predicative for being general enough, i.e., for not being necessarily connected with a specific word-class (e.g., verb or noun), or a grammatical realization thereof (e.g., non-finite or accusative). I use the term predicative to refer to the syntactic position assumed by a predicate whose function is to complete the content expressed by another predicate, so as to form a complex predication.

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1 For a detailed discussion of these categories and some relevant literature, see Prempfer, “*Zustandssätze*”, 304–321.

2 The term ‘converb’ would have been quite proper for the description of the predicative forms in Arabic, if not typically associated with non-finite verbs, see Haspelmath’s definition of a converb as ‘a nonfinite verb form whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination’ (*Converb*, 3).

Complex predications consist of (at least) two predicates, often referred to as ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’. The primary predicate is the grammatical nucleus of the complex predication, whereas the secondary predicate is usually the semantically salient constituent. Rather than an hierarchy of predicates, it seems thus more correct to speak of integration or combination of predicates or clauses. Integration—as opposed to the traditional dichotomy of coordination and subordination—is regarded as a scalar phenomenon, accommodating various degrees and forms of predicate or clause-combining.<sup>3</sup> The extent to which both predicates are integrated follows from the amount of grammatical and lexical material shared by them. Whether the construction presents a high degree of ‘elaboration’ or a high degree of ‘compression’, to use Lehmann’s terms,<sup>4</sup> integration entails that: (a) both predicates or clauses are not self-contained syntactic units, and (b) they depict one common occasion.

In Classical Arabic the predicative paradigm consists of three forms: *yafʿalu*, the participle, and *qad faʿala*. In this well-defined syntactic slot, one may speak of a basic aspectual meaning of the forms, *yafʿalu* marking a dynamic-progressive situation, the participle marking a static state, and *qad faʿala* marking a state resulting from a previous process. As for their temporal value, the predicative forms are essentially co-temporal, indicating either simultaneity (total overlap) or coincidence (partial overlap) with the time frame established in the main clause:

TABLE 8.1 *The predicative paradigm*

Predicative form	Aspect	Temporal value
<i>yafʿalu</i>	dynamic-progressive	simultaneous, coincidental (terminal)
<i>fāʿilVn/mafʿūlVn</i>	static	simultaneous
<i>qad faʿala</i>	resultative	coincidental (initial)

The triad of *yafʿalu*, the participle, and *qad faʿala* constitutes the core of the predicative paradigm. The form *faʿala* seldom functions as a predicative. This may be explained by the fact that *faʿala* is used to indicate self-contained events

3 See Van Valin, *Syntactic Relations*; Haiman and Thompson, “Subordination”; Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 216 ff.; Lehmann, *Clause Linkage*; Matthiessen and Thompson, *Discourse and Subordination*; Raible, *Junktion*. In Arabic linguistics, see Isaksson, *Circumstantial Qualifiers*; most notably Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*.

4 Lehmann, *Clause Linkage*, especially 216.

(hence its use as the narrative form), not coinciding with other events. The same goes for *sa-yaf'alu*, which rarely participates in complex predications (see below 8.2.4). Quite often, when *fa'ala* and *sa-yaf'alu* are used, the predication involves a certain abstraction at the semantic level, thus calling for some extension of the notion of common occasion.

A wide definition of complex predications, as such realizing a certain degree of syntactic and semantic integration between (at least) two predicates, covers a large and quite heterogenic group of structures. These extend from simple morphological constituents—closely-integrated with their matrix clause—to textual units, where integration is rather loose.<sup>5</sup> In the following sections, I start by discussing closely integrated complexes in which the predicative form is embedded. Then, one type of dependent clauses, the syndetic circumstantial clause, is discussed, and finally, mutually dependent, setting and presentative clauses are presented. The common denominator of all these constructions is the presence of the predicative paradigm.

## 8.2 Verbal Complexes

The term verbal complex covers various manifestations of [main verb + embedded verb]. These range from closely integrated structures, involving auxiliaries and modifying verbs, to lexically and grammatically looser ones, where the main verb retains its full semantics.<sup>6</sup> The main verb is the grammatical nucleus of the complex in that it marks the syntactic status of the entire complex; the embedded verb is usually the lexical pivot of the complex. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that both verbs convey some amount of grammatical and lexical information: the main verb is never entirely depleted (even the auxiliary *kāna* may be said to convey the notion of 'being'), while the predicative form marks such categories as number, gender, diathesis, and aspect.

In both medieval and modern grammars of Classical Arabic, the structures which are here subsumed under the title of verbal complexes are treated as separate categories. Despite their formal identity, a distinction is drawn between structures initiated by the auxiliary *kāna* and the mental di-transitive verbs (*'af'al l-qulūb*), in which the predicative is deemed as kernel, and structures

5 Most structures exhibit the iconic relation pointed out by Givón, *Syntax*, 2, 328, between semantic and syntactic integration: The greater is the semantic connectivity between two events the stronger will be the syntactic dependency between the clauses indicating them.

6 The same verb can have a double realization, either as a lexically 'full' verb (*tāmm*) or as a lexically 'deficient' verb (*nāqiṣ*), which is thus followed by a predicative form.

initiated by intransitive and mono-transitive verbs, in which the predicative is considered peripheral. The Arab grammarians designate the first type of predicative *ḥabar* ‘rheme’ (paired-off with *ism* ‘theme’), whereas the latter is termed *ḥāl* ‘circumstantial’ (defined in contrast to a proper *mafʿūl* ‘object complement’).<sup>7</sup> This distinction follows from a categorical semantic approach, classifying verbs into distinct ‘families’, and a strict formal view of the clause, dividing it into an essential part (*ʿumda*) and a redundant part (*faḍla*). However, the distinction between *ḥāl* and *ḥabar* is not always kept, and the fact that the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably is in itself quite telling: it discloses the special identity of this syntactic constituent, which at the same time is both predicative (in its essence) and adverbial (in its position).<sup>8</sup> From a diachronic point of view as well, adverbial-circumstantial and predicative clauses may be regarded as akin to each other: the latter, more inherently integrated with their matrix clause, reflect a further grammaticalization of the former.<sup>9</sup>

Verbal complexes present the same syntactic structure, whatever the lexical class of the main verb is: the predicative—a verb(-derived) form in adverbial position—is juxtaposed to the main verb;<sup>10</sup> both verbs exhibit subject-identity (in that we include inalienable entities, see below [8.46]). The adverbial status of the predicative obtains a formal mark when the predicative is realized as a nominal (verb-derived) form, i.e., as the accusative participle. The finite forms *yafʿalu* and *qad faʿala* occupy the same syntactic position as the participle and thus acquire—by virtue of their paradigmatic interrelation—an adverbial status.

The following discussion of verbal complexes is divided into five sections according to the class of the main verb. I will proceed from *kāna*-compounds, located on one end of the integration scale, toward less integrated complexes,

7 See Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, 2, 13–14, 15–17.

8 Levin, *Kāna*, 192–196, discusses the correspondence between the categories termed *ḥabar*, *ḥāl*, and *mafʿūl tāni* in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*. It is worth quoting in this regard Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, 2, 7, who explicitly states that *al-ḥālu ziyādatun fi l-fāʿidati wa-l-ḥabari* ‘The circumstantial expression is an addition to the informativity [of the clause] and to its predicate’. He explains that in a clause like *marartu bi-l-farazdaqī qāʾiman* ‘I passed by al-Farazdaq [while] standing’ the predication (*ʾiḥbār*) of ‘passing by’ is added another predicate (*ḥabar āḥar*); the only difference is that the first is obligatory (*alā sabīli l-luzūmi*), whereas the latter is additional and can thus be renounced (*ziyādatan yağūzu l-istiğnāʾu ʿan-hā*).

9 Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 295.

10 On the internal structure of compound verb forms and the adverbial status of the predicative complement see Goldenberg, *Compound Verbs*.

initiated by modifying verbs, motion and state verbs, perception and permission verbs, and speech verbs. Complexes initiated by full action verbs (which present the same syntactic structure) are not dealt with. Nearly all the examples illustrate verbal complexes in main clauses (see but [8.16] and [8.18]). For *kāna*-compounds in dependent clauses, see chapter 7 above.

### 8.2.1 *kāna*-compounds

Compound *kāna* forms present the highest degree of integration within a verbal complex. The auxiliary verb *kāna* expresses either a temporal or a modal meaning (see above 5.2.3). In this section, however, I will only discuss compounds initiated by the anterior *kāna*. The predicative form indicates the content of the verbal situation as well as its internal unfolding. The opposition between the predicative forms operates therefore at the lexical as well as the grammatical levels.

The compound form *kāna yaf'alu* was thoroughly studied by Nebes, who applied a semantological method of categorization to his Classical Arabic material.<sup>11</sup> The form *kāna yaf'alu*, according to Nebes, is an imperfect whose marked time reference is past. This meaning of *kāna yaf'alu* stands in opposition to the marked perfectivity of *fa'ala*, on the one hand, and the unmarked time reference of *yaf'alu*, on the other.<sup>12</sup>

The present discussion is not concerned with the general function of *kāna yaf'alu*. Rather, the opposition between *yaf'alu* and the other verbal forms which co-occur with *kāna* is in focus. As mentioned, this opposition resides in two domains: (a) the lexical domain, to which the issues of lexical compatibility and the valence of the verb-phrase belong, and (b) the grammatical domain, in which the aspect marked by the verbal form comes into play.

The verbal form *yaf'alu* is the least lexeme-sensitive of all verbal forms: it may convey all types of verbal situations, both static and dynamic, telic and atelic, and be realized in both intransitive (active and passive) and transitive verb-phrases. Intransitive and transitive are used here in a strict syntactic sense, to refer to the grammatical relation between a verbal situation and its accusative complement(s).<sup>13</sup> As for its grammatical aspect, *yaf'alu* depicts an unbounded situation: either one that continues throughout the period of time indicated by *kāna*, or one that constantly repeats itself. The repetition is frequentative in nature, i.e., it is not a mere iteration of the verbal situation, but

11 Nebes, *Kāna Yaf'alu*, especially chapter 2, in which his analytical method is presented.

12 Ibid., especially chapter 7.

13 As a semantic concept, transitivity is obviously multi-faceted and scalar, cf. Hopper and Thompson, *Transitivity*.

a regular and predictable recurring which is valid through the entire period of time indicated by *kāna*.<sup>14</sup> In the following, the various manifestations of *kāna yaf'alu* will be illustrated and explained.

With both stative and dynamic lexemes, *kāna yaf'alu* occurs in transitive verb-phrases. Transitivity may code a different semantic relation in each case:

- (8.1) *wa-kāna rasūlu llāhi yuḥibbu l-fa'la wa-yakrahu l-ṭirata*  
The Messenger of God used to love the good omen and hate the evil omen. (*Mağāzī*, 218)
- (8.2) *'ayyu-hā l-maliku kunna qawman 'ahla ḡāhiliyyatin na'budu l-'ašnāma wa-na'kulu l-maytata wa-na'tī l-fawāḥiṣa wa-naqṭa'u l-'arḥāma wa-nusī'u l-ḡiwāra*  
O king! We were people of the *Ḡāhiliyya*, worshiping the idols, eating the carrion, committing abominations, violating the rules of consanguinity, and harming those who sought our protection. (*Sīra* 1, 219)
- (8.3) *wa-kāna mra'an tanaṣṣara fī l-ḡāhiliyyati wa-kāna yaktubu l-kitāba l-'ibrāniyya fa-yaktubu min-a l-'inḡili bi-l-'ibrāniyyati mā šā'a llāhu 'an yaktuba*  
And he was a man [who] became Christian in the *Ḡāhiliyya*. He used to write in the Hebrew script and would write in Hebrew whatever God wished him to write from the Gospel. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5)

Also in intransitive verb-phrases *kāna yaf'alu* is used. Example [8.4] below exhibits the passive form of *'arafa* 'to know':

- (8.4) *fa-'aḥraḡa qawsa-hū wa-ḡu'bata-hū wa-sayfa-hū wa-kāna yu'rafu bi-l-šajā'ati*  
And he took out his bow and his quiver and sword; and he was known for [his] bravery. (*Mağāzī*, 223)

Within *kāna*-compounds, certain lexemes are not encountered with the participle but only with *yaf'alu*. These pertain to various classes of verbs, including mental states,<sup>15</sup> perception, or action:

14 For a discussion of the semantic nature of frequentative repetition, see below 11.3.

15 The verb *yurīdu* is another prominent case where *yaf'alu* is preferred to the participle, see also Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 293.

- (8.5) *wa-kuntu 'arġū 'an 'arudda-hū 'alā qurayšin fa-'āḥuḍa l-mi'ata nāqatin*  
And I was hoping to bring him back to Qurayš and to get [as a reward]  
the one hundred she-camels. (*Sīra* 1, 331)
- (8.6) *fa-kuntu 'arā min-a l-nāsi wa-l-ḥayli mā lā 'aṣifu min-a l-kaṭrati*  
And I saw people and horses which I cannot describe due to their great  
numbers. (*Mağāzī*, 408)
- (8.7) *wa-kāna 'abū 'aḥmada raġulan ḍarīra l-baṣari wa-kāna yaṭūfu makkata*  
*'alā-hā wa-'aṣfala-hā bi-ġayri qā'idin*  
'Abū 'Aḥmad was a blind man and he used to walk around Mecca,  
[from] its highest [to] its lowest parts, without anyone to lead [him the  
way]. (*Sīra* 1, 316)

The compound *kāna yaf'alu* often co-occurs with adverbs and adverbial clauses which specify the frequentative nature of the verbal situation:

- (8.8) *wa-kāna 'idā rakiba yab'atu 'ilay-himā bi-ba'irayni yarkabāni ma'a-hū*  
And whenever he rode, he used to send to both of them camels so that  
they would ride with him. (*Riwayāt* 1, 58)
- (8.9) *wa-kāna 'abū bakrin kaṭīran mā yasta'dīnu rasūla llāhi fī l-ḥiğrati*  
'Abū Bakr kept asking the Messenger of God for permission to [set out]  
on the *Hiğra*. (*Sīra* 1, 323)

In some cases, *kāna yaf'alu* co-occurs with the modifiers *qad* and *la-qad*, which precede the compound form as a rule. The modifier *qad* expresses both anteriority (already indicated by *kāna*) and completion:

- (8.10) *man hādā fa-qālū hādā fulānu bnu fulānin fa-qāla l-'asadu qad kuntu*  
*'a'rifu 'abā-hu*  
Who is this? They said: 'This is so-and-so, son of so-and-so.' So the lion  
said: 'I had known his father.' (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 70)

In [8.10] the 'knowing' of the father, who is already deceased by the time the clause is uttered, is marked as 'cut-off' by *qad*. The modifier *la-qad*, unlike the plain *qad*, embodies an explicit mark of asseveration. Thus, in [8.11] the speaker asserts the unusual sight he has seen by means of *la-qad*:



- (8.11) *la-qad kunnā narā riġālan biḍan ‘alā ḥaylin bulqin mā kunnā narā-hum qablu wa-lā ba‘du*  
Indeed, we saw white men on piebald horses. We never saw them before or after. (*Maġāzī*, 409)

Following *kāna*, the predicative *yaf‘alu* is always negated with *lā*:

- (8.12) *fa-ḥaraġnā nas‘alu ‘an rasūli llāhi wa-kunnā lā na‘rifu-hū lam nara-hū qabla dālīka*  
We went out to ask the Messenger of God, and we did not know him, nor had we seen him before that. (*Sīra* 1, 294)

The compound form *kāna fā‘ilan/maf‘ūlan* shows a clear contrast to *kāna yaf‘alu*, at both the lexical and the grammatical levels. The predicative participle is found almost exclusively in intransitive configurations. It serves to indicate a static situation which is viewed in its entirety, i.e., which does not break down into internal phases or recurrent instances.

The predicative participle is used with stative lexemes:

- (8.13) *wa-kullu-hum kāna lī muḥibban wa-‘ilay-ya mā‘ilan wa-lī muṭī’an*  
And everyone loved me and was favorably inclined to me and was obedient to me. (*Riwayāt* 1, 35)

Notice that *muḥibban* is connected with its object by means of the preposition *l-*,<sup>16</sup> whereas *yuḥibbu* in [8.1] has a direct object. Derived from verbs of mental state and disposition, the adjectival patterns *fa‘il*, *fa‘il*, and *fa‘lān* often serve as predicative forms side by side with the participle:

- (8.14) *wa-naša‘a l-naġāšīyyu ma‘a ‘ammi-hī wa-kāna labīban ḥāzīman min-a l-riġālī*  
The Negus grew up with his uncle, and he was wise and resolute from among the men. (*Sīra* 1, 222)

16 The Arab grammarians consider this *l-* as *al-lām li-taqwīyat al-‘amil* ‘the *lām* which strengthens the regent’, cf. Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 61 ff. Being a nominal form, the participle has less ‘power’ to govern an object complement; the *lām* thus serves as an explicit exponent of this grammatical relation.

The participle is very common with verbs of state and motion. With motion verbs, the participle indicates the situation of being in a move, rather than actual kinesis or progression:

- (8.15) *wa-kāna 'adiyyu bnu zaydin wāqifan bayna yaday-hi*  
 'Adī b. Zayd was standing in front of him. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 184)
- (8.16) *ḥattā 'idā kunnā bi-l-muṣallā rāḡī'ina min badrin baraka 'alay-nā*  
 Until [the time] when we were near al-Muṣallā, coming back from Badr, it (i.e. the camel) fell on its knees (lit. 'kneeled down to us').  
 (*Maḡāzī*, 25)

Besides indicating the mental state of a subject, the participle is also found with stative lexemes depicting a physical state:

- (8.17) *wa-kāna dāri'an wa-'alay-hi miḡfarun lā raḡafa la-hū fa-kānat ḥanḡa-ratu-hū bādiyatan*  
 And he was wearing armor and a helmet with no visor, so his neck was exposed (lit. 'visible'). (*Maḡāzī*, 227)

The participle rarely occurs with transitive lexemes. When it does, it is often realized in the passive form, so that the verb-phrase is intransitive:

- (8.18) *'id kāna l-iḡtilāfu fī dālīka mawḡūdan bayna dawī l-naẓari fī-hi*  
 As the controversy about that [matter] exists between those holding a view about that. (*Ta'rīḡ* 1, 86)

The participle may also be realized in the active form. However, in these cases transitivity is not exercised, since the verb occurs without an explicit object complement:

- (8.19) *wa-qāla li-'uḡti-hī 'a'tī-nī hādihi l-ṣaḡīfata [...]'anzuru mā hādā lladī ḡā'a bi-hī muḡammadun wa-kāna 'umaru kātiban*  
 And he said to his sister: 'Give me this leaf [of book ...] so that I may take a look at that which Muḡammad has brought,' for 'Umar was literate (lit. 'writer'). (*Sīra* 1, 226)

Comparing the participle in [8.19] and *yaf'alu* in [8.3], we observe two points of contrast: (a) the participle *kātiban* has no object complement, and (b) rather than indicating recurring instances of writing like *yaktubu*, it expresses a state

so stable that has reached the status of a skill. This stands to reason, as the participle is an adjectival form which inherently indicates an attributive relation. Whether the attribute is accidental (temporary) or inherent is not specified by the participial form, but only by the context.<sup>17</sup>

The compound *kāna fā'īlan/maf'ūlan* is occasionally preceded by the modifiers *qad* and *la-qad*. As elsewhere, *qad* imparts both the meanings of anteriority and completion, thus it sets limits to the static situation indicated by *kāna fā'īlan/maf'ūlan*; *la-qad* stresses the veracity of the verbal situation:

(8.20) *qad kuntu 'anā ḡāhīlan miṭla-ka ḥattā waffaqa-nī llāhu 'ilā mā huwa 'aršadu*

I used to be ignorant like you until God made me successful in achieving the right way. (*Buḥalā'*, 40)

(8.21) *la-qad kāna 'ilay-nā muḥsinan wa-la-nā mukarriman*

Indeed, he was good to us and honoring us. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 103)

Within *kāna*-compounds, the predicative participle is negated as a rule by *ḡayr*:<sup>18</sup>

(8.22) *wa-kānat-i l-'am'ā'u muttaṣīlatan ḡayra mutabāyanatin*

The intestines were intertwined [and] not separated from each other. (*Buḥalā'*, 99)

The compound form *kāna qad fa'ala* or *qad kāna fa'ala* can be analyzed in two ways: as the modified form *qad fa'ala* expanded by *kāna*, or as the compound form *kāna fa'ala* modified by *qad*. Examples of both orders are found in the corpus, although *kāna qad fa'ala* is by far more common:

(8.23) *wa-kānū qad 'u'tū baṣṭatan fī l-ḥalqi*

They were given a large stature. (*Ta'rīḥ* 1, 167)

17 Cf. Reckendorf, *Zum Gebrauch des Partizips*, 256. There are languages in which the distinction between an accidental and an inherent attribute is marked on the (inflected) adjectival form, see Goldenberg, *Predicative Adjectives*.

18 I have encountered one case in which the predicative participle was negated by *lā* in a conditional clause: *fa-'in kunta lā 'ākīlan ṣay'an sakattu 'anā wasakatta 'anta* (*Buḥalā'*, 47)—'And if you were not eating anything, I would have been silent and you would have been silent.' This example is unusual in two points: the participle is negated by *lā* and realized in a transitive verb-phrase.

- (8.24) *wa-qad kāna 'u'ṭiya fatā'a l-sinni*  
 He was given youth (lit. 'the youth of age'). (*Riwāyāt* 1, 19)

The compound *kāna qad fa'ala* embodies the meanings of anteriority and completion. Anteriority is doubly marked by both the modifier and the auxiliary. Similarly to *kāna fa'ala* (to be discussed below), *kāna qad fa'ala* is mostly used as a background form in the narrative. However, *kāna qad fa'ala* is more frequent and has a wider distribution than *kāna fa'ala*. It is found with nearly all classes of verbal lexemes; the only class of verbs which does not occur with *kāna qad fa'ala* is that of state verbs such as *'aqāma* 'to dwell'. This may be explained by the fact that *kāna qad fa'ala*—due to the effect of *qad*—indicates a temporally framed situation which is incompatible with stative background descriptions. Indeed, we often encounter *kāna qad fa'ala* in contexts where temporality, or to be more precise, the successive order of the events, is salient to the narrative:

- (8.25) *fa-lammā raġa'a ba'da ḥīnin ṭalaba ḥadīda-hū wa-kāna l-raġulu qad bā'a-hū*

And after a while, when he came back, he asked for his iron, [but] the man had already sold it. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 119)

- (8.26) *wa-kāna 'abū 'āmirin-i l-fāsiqu qad ḥaraġa fi ḥamsīna raġulan min 'awsi llāhi ḥattā qadima bi-him makkata ḥīna qadima l-nabīyyu l-madīnata*  
 'Abū 'Āmir, the sinner, had already gone out with fifty men from 'Aws Allāh until he arrived with them in Mecca, at the time when the Prophet arrived in Medina. (*Maġāzī*, 205)

- (8.27) *fa-'in kāna dālika ka-dālika fa-qad kāna l-mā'u wa-l-rīḥu ḥuliqā qabla l-'arṣi*

If this is so, then the water and the wind were created before the throne. (*Ta'rīḥ* 1, 37)

The compound form *kāna fa'ala* is less frequently used than *kāna qad fa'ala*. It gains preference in cases where the lexical input is incompatible with the meaning of bounding marked by *qad*, or when the relative order of the events is not considered as important as the assertion of their actual occurrence. Example [8.28], for instance, presents a case where *kāna fa'ala* occurs with the state verb *makaṭa* 'to stay':

- (8.28) *kāna nūḥun makata fi qawmi-hi ʿalfa sanatin ʿillā ḥamsīna ʿaman yadʿū-hum ʿilā llāhi*  
 Noah had stayed among his people for 950 years (lit. ‘thousand years minus fifty years’), calling upon them to [worship] God. (*Taʿrīḥ* 1, 186)

In narratives, *kāna faʿala* is used when the temporal sequence is not deemed as important as the assertion of the actual occurrence of the events. Notice the difference between [8.25] and [8.29], extracted from the same story: in the first case, the temporal sequence is crucial to the point of the narrative (the man claims back his iron *after* the iron has already been sold); in the latter case, the events themselves (that are reported in direct speech) are given the most focus:

- (8.29) *kuntu waḍaʿtu ḥadīda-ka fi nāḥiyatin min-a l-bayti fa-ʿakala-hū l-ḡurdānu* (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 119)  
 I had placed your iron at a corner of the house and the rats ate it.

Although the temporal sequence is not in focus, *kāna faʿala* may co-occur with temporal adverbs:

- (8.30) *wa-kāna ḡabalun ḥaraḡa laylan min mawḍiʿin kāna fi-hi*  
 Ḡabal had gone out at night from the place where he had been. (*Bu-ḥalāʾ*, 65)

In [8.30] the adverb *laylan* ‘at night’ indicates the temporal setting of the situation. However, this setting is not presented as relative to some other point. The compound *kāna faʿala* also occurs with the focus particle *ʿinnamā*, which stresses the veracity of the situation expressed in the clause. In this case, too, it is not the relative position of the event within the narrative sequence that is being asserted, but the fact that it has actually taken place:

- (8.31) *ʿinnamā kāna qatala l-qātilu min-humā ʿaḡā-hu ʿanna llāha ʿazza wa-ḡalla ʿamara-humā bi-taqribi qurbānin*  
 The fact of the matter is that one of them killed his brother because God ordered them to offer a sacrifice. (*Taʿrīḥ* 1, 142)

As it does not carry a specific marking of temporal framing, *kāna faʿala* is also compatible with an adverb such as *rubbamā*, which indicates an unbounded iteration:

- (8.32) *wa-kānū rubba-mā ḥaṣṣū-hu fa-waḍaʿū bayna yaday-hi l-durrāğata l-samīnata*  
 They often endowed him with special honor and put in front of him a plump francolin. (*Buḥalāʿ*, 85)

The predicative *qad faʿala* is generally incompatible with negation. The predicative *faʿala* is also not negated. Instead, *lam yafʿal* is used:

- (8.33) *kāna yaḥrusu rasūla llāhi lam yufāriq-hu*  
 He used to guard the Messenger of God; he would not leave him.  
 (*Mağāzī*, 217)

### 8.2.2 *Modifying Verbs*

Modifying verbs, *ʾaḥawāt kāna* ‘*kāna*’s sisters’ in the Arabic grammatical tradition, serve to describe a certain phase or aspect of the verbal situation, which is expressed by the predicative form. In Classical Arabic, modifying verbs comprise several lexical classes;<sup>19</sup> however, the main semantic distinction can be drawn between two groups of verbs: those which indicate the initial phase of the verbal situation and those indicating its continuation or duration. There are no modifying verbs referring to the terminal phase of the verbal situation or to its accomplishment, hence this group of verbs is incompatible with the resultative meaning of *qad faʿala*.

The predicative form *yafʿalu* is compatible with both groups of modifying verbs. The most common representative of the first is *ğaʿala* ‘to start’.<sup>20</sup> The verbal complex *ğaʿala yafʿalu* is found with all classes of verbs, in affirmative and negative forms:

- (8.34) *fa-ğaʿala yamšī wa-yaqʿudu wa-yanzuru ʾilā l-ṭarīqi ḥattā rufiʿa la-hū dimnātu muqbilan*  
 And he started to walk and sit and look at the road until Dimna, [while] approaching, came into his sight. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 75)

19 Modifying verbs, the same as *kāna*, can also be used as full verbs. Cf. Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 198–199, for some ambiguous examples, where the verbal form may be interpreted either as a modifying or a full verb.

20 Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 348, reports that verbs indicating ingressivity formed 72% of the modifying verbs attested in his corpus; the verb *ğaʿala* had by far the greatest number of tokens.

- (8.35) *fa-ğā'alū yaḍribūna-hum ḥattā nuqīdat šufūfu-hum*  
 And they started to hit them until their lines were destroyed. (*Mağāzī*, 226)
- (8.36) *fa-ğā'alū lā yaṭrabūna la-humā wa-lā yuğābūna bi-himā kamā kānū yaṭrabūna*  
 And they stopped (lit. 'started not') being moved and delighted by them the way they used to be. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 57)

With cognitive verbs which are, by their nature, static, *ğā'ala* indicates the entrance into a state or a disposition, thus the meaning of becoming ('starting to be'):

- (8.37) *wa-ğā'ala 'abū ġahlīn yusarru bi-mā šana'a l-mušrikūna bi-'utbata*  
 And 'Abū Ġahl became delighted by what the polytheists did with 'Utba. (*Mağāzī*, 66)

Besides *ğā'ala*, there are other verbs which indicate inchoative meaning. These originate from diverse lexical classes, e.g.: *'aṣbaḥa* 'to be [in] day time', *'aḥada* 'to take', *indaḥā'a* 'to rush off'. The modifying verb *šāra*, illustrated in [8.38], also functions as a motion verb indicating the arrival at a certain place or destination (e.g. *šāra 'ilā fulānīn* 'He came to such a one'):

- (8.38) *fa-'idā širtu ka-dālika fa-qad dahaba kasb-ī min māli ġayr-ī wa-šāra ġayr-ī yaksibu min-nī*  
 If I become like that, my earnings from someone else's money will disappear and someone else will start earning from me. (*Buḥalā'*, 93)

To the same group of inchoative verbs also belong verbs indicating imminence or intention. These verbs do not refer to the actual outset of the verbal situation but to the phase immediately preceding it, either in the physical or in the mental world of the agent:<sup>21</sup>

- (8.39) *fa-lammā ntaḥā 'ilā l-nahri lam yağid 'alay-hi qaṇṭaratan li-yaqṭa'a-hū wa-l-dī'bu kāda yudriku-hū*

21 In the Arabic grammatical tradition, *'af'āl al-šurū'* 'the verbs of beginning' and *'af'āl al-muqāraba* 'the verbs of approximation' are lumped together, cf. Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 106–109.

And when he got to the river he did not find a bridge to cross it over, while the wolf was about to reach him. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 63)

The predicative *yafʿalu* often co-occurs with the second group of modifying verbs, indicating the continuation or duration of the verbal situation. Among these verbs, *lam yazal* ‘to not cease’ is by far the most frequently encountered. Notice in [8.41] the opposition between the predicative participle and *yafʿalu*, the first indicates a static situation while the latter indicates a dynamic one:<sup>22</sup>

(8.40) *wa-naḥnu lam nazal naḍribu-hū bi-suyūfi-nā maʿa l-ʿawsi fī ḥarbi-him kulli-hā*

And we continued to fight him with our swords, together with ʿAws, throughout their war. (*Maḡāzī*, 369)

(8.41) *wa-qīla ʿanna-hū lam yazal muqīman bi-makkata yaḥuḡḡu wa-yaʿta-miru*

It was reported that he continued to stay in Mecca, performing the pilgrimages of the *Ḥajj* and the *ʿUmra*. (*Taʿrīḥ* 1, 164)

The predicative participle is seldom found with the first group of modifying verbs indicating an inchoative meaning. This may be explained by the non-phasal nature of the participle, which rules out the reference to its internal phase. However, with stative lexemes, the participle may co-occur with modifying verbs conveying the meaning of becoming, i.e., the entrance into a new state. In such cases, the verbal situation is not broken down into its internal phases but the entire situation (‘non-being x’) is transformed to another (‘being x’):

(8.42) *wa-qad wallāhi yā rasūla llāhi ʿaṣbaḥtu muštāqan ʿilā murāfaqati-hī fī l-ḡannati*

By God, O Messenger of God, I have come to yearn to accompany him in Heaven. (*Maḡāzī*, 213)

The participle is quite common with the second group of modifying verbs indicating the continuation or duration of the verbal situation. As with *kāna*, the predicative participle mostly occurs in intransitive verb-phrases:

<sup>22</sup> *Taʿrīḥ* 3, 1150, provides a parallel example, in which *yafʿalu* specifies, by negation, the dynamic aspects of ‘standing still’: *fa-mā ziltu wāqifan mā ʿataqaddamu ʿamām-i wa-lā ʿarḡīʿu warāʿ-i* ‘And I kept standing, I did not proceed forward or returned back.’



- (8.43) *wa-lam 'azal li-dālika l-sammi min lisāni-ka ḥā'ifan mušfiqan 'an ya'urra-nī bi-šay'in kārihan li-qurbi-ka dākiran li-maw'izati l-'uqalā'i fī ḡtinābi muqārabati 'ahli l-fuḡūri*

And because of your poisonous tongue, I kept being afraid and worried that I would be ashamed of something, [and I kept] hating your closeness [while] remembering the lesson of the wise men: to avoid being close to immoral men. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 118)

Besides typical modifying verbs such as *lam yazal* or *mā dāma*, there are other verbs which serve to indicate continuation or duration. These are often motion and state verbs, such as *maḏā* 'to pass' and *labīta* 'to abide', which in some contexts undergo semantic bleaching:

- (8.44) *fa-labīta l-'awsu wa-l-ḥazraḡu mutaḥāribīna 'iṣrīna sanatan fī 'amri sumayrin*  
 'Aws and Ḥazraḡ kept fighting for twenty years because of the matter of Sumayr. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 19)

As mentioned above, modifying verbs expressing either inchoative or durative meaning are incompatible with *qad fa'ala*. Also the simple *fa'ala* is rarely found with modifying verbs; the few existing examples stem mostly from poetry.<sup>23</sup> In my corpus, I have encountered one example in which the form *'arāda* 'he wanted' co-occurred with the modifying verb *'asā* 'it might be'. The compatibility of *'arāda* and *'asā* may be explained by the fact that, as opposed to *qad fa'ala*, *fa'ala* does not indicate the complete and concrete realization of the verbal situation:

- (8.45) *fa-'asā-hu 'arāda l-tafḏīla fī l-qismati*  
 Perhaps he wanted [to be given] preference in the allotment [of the gifts]? (*Buḥalā'*, 91)

### 8.2.3 *Motion and State Verbs*

Verbs expressing a movement towards a destination or a certain position or location in space are very common in complex predications. Such verbs indicate the outset or setting of the verbal situation which is specified by the following predicative form. With this group of verbs we find the predicative triad *yaf'alu*, *fā'ilan/maf'ulan*, and *qad fa'ala*, marking the opposition between a

23 Cf. Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 297, for poetry quotes such as *'aṣbaḥat 'aḏalatnī*.

progressive, a static, and a resultative aspect, respectively. As both the main verb and predicative verb refer to the same situation and are co-temporal, *fa'ala*—being neither simultaneous nor coincidental—is excluded from the predicative paradigm.

In both traditional and modern grammatical literature, verbal complexes initiated by motion and state verbs provide the most typical example of circumstantial constructions. While the Arab grammarians were mostly concerned with the grammatical properties of the *ḥāl* 'circumstantial expression', and the syntactic relation with its (pro)nominal antecedent, i.e. *ḍū al-ḥāl* 'the circumstantial expression's referee', modern studies of circumstantial clauses focus on the semantics of the main verb and its effect on the interpretation of the predicative form. The following discussion is concerned with the semantic compatibility between the main verb and the predicative verb, as well as the functional opposition between the predicative forms.

In the Arabic grammatical tradition, the predicative form *yaf'alu* is considered to have two manifestations: (a) as *ḥāl muqārin* 'simultaneous circumstantial', or as (b) *ḥāl muqaddar* 'intended circumstantial'.<sup>24</sup> Modern grammars maintain the same distinction between *yaf'alu* forms which are 'simultaneous with or following the action expressed by the governing verb'.<sup>25</sup> In his short article, Abboud diverts attention from *yaf'alu* to the semantics of the main verb: since *yaf'alu* co-occurs with 'event-completion' verbs, it may refer either to the event or to its 'eventual completion'. According to Abboud, such an explanation 'obviates the need for a *ḥāl muqaddar*'.<sup>26</sup> A somewhat different view is presented in Waltisberg's work on circumstantial clauses. Although he, too, maintains that the semantics of the main verb affects the interpretation of *yaf'alu*, Waltisberg suggests a neat separation between a 'modal' (simultaneous) and a 'final' (posterior) function of *yaf'alu*, which are then paired off with syndetic circumstantial clauses and final clauses, respectively.<sup>27</sup>

A detailed examination of all the possible combinations shows that the temporal value of *yaf'alu* is not solely determined by the content of the main verb, nor by that of the predicative verb, but by the interaction of both. We observe a general rule: if (at least) one of the verbal lexemes is potentially unbounded (a-telic), then *yaf'alu* is interpreted as simultaneous (totally overlapping); if neither is unbounded, then *yaf'alu* is interpreted as coincidental (partially

24 Cf. Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 19–20.

25 Fischer, *Classical Arabic Grammar*, 220.

26 Abboud, *Ḥāl Construction*, 195.

27 See Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, § 5.2 and § 5.6; Cf. Marmorstein, *Review on Waltisberg*, 381–382.

overlapping), i.e., the situation expressed by *yaf'alu* proceeds from the one expressed by the main verb. The coincidental relation should not be analyzed as simple succession, since both the main verb and *yaf'alu* refer to the same situation, the first depicting its outset or setting, the latter its destination.

The rule outlined above is demonstrated in the following set of examples, where the main verb indicates: (a) movement towards a destination, i.e., motion and goal; (b) movement in space with no goal; or (c) static position in space. In [8.46]–[8.47] the main verb belongs to the first group of motion verbs while the predicative verb indicates an unbounded situation; *yaf'alu* is thus interpreted as simultaneous:

(8.46) *fa-raġa'a bi-hā rasūlu llāhi yarġufu fu'ādu-hū*  
And the Messenger of God returned with them (i.e. the verses) his heart shivering. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5)

(8.47) *fa-labisa dir'a-hū wa-'aḥada sayfa-hū fa-ḥaraġa ya'dū*  
He wore his armor, took his sword and went out running. (*Maġāzī*, 370)

In [8.48] the main verb belongs to the first group of motion verbs while the predicative verb indicates a bounded situation; *yaf'alu* is thus interpreted as coincidental:

(8.48) *fa-ḥaraġū yaṭlubūna-humā fi kulli waġhin*  
They went out looking for both of them in all directions. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 24)

In [8.49] the main verb belongs to the second group of motion verbs; *yaf'alu* is thus interpreted as simultaneous:

(8.49) *wa-marrū yaḍribūna bi-l-dufūfi wa-yazmirūna bi-l-mazāmīri*  
They marched striking tambourines and playing the pipes.<sup>28</sup> (*Maġāzī*, 375)

In [8.50]–[8.51], where the main verb belongs to the third group of state verbs, *yaf'alu*, whether unbounded or bounded, is interpreted as simultaneous:

28 The verb *marrā* can be interpreted as either bounded ('to pass by') or unbounded ('to march'). In the latter case, no limitation or destination of the movement is indicated, as in [8.49].

(8.50) *fa-bāta yabkī*  
He spent the night crying. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 32)

(8.51) *fa-bātū yaṭlubūna-hū ḥattā ya'isū min-hu*  
They spent the night looking for him until they gave up all hope of  
[finding] him. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 178)

Not only with verbs of (vectorial) motion, but also with verbs of caused motion, *yaf'alu* indicates the goal of the event launched by the main verb:

(8.52) *fa-'arsala 'ilay-hi yad'ū-hu*  
And he sent to him [a messenger] inviting him [to come]. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 29)

In these cases, too, *yaf'alu* is not strictly successive, nor does it indicate finality; rather, it indicates the terminal stage of the verbal situation. That the two notions, i.e., final and terminal, are not simply overlapping can be demonstrated, *inter alia*, by the fact that proper final clauses, such that are introduced by an explicit operator (e.g. *li-* 'for'), are external to the verbal situation and hence can be negated, whereas the terminal *yaf'alu*—being an internal and inseparable part of the verbal situation—is never negated.

While coincidental or terminal *yaf'alu* forms cannot be negated, *yaf'alu* indicating simultaneity does exhibit negation with *lā*. Quite often, *lā yaf'alu* paraphrases the content expressed by the preceding (affirmative) predicative form:

(8.53) *wa-bātat ṣāhilatan ḥaylu-hum lā tahda'u*  
Their horses stayed up the night neighing; they would not calm down.  
(*Mağāzī*, 217)

(8.54) *wabaqītu mabhūtan lā 'astaṭī'u l-kalāma wa-lā l-ğawāba wa-lā l-ḥarakata li-mā ḥālaṭa qalb-ī*  
I remained speechless; I could not talk nor respond or move for what had befallen me. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 46)

**The predicative participle** depicts a static situation. It may indicate: (a) the outcome of a previous process in the passive form; (b) the persistence in a certain state with dynamic lexemes; or (c) the endurance of a state with stative lexemes. These three options are illustrated in the examples below. Notice that in [8.56] the participle, as elsewhere (see [8.17] above), is used to describe

physical appearance, dressing, and specifically, the girding of a sword (other parallel examples are *Riwāyāt* 2, 185: *mutaqallidan*; *Sīra* 1, 225: *mutawaššihan*); Example [8.57] demonstrates the functional opposition between the participle and *yaf'alu* with regard to transitivity: the first is used in intransitive verb-phrases whereas the latter takes an object complement:

- (8.55) *fa-makata mumallakan 'alay-hā 'ašhuran*  
He remained its king (lit. 'enthroned') for several months. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 184)
- (8.56) *fa-'aqbala muṣlitan sayfa-hū fi nafarin min-a l-yahūdi*  
He approached unsheathing his sword amid a group of Jews. (*Mağāzī*, 372)
- (8.57) *fa-ḥarağnā ḥā'ifīna nahāfu l-raṣada*  
We set out afraid; we were fearing an ambush. (*Mağāzī*, 28)

The last example illustrates a general principle of complex predications. We may refer to it as the principle of increased specificity: each predicative is added to the previous one, thereby depicting the given situation in greater detail. The increased specificity is obtained by the accumulation of predicates, and not by their internal order. Consider, for instance, [8.58]–[8.59] in which *rakiba* 'to ride' functions either as the main (specified) verb or as the predicative (specifying) form:

- (8.58) *lam 'arkab ḥaṭwatan dāhiban wa-lā rāğī'an*  
I did not ride a single step either going or coming. (*Mağāzī*, 26)
- (8.59) *'aqbaltu rākiban 'alā ḥimārin 'atānin*  
I came close, riding on a she-ass. (*Şaḥīḥ*, 31)

Quite often, the lexemes of both the main verb and the predicative form pertain to the same class of motion verbs. According to Waltisberg, in such cases the participle serves to mark 'situation-identity' between both verbal forms.<sup>29</sup> It appears, however, that the notion of situation-identity fails to capture the specifying function of the participle and its semantic contribution to the verbal complex. To be sure, there are cases where the content of both verbs is very

29 Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 286–291.

similar. However, even in these, the predicative is not simply tautological, but serves to elaborate the content of the main verb, often by indicating the point of departure or the direction of the motion:

(8.60) *wa-ʿaqbala ʿabū ġubaylata sāʿiran min-a l-šāmi*  
And ʿAbū Ġubayla came proceeding from al-Šām. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 11)

(8.61) *hattā qumtu fī qiblati-hī mustaqbila-hū*  
Until I stood in his direction of praying facing him. (*Sīra* 1, 228)

Unlike *yafʿalu*, the participle is rarely interpreted as indicating the terminal stage or destination of the verbal situation. Example [8.62] is one case that may be interpreted as such:

(8.62) *ġiʿtu-ka ʿāʿidan bi-ka*  
I came to you asking for your protection. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 55)

In other cases where the main verb indicates vectorial motion, what one usually finds is the participle indicating an appointment or assignment, rather than the destination or goal. As an adjectival form, the participle is most suited to the expression of such attributes, whether these have a temporary or a permanent validity. Example [8.63] provides a good illustration to the distinction between the participle, indicating an appointment, i.e., an (assigned) attribute, and *yafʿalu*, which breaks down this attribute into its actual instances. The Qurʾānic quote in [8.64], which has a parallel in the *Sīra*, is yet another case where the participle, like non-derived adjectives, is used to indicate an appointment ('being sent as') rather than a goal ('being sent to');

(8.63) *fa-baʿaṭa llāhu ʿiblisā qāḍiyan yaqḍī bayna-hum*  
God sent ʿIblis as a judge to judge among them. (*Taʾrīḥ* 1, 85)

(8.64) *fa-baʿaṭa llāhu l-nabiyyīna mubašširīna wa-mundirīna | wa-lākinna llāha baʿaṭa-nī bašīran wa-naḍīran*  
God sent the prophets as bringers of glad tidings and warners. (Q 2:213; *Taʾrīḥ* 1, 184) / But God sent me as a bringer of glad tidings and a warner. (*Sīra* 1, 189)

As already mentioned above, a predicative *faʿala* is incompatible with motion verbs, due to its self-contained temporal framing (this is not to be confused with the notion of boundedness: *faʿala*, with stative lexemes, may well indi-

cate unbounded persisting situations). The modified *qad fa'ala*, on the other hand, does co-occur with motion verbs, indicating a process whose result is coincidental with the situation expressed by the main verb. As opposed to the coincidental *yaf'alu*, the tangent point of *qad fa'ala* and the main verb is not the terminal stage of the latter but its initial one:

(8.65) *fa-ğā'a 'a'rābiyyun qad 'aqbala min tihāmata*  
A Bedouin arrived [after] approaching from Tihāma. (*Mağāzī*, 46)

(8.66) *wa-'aqbala l-mušrikūna qad šaffū šufūfa-hum*  
The polytheists approached [being] already arranged in lines. (*Mağāzī*, 220)

#### 8.2.4 Perception and Permission Verbs

Perception verbs and verbs indicating permission form a sub-group of complement-taking verbs in Classical Arabic. Both these classes of verbs head raising constructions. The term 'raising' refers to the syntactic fusion of two clauses, a complement-taking verb and its propositional complement, whereby the subject of the second clause is fronted to the object position of the first. The raised element is in fact shared by both clauses, and thus cannot be analyzed as an exclusive member of either.<sup>30</sup>

The mechanism of raising allows for two interpretations of perception verbs: either as indicators of concrete perception of an object and its condition (e.g., 'I saw him doing'), or as indicators of notional perception of a whole situation or fact (e.g., 'I saw that he was doing'). The latter use may trigger a further shift or abstraction of the meaning of the verb, from physical perception to mental comprehension (e.g., 'I realized that he was doing').<sup>31</sup>

30 Discussing such examples as 'I found her gone', Jespersen, *Philosophy*, 122, suggests regarding the entire combination ('nexus') *her gone* as the object of the main verb. According to Givón, *Syntax*, 2, 272, such cases exhibit the process of raising, whereby an argument of the subordinate clause is converted to an argument of the main clause. By contrast, Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 322–323, views the raised element as still belonging to the embedded clause. As a matter of fact, this question cannot be decided, for the raised element is formally marked (through its case and agreement) as relating to both clauses at the same time.

31 According to Arabic grammatical tradition, when *ra'ā* and *wağada* are not intended in their physical denotation (i.e., in the sense of *ru'yat al-'ayn* 'the seeing of the eye' or *wiğdān al-dālla* 'the finding of the lost beast'), but rather in their mental denotation, their second object is indispensable to the clause, serving as the predicate of the first object, see Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 13.

The distinction between the patterns of concrete and notional perception is not only semantic, but it also has syntactic correlates: (a) complement clauses introduced by the operator *ʾanna* are not free variants of raising constructions, but mostly interchange with the pattern of notional perception;<sup>32</sup> and (b) the paradigm of predicative forms which is compatible with the expression of notional perception is wider and also includes verbs not indicating co-temporality with the main verb. Thus, while the pattern of concrete perception involves only the predicative triad, *yafʿalu*, *qad faʿala*, and the participle, the pattern of notional perception also includes *faʿala* and *sa-yafʿalu*, both referring to events which are not envisaged as co-occurring with the situation of perception.

The predicative form *yafʿalu* occurs with both patterns of concrete and notional perception. With the first pattern, *yafʿalu* depicts an ongoing situation, simultaneous with the moment of seeing, hearing, or finding:

(8.67) *fa-raʿā-nī ʾatawaddaʿu min kūzin ḥazafin*  
He saw me performing the ablution using a pottery jug. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 37)

(8.68) *ʾa-mā wallāhi la-samiʿtu muḥammadan yaqūlu*  
Verily, by God, I heard Muḥammad saying. (*Maḡāzī*, 35)

(8.69) *wa-ʿtabir ʾaydan dālīka bi-l-milḥi llaḍī yūḍaʿu taḥta l-misraḡati wa-l-nuḥālāti llatī tūḍaʿu hunāka li-taswiyati-hā wa-taṣwībi-hā kayfa taḡiduhumā yanʿaṣirāni duhnan*  
Consider that too, along with the salt that is put under the lamp, and the bran that is put there to level it and tilt it, how much oil you will find them (i.e., the salt and bran) to exude. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 41)

In the negative form as well, *lā yafʿalu* functions as predicative in raising constructions. Example [8.70] is ambiguous in that the syntactic relation between the indefinite object *qawman* and the following *lā yurīdūna* can be analyzed as either predicative or attributive (see above 6.1.3):

(8.70) *wa-lākinnī wallāhi raʾaytu qawman lā yurīdūna ʾan yaʿūbū ʾilā ʾahlī-him*  
But, by God, I saw people not willing to return to their families. (*Maḡāzī*, 62)

32 Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 340.



The predicative *yaf'alu* is also compatible with *ra'ā*, when this indicates—rather than concrete ocular perception—the seeing of a certain scene in a dream or the envisioning of a scene:

- (8.71) *'innī qad ra'aytu ru'yan [...] wa-'arā bn-ī yaṭlubu-nī ṭalaban ḥaṭītan*  
I dreamt (lit. 'I saw a dream') [...] and I see my son looking for me anxiously. (*Sīra* 1, 254)

With the second pattern of notional perception or comprehension, *yaf'alu* expresses a prediction, a situation that is not concomitant but posterior to that indicated by the main verb. As the moment of comprehension does not coincide with the comprehended fact, the posterior *sa-yaf'alu* may also be used:

- (8.72) *fa-tarā muḥammadan yaḥṣīru-nā sanatan*  
Do you think that Muḥammad will besiege us for a year? (*Majāzī*, 368)
- (8.73) *wa-'ammā ṭalabu bn-ī 'īyyā-ya tumma ḥabsu-hū 'ann-ī fa-'innī 'arā-hu sa-yağhadu 'an yuṣība-hū mā 'aṣāba-nī*  
And as for my son's looking for me and being withheld from me, I see it [as if] he will strive so that what happened to me will happen to him [too]. (*Sīra* 1, 254)

As with verbs of motion and caused motion, when *yaf'alu* co-occurs with permission verbs it may be coincidental, referring to the terminal stage of the complex situation:

- (8.74) *fa-qad 'amara-nā 'an lā nada'a-ka tastaqirru 'alā l-'arḍi*  
He has instructed us to not let you stick to the ground. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 248)

The predicative participle is compatible with the expression of concrete as well as notional perception. In both cases it depicts a static situation, one that exists or persists at the moment of perception:

- (8.75) *tumma ġā'at-i mra'atu l-ḥağğāmi ba'da sā'atin li-musāmarati ṣadīqati-hā mra'ati l-'iskāfi fa-wağadat-hā marbūṭatan*  
Then the wife of the cupper came after one hour to have an evening chat with her friend, the wife of the shoemaker, and she found her tied up. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 79)

(8.76) *fa-lammā wağada-hū qā'idan fi 'aṣḥābi-hī 'akabba 'alay-hi wa-ānaqa-hū*

When he found him sitting among his friends, he bent down over him and embraced him. (*Buḥalā'*, 43)

(8.77) *fa-qultu yā rasūla llāhi mā la-ka 'an fulānin fa-wallāhi 'innī la-'arā-hu mu'minan*

So I said: 'O Messenger of God, what do you have [in mind] about so-and-so, for by God, I think he is a believer.' (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 15)

With verbs indicating permission, the predicative participle also depicts a static situation. Notice that in [8.78] the participle, as elsewhere, is intransitive, whereas the following *yaf'alu* has an object complement:

(8.78) *fa-'aḥbara-nā 'anna muḥammadan kāna 'araḍa li-'iri-nā fi bad'ati-nā wa-'anna-hū taraka-hū muqīman yantaḥiru rağ'ata-nā*

And he informed us that Muḥammad was observing our caravan since we started our [journey], and that he had left him to stay [there] and watch for our return. (*Mağāzī*, 28)

The predicative form *qad fa'ala*, in both patterns of concrete and notional perception, is used to indicate a process whose resultant state coincides with the time of perception itself:

(8.79) *'asma'u l-ṣawta qad-i rtafa'a fi 'alā qawrā*

I hear the voice already risen at the top of Qawrā. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 47)

(8.80) *'innī 'arā qurayṣan qad 'azma'at 'alā l-ḥurūği*

Indeed, I think that Qurayṣ have already decided to go out. (*Mağāzī*, 36)

As is usually the case, *qad fa'ala* is preferred to *fa'ala* when the chronological order of the events is deemed salient to the narrative. Thus in [8.81], the fact that 'Adī was already dead when the messenger found him, and not just the mere fact of his death, has great bearing on the later development of the narrative:

(8.81) *'innī wağadtu 'adiyyan qad māta qabla 'an 'adhūla 'alay-hi*

I had found 'Adī already dead before I entered upon him. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 191)

In some cases, the perceived situation consists of a number of scenes, either overlapping or following each other in time. Example [8.82] is a good illustration of the predicative triad. We observe that the order of the forms—first the participle, then *yaf'alu*, and *qad fa'ala*—is a fixed one, regardless of the nature of the matrix clause. This order may be viewed as iconic, reflecting the decreasing degree of integration of the predicative form with the main verb:<sup>33</sup>

(8.82) *wa-la-ka-'anni 'anzuru 'ilay-kum zā'inīna yataḍġā šibyānu-kum qad taraktum dūra-kum ḥulūfan wa-'amwāla-kum*

It is as if I look at you departing, your children crying out, [after] you have left your homes and possessions neglected. (*Maġāzī*, 365)

In my corpus, a predicative *fa'ala* was not found in raising constructions very often. Unlike the temporally bounded, coincidental *qad fa'ala*, *fa'ala* refers to a self-contained period of time. With concrete perception, *fa'ala* is found with lexemes indicating an enduring state. Notice in [8.83] the indefinite time frame indicated by the adverb *zamānan* 'for a while':

(8.83) *'innī qad ra'aytu l-malika 'aqāma bi-makāni-hī hādā zamānan lā yabraḥu min-hu*

Indeed I have seen [that] the king remained in this place of his for a while, not moving from it. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 73)

The predicative *fa'ala* is more likely to occur when perception is not intended in its physical sense, but in its mental sense. Thus, *fa'ala* is used in visions and dreams, or in the expression of realizations and conclusions:

(8.84) *ra'aytu rākiban 'aqbala 'alā ba'iri-hī [...] fa-'arā l-nāsa ḡtama'ū 'ilay-hi*  
I saw [in a dream] a rider [that] approached on his camel [...] and I saw [that] the people gathered to him. (*Maġāzī*, 29)

(8.85) *fa-'innī 'arā rīḥan qad hāġat min 'a'lā l-wādī wa-'innī 'arā-hā bu'itat bi-naṣri-ka*

I see a wind has risen from above the valley and I think it has been sent to help you. (*Maġāzī*, 29)

33 Though they fill the same functional slot in the clause, the participle, *yaf'alu*, and *qad fa'ala* are different in their degree of finiteness and, therefore, in the extent to which they are integrated (i.e., share the same grammatical categories) with the main clause.

As is the case elsewhere, the predicative *fa'ala* is not encountered in the negative form; instead, *lam yaq'al* is used:

- (8.86) *inḥaḍ-i l-sā'ata 'ilā l-faḍli bni yaḥyā fa-'inna-ka taḡidu-hū lam ya'dan li-  
'aḥadīn ba'du*  
Get up [and go] now to al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā; you will find him not allowing  
anyone [in] yet. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 30)

### 8.2.5 *Speech Verbs*

Another defined class of verbs which initiate verbal complexes are speech verbs. The predicative forms which co-occur with speech verbs are *yaq'alu* and the participle. These forms increase the specificity of the verbal situation by referring either to the content expressed or to the vocal quality of speech itself. Notice that [8.88] exhibits an unusual case where the participle is followed by an object complement:

- (8.87) *qāla l-'a'sā yamdaḥu l-samaw'ala*  
Al-'A'sā said praising al-Samaw'al. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 27)
- (8.88) *qāla l-walīdu rāfi'an ṣawta-hū*  
Al-Walīd said raising his voice. (*Buxalā'*, 65)

## 8.3 *Circumstantial Clauses*

Not only in verbal complexes, i.e., in embedded clauses, but also at higher syntactic levels, the predicative paradigm is found. In this section I will discuss one type of dependent clause, the circumstantial clause, in which the predicative triad is used. The aspectual oppositions between the forms are the same as those described above: *yaq'alu* indicates an ongoing situation or process, the participle indicates a static state, and *qad fa'ala* indicates a result.

The category of *al-ḡumla al-ḥāliyya* 'the circumstantial clause' was described by the Arab grammarians as a complex ('periphrastic') manifestation of the *ḥāl* category. However, modern research has demonstrated that the asyndetic *ḥāl* constituent and the syndetic *ḡumla ḥāliyya* do not interchange freely with each other.<sup>34</sup> In fact, there are a number of formal and functional distinctions between them:

34 Cf. Premper, "Zustandssätze"; Isaksson et al., *Circumstantial Qualifiers*; Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*.

- (a) The subject of the syndetic circumstantial clause is not necessarily co-referential with the subject of the main clause, thus both clauses do not necessarily refer to the same verbal event. It should be noted, however, that the subject of the circumstantial clause is not entirely new, but can be retrieved from the previous context.<sup>35</sup>
- (b) The syndetic circumstantial clause is not lexeme-sensitive: it does not co-occur with specific classes of verbs in the matrix clause.
- (c) Syndetic circumstantial clauses are backgrounded whereas their asyndetic counterparts are foregrounded. The latter distinction is often correlated with the temporal relation marked by the syndetic and asyndetic clause, to wit, simultaneity vs. sequentiality (or chaining).<sup>36</sup> Although generally correct, this correlation is too sweeping. As was already discussed, the predicative forms refer to situations which overlap with the situation indicated by the main verb, or which precede or proceed from that situation.

The formal and functional distinctions outlined above reflect different degrees of integration of asyndetic and syndetic circumstantial clauses and their matrix clause. The asyndetic predicative forms, occupying the position of an adverbial (accusative) complement, show a higher degree of integration than syndetic circumstantial clauses, connected to their matrix clause as self-standing clause units (we recall that the participle in syndetic circumstantial clauses takes the nominative case!). Also from a functional point of view, asyndetic predicative forms serve to single out a certain aspect, feature, or stage of the complex situation. Syndetic circumstantial clauses, on the other hand, are comments elaborating on a certain entity, depicting in greater detail the situation indicated in the main clause, or describing the setting in which the latter takes place.

Except for some minor cases in which *fa-* is used, the circumstantial clause is connected as a rule with *wa-*.<sup>37</sup> The connective *wa-* is a general connective particle: it simply indicates the adjoining of two or more elements or clauses. The particular semantic relation between the adjoined clauses, whether it

35 It is rather unusual that the subject of the circumstantial clause is newly introduced into the text. As the following example shows, the subject may be indefinite, though still strongly associated with other topics and hence presupposed (like inalienabilia): *kuntu 'inda šayḥin min 'ahli marwa wa-šabīyyun la-hū šağīrun yal'abu bayna yaday-hi* (Buḥalā' 38)—'I was at [a place of] a sheikh from the people of Marw, and a young boy of his was playing in front of him'.

36 Cf. Premper, "Zustandssätze", 275.

37 For circumstantial clauses introduced by *fa-*, see Nebes, *Satzschema*.

be chronological, causal, contrastive, or other, is not indicated by *wa-* but determined by the given context.<sup>38</sup>

*wāw al-ḥāl* ‘the circumstantial *wa-*’ may introduce either a nominal or a verbal clause (see above 4.5). When the predicate is *yafʿalu* or the participle, the nominal clause pattern is mandatory; with *qad faʿala*, the pattern of the verbal clause is preferred, although there are a few examples where the subject is fronted. In the following, I will illustrate and discuss circumstantial clauses with each of the verbal forms.

Circumstantial clauses whose verbal predicate is *yafʿalu* may refer to a situation concomitant with the one indicated in the matrix clause. The concomitant relation is sometimes interpreted as contrastive, especially when the subject of the circumstantial clause is not only different, but in fact confronted to the subject of the main clause:

(8.89) *fā-ḡaʿaltu ʾamsī ruwaydan wa-rasūlu llāhi qāʾimun yuṣallī yaqraʾu l-qurʾāna*

I started to walk slowly while the Messenger of God was standing, praying, [and] reciting the Qurʾān. (*Sīra* 1, 228)

(8.90) *fā-daḥala ʾalay-hi raḡulun kāna la-hū ḡāran wa-kāna lī ṣadīqan fā-lam yaʾriḍ ʾalay-hi l-ṭaʾāma wa-naḥnu naʾkulu*

When in came a man, a neighbor of his and a friend of mine, and he did not offer him food, though we were eating. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 38)

Like the asyndetic *yafʿalu*, the circumstantial *yafʿalu*—being co-referential with the subject of the main verb—may refer to the same verbal event as the latter. Thus, in [8.91]–[8.93], the same verb *qāla* is followed each time by a circumstantial clause, specifying either the manner of speech, its location, or the content expressed:

(8.91) *fā-lammā qāla surāqatu mā qāla wa-huwa yanṭiqu bi-lisāni ʾiblisā ṣaḡuʾa l-qawmu*

And when Surāqa said what he said, and he was speaking with the tongue of ʾIblīs, the people were encouraged. (*Maḡāzī*, 39)

38 For a different view of syndetic circumstantial clauses, as such indicating a ‘catalogue’ of semantic relations, see Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 358. König, *Converb Constructions*, provides a general account of the controversy over the polysemous or vague nature of adverbial verb forms.

- (8.92) *sami'tu 'alīyyan yaqūlu wa-huwa yaḥṭubu bi-l-kūfati*  
I heard 'Alī saying while he was delivering a sermon in Kufa. (*Mağāzī*, 57)
- (8.93) [...] *qāla wa-huwa yuḥadditu 'an fatrati l-wahyi*  
He said, while delivering a *ḥadīṭ* on the period of pause in revelation. (*Ṣaḥīḥ* 1, 6)

In circumstantial clauses *yaf'alu* is negated by *lā*. Quite often, *lā yaf'alu* occurs with verbs of knowledge, depicting a situation where one subject is ignorant about the activity of the other:

- (8.94) *fa-marrat-i l-ḥayyatu 'alā l-ḥazanati wa-hum lā ya'lamūna*  
The snake passed by the keepers [and entered] while they did not know. (*Ta'rīḥ* 1, 104)

**Circumstantial clauses whose predicate is the participle** are either co-referential with the situation depicted by the main verb, or refer to a concomitant situation. We observe that the participle in [8.95] follows a non-derived adjectival form which indicates the mental state of the subject (see [8.14] above). In [8.96], the participle refers to the physical appearance of the subject, specifically to his girding for battle (another example is *Mağāzī* 1, 39: *wa-huwa mutawaššihun bi-sayfi-hī*; see also [8.17] and [8.56] above):

- (8.95) *fa-ḡā'a-nī wa-huwa ḥazīnun munkasirun*  
He came to me sad and [heart] broken. (*Buḥalā'*, 90)
- (8.96) *wa-'aḥada l-nabiyyu l-qawsa wa-'aḥada qanātan bi-yadi-hī [...] wa-l-muslimūna mutalabbisūna l-silāha*  
The Prophet took the bow and he took the spear in his hand [...] while the Muslims were putting on their weapons. (*Mağāzī*, 215)

The same as the asyndetic participle, the circumstantial participle occurs as a rule in intransitive verb-phrases, either with intransitive lexemes or, with transitive lexemes, in the passive form:

- (8.97) *laqiya-hū safihun min sufahā'i qurayšin wa-huwa 'amidun 'ilā l-ka'batī*  
One of the Qurayš fools came across him while he was heading towards the Ka'ba. (*Sīra* 1, 246)

- (8.98) *li-ʾanna-hū lā šayʾa yatawawhamu-hū mutawawhimun fī qawli qāʾili dālika ʾillā wa-huwa mawǧūdun fī qawli qāʾilin*  
 Because there is nothing which one may presume [to be implied] in this statement without existing in a statement such as ... (*Taʾrīḥ* 1, 58)

On rare occasions the participle takes an object complement. We observe, however, that the object in such cases is not a prototypical one, i.e., an individualized affected entity, but in fact, forms a collocation with the verbal form:

- (8.99) *wa-kayfa yastaṭīʿu dālika wa-huwa ʾākilun ʾuṣban*  
 How is he able to do that while being a grass-eater? (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 92)

**Circumstantial clauses whose predicate is *qad faʿala*** exhibit mainly the pattern of the verbal clause, although one may encounter a few cases in which the subject is fronted:

- (8.100) *wa-raǧʿa l-naǧāšiyu wa-qad ʾahlaka llāhu ʾaduwwa-hū*  
 The Negus came back [after] God had already destroyed his enemy.  
 (*Sīra* 1, 221)
- (8.101) *wa-ḥaraǧa l-ḥabaru ʾilā l-nāsi wa-riǧālu banī l-muṣṭaliqi qad-i qtusimū wa-mulikū*  
 The news went out to the people, while the men of the Banū Muṣṭaliq had already been divided [among their captors] and become [their] property ... (*Maǧāzī*, 411)

A plausible explanation to the different clausal pattern of *wa-qad faʿala* vis-à-vis *wa-huwa yafʿalu/wa-huwa fāʿilun* may be that the latter nominal patterns are indeed plot-external descriptions, sometimes even generic or encyclopedic comments, centered on a certain entity, while *wa-qad faʿala*, though deviating from the main *faʿala*-plotline and depicting an anterior event, is not purely descriptive, but rather incorporated in the stream of events (see also below 10.3.2).

Circumstantial clauses sometimes present the *inna la*-clausal pattern. The operator *inna* introduces the entire clause whereas the modifier *la-* precedes the predicate. When the predicate is verbal, *la-* may be prefixed to either *yafʿalu* or the participle. The structure *wa-ʾinna la-* has an emphasizing function: it indicates that the content expressed in the clause stands against a certain expectation, explicit or implicit in the surrounding context, and that it is there-



fore remarkable. There is an important functional distinction between ordinary circumstantial clauses and *wa-'inna la*-clauses: unlike the first, *wa-'inna la*-clauses are not merely descriptive or orientational (if at all), but they present the personal evaluation of the narrator regarding the narrated situation. Consider, for instance, the examples below:

(8.102) *wa-la-qad ra'aytu-hū yanzilu 'alay-hi l-waḥyū fī l-yawmi l-šadīdi l-bardi fa-yuḥṣimu 'an-hu wa-'inna ḡabīna-hū la-yatafaṣṣadu 'araqan*  
 And I saw him [when] the revelation came upon him, on a very cold day; then it departed from him, while his forehead was dripping with sweat. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 6)

(8.103) *fa-la-qad luddat maymūnātu wa-'inna-hā la-ṣā'imatun*  
 And Maymūna was given the medicine while she was fasting. (*Sīra* 2, 1007)

In [8.102], 'Ā'īša says that it was an extremely cold day when the revelation came upon the Prophet, but nevertheless she saw that he was sweating. In [8.103], Maymūna is reported to be given medicine, despite the fact that she was fasting.

Being unusual in the nominal clause pattern, *qad fa'ala* is also not found in the *'inna la*- pattern. Nevertheless, *qad fa'ala* is compatible with the emphasizing *la*- which precedes the modified form. The same as *wa-'inna-hū la-yaf'alu/wa-'inna-hū la-fā'ilun*, also *wa-la-qad fa'ala* has an evaluative function: it imparts the impression of the narrator regarding the related event:

(8.104) *la-qad ḥaddata-nī 'abdu llāhi bni 'abbāsīn 'anna 'ādama nazala ḥīna nazala bi-l-hindi wa-la-qad ḥaḡḡa min-hā 'arba'īna ḥiḡḡatan 'alā ri-ḡlay-hi<sup>39</sup>*  
 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās told me that when Adam came down it was in India; from there he had performed the pilgrimage to Mecca on foot forty times. (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 124)

39 Interestingly, *wa-la-qad ḥaḡḡa* does not refer to an anterior event relative to the preceding *nazala*. It may be that *la-qad fa'ala*, as opposed to *qad fa'ala*, serves mainly an expressive goal and is not used for the purpose of grounding. This suggestion awaits further research.

## 8.4 Mutually Dependent Clauses

Mutually dependent constructions are exocentric, that is, neither their first nor their second part may be said to function as the main constituent or nucleus to which the other is subordinate. As already discussed above (6.1.2), mutual dependency is marked as distinct from other types of interdependency by inverting the usual order of the conjoined dependent clause, from subsequent position to initial. The global meaning of a mutually dependent construction is gathered from the contents of both its parts, so that neither one can be omitted without giving up much of the sense of the entire construction.

Conditional sentences are perhaps the best known example of mutually dependent constructions. The conditional meaning is obtained by the juxtaposition of a protasis and an apodosis.<sup>40</sup> Conditional clauses may be introduced by the same conjunction as modifying adverbial clauses, e.g.: *'in* 'if', *'idā* 'when/if'. However, the relative position of the clause determines its interpretation. When the clause takes the initial position it is a conditional, when it is postposed it is an adverbial expansion of the main clause.<sup>41</sup> The seemingly inverted order of the conditional construction marks the relation of mutual dependency, whereby both clauses have an equal syntactic status.<sup>42</sup> Not only the syntagmatic order, but also the paradigmatic constitution of the verbal forms is different in conditionals and in modifying adverbial clauses. Prototypical conditional sentences present a limited range of possibilities, the verbal form in the protasis—*fa'ala* or *yaf'al*—triggers off the verbal form in the apodosis—*fa'ala* or *yaf'al*, and both forms assume a hypothetical meaning.<sup>43</sup>

40 Cohen, *Conditionals*, 15, views the syntactic relationship between both parts of the conditional construction as mutual dependency. As far as their semantic interrelation is concerned, 'ordinary conditionals' are defined by him as 'structures containing two domains of events or state of affairs' of which 'neither domain can be confirmed or denied at the time of the utterance, and the likelihood of one domain (the apodosis) to take place depends directly on the realization of the other domain (the protasis)'.

41 That the protasis and apodosis cannot be inverted while maintaining their function was already observed by the Arab grammarians. The Arabic terminology also reflects the distinction between a proper conditional, termed *šarf*, and a postposed modifying conditional, termed *zarf*; cf. Peled, *Conditional Structures*, 139–140.

42 A conditional clause is not just less integrated with its matrix clause, compared to postposed dependent clauses (Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 75–77); rather, it exhibits a different kind of interdependency, a mutual dependency.

43 Besides the prototypical construction there are other types of conditional sentences in which the apodosis is not selected by the protasis but, following the conjunction *fa-*, is free

By contrast, modifying adverbial clauses are free to follow a wide variety of clause patterns,<sup>44</sup> and the temporal or modal meaning of their verb, as is generally the case in dependent clauses, is relative to the point of reference of the main clause.

Apart from conditional sentences, there are other types of mutually dependent constructions. The present discussion focuses on those in which the predicative paradigm is employed. These constructions can be divided into two interrelated kinds: (a) setting clauses and (b) presentative clauses. Although the predicative paradigm is common to all of them, there is an important difference between verbal complexes and circumstantial clauses, on the one hand, and setting and presentative clauses, on the other. The former operate at the syntactic level of the complex-clause, and thus may be found in any type of discourse, e.g., dialogues, narratives, expositions, etc.; the latter operate at the text level and can only be found in narratives. They are, in fact, marked patterns of narration (for a detailed discussion, see below 10.4).

#### 8.4.1 *Setting Clauses*

Setting clauses are introduced by the operator (*fa-*)*baynā/baynamā* ‘while’. They take the first position in the complex construction (like conditional clauses), followed by a presentative clause. Clauses headed by *baynā/baynamā* exhibit the pattern of the nominal clause, where the nominal theme precedes an adverbial (prepositional) or a verbal predicate. In cases where the predicate is verbal, it is realized as either *yafʿalu* or the participle, always in the affirmative. Here, as well, we observe the opposition between the dynamic-progressive-transitive *yafʿalu* and the static-intransitive participle:

(8.105) *baynā ʿanā ʿamši ʾid samiʿtu ʂawtan min-a l-samāʿi*

As I was walking, I suddenly heard a voice from heaven. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 6)

(8.106) *fa-baynamā humā wāqifāni bayna yaday-hi ʾid saqaṭa ṭāʾirāni ʿalā l-sūri*

And while they were standing in front of him, suddenly two birds landed on the wall. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 180)

The modified form *qad faʿala*, incompatible with the durative (unbounded) meaning of *baynā/baynamā*, is not attested in this clause type. However, *qad*

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to comprise verbal and nominal patterns other than *faʿala* or *yafʿal*; cf. Peled's category of ‘modally split conditional sentences’ (*Conditional Structures*, chapter 4).

44 Peled, *Conditional Structures*, 140 ff.

*fa'ala* may be incorporated into the setting in the form of a circumstantial clause. Notice that in [8.107] the subject of the circumstantial is fronted, so as to match the order of the *baynā/baynamā* clause:

- (8.107) *fa-baynā 'anā fi mağlis-ī wa-l-ḥadamu qad ḥaffū bī wa-ğawāriy-ya yata-raddadna bayna yaday-ya 'idā 'anā bi-šayḥin*  
 And while I was in my living room, the servants had already surrounded me and my maids were coming and going in front of me, all of a sudden there was an old man with me. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 45)

Setting clauses may also take the form of the *'inna la*-pattern. The same as in *baynā/baynamā*-clauses, *yaf'alu* and the participle function as verbal predicates. The distinction between setting clauses introduced by *baynā/baynamā* and those introduced by *'inna* is not a syntactic one:<sup>45</sup> both types of clauses exhibit a mutually dependent construction with the same verbal paradigm. Rather, the distinction resides in the domain of expressivity. Setting clauses introduced by *'inna* signal the presence and stance of an internally involved, 'homodiegetic' narrator, telling the story from his own first-hand experience:<sup>46</sup>

45 I hold a different view than Nebes, *Inzidenzschema*, who draws a syntactic distinction between a setting clause introduced by *baynā/baynamā* and one introduced by *'inna*. The first is labeled 'the dependent clause-main clause construction', whereas the latter is labeled 'the "emphatic" main clause-main clause construction'. According to Nebes, the past time reference of *yaf'alu* (the imperfect) in the *baynā/baynamā*-clause is obtained due to its being dependent upon and concomitant with *fa'ala* (the perfect) in the following superordinate clause. In *'inna*-clauses, by contrast, *yaf'alu* does not assume its past meaning relative to *fa'ala*, but is interpreted as 'historic present': its temporal value is endowed by the speaker/narrator, who envisions past events as if currently unfolding in front of his eyes. In my view, both clauses exhibit the same syntagmatic relations and paradigmatic structure: *yaf'alu* and the participle in both cases mark the same aspectual distinctions, while the temporal frame of reference is established by the eventive-narrative *fa'ala*. Moreover, the general qualification of *'inna* as 'emphatic' can be further specified. To be sure, *'inna* does not indicate a contrastive focus; it does not assert the content of the clause against the explicit or implicit preceding context. On the contrary, *'inna* (like *baynā/baynamā*) presents cataphoric background: it frames the narrative scene in which the dramatic development is about to take place.

46 For the notion of 'homodiegetic', see Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 245. In my corpus I could find only one example in which a setting clause introduced by *'inna* did not stem from a first-person narrative. In this example the predicate is not verbal but a prepositional phrase, thus the following presentative is introduced by *'idā*: *fa-'inna 'abda l-ḥakami yawman la-fi l-masğidi l-ḥarāmi 'idā fatan dāḥilun* (*Riwāyāt* 1, 64)—'One day while 'Abd al-Ḥakam was in the holy mosque, there came in a young man'.

(8.108) *fa-wallāhi 'innī la-'amšī naḥwa-hū [...]* 'id ḥaraġa naḥwa bābi banī sahmīn

By God, I was walking toward him [...] when suddenly he went out toward the gate of Banū Sahn. (*Maġāzī*, 31)

(8.109) *fa-wallāhi 'innī la-qā'idun fī 'ahl-ī 'id naẓartu 'ilā za'īnatin*

By God, I was sitting among my people when suddenly I noticed a woman in a camel-borne sedan. (*Sīra*, 2, 948)

#### 8.4.2 Presentative Clauses

Presentative clauses take the second position in the complex construction. Presentative clauses which involve the predicative paradigm are introduced by the particle 'idā and exhibit the pattern [nominal-phrase + predicative form].<sup>47</sup> The predicative paradigm comprises the triad of *yaf'alu*, the participle, and *qad fa'ala*. Interestingly, the participle in 'idā-clauses—rather than taking the accusative case (as in verbal complexes)—assumes, as a rule, the nominative case:<sup>48</sup>

(8.110) *fa-qāla unẓurū mā hādā l-'adānu fa-'idā baššārun yu'addīnu sakrāna*

And he said: 'Look what is this call!' And there was Baššār calling for prayer while drunk. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 261)

47 The nominal presentee after 'idā may be definite or indefinite. It either takes the nominative case or is realized as the genitive complement of the preposition *bi-* 'with'. However, when followed by a predicative form, the nominal presentee is nearly always attested in the nominative.

48 In my corpus, as well as in the major grammars of Classical Arabic, there are no examples of 'idā-presentatives in which the participle is attested in the accusative case. On the other hand, there are quite a few examples of presentatives introduced by *hādā* in direct speech, in which the participle takes the accusative, e.g.: *fa-qāla yā rasūla llāhi hādā 'umarū bnu l-ḥaṭṭāb mutawaššīhan l-sayfa* (*Sīra* 1, 227)—'And he said: O Messenger of God, [out] there is 'Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb girding the sword'. This double manifestation of the participle is explained by Bloch, *Presentative Structures*, as a semantogrammatical development of presentatives in Arabic, from 'amplified' constructions, in which the participle (or some other form) is adverbial (i.e. accusative), to 'proclitic' constructions, in which it is predicative (nominative). In a synchronic view, however, the fact that a fluctuation between both manifestations exists is by itself instructive: it reflects the adverbial-yet-kernel status of this 'amplifying' term, which, unlike other adverbials (e.g., temporal or locative), forms part of the predicative core of the clause, see above 8.2.

(8.111) *fa-ğītu ʾilā ʾibrāhīma l-mawṣiliyyi fa-ʾidā l-bābu maftūḥun wa-l-dihlizu qad kunisa wa-l-bawwābu qāʾidun*

I came to ʾIbrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, and behold, the door was opened, the hall was already swept, and the door-keeper was sitting. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 28)

(8.112) *fa-fataḥa-hā la-hū fa-ʾidā fi-hā šūratu ʾādama wa-ḍurriyyati-hī kulli-him fa-ʾidā kullu raḡulin maktūbun ʾinda-hū ʾaḡalu-hū wa-ʾidā ʾādamu qad kutiba la-hū ʾumru ʾalfi sanatin*

He opened it (i.e. His hand) for him, and behold, in it there was the picture of Adam and all his progeny, and there was the [life] term of each man written down with Him, and there was Adam, a term of thousand years already written down for him. (*Taʾrīḥ* 1, 156)

## 8.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed a paradigm of verbal forms which function as predicatives in complex predications. This paradigm consists of *yafʿalu*, the participle, and *qad faʿala*, marking an ongoing situation, a state, and an outcome, respectively. All three forms are co-temporal, either simultaneous (totally overlapping) or coincidental (partially overlapping) with the time frame established in the main clause. The predicative paradigm cross-cuts different syntactic levels: it is used in verbal complexes and circumstantial clauses at the (complex-)clause level, and in mutually dependent constructions at the text level, as summarized in table 8.2 below:

TABLE 8.2 *The predicative paradigm across the board*

	The predicative triad	Other verbal forms
verbal complexes	<i>yafʿalu</i> <i>fāʾilan/mafʿūlan</i> <i>qad faʿala</i>	<i>fāʿala</i> (auxiliary, perception) <i>sa-yafʿalu</i> (perception)
circumstantial clauses	<i>wa-huwa yafʿalu</i> <i>wa-huwa fāʾilun/mafʿūlun</i> <i>wa-qad faʿala</i>	

TABLE 8.2 *The predicative paradigm across the board (cont.)*

	The predicative triad	Other verbal forms
setting clauses	<i>baynā/baynamā huwa yafʿalu</i> <i>baynā/baynamā huwa fāʿilun</i> * <i>qad faʿala</i> not adjacent to <i>baynā/baynamā</i>	
presentative clauses	<i>ʾidā huwa yafʿalu</i> <i>ʾidā huwa fāʿilun/mafʿūlun</i> <i>ʾidā huwa qad faʿala</i>	

The identification of the predicative paradigm leads to some interesting observations with regard to the Classical Arabic verbal system in general. Firstly, by contrast to the general opinion (see above chapter 3), *faʿala* and *yafʿalu* do not function as a binary pair. As a predicative form, *faʿala* is quite marginal vis-à-vis the dominant role played by *yafʿalu* and its counterparts, the participle and *qad faʿala*. Secondly, despite their close syntactic *muḍāraʿa* ‘resemblance’ (see above 2.3.2), *yafʿalu* and the participle are distinct at several semantic levels, as presented in table 8.3 below:

TABLE 8.3 *yafʿalu vs. the participle*

	<i>yafʿalu</i>	Participle
Grammatical aspect	dynamic-progressive	static
Verbal attribute	habit / goal	property / appointment
Transitivity	(mostly) transitive	intransitive
Lexical informativity	higher	lower

Thirdly, it is clear that *qad faʿala* is not simply an extension of *faʿala*, at both the syntactic and semantic levels: (a) *qad faʿala* is far more frequent as a predicative, whereas *faʿala* usually functions as the main verb; and (b) *qad faʿala* indicates a temporally bounded situation, whereas *faʿala* indicates a self-contained event. These distinctions are summarized in table 8.4 below:

TABLE 8.4 *qad fa'ala* vs. *fa'ala*

	<i>qad fa'ala</i>	<i>fa'ala</i>
Favored syntactic position	predicative	main
Grammatical aspect	resultative	perfective-eventive
Temporal reference	coincidental	self-contained



## The Verbal Paradigm in the Dialogue

The last two chapters were dedicated to the analysis of the verbal paradigm at the (complex-)clause level: the function of the verbal forms in embedded, dependent, and mutually dependent clauses was examined. In this and in the following two chapters, I will move on to discuss the verbal paradigms at the text level. I draw a basic distinction between three text types: the dialogue, the narrative, and the generic utterance. This distinction is based on two parameters: (a) the reference point and (b) the overall cohesive structure of the text (see above 4.3). In the present chapter, the distribution and function of the verbal forms in the dialogue will be examined. Specifically, the effect of the context of situation on the interpretation of the verbal forms will be discussed.

### 9.1 Preliminaries

Dialogue, in non-technical language, is often taken to be synonymous with conversation. In this capacity, dialogue is the form in which the most basic and ordinary language—indeed, the form which human language was primarily designed for—manifests itself.<sup>1</sup> In yet a broader sense, dialogue is conceived of as not only the most basic form of language use, but as an inextricable component thereof, for language is interactional in its very nature, a ‘joint production’ of a speaker and an addressee.<sup>2</sup>

When used in a technical fashion, however, it is important to keep the two concepts of dialogue and conversation apart: while conversation refers to a type of communicative situation, dialogue refers to a type of textual structure.

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- 1 This idea has been expressed time and again in the literature: see Lyons, *Semantics*, 2, 637–638, arguing that ‘there is much in the structure of languages that can only be explained on the assumption that they have developed for communication in face-to-face interaction’; also in similar wording, Levinson, *Pragmatics*, 54.
  - 2 Tannen, *Talking Voices*, 12. In discussing the interactional nature of conversations, Tannen contends that a conversation is not simply ‘a matter of two (or more) people alternately taking the role of speaker and listener’, since both ‘speaking and listening include elements and traces of the other’.

An ordinary conversation is the most common situation in which a dialogue is realized, although other types of textual structures, such as narratives and generic utterances, may well be embedded in conversations. A literary work is another communicative situation in which dialogues are found. In this case, the dialogue may be viewed as yet another channel of story transmission, alternating with that of the narrative. Consider, for example, the following excerpt, in which the king's desire, presented in the form of direct speech, functions as a link within the sequence of events:

- (9.1) *tumma qāla li-l-yahūdi 'inna l-malika yurīdu ziyārata-kum fa-'ā'iddū nuzlan fa-'ā'addū-hu*  
 Then he said to the Jews: 'The king wants to visit you—so prepare the food [offered to the guest]!' So they prepared it. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 11)

Literary or represented dialogues are considerably different from ordinary dialogues in everyday conversation. For one thing, in literary dialogues the phatic component, or references to the 'mechanical requirements of talk', are far less encountered and sometimes even completely absent.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, in (non-performed) literary dialogues, certain features which make up what Tannen calls 'the poetics of conversational discourse' are missing, especially those marked by prosodic means.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, ordinary and literary dialogues are different in their non-referential (or informative) functions. In ordinary dialogues, the social function (i.e., the establishing of the relationships among the participants) appears to exhaust much of the efforts of the interlocutors, and may be considered in some cases to constitute the ultimate goal of the conversation. Thus, one may encounter many features in ordinary conversation whose presence cannot be explained in any (better) way than the marking of involvement and rapport.<sup>5</sup> Literary dialogues, by contrast, serve primarily an expressive function: besides transmitting information, the dialogue contributes to the

3 In her multi-dimensional model of discourse, Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers*, 24–25, refers to that aspect as the 'exchange structure' of discourse.

4 Tannen, *Talking Voices*, presents an extensive study of the features which contribute to the poetics or aesthetics of conversational discourse. These often manifest themselves through phonic or prosodic means. One could argue that punctuation marks in literary works serve a similar function. However, (original) punctuation is entirely absent from the classical works I have examined.

5 Tannen, *Talking Voices*, 13, argues that 'coherence and involvement are the goal—and, in frequent happy occurrences, the result—when discourse succeeds in creating meaning through familiar strategies'.

characterization of the *dramatis personae* and to the overall dramatic impact of the composition.<sup>6</sup>

Dialogues, then, may vary to a great deal depending on the communicative situation in which they are realized. However, there appear to be two essential properties of dialogue which characterize this type of textual structure, regardless of the particular—spoken or written, ordinary or literary—form it assumes. The first is related to the deictic nature of the dialogue; the latter to its cohesive structure. The dialogue is egocentric: the identity of the persons involved, as well as the spatiotemporal coordinates, are all determined with respect to the speaking subject. Every utterance in a dialogue is revealing of a certain ‘self’, situated in a specific social and cultural context, holding a certain stance, and viewing reality from a particular vantage point. The dialogue is also interactional: it always consists of an exchange between (at least) two involved and active parties. Being egocentric and interactional, the dialogue is distinct, on the one hand, from generic utterances, which are devoid of particular reference, and on the other, from narratives (or other monologic structures), in which only one party actively contributes to discourse. These two properties largely determine (and, from the analyst’s perspective, explain) the bulk of syntactic structures that are found in dialogues and the meanings they are designed to convey.

Although often taken to be the most basic form of discourse, dialogues present a tremendous structural complexity and variability. This may be explained by the fact that a dialogue is embedded in a social activity whose purpose is not simply informative, but also (and even to a greater extent) expressive and persuasive. The interactional component is therefore fundamental in analyzing the structure of dialogues. It is not without reason that speech-act theories, and pragmatics in general, were primarily oriented to dialogic utterances, since in dialogues structure and meaning are always integrated with the component of action. As Schiffrin points out, cohesion in discourse (‘discourse’ implying, for the most part, conversation) is achieved through a (successful) integration of these three components, i.e. structure, meaning, and action, which come into play at several dimensions: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. In her words: ‘Local coherence in discourse is thus defined as the outcome of joint efforts from interactants to integrate knowing, meaning, saying, and doing.’<sup>7</sup>

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6 In literary works, the use of the same strategies that are found in ordinary conversations is never there for its own sake, but always as part of the artistic or mimetic act.

7 Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers*, 29.

The structure of dialogues, then, can be approached from several angles. In the present study, the structure of dialogues in Classical Arabic prose is not explored in its entirety, but rather the discussion focuses on the verbal paradigms which operate in them. Specifically, I will examine the indicative affirmative forms occurring in main clauses, although, for the sake of coherence, a short review of the negated forms will also be presented. It should be noted that the following discussion of dialogue clauses does not fit strictly with either the standard classification of sentence-types (i.e., declarative, imperative, interrogative) or with a certain typology of speech-acts; rather, it follows from the analysis of the verbal paradigms which were found to be used in different types of clauses, thus the classification may be said to reflect both syntactic and pragmatic aspects of the examined clauses.

## 9.2 Declarative Clauses

Declarative clauses are considered to be unmarked with respect to other sentence-types (or moods). They are the most frequently occurring type of clauses and, quite often, they do not include any positive marker of their 'declarative' meaning.<sup>8</sup> As for their use, declarative clauses are employed in the dialogue for a great number of speech-acts. The fact that they are commonly associated with a descriptive or representative function is not so much suggested by authentic linguistic evidence, as by the history of language study (or better, its philosophical sources). Proper declaratives, so to speak, which serve a purely descriptive function, are usually of generic nature (see below chapter 11). As particular clauses, declaratives in the dialogue come close to having a descriptive function when they serve to express a mental state or perception, that is, when they are used as external verbalizations of internal states or processes (see below 9.2.1). Otherwise, declaratives are often used to state a certain position or offer support to this position, that is, to express an argument. We shall see below (9.2.2) that, although no explicit marker of the declarative meaning exists, Classical Arabic does have an exponent for the argumentative function of a clause, namely, the introductory *'inna*.

As mentioned above (9.1), dialogue is considered to be the most basic form of language use. For this reason, grammars usually quote examples from dialogue in order to illustrate the typical meaning of a verbal form. A clause such as presented in [9.2] could have served well the discussion of the tense-aspect opposi-

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8 Cf. König and Siemund, *Speech Act*, 284ff.

tion marked by *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*, the first indicating past perfective meaning, the latter indicating non-past (or present-future) imperfective meaning:

- (9.2) *wayla-kum qataltum 'abā-hu bi-l-'amsi wa-'aqtulu-hū l-yawma*  
 Woe unto you! You killed his father yesterday and am I to kill him today?! (*Sīra* 1, 222)

There are two basic problems with such an analysis of the meanings of *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*. Firstly, this analysis is usually generalized by the grammarians so as to account for all the cases which exist in the language (see above chapter 3). Secondly, it reduces the functional complexity of the verbal forms to pure, clear-cut temporal or aspectual notions. Clearly, in [9.2], as suggested by the translation, *'aqtulu-hū* cannot be simply understood as an assertion of future event. Rather, this form involves the modal sense of obligation, refuted by an implied tone of reproach. But not only the interference of modal nuances in the temporal interpretation of the verbal forms challenges the neat tense-aspect opposition mentioned above. The precise meanings of tense and aspect, too, are not as self-evident as often taken to be in the frame of a dialogue. Consider, for instance, the following examples:

- (9.3) *qāla māḍā tasma'īna qālat 'asma'u riḡālan yaqūlūna yā 'āla l-'awsī wa-riḡālan yaqūlūna yā 'āla l-ḥazraḡi qāla l-'āna ḥamiya l-qitālu*  
 He said: 'What do you hear?' She said: 'I hear men saying "O people of 'Aws [come to battle]" and men saying "O people of Ḥazraḡ [come to battle]."' He said: 'Now the battle is fierce.' (*Riwāyāt* 2, 47)
- (9.4) *qāla buraydatu 'arkabu l-'āna fa-'ātī-kum bi-ḡam'in katīfin min qawm-ī*  
 Burayda said: 'I will ride now and come [back] to you with a group of tough men from my people.' (*Maḡāzī*, 405)

In both examples the adverb *l-'āna* 'now' is used to signal the current relevance, presence, or actuality of the events from the point of view of the speaker. Thus, in [9.3], it is hard to claim that the *fa'ala* form *ḥamiya* refers to a past complete event. Even if we interpret it as 'to become fierce', the impression of this process still abides at the time when the clause is uttered. The same applies to [9.4], in which the *yaf'alu* forms *'arkabu* and *'ātī* cannot be said to refer to an unapproached future, for the intention to act is already present at the time when the clause is uttered. That the speaker's 'now' coincides with both impressions (or outcomes) and intentions raises a question as to the reality of a rigidly sliced time line (at least) in the sphere of the dialogue.

All this should not be taken to mean that tense and aspect distinctions do not exist in the dialogue, but only that they do not exist in a pure, absolute fashion. In the dialogue, temporal and aspectual meanings are always conflated with other meanings, modal or, at yet a higher level, pragmatic, which stem from the egocentricity (or subjectivity) of the dialogue and from its interactional nature.

The following discussion of declarative clauses is divided into four sections. First, plain declaratives are examined. Second, clauses introduced by the argumentative *'inna* are discussed and, thereafter, asseverations taking the form of the *'inna la*-pattern. Last, declaratives in which negative forms are used are shortly reviewed.

### 9.2.1 *Plain Declaratives*

Plain declarative clauses exhibit the pattern of either the verbal clause or the nominal clause, not initiated by an introductory or a modificatory operator (see above 6.2.2.2). As discussed above (4.5), there is a certain correlation between the verbal form and the clausal pattern in which it occurs, so that *yaf'alu* forms are more prone to occur in nominal clauses than *fa'ala* forms. In general, extrapositions are more common with the first person than with the second and third persons. This, too, can be explained by the egocentric nature of dialogues, in which the extensive mention of 'I' is not motivated by special conditions (e.g., by contrast to another person), but serves to re-activate the most natural and accessible topic of discourse. The participle, in itself a non-finite form, always occurs in the nominal clause pattern.

Plain declarative clauses provide a good syntactic environment to examine the interaction between the verbal lexeme (the lexical aspect) and the verbal form (the grammatical aspect). As noted above (7.2), the verbal lexeme may be characterized according to two semantic distinctions, namely, boundedness and analyzability into internal phases. As for the verbal forms, the distinction is drawn between forms which do not impose a certain bounding of the situation, i.e., *yaf'alu*, *fa'ala*, and *fā'ilun*, and those which impose such bounding, i.e., *sawfa/sa-yaf'alu*, *qad fa'ala*, and *maf'ūlun*.

The temporal value of verbs in the dialogue is determined relative to the zero-time of the dialogue. Far from its graphic representations, the zero-time of the dialogue is not simply a medial point on a logically constructed time axis. Rather, it converges with the subjective vantage-point of the speaker, with respect to which not only temporal but also aspectual and modal meanings, as well as pragmatic motivations, are determined. It will therefore be more accurate to define the reference point of the dialogue using a comprehensive term such as 'the situation of the speaker' (see above 4.2). In the following, I will

attempt to outline the way by which the semantic and grammatical properties of the verbal form interact with the specific situation of the speaker so as to produce the set of meanings found in dialogues. I shall use relative terms such as posterior and anterior to refer to the time reference of the form, saving the absolute terms, e.g. future and past, to indicate the corresponding logical notions.

The verbal form *yaf'alu*, with unbounded lexemes denoting activities or states, is normally interpreted as concurrent with the zero-time of the dialogue. In [9.5]–[9.7], *yaf'alu* occurs with cognitive verbs, indicating perception or mental states. Although the examples exhibit all three persons, with this type of verbs, *yaf'alu* is by far more attested in the first person. This may be explained by the fact that one is more inclined to make assertions about his internal state than about the mental states of others:

- (9.5) *'asma'u riġālan yaqūlūna yā 'āla l-'awsī wa-riġālan yaqūlūna yā 'āla l-ḥazraġi*  
I hear men saying 'O people of 'Aws [come to battle]' and men saying 'O people of Ḥazraġ [come to battle]'. (*Riḥwāyāt* 2, 47)
- (9.6) *ta'lamu wallāhi mā bi-makkata min qurašīyyin wa-lā qurašīyyatin la-hū naššun fa-ṣā'idan [...] 'illā wa-qad ba'ata bi-hī ma'a-nā*  
You know, by God, there is not a man or a women in Mecca who has one *našš* or more [...] but he has sent it with us. (*Maġāzī*, 41)
- (9.7) *al-ḥiwānu ḥiwānu-hū fa-huwa yurīdu 'an yudassima-hū*  
The table belongs to him and he wants to grease it. (*Buḥalā'*, 45)

With verbs denoting a continuous or recurring activity, such as *'abada* 'to worship', *yaf'alu* also has a concurrent meaning:

- (9.8) *fa-naḥnu na'budu l-malā'ikata wa-l-yahūdu ta'budu 'uzayran*  
We worship the angels while the Jews worship 'Uzayr. (*Sīra* 1, 236)

With bounded lexemes, the verbal form *yaf'alu* is interpreted as having a posterior time reference relative to the zero-time of the dialogue. However, futurity expressed by *yaf'alu* appears to involve in most cases a modal nuance, especially in the first and second persons:

- (9.9) *qālā naḥruġu fa-nuqātilu-hū fa-bakā wa-qāla lā taḥruġā fa-wallāhi 'inna-hū la-nabīyyun*

They both said: 'We will go out and fight him.' He cried and said: 'Don't go out, for, by God, he is a prophet!' (*Mağāzī*, 33)

In [9.9] *naḥruḡu fa-nuqātilu-hū* do not express a pure prediction, but in fact, a statement about the speakers' intention to act. In such cases, intention is conflated with prediction to such an extent that one cannot regard the latter as the 'focal use' of *yaf'alu*.<sup>9</sup> Motion and action verbs such as represented by *naḥruḡu* and *nuqātilu* consist of both the components of intention and prediction. While intention is experienced by the speaker at the present moment of speech, prediction is less certain and always hinges upon the limited epistemological position of a particular subject (in generic clauses, by contrast, no such limits exist). Cognitive verbs, such as those illustrated above, are different from motion and action verbs in their semantic structure. In these verbs, intention and action are not so easily separable, at least in the case of feelings and sensations of which our mind is only receptive and which we normally have no control over (unless we take a deliberate, strongly intended action). However, it is not impossible (even if rare) to find *yaf'alu* forms which predict a certain mental state. In such cases, the reference to future time is imposed by the surrounding context. This is the case in [9.10], where the future interpretation of *wa-yakrahūna* 'they will hate' is entailed by the prophetic context of the clause:

(9.10) *wa-hādā l-baladu mawlidu-hū wa-mab'atu-hū tumma yuḥriḡu-hū qawmu-hū min-hā wa-yakrahūna mā ḡā'a bi-hī*

This country is his birthplace and place of mission; then his people will expel him from there and despise what he has come with (i.e., the new faith). (*Ta'riḥ* 3, 1144)

9 Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca, *Evolution*, 280, argue that 'the future is less a temporal category and more a category resembling agent-oriented and epistemic modality'. Also Lyons, *Semantics*, 2, 815–816, states that 'we are seldom in a position to lay claim to knowledge of the future [...]; thus the future tense 'is rarely, if ever, used solely for making statements or prediction, or posing and asking factual questions about the future. It is also used in a wider or narrower range of non-factive utterances, involving supposition, inference, wish, intention and desire'. While I agree that a pure assertion of future events is possible only for those who hold a privileged epistemological position, e.g. prophets, I do think that the component of intention or desire in a future utterance, by contrast to prediction, is very much 'factive'. For this reason, I have described [9.9] as a 'statement of intention'. Cf. also Fleischman, *Future*, 30, reviewing the discussion of the notion of future as a 'projection of the subjective, experiential present'. The modal value of the future is, accordingly, a projection of 'modalized notions', such as volition and obligation, which are 'rooted in the present'.



Explicit reference to future time in the context induces a posterior reading of static verbs, whereas explicit reference to present time may induce a concurrent reading of dynamic verbs. The present time does not necessarily coincide with the exact moment of speech, but it can also be a longer span of time which forms part of the speaker's 'actual referential concern'.<sup>10</sup> As Janssen articulately points out, 'it is the actual referential concern to the speaker that permits the event at issue to be situated, with regard to the time of the utterance, within a broad temporal region in positions that vary significantly'.<sup>11</sup> Such an understanding of the meaning of the present tense, as the form marking an actual, focal, and relevant situation, obviates the otherwise puzzling questions as to the generality or semantic indefiniteness of the present tense. Thus, concurrent *yaf'alu* forms may equally report on momentary activities overlapping with the speech time, or on habitual activities characteristic of the present situation of the speaker:

- (9.11) *yā sayyid-ī l-sā'ata wallāhi taḥruḡu rūḥ-ī*  
My lord, *now*, by God, my spirit flies away. (*Riḡwāyāt* 1, 249)
- (9.12) *fa-qāla yā rasūla llāhi kayfa ya'tī-ka l-waḥyu fa-qāla rasūlu llāhi 'aḥyānan ya'tī-nī miṭla ṣalṣalati l-ḡarasi*  
He said: 'O Messenger of God, how does the revelation come upon you?' The Messenger of God said: 'Sometimes it comes upon me like the ringing of a bell ...' (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4)

There are two other cases in which *yaf'alu*, occurring with bounded dynamic lexemes, is nonetheless interpreted as having a concurrent meaning. In these, no explicit reference to the present situation is made. In the first case, *yaf'alu* serves to externalize or verbalize an internal observation:

- (9.13) *wayla-ka tuḥarribu-nī ka-'annī maṭlūbun*  
Woe to you! you force me to flee as if I were a wanted man. (*Buḡalā'*, 69)
- (9.14) *tumma ḡa'ala ya'malu safīnatan fa-yamurrūna fa-yas'alūna-hū fa-yaqūlu 'a'malu-hā safīnatan fa-yasharūna min-hu wa-yaqūlūna ta'malu safīnatan fī l-barri fa-kayfa taḡrī*

<sup>10</sup> Janssen, *Preterit as Definite*, 169.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

Then he started to build an ark and they passed by and asked [what was he doing] so he said: 'I am building an ark from it.' They made fun of him and said: 'You are building an ark on land, how could it float?!' (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 186)

In [9.13] the speaker notices that he is forced to flee, and in [9.14] the speaker (echoed later by his addressees), explains the sight about which he is asked. These examples resemble those in which perception verbs are involved (see [5] above), only in this case the clause does not communicate direct perception but an observation involving further cognitive calculation.

The second case in which dynamic *yaf'alu* forms may assume a concurrent reading is with speech verbs, specifically with *qāla* 'to say'. The saying reported by *yaqūlu* is understood as still abiding at the time of speech. Such an interpretation of the verbal form suggests that it is not the event of saying that is being referred to, but the content of the saying:

- (9.15) *fa-qāla lī yaqūlu la-ka 'amīru l-mu'minīna 'aǧǧil 'ilay-ya*  
 He said to me: "The Commander of the Faithful tells you: "Hurry up [and come] to me." (*Riwāyāt* 1, 65)

To recapitulate the hitherto discussion of the meaning of *yaf'alu* in the dialogue: with unbounded, static and dynamic lexemes, *yaf'alu* refers to a concurrent ongoing situation; with bounded lexemes, *yaf'alu* is interpreted as referring to an intended posterior situation. Deviations from these general tendencies are triggered by a specific context, either one carrying an explicit reference to the future (e.g. prophecy) or one carrying an explicit reference to the present moment or situation. External verbalizations of observed situations are also concurrent with the dialogue time.

The verbal form *yaf'alu* can be preceded by the modifiers *la-*, *qad*, and *sawfa/sa-* (see above 5.2.2). The form *la-yaf'alu* will be discussed below in section 9.2.3. The modified *qad yaf'alu* is scarcely found in dialogue clauses; it is usually used in generic clauses (see below 11.3). In the dialogue, *qad yaf'alu* is attested with the verbs *ra'ā* 'to see' and *'araḥa* 'to know', mostly in the first person. It appears that in such cases, as suggested by [9.16], *qad* has an assertory function: it serves to stress the validity of the assertion expressed by the plain *yaf'alu*:

- (9.16) *qum 'ilay-hi fa-qad 'arā llāha 'atā-ka bi-mā yuḥzī-ka*  
 Get up [and go] to him, for I see that God brought you something that will humiliate you. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 247)

The modified form *sa-yaf'alu*, and to a lesser extent, *sawfa yaf'alu*, are more frequently attested in the dialogue. *sawfa/sa-yaf'alu* serve to refer to posterior occurrences, with either bounded or unbounded lexemes. With the latter types of lexemes, one can observe a neat opposition between the concurrent *yaf'alu* (see [6] above) and the posterior *sawfa/sa-yaf'alu*, as illustrated below:

- (9.17) *tumma ġa'ala ya'malu safīnatan fa-yamurrūna fa-yas'alūna-hū fa-ya-qūlu 'a'malu-hā safīnatan fa-yasharūna min-hu wa-yaqūlūna ta'malu safīnatan fī l-barri fa-kaṣfa taġrī fa-yaqūlu sawfa ta'lamūna*  
 Then he started to build an ark and they passed by and asked [what was he doing] so he said: 'I am building an ark from it.' They made fun of him and said: 'You are building an ark on land, how could it float?!' So he said: 'You will know.' (*Ta'rīḥ* 1, 186)

The verbal form *fa'ala* refers either to anterior occurrences, with dynamic lexemes, or to persistent situations, with stative lexemes:

- (9.18) *fa-qāla 'umarū yā rasūla llāhi ġi'tu-ka li-'ūmina bi-llāhi wa-bi-rasūli-hī wa-bi-mā ġā'a min-a llāhi*  
 'Umar said: 'O Messenger of God, I came to you to express my belief in God and in His Messenger and in what he has brought from God.' (*Sīra* 1, 227)
- (9.19) *fa-qāla l-raġulu 'āmantu bi-mā ġi'ta bi-hī*  
 The man said: 'I believe in what you have brought.' (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 26)

The persistent meaning of static *fa'ala* forms is explained by the fact that *fa'ala*, by contrast to *qad fa'ala*, does not mark the verbal situation as necessarily bounded. Thus, *'āmantu* in [9.19] depicts an event whose imprints, its relevance and actuality, extend to the dialogue time. Note that the distinction between anteriority and persistence marked by *fa'ala* exists only in the dialogue. In the narrative, the chain structure imposes a perfective-eventive reading of *fa'ala*, regardless of the type of the verbal lexeme (see below 10.2.1).

Interestingly, there is a small group of stative lexemes with which *fa'ala* is not used to indicate persistence but rather concurrence. Two such lexemes are *ṣadaqa* 'to tell the truth' and *kaḍaba* 'to tell lies'. When directed to the addressee, *ṣadaqa* and *kaḍaba* do not report on anterior events, but judge one's words as either true or false. To some extent, *ṣadaqa* and *kaḍaba* resemble verbs such as 'to name' or 'to appoint' in having a similar performative force (see below

9.3). The (semi-)performativity of *ṣadaqa* and *kaḍaba* may explain their concurrent reading:

- (9.20) *ṣadaqtumā wa-kaḍaba man qāla ġayra dālīka*  
 You are both right and anyone who says otherwise lies. (*Sīra* 1, 248)

Other stative lexemes which indicate concurrence with *fa'ala* are *šā'a* 'to want' and *'aḥabba* 'to like', when referring to a current desire of the speaker:

- (9.21) [...] *wa-qad kabirat sinn-ī wa-raḡqa 'aẓm-ī wa-'aḥbibtu liqā'a rabb-ī*  
 [...] I have grown old, my bones have become tender, and I desire to meet my Lord. (*Mağāzī*, 213)

In cases such as [9.21], the speaker uses *fa'ala* in order to mark politeness and humbleness. Such examples are particularly challenging to the common temporal-aspectual analysis of *fa'ala*, since it is not the past-perfective meaning of *fa'ala*, but its association with remoteness and indirectness, which makes this form suitable for polite requests.

In contrast to *fa'ala*, the verbal form *qad fa'ala*, with both static and dynamic lexemes, marks a bounded situation. With stative lexemes, *qad fa'ala* indicates the completion of the transition from one state to another (e.g., 'not knowing' → 'knowing'):

- (9.22) *qad 'araftu maqālata-ka fa-rāġi' 'aqla-ka wa-'lam 'anna li-kulli 'insānin manzilatan wa-qadran*  
 I already know your position, but, reconsider the matter! Know that every man has an [assigned] status and rank! (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 66)

Resultativity, while very characteristic of *qad fa'ala*, is not the only meaning expressed by this form. In the sphere of the dialogue, *qad fa'ala* displays a complex semantic structure, consisting of a cluster of temporal, aspectual, and modal meanings. The present discussion is not aimed to determine which of these meanings is the original meaning of *qad fa'ala*.<sup>12</sup> Rather, the goal is to

12 In the Arabistic literature, one finds several attempts to explain the multiplicity of functions fulfilled by *qad*. Testen, *Asseverative la-*, 85 ff., argues that the original role of *qad*, from which its other meanings are derived, is the marking of perfective aspect. A different view is presented in Bahloul, *Arabic Verb*, chapter 5, who contends that the invariant meaning of *qad*, underlying all of its uses, is assertorial. In my view, the existing data does not provide us with enough evidence to reach a decisive conclusion. Nevertheless, the fact

examine the interaction of *qad fa'ala* and the surrounding context in order to understand the conditions in which a certain meaning suggests itself more strongly than others.

We shall first look at a case where the temporal and aspectual meanings of *qad fa'ala* surface:

(9.23) *lā tantazīrū-nī bi-l-'akli fa-qad 'akaltu*

Don't wait for me with the food, for I have already eaten. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 40)

In [9.23] it is clear that *qad 'akaltu* 'I have already eaten' refers to a complete event of eating, and hence to the resultant state of satiation, which explains the speaker's request not to postpone the meal time on his behalf. In [9.24], by contrast, the emphasis lies not on the fact that the event is already completed, but on the fact that it was indeed carried out:

(9.24) *wayḥa-ka 'a-hādā šī'ru-ka llaḏī 'anšadta-hū l-farazdaq qaltu na'am fa-qāla qad wallāhi 'aṣabta wallāhi la-'in kāna hādā l-farzadaqu šā'iran la-qad ḥasada-ka*

Woe unto you, is this your poem that you sang to al-Farazdaq? I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'By God, you surely did [it] well! If this al-Farazdaq is a singer then he must envy you.' (*Riwāyāt* 1, 13)

The response *qad 'aṣabta* 'you did well', corroborated by the oath expression *wallāhi* 'by God', has an assertorial function: it stresses the fact that the event of singing exceeded the expectations of the speaker and that it is therefore remarkable.

It is interesting to notice the different uses of *qad fa'ala* in the dialogue vis-à-vis the narrative. First of all, *qad fa'ala* in the dialogue may occur in main clauses whereas in the narrative it only occurs in dependent circumstantial clauses (when not embedded, see below 10.3.1). Secondly, in the dialogue, *qad fa'ala* is mostly used to present the background or offer an explanation to a certain position, the same as argumentative *'inna*-clauses. This causal meaning of *qad fa'ala* is evidently related to its anterior meaning. In the narrative, on the other hand, the anterior meaning seems to predominate. Consider, for instance, the following excerpt in which the same event, viz. *qad 'ahlaka*, is mentioned twice, first in the dialogue and then in the narrative:

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that *qad fa'ala* is generally incompatible with negation may be taken as evidence for the proposal that its core meaning is assertorial.

- (9.25) *'a-la 'abširū fa-qad zahara l-nağāšiyu wa-qad 'ahlaka llāhu 'aduwwa-hū [...] wa-rağ'a l-nağāšiyu wa-qad 'ahlaka llāhu 'aduwwa-hū*  
 Rejoice, for the Negus has conquered and God has destroyed his enemy [...]; and the Negus came back after God had destroyed his enemy. (*Sira* 1, 221)

In the dialogue, *qad 'ahlaka* clearly serves to explain the request expressed by the imperative *'abširū*. In the narrative, *qad 'ahlaka* is part of the chronological transmission of the story. In both cases, neither the temporal nor the causal meaning can be ruled out; yet, in each of them, due to the different text type, a chronological or a logical interpretation of *qad fa'ala* suggests itself more strongly.

The active participle *fā'ilun*, in the dialogue as elsewhere (see above 7.2), does not impose a certain bounding of the verbal situation. In contrast, the passive participle *maf'ūlun* depicts a terminally bounded situation. With unbounded lexemes, *fā'ilun* refers to a situation concurrent with the zero-time of the dialogue. As opposed to *yaf'alu*, *fā'ilun* does not indicate an ongoing or recurring situation, but a static one:

- (9.26) *qad sami'tunna sū'i raddi-hī 'alay-kunna wa-'anā ḥā'ifun miṭla-hū min-hu*  
 You have heard his offensive reply to you and I fear of [getting] the same [reply] from him. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 11)

With bounded lexemes, *fā'ilun* is interpreted as having a posterior time reference relative to the zero-time of the dialogue. In many of these cases, *fā'ilun* serves to express an immediate future.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to *yaf'alu*, which states the speaker's intention to take action (and, hence, predicts the occurrence of that action), *fā'ilun* states the readiness of the speaker to take action. As illustrated in [9.27], the act of going out is that settled in the speaker's mind, so as to initiate the process in effect:

- (9.27) *fa-qāla 'utbatu lā šay'a 'anā ḥāriğun*  
 'Utba said: 'Nothing. I am leaving!' (*Mağāzī*, 38)

13 Immediate future forms, according to Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca, *Evolution*, 244 ff., are 'restricted to events which are imminent or about to occur in the immediate future'. As a matter of fact, immediate futures may be regarded as not futures at all, since rather than predictions, these forms amount more to 'assertions announcing the imminence of an event' (273).

The *subjective* opposition between intention and readiness marked by *yaf'alu* and *fā'ilun* should not be simply reduced to the *objective* opposition between far and near future. In the dialogue, the temporal location of the events appears less important and, in fact, derives from the speaker's subjective evaluation as to the feasibility or probability of the events to take place.

The passive participle, with both bounded and unbounded lexemes, depicts a resultant state, concurrent with the zero-time of the dialogue:

- (9.28) *yā rasūla llāhi l-qawmu mad'ūrūna fazi'ūna*  
 O Messenger of God, the people are scared and frightened. (*Maḡāzī*, 54)

Table 9.1 below summarizes the discussion of the functions of the verbal forms in declarative clauses:

TABLE 9.1 *The verbal forms in declarative clauses*

Verbal form	Verbal lexeme		Context/lexeme-specific
	unbounded	bounded	
<i>yaf'alu</i>	concurrent ongoing situation	posterior intention	concurrent explicit present ( <i>l-sā'ata</i> ) observations, sayings ( <i>yaqūlu</i> ) posterior explicit future (prophecy)
<i>sa(wfā)-yaf'alu</i>	posterior		
<i>qad yaf'alu</i>			concurrent-assertive <i>'arā, 'a'rifu</i>
<i>fā'ala</i>	persistent	anterior	concurrent-indirect/remote <i>šā'a, 'aḡabba</i> concurrent-'performative' <i>šadaqa, kaḡaba</i>
<i>qad fā'ala</i>	anterior-complete-causal-assertive		

Verbal form	Verbal lexeme		Context/lexeme-specific
	unbounded	bounded	
<i>fā'ilun</i>	concurrent state	posterior readiness	
<i>maf'ūlun</i>	concurrent result		

### 9.2.2 *Argumentative 'inna-clauses*

The display of arguments constitutes a great part of any dialogue exchange. An argument, as Schiffrin defines it, is 'discourse through which speakers support disputable positions'.<sup>14</sup> It comprises, accordingly, three parts: position, dispute, and support. An argumentative clause, i.e., a clause which contributes to the construction of an argument, can be used to convey any of these parts. Quite often, clauses which express support or dispute do not follow the explicit mention of a position, but implicitly, by endorsing or rejecting a certain position, they also make plain what its content is about.

Positions, i.e., assertions about situations and events, beliefs and ideas, are often expressed by plain declaratives. However, they can also take the marked form of *'inna*-clauses. The operator *'inna* is used for a number of functions.<sup>15</sup> One of its major roles is to introduce what may be described as 'expository' clauses, i.e., clauses which outline a certain position. Expository *'inna*-clauses do not occur freely in the dialogue, but are found adjacent to clauses expressing commands, demands, requests or questions, whether these are directly addressed or only inferred. Expository *'inna*-clauses initiate thus bipartite structures, in which the first part, the expository unit, implies the second part, the unit addressing the second party.

The verbal paradigm in expository *'inna*-clauses consist of *yaf'alu*, *fā'ala*, *qad fā'ala*, and the participle. As far as their temporal, aspectual, and modal meanings are concerned, these forms exhibit the same distinctions as the ones observed in plain declaratives, as illustrated below:

<sup>14</sup> Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers*, 18.

<sup>15</sup> The syntactic distribution and discourse functions of *'inna* were thoroughly studied in Marmorstein, *'Inna-Sentences*.



- (9.29) *'inna-nī 'asmuru l-laylata ma'a 'amīri l-mu'minīna fa-hal tuḥsinu 'an taḥduwa*  
I will spend the night chatting with the Commander of the Faithful—  
are you good in singing the songs which urge the camels? (*Riwāyāt* 1, 25)
- (9.30) *'inna raḡulan min 'aṣḥābi-ka qatala raḡulayni min qawm-ī wa-la-humā min-ka 'amānun wa-'ahdun fa-b'aṭ bi-diyati-himā 'ilay-nā*  
A man from your companions killed two men of my people, while they  
had your protection and agreement, so send us their blood money!  
(*Maḡāzī*, 364)
- (9.31) *'innī qad ḡi'tu bi-'irsāli-ka fa-mā 'inda-ka*  
I have come with your release, what do you have at your [disposal]?  
(*Riwāyāt* 2, 190)
- (9.32) *yā ma'sara l-'uṣāti 'innī muḡtirun fa-'aḡtirū*  
O people of disobedience, I am breaking my fast, so break your fast!  
(*Maḡāzī*, 47)

Argumentative *'inna*-clauses are not only used to display a position but also to explicate a certain position or appeal to the addressee. In such cases, the bipartite structure shows an inverted order, in which the *'inna*-clause follows a (direct or indirect) command, request or question. The position which explicative *'inna*-clauses serve to support is often not explicitly stated, but implicit in the content of the *'inna*-clause itself. The explicative *'inna* thus encodes both sides of the argument (i.e., the position and the reaction to this position), thereby encapsulating its dialogic nature.<sup>16</sup>

Explicative *'inna*-clauses feature the verbal forms *yaf'alu*, *fa'ala*, *qad fa'ala*, and the participle, and to a smaller extent, *sa-yaf'alu*, as illustrated in the following set of examples:

- (9.33) *iḥmū la-nā zuḥūra-nā fa-'innā naḡāfu 'an nu'tā min warā'i-nā*  
Shield our backs, for we fear that we will be approached from behind  
us! (*Maḡāzī*, 224)

16 According to Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers*, 18, arguments incorporate both monologic and dialogic properties, the latter have to do with 'the interactional organization of dispute'. The rhetoric of dispute is sometimes captured in the most compact lexical items, e.g.: Arabic's *'inna*, Hebrew's *harei*, or *car* in French (for the latter, see Larcher, *Le 'segmentateur'*, 60).

- (9.34) *'anā 'abdu-ka yā 'amīra l-mu'minīna fa-qul mā šī'ta siwā baššārin fa-'innī ḥalaftu fī 'amri-hī bi-yamīnin ḡamūsīn*  
I am your servant, O Commander of the Faithful; ask whatever you want but Baššār, for I took the ḡamūs-oath in his case. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 258)
- (9.35) *fā-tanaḥḥā nāḥiyatan wa-l-samā'u tumṭiru 'alay-hi yaqūlu 'utbatu 'inna ḥādā huwa la-nakdun wa-'inna-hum qad 'aḥadū suqqā'a-kum*  
He moved aside and the heavens rained down upon him. 'Utba said: 'This is verily a misfortune, for they have already taken your water-carriers!' (*Maḡāzī*, 52)
- (9.36) *intaliq bi-nā 'ilā 'adnā mā'i l-qawmi fa-'innī 'ālimun bi-hā wa-bi-qulubihā*  
Let us go to the point nearest to the water of the people, for I know it and its wells. (*Maḡāzī*, 53)
- (9.37) *uṣduq-i l-malika 'ammā sami'ta fa-'innī sa-'uḥadditu-hū bi-mitli ḥadīti-ka*  
Tell the king the truth about what you have heard, for I will give him the same account as yours. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 193)

It is important to note that the explicative meaning may be imparted by other syntactic means, such as the connective *fā*-. The verbal form, too, specifically *qad fā'ala* which carries a causal meaning, is sufficient in marking the explicative relation. However, unlike the other exponents, *'inna* is the only grammatical device which indicates explicitly (unambiguously) the explicative relation.

### 9.2.3 *Asseverative 'inna la-clauses*

Besides its argumentative function, the operator *'inna* also has an expressive function. The fact that *'inna* marks *tawkīd* 'emphasis' was recognized by the Arab grammarians, and it is, in fact, the meaning most commonly associated with this particle. The present discussion is not concerned with the semantics of *'inna*; however, some clarifications as to the distribution and use of the emphatic *'inna* are deemed necessary.

It should first be stated that *'inna* alone does not embody an emphatic meaning, but only when it introduces a nominal clause whose predicate is preceded by the modifier *la*-. Thus, the emphasis expressed by *'inna la*-clauses should be attributed to the overall construction of the clause (and historically, perhaps, to the emphatic *la*- alone). Secondly, the exact meaning of 'emphasis', which in itself is quite vague, should be examined more closely. Emphasis can be applied

to various parts of the predication. In the case of a verbal predication, each of its constitutive elements, i.e., the subject, the verbal lexeme, and the predicative link (the 'nexus'), can be emphasized.<sup>17</sup> It is the latter constitutive element, namely, the predicative relation, that the *'inna la-* construction is emphasizing, thereby assigning the clause an asseverative force. The emphasizing of the predicative link, or the 'nexus focusing mechanism', is characterized by Cohen as 'a contrast of polarity applied to the nexus, or in other words, the contrast between the affirmative and the negative or even mere implication of negative, such as doubt'.<sup>18</sup> The content to which the asseveration reacts may be explicitly stated in the surrounding context or presupposed by the speaker. Nexus focusing is viewed by Cohen as inherently modal, since it 'marks the propositional content as initially in doubt'.<sup>19</sup> In my general classification of the verbal forms (see above chapter 5), I drew a distinction between modally unmarked (indicative) forms and modally marked forms. The employment of indicative forms in asseverative clauses is thus one case in which these acquire a specialized modal meaning (another case will be discussed in section 9.4 below). However, this meaning cannot be attributed to the verbal form alone, as it emerges from the entire construction of the clause.

The verbal paradigm in asseverative clauses consists of *yaf'alu* and the participle, to which the modifier *la-* is prefixed. Not only with unbounded, but also with bounded lexemes, *yaf'alu* refers to an ongoing or recurring situation, concurrent with the zero-time of the dialogue:

(9.38) *hal tadrūna li-mā qāma muḥammadun qālū lā wallāhi mā nadrī wa-mā tadrī 'anta qāla balā waltawrāti 'innī la-ʾadrī*

Do you know why Muḥammad got up? They said: 'By God, we do not know and neither do you!' He said: 'But of course, by the Torah, I do know!' (*Mağāzī*, 365)

(9.40) *qālat ḥadiġatu kallā wallāhi mā yuḥzī-ka llāhu ʾabadan 'inna-ka la-tašilu l-raḥīma wa-taḥmilu l-kalla wa-tuksibu l-ma'dūma wa-taqrī l-dayfa wa-tu'īnu ʾalā nawā'ibi l-ḥaqqi*

Ḥadiġa said: 'Never, by God, God will never disgrace you! You bestow upon the relatives, carry the burden, grant the poor with help, receive

17 For the analysis of the verbal complex into three essential constituents, viz. (1) the pronominal theme, (2) the verbal lexeme, and (3) the predicative relation between them, see Goldenberg, *Verbal Structure*.

18 Cohen, *Modal System*, 42.

19 Ibid., 67.

hospitably the guest, and help in fulfilling the ever-recurring duties.’  
(*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3)

The participle, as mentioned before, is generally used to express a static situation. However, in the frame of *ʾinna la*-clauses, this state is interpreted as that characteristic so as to become an inherent attribute or disposition. This may be explained by the fact that nexus focusing, marked by the *ʾinna la*-pattern, essentially conveys a strong identification between the speaker (or more generally, the subject) and his state. Thus, also with bounded lexemes, the concurrent interpretation of *la-fāʾilun* seems to be called for:

(9.41) *wallāhi mā balāḡa-nā ʾillā ʾanna nabīyya-nā yuṣalli ʾilā l-šāmi wa-mā nurīdu ʾan nuḥālifa-hū qāla fa-qāla ʾinni la-muṣallin ʾilay-hā*

By God, we are only informed that our Prophet prays towards al-Šām, and we do not want to contradict him. (he said) He said: ‘I am surely praying towards it (i.e. the Kaʿba).’ (*Sīra* 1, 294)

The strong ties between asseveration, as marked by the *ʾinna la*- pattern, and reference to present time, did not escape the Arab grammarians. Ibn Yaʿīš reports on a dispute among the grammarians with regard to the possible future interpretation of *la-yafʿalu*.<sup>20</sup> The grammarians allowing for a future reading of *la-yafʿalu* adduce the following verse from the Qurʾān: *wa-ʾinna rabbu-ka la-yahkumu bayna-hum yawma l-qiyāmati* (16:124) ‘Verily your Lord will judge among them on the Day of Resurrection.’ However, such evidence could not be found in my corpus, where all the examples of *la-yafʿalu* appeared as largely incompatible with a future reading. In my view, this fact is not to be explained by the disambiguating function of *la-*, which instructs us to interpret *yafʿalu* as present, the same way as *sa-* instructs us to interpret *yafʿalu* as future, as suggested by some grammarians. Rather, the relation between *ʾinna la*-clauses and reference to present time stems from the essential function of these clauses, namely, to emphasize the strong identification of the speaker (i.e., the topic entity) with his current state (i.e., his qualification or description).<sup>21</sup>

#### 9.2.4 *Negative Clauses*

The present section on negative clauses in the dialogue is a short addendum to the above discussion of affirmative declarative clauses. To be sure, the topic

20 Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, 5, 147.

21 Unlike the stressed auxiliary ‘do’ in English, *ʾinna la-* does not operate in all tenses, but is restricted to the current state of the speaker.

of negation in Classical Arabic, considering both its notional and structural aspects, is worthy of a whole lot more attention. Here I will only make a few notes regarding the issues of compatibility, distribution, and frequency of some negated verbal phrases.

The Arab grammarians defined the negated verbal forms in contrast to their affirmative counterparts. Thus, Sibawayhi presents a neat correspondence between *fa'ala* and its negation *lam yaf'al*, and between *la-qad fa'ala* and its negation *mā fa'ala*. With *yaf'alu*, the correspondence goes as follows: *mā yaf'alu* negates the present *yaf'alu*, whereas *lā yaf'alu* negates both the future *yaf'alu* and the energetic *la-yaf'alanna*.<sup>22</sup> Sibawayhi's discussion of verbal negation offers two important insights. Firstly, it reveals the polyfunctionality of the verbal forms, which—depending on their affirmative or negative realization—can be used to express different meanings. Secondly, it suggests the same connection that was observed above between emphasizing and reference to present time. These two meanings emerge from the interaction of the negative marker *mā* and the verbal forms *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu*, respectively. The connection between emphasis and reference to present time was lucidly explained by Wehr.<sup>23</sup> The negative particle *mā*, as noticed by Wehr, is usually found in dialogues, and more specifically, in contexts where an oath, asseveration, or emphasis of some other kind are involved. The primary function of *mā* is accordingly to mark a 'strong emotional form of speech', and to indicate high involvement on the part of the speaking subject. Since the event expressed in the clause is 'affectively stressed', it is felt by the speaker to be 'closer' to his present situation.<sup>24</sup>

The grammarians account of the verbal negation and Wehr's insightful description of *mā* conform with a great part of the data found in my corpus; still, some additional observations and refinements of the ones mentioned above can be offered.

**The verbal form *yaf'alu***, when negated by *lā*, may be interpreted as either concurrent or posterior. The time reference of *lā yaf'alu* is not determined by the corresponding (in fact, presupposed) affirmative form, which, we recall, can indicate both temporal values. Rather, the time reference is derived from the interaction between the verbal lexeme and the grammatical form of the verb. With unbounded lexemes, *lā yaf'alu* is normally interpreted as concurrent:

<sup>22</sup> Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 408–409.

<sup>23</sup> Wehr, *Arabischer Negationen*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

- (9.42) *'ayna 'abū-ki yā binta 'abī bakrīn qālat qultu lā 'adrī wallāhi 'ayna 'ab-ī*  
(*Sīra* 1, 329)

Where is your father, O daughter of 'Abū Bakr? (she said) I said: 'I don't know, by God, where is my father.'

Contexts which include an explicit reference to future time induce a posterior reading of *lā yaf'alu*, also with unbounded lexemes. The negated *lā yaf'alu*, the same as *yaf'alu*, is usually not used to convey pure predictions, but to express one's intention to act or not to take action. In the first person, the intention is internal; in the second and third persons, it is projected or conjectured:

- (9.43) *wa-'innā wallāhi lā nu'mīnu bi-l-rahmāni 'abadan*

And, by God, we will never believe in *al-Rahmān!* (*Sīra* 1, 189)

As amply demonstrated by Wehr, the negative marker *mā* is used for expressive or 'affective' negation. Indeed, *mā yaf'alu* is very common in oaths and other asseverative contexts, where reference to a future event is often intended:

- (9.44) *fa-wallāhi mā yadhulu 'alay-ka 'ahadun*

By God, no one is to enter upon you. (*Sīra* 1, 249)

The negated *mā yaf'alu* is also found in non-asseverative contexts. In such cases, it usually occurs with cognitive verbs indicating perception or a certain mental state or disposition. The preference of *mā* with cognitive verbs is to be explained by the egocentric, or better, 'centripetal force' of this negative particle, which brings the situation 'closer' to the speaker, whether this closeness stems from a strong emotional involvement or from the fact that the situation is internally experienced or sensed:

- (9.45) *wa-mā 'uhibbu 'an ta'lama qurayšun mā 'aqūlu l-'āna*

I don't want Qurayš to learn what I say now. (*Mağāzī*, 36)

I adduce one example for the negation of *yaf'alu* with *laysa*, which in Classical Arabic prose, as opposed to Qur'ānic Arabic, is not uncommon.<sup>25</sup> From a structural (and perhaps also historical) point of view, the compatibility of

25 Concluding his discussion of *laysa* in the Qur'ān and in Sibawayhi's *Kitāb*, Sakaedani, *Laysa*, 170–171, says that since *laysa yaf'alu* is not attested in the Qur'ān, nor mentioned by Sibawayhi, its usage is 'supposed to be relatively recent'. However, the fact that we do

*yaf'alu* with *laysa*—the negative counterpart of both the existential and the copulative *kāna*—is quite interesting: it hints at the nominal character of this type of verb (see above chapter 2), which essentially indicates nothing more than an indefinite state of affairs, which can be either asserted or denied:

- (9.46) *kaḥfa ra'ayta bna ḡāmi'in yā bunay-ya qultu la-hū 'a-wa-tu'fī-nī ḡu'iltu fidā-ka fa-qāla lastu 'u'fī-ka fa-qul* (*Riwāyāt* 1, 3)  
 My little son, what is your opinion about Ibn Ḡāmi'? I said: 'Will you exempt me [from answering], may I be made your ransom?' He said: 'I will not exempt you, so say [what do you think]!'

The negation of the verbal form *fa'ala* via *lā* is highly marked. The negated form *lā fa'ala*, which occurs in contexts of oaths and asseverations, conveys a strong negation and refers to situations which will not take place under any type of circumstances:

- (9.47) *fa-qultu wallāhi lā fa'altu wa-'in ṭalaba-nī l-ḥalīfatu*  
 I said: 'By God, I shall not do that even if the Caliph asks me to.' (*Riwāyāt* 1, 3)

The negated form *mā fa'ala*, the same as *mā yaf'alu*, is very common in contexts of oaths and asseverations. With both static and dynamic lexemes, it refers to situations whose imprints or relevance still abide at the time when the clause is uttered:

- (9.48) *'inna-hū wallāti wal'uzzā mā nazala bi-kum 'amrun 'a'zamu min dālika*  
 By al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā, surely nothing greater than that has come down to you! (*Maḡāzī*, 32)

Due to the 'centripetal force' of *mā*, *mā fa'ala* is commonly used with lexemes denoting situations which are internally perceived or sensed by the speaker:

- (9.49) *mā ra'aytu min-ka ḥayran qaṭṭu*  
 I have never seen any good from you. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 15)

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find *laysa yaf'alu* in Classical Arabic prose proves that this is not an innovation of Modern Standard Arabic but, in fact, a fairly old form, even if not found in the corpora described by the grammarians.

- (9.50) *yā ḥabīb-ī mā 'aradtu l-waḍ'a min-ka bi-mā qultu-hū la-ka wa-'innamā 'aradtu tahdība-ka wa-taqwīma-ka*  
 My friend, I did not want to disparage you by what I have said, but only to improve and correct you. (*Riwayāt* 1, 40)

The most common form of past negation does not involve *fa'ala* at all. The unmarked form of past negation is *lam yaf'al*: it may occur with all types of lexemes and it is not text-sensitive. Although cognitive verbs are often negated through *mā fa'ala*, they may also be negated through *lam yaf'al*:

- (9.51) *mā lī 'arā-ka l-yawma ḥabīta l-nafsi wa-lam 'ara-ka mud' ayyāmin*  
 Why is it that I see you today depressed and I haven't seen you for days?!  
 (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 88)

Lastly, I would like to present two examples of negated participial forms. The negation of the participle can be done via *mā*, *laysa*, or *jayra* (the latter not discussed here). Quite often, the negative particles *mā* or *laysa* are strengthened by an additional marker prefixed to the participle, namely, the preposition *bi-*. The structure of *mā/laysa bi-* clauses parallels the structure of *'inna la-* clauses: in both cases, an operator controlling the entire clause is followed by a modifier preceding the predicate. Also, as far as their function is concerned, *mā/laysa bi-* clauses correspond to *'inna la-* clauses: while *'inna la-* indicates a strong association of the speaker (or agent) with a certain situation or attribute, *mā/laysa bi-* indicates a strong dissociation of the speaker (or agent) from a certain attribute. For instance, in the famous passage quoted in [9.52], the Prophet, declaring that he does not read, dissociates himself not only from a current state of reading, but from the very ability to read:

- (9.52) *fā-qāla iqra' fā-qultu mā 'anā bi-qārī'in*  
 He said (i.e. the angel): 'Read!' So I Said: 'I do not read.' (*Ṣaḥīḥ* 5)

When not reinforced by *bi-* and occurring with bounded lexemes, the negated participle can be interpreted as referring to an immediate future or 'current readiness':

- (9.53) *wa-qad 'aḡartu l-ḡamala wa-lastu ḡādiran bi-hī*  
 I have protected the camel and I am not about to betray him. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 103)



The verbal form *qad fa'ala* is not found in negative declarative clauses. This may be explained by the fact that the assertorial meaning of *qad* is by and large incompatible with negation. However, we do find *qad fa'ala* in negative interrogatives, as will be discussed and illustrated below (9.5).

### 9.3 Performative Clauses

Performative clauses are here dedicated a separate section although, from a strictly formal point of view, this type of clauses could have been subsumed under the above discussion of declaratives. Indeed, performative clauses do not employ a different mood than declaratives (like imperatives), nor do they operate on the assertive value of the clause (like interrogatives). Also from a pragmatic point of view, the preliminary Austinian distinction between 'performative' and 'constative' is blurred once one recognizes that all clauses bear some kind of illocutionary force, whether that be directly or indirectly expressed. What, then, justifies treating performatives any differently from the normal declaratives discussed above? In my view, this question cannot be settled on theoretical grounds, by espousing either one of the reductive approaches to speech-acts (the 'thesis' or 'antithesis', to use Levinson's formulation).<sup>26</sup> Rather, it will be proper to speak of a distinct category of performatives if this indeed correlates with a special marking, lexical and/or grammatical. This condition appears to be fulfilled in Classical Arabic as will be shown below.

Performative clauses, as basically defined, are not used to *say* something but to *do* something, i.e., to bring about a change in the world, given the proper ('felicitous') conditions allowing for this change. Such a definition is rather general and may apply to a great number of clauses found in dialogues. Thus, in order to distinguish performatives from other types of clauses one must be able to specify which actions in what conditions should be considered as performatives. I define performative clauses as declarations of actions which constitute, i.e., initiate and accomplish, the action in effect. Unlike expressions of internal perception or external observations (see above 9.2.1), these declarations do not simply verbalize situations which are co-extensive *with* the time of speech, but refer to situations which come about *through* speech. Unlike imperatives or interrogatives, performatives are not designed to solicit the reaction of a sec-

26 The topic of speech acts is thoroughly discussed in Levinson, *Pragmatics*, chapter 5. Levinson contrasts two possible ways ('theses') to resolve the theoretical problems brought about by this topic.

ond party (though they may affect one), but reside entirely in the domain of the speaker's desire and intention.

In Classical Arabic, one can distinguish between two major types of performative clauses: in the first, the verbal form *yaf'alu* is used; in the second, *fa'ala* and *qad fa'ala* are used. This distinction is not only entailed by the grammatical form of the verb, but also by its compatibility with various lexical classes. Thus, *yaf'alu*-performatives are lexeme-specific and occur only with declaration verbs:

- (9.54) *yā kašadu hal ra'ayta 'aḥadan min 'uyūni muḥammadin fa-yaqūlu 'a'ūdu bi-llāhi wa-ʾannā 'uyūnu muḥammadin bi-l-naḥbāri*  
O Kašad, did you see any of Muḥammad's spies? He said: 'God forbid! Why are there spies of Muḥammad in Naḥbār'? (*Mağāzī*, 20)
- (9.55) *'udakkiru-kum-u llāha wa-dīna-kum wa-nabiyya-kum*  
I [hereby] remind you of God, your religion, and your Prophet. (*Mağāzī*, 219)
- (9.56) *'ahlifu bi-llāhi la-qad ḡā'a-kum 'usaydun bi-ḡayri l-waḡhi llaḍi dahaba bi-hi min 'inda-kum*  
I swear by God, 'Usayd certainly has come back to you with a different expression on his face than the one he had when he left you. (*Sīra* 1, 292)

In contrast, *fa'ala/qad fa'ala*-performatives occur with all types of lexemes, though rarely with declaration verbs.<sup>27</sup> This type of performatives are used in contexts where the event at issue calls for both parties' consent. In other words, in order for the event to be successfully carried out, a reciprocal approval, an agreement, is needed. I therefore refer to this type of clauses as 'transaction-performatives':

- (9.57) *yā rasūla llāhi bal taqsimu-hū li-l-muḥāḡirīna wa-yakūnūna fī dūri-nā kamā kānū wa-nādat-i l-'anšāru raḍīnā wa-sallamnā yā rasūla llāhi*  
O Messenger of God, you may rather apportion it to the *Muḥāḡirūn* and they will stay at our homes as they used to. The *Anšār* then called out: 'We are satisfied and approve [it], O Messenger of God.' (*Mağāzī*, 379)

<sup>27</sup> Grammars do quote a few examples of declaration verbs realized in the *fa'ala* form, e.g.: *'anšadtu-ka llāha* 'I conjure you by God' (Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 1). Such examples, however, are seldom found in Classical Arabic prose.

- (9.58) *yā 'abā 'abdi šamsin wafat dimmatu-ka qad radadtu 'ilay-ka ġiwāra-ka*  
 O 'Abū 'Abd Šams, your obligation [to me] is completely fulfilled; I  
 [hereby] renounce your protection. (*Sīra* 1, 243)
- (9.59) *iḍan lī 'ahruġ 'ilā bišrin bi-l-'irāqi [...]* *qāla qad 'adintu la-ka*  
 Allow me to go to Bišr in Iraq [...] He said: 'I [hereby] allow you.'  
 (*Riwāyāt* 1, 16)

Unlike 'declaration-performatives', whose successful execution hinges solely on the speaker, without appealing to an external authority (anyone can successfully take an oath, the question of its actual worth is entirely irrelevant), 'transaction-performatives' presuppose the authority of both the speaker and his addressee to reach an agreement, i.e., to offer and accept the matter at hand.

Despite the functional differences outlined above, one cannot help but wonder how is it that *yaf'alu*, *fa'ala*, and *qad fa'ala* can all be used to indicate performativity? In my opinion, the appropriateness of all three forms in performative clauses is not dissociated from their temporal and aspectual meanings in regular declaratives. The form *yaf'alu*, as was shown above, often has a concurrent reading with speech verbs. The form *fa'ala*, with stative lexemes, has a tangent point with the present situation of the speaker, and this is apparently the reason why *raḍīnā* and *sallamnā* in [9.57] are realized in the *fa'ala* form rather than in the resultative *qad fa'ala* form. The use of *qad fa'ala* with potentially bounded lexemes, as in the last two examples, should be explained by the aspectual meaning of this form, indicating the completion of the verbal situation. The relation between performativity and resultativity is also apparent in the next example, featuring the passive participle:

- (9.60) *mal'ūnatun-i l-'arḍu llatī ḥuliqta min-hā la'natan ḥattā tataḥawwala*  
*timāru-hā šawkan*  
 Cursed is the earth from which you were created in such a curse that  
 its fruits will turn into thorns. (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 106)

There are very few examples in which performativity is expressed through a participial predicate, realizing the order of the verbal clause. The peculiar structure of [9.60] may be explained by the parallel (in fact underlying) Biblical version of the clause (viz. Genesis 3:17 *'ārūrā hā'ādāmā ba'ābūrekā*). In any event, *mal'ūnatun* presents us with yet another kind of performative clauses, namely, blessings and curses. When the curse is delivered by the ultimate (divine) authority, as is the case in [9.60], it gains a performative force: it is effective as of the time of its pronunciation. This case is different from ordinary

(human) curses, to be discussed in the following section, where the curse is a matter of a (yet unfulfilled) wish. Table 9.2 below summarizes the discussion of the distribution and function of the verbal forms in performative clauses:

TABLE 9.2 *The verbal forms in performative clauses*

Verbal form	Type of performative	Temporal-aspectual value
<i>yaf'alu</i>	declarative-performative	concurrence
<i>fa'ala</i>	transaction-performative	persistence
<i>qad fa'ala</i>	transaction-performative	resultativity
<i>maf'ulun</i>	blessings and curses	resultativity

#### 9.4 Optative Clauses

In Classical Arabic, the expression of wishes is not marked by a special mood, but may be realized through various syntactic means (for instance, the operator *layta*). What I refer to as optative clauses are but one type of clause expressing a wish. Optative clauses employ as a rule the *fa'ala* form, followed by the explicit mention of *allāh* or *rabb* 'God': [*fa'ala*-object pron. *llāh/rabb*]. In the passive voice, the reference to *allāh* or *rabb* is implicit:

(9.61) *fa-mā hāḡatu l-'amīri 'ilay-ya ḡa'ala-nī llāhu fidā-hu*  
 What need is there in me for the 'Amīr? May God make me his ransom!  
 (*Riwāyāt* 1, 246)

(9.62) *ḡu'iltu fidā-ka 'ibil-ī wa-'amānati*  
 May I be made your ransom, [what about] my camels and trusted  
 goods? (*Riwāyāt* 1, 246)

As discussed earlier (9.2.3), sometimes a modally unmarked (indicative) form has a specialized modal meaning. This is the case with the optative *fa'ala* (as well as the conditional *fa'ala* which is not dealt with in the present work). Any attempt to derive the optative meaning of *fa'ala* from its 'basic' past-perfective meaning is bound to result in circular reasoning.<sup>28</sup> We might get

28 Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 2 ff., argues that *fa'ala*—when occurring in promises, oaths, condi-

closer to understand the optative meaning of *fa'ala* if we examine the discursive function of these types of clauses. As shown in the examples above, the expression of wish is not intended for its own sake, but as means to show politeness and humbleness, called for in interactions with a person of a higher social stature. Earlier I discussed cases where the current desire of the speaker was expressed through *fa'ala*. This use of *fa'ala* was explained too by the indirectness or remoteness associated with *fa'ala* (see [9.21] above). Yet, in what may look as quite the opposite circumstances, the optative *fa'ala* is not only used to signal politeness in the face of nobility, but also as means to show friendliness and generosity:

(9.63) *fa-qāla 'a-lā 'uḥadditu-kum bi-mā sami'tu min rasūli llāhi [...]* *fa-qulnā balā raḥima-ka llāhu*

And he said: 'Will I not tell you about what I have heard from the Messenger of God [...]' And we said: 'Certainly, may God have mercy upon you!' (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 63)

In [9.63] the speakers want to encourage their addressee to share with them the words of the Prophet, thus they use the blessing *raḥima-ka llāhu* to show rapport. That *raḥima-ka llāhu/rabbu-ka* is that conventionalized as an expression of good will is evident in the next example, where God himself is blessing Adam:

(9.64) *fa-lammā nafaḥa fī-hi l-rūḥa fa-daḥala l-rūḥu fī ra'si-hī 'aṭasa fa-qālat-i l-malā'ikatu qul-i l-ḥamdu li-llāhi fa-qāla l-ḥamdu li-llāhi fa-qāla llāhu raḥima-ka rabbu-ka*

And when He blew into him (i.e. Adam) the spirit and the spirit entered his head he sneezed. The angels said: 'Say "Praise be to God!"' So he said: 'Praise be to God!' Then God said: 'May your Lord have mercy upon you!' (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 92)

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tional sentences, and wishes—has a virtually past or perfective sense, due to the certainty attributed to the occurrence 'represented as having already taken place' or 'as already fulfilled'. If indeed 'certainty' is the semantic feature underlying such uses of *fa'ala*, then one may rightly wonder how is it that *qad fa'ala* is never used in these contexts. The fact that in Post-Classical Arabic (cf. Fischer, *Classical Arabic Grammar*, 103), as well as in Arabic dialects, optative expressions employ as a rule the prefix conjugation rather than the suffix conjugation, is again evidence for the ad hoc validity of some aspectual-modal correlations suggested for Classical Arabic.

I suggest, then, that the use of *fa'ala* in optative clauses might not be derived from its past-perfective meaning (at least not in a straightforward manner), but it is rather associated with the indirectness, remoteness, and politeness which is implied by this form.<sup>29</sup> The fact that optative clauses are also used for ill-wishing is perhaps to be explained by a generalization of the use of this pattern: once it was established for blessings, it extended to the expression of wishes of all types, including bad ones, as illustrated below:<sup>30</sup>

- (9.65) *fa-ḥaraġa 'ilay-ya 'abū ġahlin fa-qāla marḥaban wa-'ahlan yā bna 'uḥt-  
ī mā ġā'a bi-ka qāla ġi'tu 'uḥbiru-ka 'annī qad 'āmantu bi-llāhi wa-bi-  
rasūli-hī muḥammadin wa-ṣaddaqtu bi-mā ġā'a bi-hī qāla fa-ḍaraba l-  
bāba fī waġh-ī wa-qāla qabbaha-ka llāhu wa-qabbaha mā ġi'ta bi-hī*  
Then 'Abū Ġahl came out to me and said: 'Welcome! O my nephew,  
what has brought you?' He said: 'I came to tell you that I have become  
a believer in God and His Messenger Muḥammad and that I regard as  
true what he has brought.' (he said) Then he slammed the door in my  
face and said: 'May God damn you and damn what you have brought!'  
(*Sīra* 1, 230)

So far we have seen optative clauses in which *fa'ala* was employed. However, few examples feature the verbal form *yaf'alu*. Unlike *fa'ala*, the use of *yaf'alu* in optative clauses appears to be related in a more straightforward way to its ordinary temporal (non-past) or modal (volitive) meaning. However, by contrast to other desiderative contexts, optative *yaf'alu* forms are singled out by the clausal pattern in which they are realized [*yaf'alu*-object pron. *llāh/rabb*]:

- (9.66) *ḥalaqa llāhu 'adama bi-yadi-hī wa-nafaḥa fī-hi min rūḥi-hī wa-'amara  
l-malā'ikata fa-ṣaġadū la-hū fa-ġalasa fa-'aṭasa fa-qāla l-ḥamdu li-llāhi  
fa-qāla la-hū rabbu-hū yarḥamu-ka rabbu-ka*  
God created Adam with His hand and blew in it some of His spirit and  
commanded the angels and they prostrated themselves before him. He  
sat down, then sneezed and said: 'Praise be to God!' His Lord said to  
him: 'May your Lord have mercy upon you!' (*Ta'rīḥ* 1, 156)

29 I do not deny the existence of intrinsic semantic relations between the notions of past, irrealis, indirectness and remoteness. However, I do not find any (historical or other) evidence to support the idea that temporality is more significant or original than the others.

30 In my corpus, blessings are far more common than curses. This may have to do with the literary nature of the texts. Studies of spoken Arabic dialects show that curses are more frequent, creative, and productive than blessings, see Henkin, *Cognate Curse*, 169 ff.

- (9.67) *yağfiru llāhu lī wa-li-l-muslimīna*  
 May God forgive me and the Muslims! (*Mağāzī*, 59)

### 9.5 Interrogative Clauses

The interactional nature of dialogues finds one of its most explicit grammatical expressions in interrogative clauses. Interrogatives are ‘conventionally associated with the speech act of requesting information’.<sup>31</sup> Although this is certainly true in many cases, it is yet an oversimplification of the various functions fulfilled by interrogative clauses in discourse of any type.

In dialogues, we find numerous examples where the interrogative clearly serves a different function than ‘requesting information’. For instance, an interrogative clause may serve a textural function, by setting the stage for the introduction of a new statement, offer, or request:

- (9.68) *qāla ‘a-fa-lā ‘adullu-ka ‘alā hayrin min dālīka qāla qultu wa-mā huwa*  
 Will I not show you a better way than that? (he said) I said: ‘And what is it?’ (*Sīra* 1, 347)

Interrogatives, specifically those known as rhetorical questions, serve an expressive function. Rather than appealing to a second party to resolve some doubt, such interrogatives are used to make stronger assertions, i.e., to stress the validity or veracity of the content of the clause. Expressive interrogatives may be self-addressed or not addressed at all but merely posed, waiting for no specific answer:

- (9.69) *yā ‘ahla makkata ‘a-na’kulu l-ṭa‘āma wa-nalbasu l-tīyāba wa-banū hāšī-*  
*min halkā lā yubā‘ūna wa-lā yubtā‘u min-hum*  
 O people of Mecca, are we to eat food and wear clothes while Banū Hāšim are dying, unable to sell or buy?! (*Sīra* 1, 248)
- (9.70) *‘a-yazunnu muḥammadun ‘an yuṣība min-nā mā ‘aṣāba bi-naḥlata wa-*  
*‘aṣḥābu-hū*  
 Does Muḥammad think that he can get from us what he and his companions got in Naḥla? (*Mağāzī*, 39)

31 König and Siemund, *Speech Act*, 291.

The fact that not all interrogatives are used to express doubt or to address a second party suggests that these two properties are in fact independent from each other. Lyons accounts for this matter by distinguishing between ‘asking a question of someone’ and simply ‘posing a question’; asking and posing are accordingly two distinct types of speech-acts, each having a different intention and each calling for a different reaction.<sup>32</sup> Hansen, on the other hand, proposes a unified semantic-pragmatic model in which both properties of interrogatives are represented. According to this model, when asking a question, the speaker (a) ‘is signaling that it is relevant for someone to wonder about the validity of the proposition expressed’ and (b) ‘is appealing to the hearer for a reaction to that proposition’.<sup>33</sup> The advantage of this model is that it is abstract enough to account for all types of interrogatives, whether their function is informative, expressive, or textural.

The following discussion of interrogative clauses in Classical Arabic is hardly exhaustive. I will examine only one type of interrogatives, namely yes-no questions, and focus on the functional oppositions marked by the verbal forms in these clauses.

Yes-no questions are introduced in most cases by the operators *ʾa-* or *hal*, though some of them are particle-less, and (as it is fair to assume) marked solely by a distinct intonation pattern. The operator *ʾa-* is prefixed to the first element of the clause. Since most interrogatives exhibit the order of the verbal clause, *ʾa-* is prefixed to the verbal form, or with negated forms, to the negation marker (*hal* is also prefixed to the negation marker). In some cases, usually in expressive interrogatives, the connectives *wa-* and *fa-* are interposed between *ʾa-* and the (affirmative or negative) verbal form. Interrogative clauses are not marked by a special mood, but use the same indicative forms that are found in declarative clauses (see above 9.2). In the following, ‘*ʾa-*interrogatives’ will be illustrated and discussed.

With unbounded lexemes, the verbal form *yafʿalu* in *ʾa-*interrogatives typically indicates concurrence:

- (9.71) *yā ʾabā ḥālidin ʾa-taḥāfu ʾan yubayyita-nā l-qawmu*  
 O ʾAbū Ḥālid, do you fear that the people will attack us at night?  
 (*Maḡāzī*, 52)

32 Lyons, *Semantics*, 2, 755.

33 Hansen, *Syntax in Interaction*, 467.



With bounded lexemes, *yaf'alu* typically refers to posterior events. The interrogative raises doubt as to the *possibility* of the event to take place in some future time:

- (9.72) *'a-takfū-nī l-'araba*  
Will you [be able to] protect me from the Arabs? (*Riwāyāt* 2, 184)

Put in doubt, externalized observations, with both unbounded and bounded lexemes, yield a concurrent reading of *yaf'alu*:

- (9.73) *'a-tadhabu bi-l-ṭa'āmi 'ilā banī hāšimim*  
Are you taking the food to Banū Hāšim? (*Sīra* 1, 232)

Interrogative clauses in which the verbal form *fa'ala* is used present the same opposition as in declarative clauses: with stative lexemes, *fa'ala* indicates persistence; with dynamic lexemes, *fa'ala* indicates anteriority. Notice that in [9.75] the interrogative takes the form of the nominal clause, which is far less attested in interrogatives than in declaratives. It may be that this pattern is used in order to lay emphasis on the nominal theme (see above 6.2.1):

- (9.74) *'a-'alimta 'anna ḥubza l-baladī yanbutu 'alay-hi šay'un šabihun bi-l-ṭīni*  
Did you know that upon the local bread there grows something like soil? (*Buḥalā'*, 89)

- (9.75) *'a-rabbu-ka 'aḥbara-ka bi-hādā*  
Did your Lord tell you about that? (*Sīra* 1, 249)

In my corpus, I have encountered almost no examples of the verbal form *qad fa'ala* in interrogative clauses. The only example I did find was not introduced by *'a-* but initiated by the connective *wa-*.<sup>34</sup> The fact that *qad fa'ala* seldom occurs in interrogative clauses is explained by its assertorial meaning which is by and large incompatible with the expression of doubt. However, the fact that there exist a few cases in which *qad fa'ala* is employed in interrogatives suggests

34 In Classical Arabic, there is nothing unusual in the introduction of a new stretch of speech through the connective *wa-*. Obviously, *wa-* in this case does not simply connect one clause to the previous one. Rather, it serves the more abstract function of re-initiating the 'ever-ongoing' dialogue that underlies speech in general (see above 9.1), somewhat like the initial 'so' in Modern English.

that it is not the verbal situation that is put in doubt, but its strong assertion. In other words, the interrogative does not operate on the *fa'ala* component but on the *qad* component:

- (9.76) *wa-qad ḡā'a l-hūḡu ba'du*  
The plums have come in already? (*Buḡalā'*, 169)

**Participial forms** are not encountered very often in interrogative clauses. As opposed to declarative clauses, interrogatives in which the participle is used exhibit the order of the verbal clause. In the next example, the participle occurs with a motion verb and refers to an immediate future; here, as well, it is the possibility of the event to take place that is put in doubt:

- (9.77) *'in tubtu wa-'aṣlaḡtu 'a-rāḡi'-ī 'anta 'ilā l-ḡannati*  
If I repent and improve, you might let me return to Paradise? (*Ta'rīḡ* 1, 132)

Negative interrogatives, that is, interrogatives which have in their scope a negated verbal form, are less likely to be used as neutral or open questions, to which both answers, yes or no, may equally apply. In most cases, negative interrogatives are biased toward a positive answer; rather than raising doubt, their function is to provide a certain position with more support. Thus, negative interrogatives often function as expressive interrogatives, making a certain claim and awaiting no response.<sup>35</sup>

In interrogative clauses *yaf'alu* is negated by *lā*, *mā*, or *laysa*. We observe the same temporal and aspectual meanings, as well as the same lexical preferences (e.g., the preference of *mā* with perception and mental verbs), that are found in declarative clauses:

- (9.78) *'a-lā tardā yā 'abda llāhi 'an yu'tīya-ka llāhu bi-hā dāran ḡayran min-hā fī l-ḡannati*  
O 'Abdallāh, are you not pleased that God will give you for it a better house in Heaven? (*Sīra* 1, 339)

35 If both doubt and appealing to the hearer for response are not intended in this type of interrogatives, what, then, qualifies them as interrogatives at all? Hansen, *Syntax in interaction*, 470 (following Anscombe and Ducrot), suggests that such interrogatives should be analyzed as polyphonic, i.e., 'as echoing some actual, or more probably potential, utterance by someone other than the present speaker'.

- (9.79) *'a-fa-mā tarawna mā bi-kum*  
Don't you see what has happened to you? (*Sīra* 1, 326)
- (9.80) *'a-lastum ta'lamūna 'anna-hum 'aṣḥābu ṣāḥibi-kum*  
Didn't you know that they are the companions of your friend? (*Ta'riḥ* 6, 3276)

Negative interrogatives also exhibit the negated forms *lam yaf'ala* and *mā fa'ala*. With stative lexemes, these refer to persistent situations, with dynamic lexemes, to anterior ones:

- (9.81) *'a-lam ta'lam 'annī 'ammantu l-ḡamala wa-ḡa'altu la-hū dīmmatan*  
Didn't you know that I reassured the camel and provided him protection? (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 103)
- (9.82) *subḥāna llāhi 'a-mā raḥimta-nī mimmā ṣana'ta bī*  
God forbid, had you no pity on me in what you did to me? (*Buḥalā'*, 166)

It was noted above that the corpus featured only one example in which *qad fa'ala* was used in a positive interrogative. In negative interrogatives, on the other hand, *qad fa'ala* was attested several times. This may be explained by the fact that negative interrogatives are biased toward a positive answer, corroborating the assertive value of the proposition. The next example presents such a case:

- (9.83) *'a-wa-laysa qad māta 'amīru l-mu'minīna*  
Hasn't the Commander of the Faithful died yet? (*Riwāyāt* 2, 29)

The death of the Caliph is not truly questioned by *'a-wa-laysa qad māta*. Indeed, in this case, the question has a provocative function. It is designed to communicate the speaker's absolute repudiation of the Caliph's authority.

## 9.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the main functions of the indicative forms in dialogue texts. It was shown that although certain temporal and aspectual meanings prevail in many of the examined clause types, there is still a considerable number of semantic nuances which are context-specific, clause-specific,

or emerge from the interaction of the verbal form with particular lexical classes. In a comprehensive account of the functions of verbs in dialogue, we cannot overlook these contexts, nor can we reduce the cluster of meanings conveyed by each form into strict temporal or aspectual notions. As we have seen, rather than expressing sheer objective temporality, verbs in dialogue are used to signal (relative values of) a variety of inter-subjective categories such as: current relevance and actuality, cognitive evaluation, emotional involvement, personal identification, directness and rapport. It is important to note that despite their correlations with specific temporal and aspectual values (e.g., 'strong emotional involvement' and 'present', or 'indirectness' and 'past'), inter-subjective meanings are not simply derived from or entailed by the more basic notions of tense and aspect. Quite the opposite in fact, they are the very purpose of the utterance in the first place.

## The Verbal Paradigm in the Narrative

The previous chapter dealt with the distribution and function of the indicative verbal forms in the dialogue. The present chapter is concerned with the verbal paradigm in the narrative and the way in which it shapes the overall structure of the text.

### 10.1 Preliminaries

As one of the most basic and pervasive phenomena of human life, narrative is hard to define in a compact precise fashion. Minimal definitions propose that a narrative is ‘a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events’,<sup>1</sup> and that narration means ‘someone telling someone else that something happened.’<sup>2</sup> In the vast literature on narrative structure, each of the elements referred to in these definitions, i.e., events, (ordered) sequence, teller and addressee, was thoroughly studied. Specifically, the relation between the ‘real world’ (or what we experience as such) and its configuration in narratives has been of special interest to modern theorists. Departing from a naive conception of the narrative as a recapitulation of ‘past experience’,<sup>3</sup> Fleischman describes narrativization as the ‘carving up of reality into constructs of experience, and the organization of these constructs into a verbal representation through which they acquire meaning.’<sup>4</sup> This understanding of the narrative as a cognitive-verbal construct suggests that narrative, by exploiting a well-defined linguistic schema, has both an objective property and a subjective one, which allows for a multiplicity of possibilities from which the narrator may choose to communicate his story.

Being a verbal construct, the narrative must be related in some way to the linguistic system as a whole. The question as to the specific locus of the narrative in language—either as a sub-system of the *langue* or as a special form of performance—was dealt with by some linguists and linguistically-minded

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1 Toolan, *Narrative*, 6.

2 Herrnstein Smith, *Narrative Versions*, 228.

3 Labov and Waletzky, *Narrative Analysis*, 20.

4 Fleischman, *Tense and Narrativity*, 95.

literary critics. Assuming that narrative indeed operates in a way different than the one found in ordinary discourse, then one should be able to identify some features that are not only characteristic but also distinctive of narrative discourse. For the most part, it is the use of the tense forms which is taken to provide the most obvious expression of the grammatical distinctiveness of narratives.

That narrating is not to be simply identified with the expression of past occurrences is implicit in the discussion of dedicated 'narrative forms' (such as *wayyiqtol* in Biblical Hebrew),<sup>5</sup> or in the postulation of a basic 'narrative function' of a verbal form, such as foreground or background.<sup>6</sup> However, the identification of the narrative as a system of its own implies that narrating is essentially distinct from other types of communication. Whether it exploits the same signifiers or introduces new ones, the narrative is a separate domain expressing a different set of meanings. This view of the narrative was proposed by linguists such as Benveniste and Weinrich, who set out to explain the underlying logic of the tense system in French (and to a lesser extent, in other European languages), and came to define two separate systems: one of narrative and one of non-narrative texts. For Benveniste, the hallmark of what he terms 'history' is the extensive use of the *passé simple*, which is by and large absent from the system of 'discourse'.<sup>7</sup> Weinrich goes even further to claim that the preterit does not depict past events, but it is rather an indicator of the *erzählte Welt*, as opposed to the *beschprochene Welt*, whose most basic indicator is the present. Both 'worlds' represent different 'speech-attitudes' assumed by the narrator and speaker. The internal opposition within the narrative system, especially between the preterit and the imperfect, is not temporal but comes into play in the dimension of grounding ('relief').<sup>8</sup> Hamburger holds a similar view regarding the 'a-temporality' of the preterit, which she considers as the index of narrative texts. For her, however, the subject matter is not the logic of the tense system but that of fiction against 'reality statements'. Fiction, which according to Hamburger is best represented in the third person epic, is by its very nature detached from the coordinates of the 'I-Origo' and hence devoid of

5 Dahl, *Tense and Aspect*, 113 ff.

6 According to Hopper, *Aspect and Foregrounding*, 217, the foreground-background distinction is 'universal of some kind', and aspectual distinctions, such as the ones found in Romance and Slavic languages, are 'derived from discourse' and not just 'ready-made devices "deployed" in discourse because they happen already to exist'.

7 Benveniste, *Correlations of Tense*.

8 Weinrich, *Tempus*, especially 38 ff. and 91 ff.

a temporal value. In fiction, the preterit serves to tune the consciousness of the addressee to the situation of a story being told: 'for in the same moment with its appearance the preterit is no longer perceived as stating the past. The figures and events now portrayed "are" here and now'.<sup>9</sup>

While espousing the view that 'languages do not treat narrating and asserting [...] in the same way', Fleischman questions the absolute division between narrative and non-narrative discourse as suggested above.<sup>10</sup> For one thing, not all languages have a dedicated morphology for narratives; for another, some narratives—especially those which have originated in an oral form—may well disclose traces of ordinary discourse. In fact, the models mentioned above are too narrow and language-specific to serve as universal typologies of narrative discourse. Instead, Fleischman proposes a comprehensive model that is applicable to any type of discourse (see above 4.1). According to this model, each tense form embodies a cluster of concepts which belong to different levels of meaning, i.e., 'referential', 'textual', 'expressive' and 'metalinguistic'. At each level the form has a marked value, which is typical for a certain type of discourse. In narratives, the preterit is not simply a 'past form' or an 'a-temporal index of narrativity'. Rather, it is the unmarked form (as opposed to the marked present), which serves to depict past-perfective-sequential-foregrounded-objective-diegetic occurrences.<sup>11</sup>

Classical Arabic does not have verbal forms dedicated for narration. It does not have a clear signpost of narrativity such as *wayyiqṭol* in Biblical Hebrew or the *passé simple* in French. Rather, the same forms which are used in narratives are also found in dialogues and generic utterances. Thus, in the search for grammatical indices of narrativity in Classical Arabic, one has to resort to more complex syntactic constructions and examine the way in which these contribute to what Labov and Waletzky have described as 'the overall structure of the narrative'.<sup>12</sup> Considering both their syntactic structure and textual function, we can identify three main types of narrative constructions or strategies: (a) the *fa'ala*-initiated chain, which mainly serves a referential or reportative

9 Hamburger, *Logic*, 81.

10 Fleischman, *Tense and Narrativity*, 118.

11 Ibid., 53 ff.

12 Labov and Waletzky, *Narrative Analysis*. The authors mention two main functions of the narrative: 'referential' and 'evaluative'. The referential function is reflected in the temporal sequence of the narrative. However, a narrative that carries only a referential function 'lacks significance'. The evaluative function is reflected in the narrator's attitude towards the content expressed, in his engagement in telling the story so as to convey a certain point.

function; (b) *kāna*-clauses and syndetic circumstantial clauses, which constitute the orientation sections of the narrative; (c) mutually dependent constructions, which serve both a referential and an evaluative function. Of course, these constructions do not exhaust all types of clauses which can be found in narratives. However, they provide a defining key (at least from a grammatical point of view), for the presence of these types of constructions is sufficient to identify the text as narrative.

The studied corpus comprises narratives of various kinds: some are strictly fictional (e.g., the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* tales) and some are transmitted in the form of historical records (e.g., Ṭabarī's *Ta'riḥ*). However, as far as their syntactic and textual structure is concerned, both kinds of narratives present great similarity. Obviously, the external frame in which the narrative is embedded may inform us whether the story is real or fabricated, yet the narratives themselves do not disclose, at the formal level, any intrinsic signs for either fictionality or authenticity.<sup>13</sup> Rather, the difference between both types of narratives resides in the proportions of their referential and evaluative components: the historical *ʿaḥbār* tend to be very informative and eventive, while the anecdotes collected in *Kitāb al-ʿAḡānī* or which are told by al-Ġāḥiḏ are often less eventive and more expository or impressionistic. This difference is sometimes reflected in the extensive use of expressive language in the latter texts, although expressivity is certainly not absent from the historic chronicles.<sup>14</sup> As for the parameter which was earlier defined as 'deictic reference' (4.2), both fictional and (ostensibly) factual narratives can be recounted either by an internal and involved ('homodiegetic') first person narrator or by an external and detached ('heterodiegetic') third person narrator.<sup>15</sup> The significant effect of the (literary) category of 'voice' is also manifested in the degree to which descriptive and expressive language is used in the narrative.

13 This is not to disavow the existence of a distinction between fictional and non-fictional narratives; my only claim is that 'hard-core' syntactic evidence cannot serve to substantiate this distinction, which apparently operates at a different level, lexical and/or rhetoric or pragmatic. For a discussion of the question of fictionality in Classical Arabic prose, specifically in learned literature, see Leder, *Conventions*.

14 For a short description of the literary structure of the *ʿaḥbār* and the narrative techniques through which they are shaped, see Leder and Kilpatrick, *Classical Arabic Prose*, 10 ff.

15 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 228 and 243 ff., distinguishes between different forms of involvement of the narrator in the narrative: the narrator may be 'intradiegetic' or 'extradiegetic', depending on whether his voice is internal or external, 'homodiegetic' or 'heterodiegetic', depending on whether he participates in the plot.



The following discussion will focus on the three main types of narrative constructions mentioned above. For that purpose, I will not distinguish between fictional and factual narratives; the distinction between first person and third person narratives will be recalled whenever a syntactic particularity can be attributed to it.

## 10.2 The Main-line: *fa'ala*-initiated Chains

### 10.2.1 The *fa'ala* *CONN*-*fa'ala* Pattern

It was mentioned above that narratives, according to the simplest definitions, serve to convey an ordered sequence of events. Indeed, sequentiality is often considered to be the most basic and indispensable characteristic of narratives. The linguistic exponent of narrative sequence is the chain structure. In Classical Arabic, the chain is most commonly realized in a symmetrical configuration of connected *fa'ala* forms, formulated as *fa'ala* *CONN*-*fa'ala*.<sup>16</sup> The connective particles are: *wa-* 'and', *fa-* 'and then', *tumma* 'thereafter' and *hattā* 'until'. These connectives are distinct from each other in their degree of specificity: *wa-* is the least marked connective, *fa-* conveys the general meaning of *tartīb* 'order', *tumma* indicates the passage of a certain interval of time, *hattā* the arrival at the destination or final stage of a series of events (see above 6.1.3). Each *fa'ala* form stands for a narrative event. Eventhood is often associated with dynamicity and affectedness, with 'happenings' or changes of situations. However, this is not necessarily the case: the event indicated by *fa'ala* may well be of a static or a-telic nature. Regardless of the inherent structure of the verbal lexeme, the event indicated by *fa'ala* is interpreted as discrete, particular, and sequential, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

(10.1) *fa-rağā'ū 'alā ḥāmiyati-him ḥattā qadimū l-madīnata fa-nazalū-hā*  
 [...] *fa-ntaşarū fī nawāḥi l-madīnati kulli-hā 'ilā l-'āliyati fa-ttaḥadū bi-*  
*hā l-'āṭāma wa-l-'amwāla wa-l-mazāri'a wa-labiṭū bi-l-madīnati zamā-*  
*nan ṭawīlan tumma zāharat-i l-rūmu 'alā banī 'isrā'īla ġamī'an bi-l-šāmi*  
*fa-waṭi'ū-hum wa-qatalū-hum*

16 In this formulation, *CONN* stands for 'connective'. Since the initial *fa'ala* can also be preceded by a connective, a more precise way of representation would be (*CONN*-)*fa'ala* *CONN*-*fa'ala*. However, to avoid a cumbersome formula, it will be implicitly assumed that each initial *fa'ala* also represents (*CONN*-)*fa'ala*. By 'symmetrical configuration' I mean that the adjacent clauses have the same syntactic status, and not that their coordination is symmetrical, i.e. reversible.

Then they went back to their garrison until [finally] they arrived at Medina and stopped over there [...] then they scattered all through Medina as far as al-‘Āliya (the upper city), and they got for themselves in it fortified houses, orchards and fields, and they dwelt in Medina for a long time. Then, the Romans overcame all of the Israelites in al-Šām, trampled them down, and killed them. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 8)

This short narrative demonstrates how the connectives are combined with various types of events recounted in the *fa’ala* form. The events range from purely static and intransitive situations, such as *labitū* ‘they dwelt’, to highly dynamic and transitive situations, such as *qatalū* ‘they killed’. That all the events are interpreted as bounded and discrete is not due to the perfective meaning of the unmarked narrative form (see above 10.1, Fleischman’s characterization of the preterit): we recall that outside the chain, when *fa’ala* occurs with stative lexemes it indicates unbounded persistence (see above 9.2.1). Rather, the perfective meaning is imposed by the sequential structure of the narrative chain. For in reality, the events recounted in the quoted passage did not necessarily follow in order, or were even experienced as ‘complete events’ at all. For instance, the overcoming of the Israelites was obviously not accomplished before they were all trampled down and killed. The verb *zahaṛat* serves, in fact, as an abstract for the following *waṭī’ū-hum* and *qatalū-hum*, the same way as the verb *labitū* serves as a coda for the preceding *intašarū* and *ittahādū*.

The quoted passage reports on the settling of the Jews in Yaṭrib, the historical Medina. The story is set in an historical framework; however, it abounds with fictional and even mythical elements. It is recounted by a third person narrator, who assumes a detached, absent or omniscient position. The point of reference of the narrative is therefore internal. The question of whether the reported events took place in a real time or not is quite irrelevant. As far as its temporality is concerned, this narrative is ageless: it is self-contained and discloses no relation to the situation of narration. This is obviously not the case in the following passage, where the story is related by an involved first person narrator:

(10.2) *tumma ndafa’tu fa-ğannaytu l-šawta fa-waṭabat-i l-ğāriyatu fa-qālat li-mawlā-hā hādā wallāhi ‘abū ‘uṭmāna bnu mišğahin fa-qultu ‘ī wallāhi ‘anā huwa wallāhi lā ‘uqīmu ‘inda-ka*

Then I burst and sang the song and the maid jumped and said to her master: ‘By God, this is ‘Uṭmān b. Mišğah.’ And I said: ‘Indeed, by God, this is me; by God I will not stay with you.’ (*Riwāyāt* 1, 25)

The first person sets an external point of reference to the narrative. In this case, *fa'ala* encodes the detachment of the narrative sphere from the situation of narration. Between the two ends of an impersonal third person narrator, as illustrated in [10.1], and a personal first person narrator, as illustrated in [10.2], there are other types of narrative transmission or 'mediacy', to use Stanzel's terms.<sup>17</sup> It is evident, then, that we cannot say for all narratives that a temporal sense of *fa'ala* is either absent or given; rather, the temporal interpretation of *fa'ala* becomes relevant whenever it operates in a relative deictic system, typically constituted by the first person narrator, whether the latter is a real person or is just a creation of the author's imagination.

### 10.2.2 *The fa'ala yaf'alu/fā'ilan Pattern*

The designation of *fa'ala* as the narrative form or as eventive should be understood, in line with the above discussion, as referring to the dominant role played by *fa'ala* in the construction of the narrative chain. This does not mean that *fa'ala* in all cases depicts the typical (dynamic and transitive) event, or that other verbal forms besides *fa'ala* cannot convey narrative events. In fact, we observe two other patterns of narrative chaining which, contrary to the *fa'ala* CONN-*fa'ala* pattern, are asymmetrical configurations. The first is a chain involving a verbal complex, the second features the pattern *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu*, which will be dealt with in the following section.

It is often the case that in the historiographical literature several versions of the same story are adduced. This practice is quite useful (also) for our matter, as it brings to the surface the distinction between various manifestations of what literary critics call 'point of view', 'perspective' or 'focalization', to wit, the position from which the events are perceived (rather than told).<sup>18</sup> As mentioned, in Classical Arabic the narrative most commonly unfolds in the *fa'ala* CONN-*fa'ala* pattern, signaling an 'event-by-event' pace. However, the same series of events can also be recounted in the form of a verbal complex of the pattern *fa'ala yaf'alu* or *fa'ala fā'ilan*. In using the verbal complex, two events are compressed into a single common occasion (see above chapter 8). The following examples illustrate these two patterns of narrative transmission; the verbal complex in [10.4] comprises the predicative participle:

17 The term 'mediacy' refers to the indispensable presence of some sort of 'mediator' whenever a story is being told. According to Stanzel, *Theory of Narrative*, 4, mediacy is 'the generic characteristic which distinguishes narration from other forms of literary art'.

18 The recognition that 'perspective' or 'focalization' ('who sees') and 'voice' ('who speaks') are two distinct categories in narrative structure was given its clearest expression in Genette's *Narrative Discourse*.

- (10.3) *lammā qatala qābilu ʾahā-hu hābīla ʾahāda bi-yadi ʾuḥti-hī tumma habaṭa bi-hā min ḡabali būda fī l-ḥaḍīdi*

After Cain killed his brother Abel he took his sister by the hand and went down with her to the foot of mountain Būd. (*Taʾrīḥ* 1, 144)

- (10.4) *fa-ḥasada-hū qābilu fa-qatala-hū ʾinda ʾaqabati ḥirāʾa tumma nazala qābilu min-a l-ḡabali ʾāḥīdan bi-yadi ʾuḥti-hī qalīmā fa-haraba bi-hā ʾilā ʾadana min ʾarḍi l-yamani*

Cain thus envied [Abel] and killed him on the mountain slope of Ḥirāʾ. Then Cain descended from the mountain, holding his sister Qalīmā by the hand, then he fled with her to ʾAdan in the land of Yemen. (*Taʾrīḥ* 1, 144)

The two versions refer to the same tradition: Adam wanted to marry Cain's twin sister to Abel but Cain refused. The two then offered sacrifices of which only Abel's was accepted. Cain thus became envy of Abel, killed him on the top of a mountain and fled with his sister. Though recalling the same tradition, the narrators of [10.3] and [10.4] mold the events into two different patterns: the *faʿala* CONN-*faʿala* chain in the first, the verbal complex in the latter. Though the difference between both strategies is subtle, a couple of distinctions can still be observed. Firstly, the *faʿala* CONN-*faʿala* chain imposes a certain chronology on the events: Cain first took his sister by the hand and then descended from the mountain. The verbal complex, on the other hand, leaves the exact chronology unspecified and depicts a scene in which the two events, now related in inverse order (first 'descending' then 'taking'), converge. Secondly, the version in [10.3] displays a sheer reportative style. The events, which are all externally observable ('kill', 'take', 'go down'), are condensed into a temporal *lammā*-clause and a chain of *faʿala* forms. The story is thus structured as a flat sequence, in which no event stands out as more important or central than the other. In contrast, the version in [10.4] displays a descriptive and elaborate style. The narrator sets out from describing Cain's emotional state (*ḥasada-hū*), which led him to kill Abel. He then employs the verbal complex to linger on the picture of Cain descending from the mountain while holding Qalīmā's hand, after he had 'won' her. By using the verbal complex, the narrator shifts from external to internal focalization, thereby marking a certain scene as a salient moment in the narrative. The next example illustrates the use of a verbal complex comprising the predicative *yafʿalu*:

- (10.5) *lammā ʾaḡmaʾa ʾabū salamata l-ḥurūḡa ʾilā l-madīnati raḥala lī baʾira-hū tumma ḥamala-nī ʾalay-hi wa-ḥamala maʾī bn-ī salamata bna ʾabī*

*salamata fī ḥağr-ī tumma ḥarağa bī yaqūdu ba'ira-hū [...] fa-naza'ū  
ḥiṭāma l-ba'iri min yadi-hī fa-'aḥadū-nī min-hu*

When 'Abū Salama had decided to depart to Medina, he saddled his camel for me, then he mounted me on the camel together with my son Salama b. 'Abī Salama [who was] in my arms, then he went out with me leading his camel [...] so they snatched the camel's halter from his hand and took me from him. (*Sīra* 1, 314–315)

The narrator tells the story about her family's migration to Medina, specifying that her husband was leading (*yaqūdu*) the camel, upon which she and her son were seated, when they first departed. This fact turns later to be significant, when we are told that the camel's halter had been snatched by some tribesmen, thus separating the wife and son from the husband. The narrator uses the verbal complex to portray the scene of departure in details, thereby underscoring the relevance of its specific manner of unfolding to the succeeding narrative. This strategy is not restricted to either the third person or the first person narrator: both employ the verbal complex as a special channel of story transmission, allowing them to inspect more closely the narrated scene.

### 10.2.3 *The fa'ala fa-yaf'alu Pattern*

So far, two forms of narrative chaining have been discussed: the unmarked *fa'ala* CONN-*fa'ala* pattern, and the verbal complex pattern, marking an internally focalized chain of events. A third pattern, far less attested, consists of the sequence *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu*. In contrast to the *fa'ala* CONN-*fa'ala* pattern, *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu* does not exhibit a symmetrical configuration, where each link has the same syntactic status. Unlike the asyndetic *yaf'alu* in the verbal complex, *fa-yaf'alu* is not embedded but connected to the previous *fa'ala*. We may say, thus, that *fa-yaf'alu* holds an intermediate position between the two other patterns: *fa-yaf'alu* is dependent on the previous *fa'ala*, which initiates the chain, yet it is not paradigmatic with the predicative participle and therefore not embedded. Also, as far as its function is concerned, we may define *fa-yaf'alu* with respect to its two other competitors, *fa-fa'ala* and  $\emptyset$ -*yaf'alu*. Comparing the following set of examples:

(10.6) *tumma nṣarafū fa-wağadū qurayšan bi-baṭni rābiğin*  
Then they turned and found Qurayš in Baṭn Rābiğ. (*Mağāzī*, 205)

(10.7) *fa-'aqbalū naḥwa-humā yastami'ūna*  
And they came toward them to listen closely [to their talk]. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 253)

- (10.8) *fa-ndafa'ū tilqā'a l-ḡuraybi fa-yağīdūna 'alā tilka l-qalibi llatī qāla rasūlu llāhi rawāyā qurayšin fī-hā suqqā'u-hum*  
 They proceeded towards al-Ḥurayb and found at that well, which the Messenger of God mentioned, the watering camels of Qurayš [and] in it their water carriers. (*Mağāzī*, 51)

We observe that the pattern *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu* indicates something different than mere sequence. While *nṣarafū fa-wağadū* in [10.6] indicates an 'event-by-event' progression and *fa-aqbalū [...]* *yastami'ūna* in [10.7] indicates a compressed dynamic progression, *fa-ndafa'ū [...]* *fa-yağīdūna* in [10.8] indicates a logical sequel, a relation of consequence, result, or reaction of one event to a previous event. Table 10.1 below summarizes the syntactic and semantic distinctions between these three patterns of narration:

TABLE 10.1 *Patterns of main-line sequence in the narrative*

Pattern	Syntactic status	Semantic relation
<i>fa'ala fa-fa'ala</i>	independent	chronological sequence
<i>fa'ala fa-yaf'alu</i>	dependent, not embedded	logical sequel
<i>fa'ala yaf'alu</i>	embedding	event integration

Although of marginal use, the pattern *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu* did not escape the attention of some Arabists, notably Nöldeke and Nebes. Nöldeke suggested that an imperfect following a narrative perfect serves to indicate a 'concluding action'.<sup>19</sup> In a footnote he adds that the construction in Arabic is exactly like the *waw conversivum* in Biblical Hebrew, the only difference is that in Arabic this construction is rare whereas in Hebrew it is the rule.

The resemblance that Nöldeke pointed to between the Arabic and the Hebrew forms appears to me as untenable. The form *wayyiqṭol* in Biblical Hebrew is 'the most usual method in which a series of events is narrated'.<sup>20</sup> As demonstrated by Niccacci, *wayyiqṭol* can be used in both initial and medial positions, and it is not marked particularly for the meanings of consequence or result.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the formal resemblance between *fa-yaf'alu* and *wayyiqṭol*

19 Nöldeke, *Zur Grammatik*, 68.

20 Driver, *Treatise*, 73.

21 Niccacci, *Syntax of the Verb*.

(which in itself is not perfect) is no evidence for their functional identity. In fact, the verbal systems of Classical Arabic and Biblical Hebrew are fairly different from each other. A significant point of divergence is reflected indeed in the use of *fa'ala* versus that of *wayyiqtol* as an index of the narrative chain, and the use of *yaf'alu* (in various types of clauses) versus that of *qatal* to express background information.

Another way to understand the sequence *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu* was proposed by Nebes.<sup>22</sup> Nebes endeavors to explain the temporal value of *yaf'alu* which, in spite of being what he sees as independent form, is interpreted as past rather than present tense. According to Nebes, *yaf'alu* in these cases obtains the 'fictive' present time of the subject of the narrative, rather than referring to the real time of the narrator or the speaker. This change of perspective, from the narrator to the dramatis personae, is aimed, according to Nebes, to enliven the narrative.

We have seen earlier (10.2.2) that an alternation of chaining patterns may signal a change of perspective in the narrative. The normal *fa'ala* CONN-*fa'ala* pattern marks a quick pace of narration, while transition to the *fa'ala yaf'alu/fā'ilan* complex reduces the speed to allow lingering on some particularities of the narrated event. When *yaf'alu* functions as the predicative form in the complex, the time reference of the event is not changed but only its aspectual contour, affecting in turn a change of perspective, from a distanced and external one to a closer and internal one.

The pattern *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu*, as opposed to *fa'ala yaf'alu*, does not feature an embedded predicative form but a connected sequential form. Nevertheless, *fa-yaf'alu* cannot be regarded as syntactically independent, as it can only occur in a subsequent position in the chain, dependent on the initial *fa'ala* which determines the time reference of the entire chain. Furthermore, the rare, isolated, and contextually restricted environments in which *fa-yaf'alu* is found make it hard to consider it as an instance of historic present, which is generally unknown in Classical Arabic prose. Rather than marking a temporal/perceptual shift, *fa-yaf'alu* is employed to stress the (*con*)*sequential relation* between two succeeding events. In the remainder of this section, I shall closely examine a variety of examples in which *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu* is used, in the attempt to better explain both the semantic and textual functions of this pattern of narrative chaining.

The case where a sequential *fa-yaf'alu*, specifically the verb *fa-yağidu*, follows a motion verb is relatively common. Example [10.9] is another such case.

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22 Nebes, *Kāna Yaf'alu*, 198–199.

This example is extracted from a story about the Prophet asking his *ʿaṣḥāb*, who stayed in Abyssinia, to join him in Medina. After they had come, they found out that—against their expectation—the Prophet was not in Medina, as he had already left to Ḥaybar. The verb ‘to find’ appears twice: first *fa-yaǧīdūna* then *fa-waǧādū*. The first ‘finding’ of the *ʿaṣḥāb* is marked as the result of their purposive coming to Medina to meet the Prophet. The second ‘finding’ is not as sensational, grammatically speaking; it is a further step in the chain of events:

- (10.9) *ḥattā qadimū l-madīnata fa-yaǧīdūna rasūla llāhi bi-ḥaybara fa-šaḥṣū ʿilay-hi fa-waǧādū-hu qad fataḥa ḥaybara*  
 Until they came to Medina and found out [that] the Messenger of God was in Ḥaybar, and they turned towards him and found out [that] he had already conquered Ḥaybar. (*Ibn Saʿd* 1/1, 139; Nebes, *Kāna Yafʿalu*, 196)

In a second group of cases, the sequential *fa-yafʿalu* follows an action verb. The subject is switched from *faʿala* to *yafʿalu*, so that the sequence expresses an ensuing reaction of one party to the action of another. The pattern *faʿala fa-yafʿalu* marks the situation as a salient and dramatic moment in the story. Notice that after the junction of *faʿala fa-yafʿalu* the narrative continues in the normal sequence of *faʿala* forms:

- (10.10) *fa-ʾaḥada l-liwāʾa bi-l-yusrā fa-ʾaḥmilu ʾalā yadi-hi l-yusrā fa-ḍarabtu-hā fa-qataʿtu-hā*  
 He took the flag in his left hand, so I attacked his left hand and struck it and cut it. (*Maǧāzī*, 227)

- (10.11) *fa-qultu staʾsirā fa-ʾabayā fa-ʾarmī ʾaḥada-humā bi-sahmin fa-ʾaqtulu-hū wa-staʾsara l-ʾāḥaru*  
 I said: ‘Surrender [you two]!’ And they refused [to surrender], so I threw an arrow at one of them and killed him and [then] the other one surrendered. (*Sīra* 2, 994)

In a third group of cases, the sequential *fa-yafʿalu* occurs after direct speech: *fa-yafʿalu* reacts not to a previous action in the narrative, but to the content of the speech, or a certain implication thereof. In [10.12] the look at the gazelle is interpreted as a call for hunting; in [10.13] the speakers intend to make the loud singer silent; and in [10.14] the donkey tries to comply with Noah’s order:



(10.12) *lammā kunnā bi-turbāna qāla lī rasūlu llāhi yā sa‘du nzur ‘ilā l-zabyi qāla fa-‘ufawwiqū la-hū bi-sahmin*

When we were in Turbān the Messenger of God said to me: ‘O Sa‘d, look at the gazelle!’ (he said) So I aimed an arrow [to throw] at it. (*Mağāzī*, 26)

(10.13) *fā-sami‘a-hū l-rukbanu fa-ğa‘alū yašīhūna bi-hī yā šāhiba l-šawti ‘a-mā tattaqī llāha qad ḥabasta l-nāsa ‘an manāsiki-him fa-yaskutu qalīlan ḥattā ‘idā maḍaw raḥa‘a šawta-hū*

The riders heard him and started to shout at him: ‘O you of [loud] voice (lit. ‘owner of voice’), do you not fear God? You have already withheld the people from their rituals of pilgrimage.’ So he became silent for a short while until they went away [then] he raised his voice. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 51)

(10.14) *fā-lammā ‘adhāla l-ḥimāra wa-daḥala šadru-hū ta‘allaqa ‘iblisu la‘ana-hū llāhu bi-danabi-hī fa-lam tastaqilla riğlā-hu fa-ğa‘ala nūḥu yaqūlu wayḥaka dhul fa-yanhaḍu fa-lā yastaṭī‘u*

When he brought in the donkey and its front part was inside, ‘Iblīs—may God curse him!—clung himself to its tail and so its legs could not board [the ark]; Noah started to say: ‘Woe to you! Step in!’ So [the donkey] rose but could not [go in]. (*Ta‘rīḥ* 1, 190)

In the last two examples the introduction of speech was made by a verbal complex: *ğa‘alū yašīhūna*, *ğa‘ala yaqūlu*. It is often the case that *ğa‘ala yaf‘alu* initiates a chain followed by the sequential *fa-yaf‘alu*. In these cases, too, the meaning of ensuing reaction or result can be discerned: in [10.15] Noah builds the ark on land and this action naturally brings about the reaction of astonishment, and later scorn, of his people; in [10.16] young Abraham asks his father about creatures in the world and his father thus tells him about each creature:

(10.15) *tumma ġa‘ala ya‘malu safinatan fa-yamurrūna fa-yas‘alūna-hū fa-yaqūlu<sup>23</sup> ‘a‘malu-hā safinatan fa-yasharūna min-hu fa-yaqūlūna ta‘malu safinatan fi l-barri fa-kayfa tağrī fa-yaqūlu sawfa ta‘lamūna*

23 Given its specific quotative function and its frequent interchanging with (*fa-*)*qāla* (see also below 11.3), the form *fa-yaqūlu* is not regarded as an instance of the *fa-yaf‘alu* chaining pattern.

Then he started to build an ark and they passed by and asked [what was he doing] so he said: 'I am building an ark from it.' They made fun of him and said: 'You are building an ark on land, how could it float?!' So he said: 'You will know.' (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 186)

(10.16) *fa-ǧa'ala yas'alu 'abā-hu mā hādā fa-yuḥbiru-hū 'an-i l-ba'iri 'anna-hū ba'irun wa-'an-i l-baqarati 'anna-hā baqaratun wa-'an-i l-farasi 'anna-hū farasun wa-'an-i l-šāti 'anna-hā šātun*

And he started to ask his father what is this, so he told him about the camel that it is camel, and about the cow that it is cow, and about the horse that it is horse, and about the sheep that it is sheep. (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 258)

The chains in [10.15] and [10.16] may appear as an extension of the verbal complex, viz.: *ǧa'ala yas'alu ... fa-yuḥbiru-hū*. The complex *ǧa'ala yas'alu* indeed indicates a modified event 'he started to inquire'. However, this modification does not apply to *yuḥbiru* which has a different subject. Rather than an inchoative meaning, *fa-yuḥbiru-hū* has an iterative sense which is not affected by *ǧa'ala*, meaning 'to start', but brought about by the plurality of the complements of the verb. That the sequential *fa-yaf'alu* is not just a second predicate added to the chain can be demonstrated by the next pair of examples:

(10.17) *fa-ǧannaytu-hū 'iyā-hu wa-mā zāla yaqtariḥu 'alay-ya kulla ṣawtin ḡunniya bi-hī fi širi-hī fa-'uǧannī-hi wa-yašrabu wa-yabkī ḥattā šarat-i l-'atamatu*

I sang it to him and he incessantly demanded of me [to sing] every song that was sung of his [repertoire of] poems, so I sang to him and he was drinking and crying until night has come. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 4)

(10.18) *wa-ǧa'alat tuǧannī l-ṣawta ba'da l-ṣawti wa-'uǧannī 'anā fi ḥilāli ḡinā'i-hā*

She started to sing one song after the other and I [too] was singing during her singing. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 249)

In [10.17] the chain is initiated by the modifying verb *mā zāla* 'to continue'; *fa-'uǧannī-hi* reacts to the previous action and complies with the demand to sing. In this case, too, the iterative meaning rises from the plurality of the (elliptic) object, i.e., the entire repertoire of songs. *fa-'uǧannī-hi* is continued by *wa-yašrabu wa-yabkī* which clearly do not indicate this kind of logical relation. In contrast to that, *wa-'uǧannī* in [10.18] is not ensuing but rather (as indicated by the adverbial *fi ḥilāli*) coinciding with the previous event.

It is not surprising that *fa-*, rather than *wa-* or *tumma*, is the connective used to mark this logical relation of result and consequence. We recall that the basic function of *fa-* is to indicate an ordered sequence. However, the precise semantological nature of this sequence is not indicated by *fa-* but left to the specific structure and context. For this reason, *fa-* may be found in a variety of macro-syntactic structures where the meaning of sequel holds, e.g.: the narrative chain, the *ǧawāb* ‘apodosis’ of conditional constructions (and other bipartite constructions, such as those discussed above in 8.4), and explicative clauses introduced by *fa-inna*. It is interesting to note in this regard the structural similarity between the sequential *fa-yafʿalu* and *fa-yafʿala*. The indicative form *yafʿalu* follows the indicative form *faʿala* to express the meanings of result and consequence, while the subjunctive *yafʿala* follows a modal (or a non-assertive) clause—an imperative, a prohibitive, an interrogative or an optative clause—to express a similar meaning. The occurrence of both *yafʿalu* and *yafʿala* is predetermined by the preceding clause: *yafʿalu* is never initial in the narrative chain and it is dependent upon *faʿala*; *yafʿala* is nowhere initial and independent but conditioned by a set of operators and forms (see above 5.3).<sup>24</sup> Table 10.2 summarizes the comparison between both forms:

TABLE 10.2 *fa-yafʿalu* vs. *fa-yafʿala*

Indicative	<i>faʿala</i>	<i>fa-yafʿalu</i>	result consequence
Modal	<i>ifʿal, lā yafʿal, hal ..., layta ..., lā ...</i>	<i>fa-yafʿala</i>	effect

### 10.3 The Background

A narrative is rather dull (and perhaps not a narrative at all) if it consists of a plotline only. The part of the narrative which is not foregrounded is far more complex and diversified, both formally and functionally. Shisha-Halevy, in his discussion of the narrative texteme, calls that part the ‘comment mode’ (as opposed to the ‘evolution mode’), and defines it as ‘extrinsic and typically anaphoric to the plot, but often internal to the narrator’s perspective’.<sup>25</sup> The

24 Cf. Sadan, *Subjunctive Mood*. The existence of free *yafʿala* forms was acknowledged by some grammarians, however these were always regarded as exceptional (282).

25 Shisha-Halevy, *Topics*, 34.

comment mode is the domain where the events are explained, resumed and given reasons by the narrator, who always keeps an open (even if implicit) channel for his accompanying voice. The background of a narrative is accordingly 'but one component of the comment mode' and ought to be regarded as 'roughly synonymous to "setting information"'.<sup>26</sup>

In this section I will not deal with the entire complexity of the comment mode, but only make some observations regarding the background or orientation component. Labov and Waletzky define orientation as that section of the narrative which serves to 'orient the listener in respect to person, place, time and behavioral situation'.<sup>27</sup> The orientation typically precedes the plot, although it can be found in other places as well. It may be realized through a great number of syntactic structures, and even be encapsulated in some lexical items.<sup>28</sup> The orientation is not necessarily presented in an objective or impersonal manner, but may well convey (in a more or less explicit form) the evaluation of the narrator.

In the following, I will discuss two types of clauses which form the greater part of background units in Classical Arabic narratives, i.e., *kāna*-clauses and syndetic circumstantial clauses. Both types of clauses will be described considering two distinctions: a syntactic one and a functional one. Firstly, a distinction between independent ('free') and dependent background clauses will be drawn. Secondly, I will distinguish between background clauses which are eventive and those which are non-eventive or descriptive.

### 10.3.1 *Free and Dependent Clauses*

As was earlier discussed (see above 6.1.2), the dependency status of a clause in Classical Arabic is determined by a number of features, such as the position of the clause in the sequence, the (a)symmetrical configuration it assumes relative to the adjacent clause, and its substitution class. Clauses initiated by *kāna*, as opposed to syndetic circumstantial clauses, can occur as main clauses. Being syntactically independent, they may assume any position in the sequence, initial as well as subsequent. In the narrative, *kāna*-clauses are the typical example of what Labov and Waletzky define as 'free' clauses, i.e., clauses which are not constrained by the temporal sequence of the narrative and thus

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Labov and Waletzky, *Narrative Analysis*, 32.

<sup>28</sup> The case of proper names is of particular relevance for that matter. Proper names can connote the full setting of a story in terms of the place, time, culture, persona and even the expected course of events.

can ‘range freely through the narrative sequence’.<sup>29</sup> This should not be taken to mean that *kāna*-clauses occur randomly in the text: though they do not form part of the chronological sequence, *kāna*-clauses (like all other clauses in the narrative) are subject to the logical order of narration itself, that is, to the author’s decisions as to which information is best suited to which part in order to convey the desired effect. Thus, the text may feature the same information in the beginning, where the orientation is commonly found, or as a comment inserted in the body of the text:

(10.19) *kāna ma’badun qad ‘allama l-ġinā’a ġāriyatan min ġawārī l-ħiġāzi tud’ā zabyata wa-‘uniya bi-taħriġi-hā fa-štarā-hā raġulun min ‘ahli l-‘irāqi*  
 Ma’bad had taught the singing to a maid from Ĥiġāz named Zabya; he was invested in her becoming an accomplished [singer]. Then, a man from the people of Iraq bought her. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 9)

(10.20) *‘aħadna-hū ‘an ġāriyatin kānat lī btā’a-hā raġulun min ‘ahli l-bašrati min makkata wa-kānat qad ‘aħadat ‘an ‘abī ‘abbādin ma’badin wa-‘uniya bi-taħriġi-hā*  
 They learned it (i.e. the song) from a maid I had, whom a man from Basra had bought from Mecca, and she had learned it from ‘Abū ‘Abbād Ma’bad; he was invested in her becoming an accomplished [singer]. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 11)

In [10.19], the details about Ma’bad and the maid are presented for an introductory purpose: they anticipate the story and bear on the entire text which will follow. By contrast, in [10.20] the same details have an explicative function: they aim to fill a local gap in the state of knowledge of the persons involved in the story. In the first case the *kāna*-clause serves as general background, in the latter case it serves to answer a specific question.

While *kāna*-clauses can occur both in an initial and a subsequent position in the sequence and thus serve both an introductory and an elaborative function, syndetic circumstantial clauses are dependent upon the preceding clause and can only serve the latter function. The circumstantial clause, like a subsequent *kāna*-clause, has a local scope of application, i.e., it elaborates on a certain topic—a situation or an entity—which were previously mentioned in the text. Nevertheless, the circumstantial may exceed the referential world of the narrative, when conveying an authorial comment or an encyclopedic piece of information. Consider, for instance, the example below:

29 Labov and Waletzky, *Narrative Analysis*, 22.

- (10.21) *la-qad ra'aytu-nā hīna balaġnā l-taniyyata l-bayḍā'a wa-l-taniyyatu l-bayḍā'u llatī tuhbiṭu-ka 'alā faḥḥin wa-'anta muqbilun min-a l-madīnati*  
I saw us as we reached the white pass, and the white pass is that which brings you down to Faḥḥ as you come from Medina. (*Maġāzī*, 35)

In [10.21], the point of reference of the circumstantial clause—which elaborates on the geographical location of a place mentioned before—resides outside the narrative sphere: it is located in the here-and-now of the situation of narration itself. Such cases bring to the fore the existence of the 'implied author' of which we are usually unconscious.<sup>30</sup>

Circumstantial clauses which take the form of an *'inna*-clause present us with a different case. As noted earlier (see above 8.3), the *wa-'inna la-* pattern has an emphasizing function: it stresses the validity or veracity of the content of the clause in relation to some other implicit or explicit (counter-)assumption. When the *wa-'inna la-* pattern is used it is not the external voice of the author that is expressed; rather, it is an expression of the narrator's internal stance, whether it be the first person or third person narrator, as illustrated below:

- (10.22) *ḥattā 'aqbala raġulun min-a l-ġinni min 'asfali makkata yataġannā bi-'abyātīn min šī'rin ġinā'a l-'arabi wa-'inna l-nāsa la-yattabi'ūna-hū yasma'ūna ṣawta-hū wa-mā yarawna-hū*  
Until a man of the *ġinn* approached from the lower part of Mecca, singing verses according to the Arab form of singing; and lo people were following him, listening to his voice though not able to see him. (*Sīra* 1, 330)

Besides a close description of the situation, the *wa-'inna la-* circumstantial conveys an evaluation of its remarkable nature (i.e., the enchanted people were following the man though not able to see him), an evaluation which brings to the fore the presence of an evaluating person.

### 10.3.2 *Eventive and Descriptive Background*

As already discussed above (10.2.1), the events in the narrative chain are discrete, particular, and sequential. The background is not characterized by any of these properties. Nevertheless, besides pure non-eventive descriptions, the

30 The 'implied author' is further back in the consciousness of the reader than the narrator. It is 'the mental picture of the author that a reader constructs on the basis of the text in its entirety', see Toolan, *Narrative*, 64 ff.

background does contain events. Background events are distinct from main-line events by being non-sequential: they do not move narrative time forward, but recall an event from the perspective of the main-line zero vantage point. Descriptions, as opposed to both foreground and background events, contain static, continuous, or recurrent situations, which characterize a certain figure or state in the story. They are not time-determined but rather define a certain stretch of time, a state, an epoch, in which certain individuals operate.<sup>31</sup>

In Classical Arabic, the distinction between eventive and descriptive background is marked by both the verbal forms and the clausal type in which they are realized. Generally speaking, the compounds *kāna fa'ala* and *kāna qad fa'ala* serve to indicate background events, whereas *kāna yaf'alu* and *kāna fā'ilan/maf'ulan*, alongside other nominal and adverbial *kāna*-compounds, constitute the descriptive background. The next pair of examples illustrates the transition from background units to the main-line and vice versa. In [10.23], the introductory background features the compound form *kāna qad ba'ata*; the event which is referred to precedes the plot in its entirety. In [10.24], a background unit is inserted within the narrative stream of events, in order to describe the character of Waraqa Ibn Nawfal; it features both eventive and non-eventive forms:

(10.23) *wa-kāna mūsā bnu 'imrāna qad ba'ata l-ḡunūda 'ilā l-ḡabābirati min 'ahli l-qurā yaḡzū-hum fa-ba'ata mūsā bnu 'imrāna 'ilā l-amāliqi ḡayṣan min banī 'isrā'ila wa-'amara-hum 'an yaqtulū-hum ḡamī'an*  
 Mūsā b. 'Imrān had sent the troops to the tyrants from the people of the villages to attack them, then Mūsā b. 'Imrān sent an army of the Israelites to the Amalekites and commanded them to kill them all.  
 (*Riwāyāt* 2, 7)

(10.24) *ḡattā 'atat bi-hī waraqata bna nawfali [...] wa-kāna mra'an tanaṣṣara fī l-ḡāhiliyyati wa-kāna yaktubu l-kitāba l-'ibrāniyya fa-yaktubu min-a l-'inḡili bi-l-'ibrāniyyati mā šā'a llāhu 'an yaktuba wa-kāna šayḡan kabīran qad 'amiya fa-qālat la-hū ḡadiḡatu*  
 Until [Ḥadiḡa] went with him to her cousin Waraqa b. Nawfal [...] and he was a man [who] became Christian in the *Ḡāhiliyya*; he used to write

31 Ducrot, *L'imparfait*, 6, has expressed the same thought with respect to the *imparfait* in French: *Lorsqu'un énoncé est à l'imparfait, son thème est nécessairement temporel [...] l'état ou l'événement constituant son propos sont présentés comme des propriétés, comme des caractéristiques du thème.*

in the Hebrew script and would write in Hebrew whatever God wished him to write from the Gospel. He was an old man who already lost his eyesight. Ḥadiġa then told him ... (*Ṣaḥiḥ*, 5)

Not only *kāna*-clauses, but also circumstantial clauses can interrupt the plot in order to comment on some situation or entity mentioned in it. Circumstantial clauses comprising the form *yafʿalu* or the participle always exhibit the order of the nominal clause. They are descriptive in nature, referring to an ongoing situation or a state in which a certain person is found. In contrast, circumstantial clauses in which *qad faʿala* occurs show, in the main, the order of the verbal clause. Although *qad faʿala* embodies both a dynamic and a static aspect, its function in the narrative is eventive rather than purely descriptive, and therefore *qad faʿala* circumstantials realize the order of event-oriented clauses (see above 4.5). The same as *kāna qad faʿala*, *wa-qad faʿala* recalls a previous event for the sake of orientation or amplification of the plot; unlike *kāna qad faʿala*, the circumstantial *wa-qad faʿala* is a dependent clause and thus can only take a subsequent position in the narrative sequence. The next example presents a series of background units. It starts with an introductory *kāna fāʿilan* compound followed by two circumstantial clauses, the first is topicalized and descriptive, comprising the form *yafʿalu*, the second is verb-initiated and eventive, comprising the form *qad faʿala*:

(10.25) *kuntu ʾaḥīdan bi-yadi rasūli llāhi wa-naḥnu natamāšā ġamīʿan nahwa l-maġribi wa-qad tafalat-i l-šamsu*

I was holding the Messenger of God by the hand and we were walking together at sunset time while the sun was already near setting. (*Taʾriḥ* 1, 61)

Table 10.3 summarizes the discussion on free and dependent, eventive and descriptive background clauses in the narrative:

TABLE 10.3 *Background clauses in the narrative*

Verbal form / clause	Dependency	Type of background
<i>kāna yafʿalu / fāʿilan</i>	free (initial or subsequent)	descriptive
<i>kāna qad faʿala</i>	free (initial or subsequent)	eventive
<i>wa-huwa yafʿalu / fāʿilun</i>	dependent	descriptive
<i>wa-qad faʿala</i>	dependent	eventive



#### 10.4 Setting-presentative Constructions

The syntactic structure of setting and presentative clauses which involve the predicative paradigm was discussed earlier (8.4). In this section, I would like to make some observations regarding the textual functions of these types of clauses.

Setting and presentative clauses are not found in any type of discourse, but only in narratives. They are therefore different from other structures of orientation and perception, such as circumstantial and complement clauses, which are not text-specific. The following pairs of examples illustrate the distinction between complement and presentative clauses ([10.26]–[10.27]), and between circumstantial and setting clauses ([10.28]–[10.29]):

(10.26) *lammā raʿaytu bna ʿubayyin ġālisin fi nāhiyati l-bayti*  
When I saw Ibn ʿUbayy sitting at the corner of the house ... (*Maǧāzī*  
370)

(10.27) *daḥaltu l-masǧida fa-ʿidā rasūlu llāhi ġālisun waḥda-hū*  
I entered the mosque and there the Messenger of God was sitting all by  
himself. (*Taʿrīḥ* 1, 152)

(10.28) *fa-ǧāʾa ʿilā rasūli llāhi wa-huwa ġālisun fi ʿaṣḥābi-hī*  
He came to the Messenger of God while he was sitting with his com-  
panions. (*Maǧāzī*, 370)

(10.29) *baynamā huwa ġālisun fi l-masǧidi wa-l-nāsu maʿa-hū ʿid ʿaqbala talā-  
tatu nafarin*  
While he was sitting in the mosque and the people were [sitting] with  
him, suddenly three men approached. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 28)

Complement clauses of perception verbs and presentative clauses both convey a perceived situation. They may refer to the same state of affairs in the world. The difference between them resides in what may be described as the expressive mode in which this state of affairs is represented. A complement clause is a *diegetic* device: it relates the facts from the neutral (unmarked or ‘zero’) vantage-point of the speaker/narrator. A presentative clause, by contrast, is a *mimetic* device: it transmits the situation from the internal point of view of the perceiver (be it the narrator or a character in the narrative). The contrast between complement and presentative clauses comes into play in the narrative: in the first case, the narrator tells the story in a plain neutral manner; in

the latter case, the events are presented as enacted or experienced, thus the narrative is given a dramatic impact.<sup>32</sup>

In a similar manner, the contrast between plain and dramatic representation appears to determine the choice between circumstantial and setting clauses in the narrative. Both types of clauses, the preposed setting and the postposed circumstantial, provide the frame in which the main event takes place. However, as observed by several linguists, preposed adverbial clauses, being associated with both the preceding and the following text, have a broader scope of reference than those postposed.<sup>33</sup> This makes them suitable to serve a special function in the narrative, namely, to relate the previous episode to the succeeding one and to indicate the background from which a dramatic development emerges.

Setting and presentative clauses contribute to the creation of the narrative identity or narrativity of the text. Not only do they shape the narrative structure, serving as either grounding or 'relief' devices, but also at the metalinguistic level, setting and presentative clauses are indices of narrativity: their presence in the text marks the message itself as narrative.<sup>34</sup>

#### 10.4.1 *Setting and Preposed Temporal Clauses*

As far as their function in the narrative is concerned, setting clauses introduced by *baynā/baynamā* can be paired-off with preposed temporal clauses introduced by *lammā* (see also above 7.4). Both types of clauses share some structural similarities: they take the first position in the complex construction (like conditional clauses) and are followed by *fa'ala* in the second clause; both *lammā* and *baynā/baynamā* can be preceded by the conjunction *fa-*. However, in *lammā*-clauses the verbal form *fa'ala* comes right after the operator,

32 The distinction between the plain and the dramatic mode of expression should not be equated with the distinction between an objective and a subjective mode of description. Expressivity, as a reflection of subjectivity in language, is a scalar phenomenon. Lyons, *Deixis and Subjectivity*, 107–108, for instance, views the distinction between propositional and non-propositional complement clauses (e.g. 'I remember switching off the light' vs. 'I remember that I switched off the light') as having to do with the subjective, in the first case, or objective, in the latter case, mode in which the situation is described. Thus, a plain expressive mode can be more or less subjective; a dramatic mode of expression is by definition subjective.

33 Cf. Chafe, *Adverbial Clauses* and Ramsay, *Functional Distribution*.

34 Fleischman, *Tense and Narrativity*, 78, defines the 'metalinguistic' component of the linguistic system as 'a language's resources for talking about itself'; it includes such functions as the signaling of 'a particular style, register, genre, or type of discourse'.

while *baynā/baynamā*-clauses exhibit the order of the nominal clause, where the subject precedes the verbal predicate *yafʿalu* or the participle. Table 10.4 summarizes the structural properties of *lammā*-clauses and *baynā/baynamā*-clauses:

TABLE 10.4 *lammā* : *baynā/baynamā*

Pattern	A	B
preposed temporal clause	( <i>fā-</i> ) <i>lammā</i> <i>fāʿala</i>	<i>fāʿala</i>
setting clause	( <i>fā-</i> ) <i>bayna</i> ( <i>mā</i> ) N <sup>nom</sup> <i>yafʿalu</i> / <i>fāʿilun</i>	( <i>fā-</i> / <i>ʿid</i> ) <i>fāʿala</i>

Not only in their structure but also in their function, preposed temporal clauses and setting clauses are similar: both convey a backgrounded or expository piece of information that anticipates a dramatic development in the plot. The difference is that *lammā*-clauses introduce anterior events while *baynā/baynamā*-clauses introduce ongoing situations with *yafʿalu* or states with the participle. Moreover, *lammā*-clauses are mostly anaphoric, presenting information that is accessible from the previous context. *baynā/baynamā*-clauses, on the other hand, are primarily cataphoric, often initiating a new episode of the narrative.<sup>35</sup> The following examples illustrate the function of these two types of clauses:

(10.30) *fā-lammā sāra ġayra baʿīdin-i ʿaraḍa la-hū dīʿbun*

After he went not too far, [suddenly] a wolf stood in his way. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 63)

(10.31) *fā-baynā huwa yuḥaddītu-hū yawman ʿid qāla la-hū*

While he was talking to him one day, he suddenly said to him. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 59)

(10.32) *baynā ʿanā nāʿimun ʿutītu bi-qadaḥi labanin*

While I was sleeping, I was [suddenly] brought a cup of milk. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 33)

35 On the distinction between anaphoric and cataphoric grounding, see Givón, *Beyond Foreground*, 180–181.

Example [10.30] follows right after the opening clause of the story, *'inna rağulan salaka mafāzatan* 'a man travelled the desert'. The event of 'going' reported in the *lammā*-clause belongs to the same referential domain as the 'travelling', and is in fact a specification thereof. By contrast, [10.31]–[10.32] open new episodes in the narrative; they depict the background in which a dramatic happening emerges.

Setting clauses can also take the form of the *'inna la-* pattern. As noted earlier (8.4.1), the distinction between this pattern and the regular *baynā/baynamā* pattern lies in the domain of expressivity. The *'inna la-* pattern allows the first person narrator—who marks an external point of reference—to signal his internal involvement as a character in the narrative:

- (10.33) *'innā la-natarahhalu 'ilā 'arđi l-ħabašati [...]* *'id 'aqbala 'umaru bnu l-ħaṭṭābi*  
 We were departing to Abyssinia [...] when suddenly 'Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb approached. (*Sīra*, 225)

#### 10.4.2 Presentative Clauses

Presentative clauses take the second position in the complex construction. They can be classified into two kinds: dynamic and static. Dynamic presentatives are often introduced by the particle *'id* followed by the verbal form *fā'ala*. The structure of static presentatives, which are introduced by the particle *'idā*, was presented above (8.4.2). Both *'id* and *'idā* can be preceded by the conjunction *fā-* (and occasionally by *wa-*). Table 10.5 summarizes the structural properties of presentatives introduced by *'id* and *'idā*:

TABLE 10.5 *'id*: *'idā*

Pattern	A	B
dynamic presentative	<i>(fā-)bayna(mā) N<sup>nom</sup> yaf'alu/fā'ilun</i>	<i>(fā-/'id) fā'ala</i>
static presentative	<i>fā'ala</i>	<i>fā-/wa-'idā N<sup>nom</sup> yaf'alu/fā'ilun/qad fā'ala</i>

Presentative clauses introduced by *'id* and *'idā* express something unexpected, *mufağga'a* 'surprise' in traditional terms, a sudden development or realization, perceived or grasped by a certain character. However, while *'id*-clauses present

a further progression in the plot, *ʔidā*-clauses present an unfolding scene, a *tableau*, hence the above distinction between dynamic and static presentatives. In both cases the overall construction exhibits what may be described as an aspectual asymmetry. In *ʔid*-initiated presentatives, a static situation (*baynā/baynamā*-clause) is interrupted by a dynamic peak in the story. In *ʔidā*-initiated presentatives, a dynamic step forward in the plot (*faʔala*) is concluded in a static situation. It is this aspectual asymmetry that creates the dramatic moment of surprise in the narrative. The examples below illustrate the distinction between the two types of presentative constructions. In [10.34] the presentative is introduced by *ʔid* while in [10.35]–[10.37], reproducing [8.110]–[8.112], the presentative is introduced by *ʔidā* followed by the predicative forms:

- (10.34) *baynā ʔanā ʔamšī ʔid samiʔtu ʂawtan min-a l-samāʔi*  
 While I was walking, all of a sudden I heard a voice from the sky. (*ʂahih*, 6)
- (10.35) *fa-qāla unzurū mā hādā l-ʔadānu fa-ʔidā baššārun yuʔaddinu sakrāna*  
 And he said: ‘Look what is this call!’ And there was Baššār calling for prayer while drunk. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 261)
- (10.36) *fa-ǧʔtu ʔilā ʔibrāhīma l-mawšiliyyi fa-ʔidā l-bābu maftūhun wa-l-dihlizu qad kunisa wa-l-bawwābu qāʔidun*  
 I came to ʔIbrāhīm al-Mawšilī, and behold, the door was opened, the hall was already swept, and the door-keeper was sitting. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 28)
- (10.37) *fa-fataha-hā la-hū fa-ʔidā fi-hā ʂūratu ʔādama wa-durriyyati-hī kulli-him fa-ʔidā kullu raǧulin maktūbun ʔinda-hū ʔǧalu-hū wa-ʔidā ʔadamu qad kutiba la-hū ʔumru ʔalfi sanatīn* (*Taʔrīḥ* 1, 156)  
 He opened it (i.e. His hand) for him, and behold, in it there was the picture of Adam and all his progeny, and there was the [life] term of each man written down with Him, and there was Adam, a term of thousand years already written down for him.

## 10.5 Generic Narratives

The hitherto discussion of Classical Arabic narrative structure accounts for the great majority of narratives found in the corpus. Nearly all the narratives consist of a *faʔala*-initiated chain of events, which is amplified by background units; some also feature dramatic patterns, such as the setting-presentative

constructions. Nevertheless, one can occasionally encounter other forms of narration. The following anecdote, extracted from *Kitāb al-Buḥalā'* 'The Book of Misers', is a case in point:

(10.38) *qāla 'aṣḥābu-nā yaqūlu l-marwazī li-l-zā'iri 'idā 'atā-hu wa-li-l-ḡālisi 'idā ṭāla ḡulūsu-hū taḡaddayta l-yawma fa-'in qāla na'am qāla lawlā 'anna-ka taḡaddayta la-ḡaddaytu-ka bi-ḡadā'in ṭayyibin wa-'in qāla lā qāla law kunta taḡaddayta la-saqaytu-ka ḥamsata 'aqdāḥin fa-lā yaṣīru fī yadi-hī 'alā l-waḡḥayni qalīlun wa-lā kaṭīrun*

Our friends say: "The Marwazī says to a visitor when he comes to his [house] and to a companion when he extends his stay [with him]: "Have you had your midday meal today?" If he answers "Yes" he says: "If you hadn't already had your midday meal I would have given you a fine midday meal," and if he says "No" he says: "If you had had your midday meal I would have poured you five bowls of a drink." So neither a little nor a lot would come into his hand.' (*Buḥalā'*, 37)

The quoted passage seems to fit well Koch's definition of an anecdote: 'a short—originally orally transmitted—narrative told about a well-known person, either a nationally prominent figure or a local character, to highlight his character or that of a social group or epoch this person represents'.<sup>36</sup> Al-Ḡāḥiḡ tells the story about the Marwazī in order to demonstrate the miserliness of the people of Khurasan. The story has in it a comic element, which is also inherent to the anecdotal style.

As far as its syntactic structure is concerned, this anecdote presents a great deviation from the narrative structure discussed above. For one thing, the story does not consist of a *fa'ala*-initiated chain and digression to background units therefrom. For another, the reference point of the story is neither internal—the narrative is not detached and self-contained—nor is it external, referring to the present situation of a particular narrator. Instead, the narrative consists of a sequence of generic verbal clauses: simple clauses comprising the verbal form *yaf'alu*, and conditional constructions comprising the verbal form *fa'ala*. Indeed, this narrative is essentially different from an ordinary narrative in being generic: though it does tell us of a sequence of events, these events are not discrete and particular, they did not happen to a certain person at a certain time and place, but would happen to a certain type of person whenever a certain type of situation arises. Generic narratives, according to Fleischman, 'relate

36 Koch, *Simple Forms*, 7.

what used to be the case in the past or what normally occurs in the present'.<sup>37</sup> I apply this term to anecdotes such as the one quoted, since these set foot in both the domains of the narrative and the generic utterance: on the one hand, they report on a sequence of events in order to make a certain point, thus they have both the cohesive structure of a narrative and its pragmatic motivation; on the other hand, they are not anchored in a particular situation but refer to an always valid state of affairs.

## 10.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the main types of clauses which are found in Classical Arabic narratives and the way in which they contribute to the shaping of the narrative's overall structure. I have pointed out the major role of *fa'ala* as the eventive chain-initiating form, and distinguished between three types of chains: (a) the externally reported sequence of events marked by the *fa'ala* CONN-*fa'ala* pattern, (b) the internally portrayed complex event marked by the *fa'ala yaf'alu*/*fā'ilan* pattern, and (c) the consequentially related events indicated by the *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu* pattern. Further, I have discussed background patterns in the narrative and distinguished between introductory (free) and subsequent (free or dependent) units, and between eventive and descriptive amplifications of the narrative. I have also made some observations regarding dramatic devices such as setting and presentative clauses. It was shown that the preference of a certain narrating strategy is not due to (macro-)syntactic constraints, but follows from the external or internal, involved (subjective and expressive) or uninvolved (objective and plain) position assumed by the narrator.

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37 Fleischman, *Tense and Narrativity*, 104.

## The Verbal Paradigm in the Generic Utterance

The last two chapters discussed the distribution and function of the verbal forms in two text types: the dialogue and the narrative. In the present chapter I will examine the verbal paradigm in the third text type, the generic utterance.

### 11.1 Preliminaries

Genericity is a mode of reference. As many have observed, the generic meaning is often not inherent in a particular lexical or a grammatical element; rather, it is a reading, an interpretation of the linguistic expression advanced by a certain context.<sup>1</sup> The generic mode of reference may be applied to either an entity or a state of affairs. A generic entity is one referring to a concept or a kind, rather than a certain object or individual; a generic state of affairs is one referring to a fact or a certain order of things, rather than an event or episode.<sup>2</sup>

Generic reference is distinct from particular reference in that it indicates only an implicit relation to the deictic center of the text. In both dialogue and narrative the reference is established with respect to a particular entity, i.e., the speaking subject/first person narrator or the third person narrator (see above 4.2). Being a particular subject, the speaker/narrator endows a certain element with particularity by locating it in an exclusive relation with respect to himself.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, this element is anchored in the situation of speech or narration and interpreted in relation to it. It is not the case that in assigning generic reference, the speaker does not have ‘a particular referent in mind’,

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1 Hawkins, *Definiteness*, 214–217; Ter Meulen, *Generic Information*, 123; Krifka, *Genericity*, 8–9; Jacobsson, *Notes on Genericity*, 151; Shisha-Halevy, *Topics*, 403.

2 The notion of ‘mere fact’ or ‘order of things’ is contrasted with the notion of ‘event’ or ‘episode’ in that the latter has a temporal relevance; it addresses ‘the tension between situations and changes-of-situations’, see Fuchs, *Deixis*, 102.

3 That a linguistic expression obtains a referential value with respect to the speaking person was recognized by several linguists, cf. Benveniste, *Subjectivity*, 225, and Coseriu, *Determinierung*, 269, who says: *Die Situierung schliesslich ist der Vorgang, in dem die fest bezeichneten Gegenstände ‘situieren’ werden, d.h. durch die sie mit den in die Rede einbezogenen ‘Personen’ verknüpft und durch die sie in Bezug zu den räumlich-zeitlichen Gegebenheiten der Rede gesetzt werden.*



or that he ‘does not have a commitment to its (i.e. the referent’s) existence within the relevant universe of discourse’.<sup>4</sup> Rather, the speaker does not locate the referent in an exclusive relation with respect to himself, and therefore the referent is not anchored in the situation of speech, nor dependent upon it for its interpretation.

The fact that generic utterances exhibit only an implicit relation to the speaking subject should not be confused with the notion of objectivity. Generic utterances are often described as ‘eternal-truths’ or ‘law-like’ statements, related to the higher level of ‘types’ rather than ‘tokens’, reflecting our conceptual organization of reality.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, generic information is not concerned with the description of particular situations, but, as pointed out by Ter Meulen, ‘its purpose is to classify such situations as being of a particular type’.<sup>6</sup> That being said, one should bear in mind that a generic utterance, like any other utterance, is also transmitted by a certain subject whose imprints, even if subtle, may still be discerned in the structure of the clause.

Generic utterances record human knowledge, experience, law or custom. Regardless of their length, they form self-sufficient textual units. I shall use the term generic clauses to refer to the morpho-syntactic realization of generic utterances. A set of generic clauses often constitutes an expository text or, with ‘normative’ generics (see below 11.4), a codex. Generic clauses can be found in generic speech-situations, e.g., proverbs collections, moral and wisdom literature, or scholarly writing. However, a generic clause can also be called into a particular speech-situation, to support the specific exchange of discourse. In these cases, the generic may precede the particular clause and serve as an exposition, or follow the particular clause and provide an explanation to it. The operator *’inna* is often used as an explicit mark of these two inter-clausal semantic relations (see also above 9.2.2), as illustrated in the following examples:

- (11.1) *ya hanāh ’inna l-nāsa yamzaḥūna wa-ya’abūna wa-lā yu’āḥadūna bi-šay’in min dālika fa-rudd-i l-qamiša ’āfā-ka llāhu*  
 O you, People jest and make fun and they are not reprehended for any of this, [so] hand back the gown, May God keep you in good health!  
 (*Buḥalā*, 63)

4 Hawkins, *Definiteness*, 215; Givón, *Definiteness and Referentiality*, 293–294.

5 Dahl, *On Generics*, 99–100; Kleiber, *Phrases habituelles*, 28–29.

6 Ter Meulen, *Generic Information*, 125.

(11.2) *lā tanzuranna 'ilā šīḡar-ī wa-ḡu'f-ī fa-'inna l-'umūra laysat taḡrī 'alā l-quwwati wa-l-šiddati wa-l-ḡu'fi*

Do not look at my smallness and weakness, for the matters are not guided by power, strength, [or] weakness. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna* 82)

The fact that generic reference may be applied to both a nominal-phrase and a verbal-phrase brings about four possible combinations within clauses whose predicate is a verbal form. Following the terminology suggested by Galmiche, these four types of clauses are listed in table 11.1 below. Notice that only when both the subject and the predicate are generically interpreted a generic clause is obtained:<sup>7</sup>

TABLE 11.1 *Episodic, habitual, and generic clauses*

		Verbal predicate	
		particular	generic
Nominal subject	particular	<b>episodic clause</b>	<b>habitual clause</b>
	generic	<b>episodic clause</b>	<b>generic clause</b>

In the following, I will discuss the verbal forms which are found in main generic clauses and the functional oppositions between them (embedded generic clauses were discussed above in chapter 7, see [7.11], [7.12], [7.23], [7.57], [7.66], [7.67], [7.88], [7.92], [7.93]). A brief presentation of the overall structure of generic clauses will precede the discussion. The properties of the generic nominal subject will not be dealt with.<sup>8</sup>

7 Galmiche, *Phrases génériques*, 23, includes in his classification one more type, the *jugement générique* which predicate an essential property of the kind. In terms of its grammatical characteristics, however, this type rests on a less solid definition, and therefore it is not included here. A similar combinatory approach to generic sentences is outlined in Mumm, *Verbale Definitheit*, 171–172.

8 For a detailed discussion of the theme in generic verbal clauses in Classical Arabic, see Marmorstein, *Verbal Generics*.

## 11.2 The Structure of Generic Clauses

Generic clauses are often introduced into discourse by formulas involving the verb *qāla*, e.g.: *wa-qad qāla* (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 69) ‘It has been said’, *fa-yuqālu* (*Buḥalā*, 41) ‘It is said’, *wa-qad kāna yuqālu* (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 66) *on disait*, *wamā zālū yaqūlūna* (*Buḥalā*, 39) ‘They [= people] kept on saying’. Such formulas announce a generic clause; however, they do not form part of its internal structure.

Generic clauses may exhibit the structure of either the nominal clause or the verbal clause (see above 4.5), although the first option is far more common. The nominal pattern may be simply signaled by the placing of the subject ahead of the predicate, or it may take the marked form of an *’ammā fa-* ‘as for ... so’ clause, or be headed by the operator *’inna* or one of its ‘sisters’, viz., *lākinna* ‘but’, *li’anna* ‘since’ or *’anna* ‘that’ (introducing the content clause of verbs such as *za’ama* ‘to maintain’, *’alima* ‘to know’, and *ra’ā* ‘to see, comprehend’; see above 7.2).

Occasionally, generic clauses exhibit the pattern of the verbal clause. This pattern is triggered by the occurrence of the following operators and operations: (a) negation, interrogation, modification particles such as *qad* and focus particles such as *’innamā* preceding the verb; (b) emphasizing of a complement of the predicate, brought as such to the beginning of the clause, or emphasizing of the verbal lexeme itself; (c) impersonal verbs like *yanbaḡī* ‘it is desirable’ taking a content clause as their subject; and (d) passive verbs. An accumulation of these elements is also encountered (e.g. *’innamā yanbaḡī ’an*).

## 11.3 Indicative Verbal Forms in Generic Clauses

In the grammatical literature, genericity is usually discussed in relation to nominal determination. However, genericity is also applied to verbal-phrases. In such cases, the generic mode of reference encodes a non-exclusive relation between the situation expressed by the verb and the subject engaged in discourse. In many languages the present tense is employed to signal this type of reference. This, however, cannot be simply explained away by the basic temporal denotation of this tense. The ‘actual present’ and the ‘generic present’ are not just distinct in their duration, exhibiting ‘a gradual transition from what is more or less momentary to “eternal truths”’, as Jespersen puts it, but rather they are distinct in their very nature. The ‘actual present’ is anchored in the situation of speech, it refers indeed to what is ‘valid now’, while the ‘generic present’ is in

principle incompatible with the notion of 'now', always exclusive and relative with respect to a particular subject.<sup>9</sup>

The generic verb indicates either a static situation, with stative lexemes, or a dynamic situation, a disposition achieved by a frequentative, non-contingent repetition of an action. Frequentative repetition is one that has achieved the force of a law: it does not only refer to actual cases but also to possible and predictable ones.<sup>10</sup> As defined by Kleiber, frequentative repetition, in contrast to mere iteration, does not take place *in* an interval of time, but applies *for* the whole interval of time referred to.<sup>11</sup> Both generics and habituals denote a frequentative repetition, yet they are distinct from each other, since only in the latter case the interval of time is limited by the presence of a particular subject.<sup>12</sup>

In Classical Arabic, the verbal form *yaf'alu* is the regular, most common form of verb occurring in generic clauses. As opposed to *fa'ala*, *yaf'alu* is essentially non-eventive. It depicts an ongoing situation rather than a framed episode. As opposed to *qad fa'ala*, *yaf'alu* is temporally unbounded. This opposition clearly emerges in the following example:

(11.3) *fa-qad ġama'a hādā l-ismu l-ħamda wa-l-māla wa-smu l-buħli yaġma'u l-māla wa-l-ħamma*

And this noun (i.e. 'generous') has comprised praise and money, while the noun 'miserliness' comprises money and dispraise. (*Buħalā*, 91)

In dialogue, the interval of time indicated by *yaf'alu* is delimited by the presence of a particular, spatiotemporally bounded person: either the first person, i.e., the subject engaged in discourse, or the second and third persons, determined with respect to him. This interval may be further specified by time-

9 Jespersen, *Modern English*, 4, 17–18. Kleiber, *Phrases habituelles*, 109–111, subscribing to the same view, explains the eternal validity of generic verbal sentences as produced by: (a) the neutrality of the present tense, (b) the stability of the predicate and (c) the durativity inherent in the generic noun-phrase. This, however, appears more like a description than an explanation of the generic sense. As a matter of fact, neutrality, stability, and durativity stem all from the lack of subjective anchoring.

10 Dahl, *On Generics*.

11 Kleiber, *Phrases habituelles*, 111–116.

12 In a similar fashion, Mumm, *Verbale Definitheit*, 172, finds the distinction between *allgemeinen, ausserzeitlichen Sachverhalte* and *allgemeine Eigenschaften konkreter individueller Subjekte* to relate only to the distinction between *zeitgebundenem und zeitungebundenem Verbalhandlungsträger*.

adverbs. When *yafʿalu* is not a main verb but a predicative (dependent) form, it is temporally limited by the interval of time indicated in the matrix clause. In generic clauses, *yafʿalu* does not refer to the situation of speech or is dependent on another verb, thus it is left indeterminate to the extent that it almost conveys the pure notion of the verbal lexeme. To put it in Guillaume's terms, *yafʿalu* in generic clauses reaches the end of maximal extension.<sup>13</sup>

The generic validity of *yafʿalu* is diminished when a specific interval of time is indicated:

- (11.4) *wa-ʾammā l-fursu fa-ʾinna-hum kānū yuʾarriḥūna bi-mulūki-him wa-hum l-yawma fī-mā ʾaʿlamu yuʾarriḥūna bi-ʾahdi yazdağirda bni šahri-yāra*

And as for the Persians, they used to date according to [the reigns of] their kings, and today—as far as I know—they date according to the period of Yazdğard b. Šahriyār. (*Tārīḥ* 1, 201)

The modifier *qad* occasionally precedes the generic *yafʿalu*. It serves as an explicit mark of the meaning of possible repetition implied by the generic *yafʿalu*. The modified *qad yafʿalu* always precedes the subject, thereby realizing the order of the verbal clause:

- (11.5) *al-ğāhīlu lā yakūnu munṣifan wa-qad yakūnu l-ʾālimu muʾānidan*  
The ignorant cannot be just whereas the learned may [well] be obstinate. (*Uyūn* 2, 140)

Other operators which precede *yafʿalu* are *qallamā* 'seldom' and *rubba(mā)* 'many (a time)'. Like *qad*, these restrict the meaning of universal or extensive quantification, otherwise implied by the plain *yafʿalu*, and stress the notion of (high/low) frequency in which the verbal situation is likely to recur:

13 Extension, as defined first by Guillaume, *Particularisation et generalisation*, is the reference-potential of a lexeme, existing in the *langue* as a scale ranging between the two ends of particular and universal reference. In the transition to the *parole* a certain segment of this scale is realized by the operation of a determiner, such as the article in the case of a noun. The generic realization of a lexeme is therefore an approximation to the universal end of the scale, to the end of maximal extension. Wilmet, *Contre la généralité*, has further elaborated this notion to account not just for the domain of the nominal syntagm, termed by him *extensité*, but also for the domain of the predication, termed by him *extensitude*.

- (11.6) *wa-qallamā tanğahu hīlatu l-‘ağalati wa-l-‘irhāqi*  
The hasty and excessive device seldom succeeds. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 91)
- (11.7) *man-i staqalla bi-dā’i-hī fa-lā yatadāwayanna fa-’inna-hū rubba yūrītu l-dā’a*  
He who cares little for his disease and does not treat himself, many [a time] transmits the disease. (*‘Uyūn* 3, 296)

The modifier *la-* is rarely conjoined with a generic *yaf’alu*. The form *la-yaf’alu*, as discussed above (9.2.3), occurs in the frame of *’inna* clauses. The clausal pattern *’inna la-* marks the predicative relation, the nexus, as focused:

- (11.8) *wa-mā humqu l-ruba’i wallāhi ’inna-hū la-yağtanību l-‘udawā’a wa-yatba’u ’umma-hū fi l-mar’ā wa-yurāwiḥu bayna l-‘aṭbā’i wa-ya’lamu ’anna ḥanīna-hā ruğā’un fa-’ayna humqu-hu*  
And what is the stupidity of the *ruba’* (i.e., a young camel born in the season called *rabi’*)? By God, it surely avoids uneasiness, follows its mother in the pasture, alternates between [its mother’s] dug and knows that its [mother’s] yearning [sounds like] grumble, so where is its stupidity? (*Ḥayawān* 7, 22)

Focus, as is well known, marks the subjective stance of the speaker. At first sight this might seem contradictory to the notion of genericity. However, a generic utterance, though not anchored in a particular situation of speech, is not devoid of subjectivity.<sup>14</sup> Subjectivity is explicitly marked in the clausal pattern *’inna la-* or when the operator *’innamā* is employed. It is also marked formally in a clause whose predicate or one of its complements are emphasized and thus fronted to the beginning of the clause. The modal verbal forms, to be discussed below, are naturally colored with subjectivity; however, *yaf’alu* forms often have a shade of modal meaning as well (see below [11.10]–[11.11]). The difference between focus in particular and generic clauses is that in the first case the pragmatic motivation for the subjective expression is present and evident, while in the second case, due to the transferability of generic utterances (enabled by their non-anchoredness), this motivation is lost along the way.

14 Subjectivity and subjective anchoring are not overlapping terms: the first is much more wide and elusive: it applies not only to the deictic binding of the expression to the situation of discourse, but to any disclosing of the speaker’s involvement or attitude marked formally in the structure of the clause, see above 4.2.

Generic *yaf'alu* forms are nearly always negated by *lā*. Only in rare occasions *laysa* is used and *mā* was encountered on only one occasion. The negated *yaf'alu* usually follows a definite subject and precedes an indefinite one:

(11.9) *inna-nī la-kum ḡayfun wa-l-ḡayfu lā yuṣāri'u rabba manzili-hī*  
I am your guest and the guest does not fight with his host (lit. 'the lord of his house'). (*Riwāyāt* 1, 129)

(11.10) *wa-lā yaqtulu mu'minun mu'minan fi kāfirin*  
And a believer shall not kill another believer for the sake of an infidel.  
(*Sīra* 1, 342)

However, in certain cases the negated *yaf'alu* also precedes the definite subject: (a) when the verb is in the passive, or (b) when the content negated is restricted by either *'illā* 'except', *ḡattā* 'until', or *mā l-daymūma* 'mā of duration':

(11.11) *maktūbun fi l-tawrāti lā yu'ādu l-ḡadītu marratayni*  
It is written in the Torah: The story is not to be repeated twice. (*'Uyūn* 2, 194)

(11.12) *fa-lā yub'idu llāhu 'illā man ḡalama*  
And God does not remove but the one who does wrong. (*Buḡalā'*, 150)

(11.13) *lā ya'rifu l-raḡulu ḡaṡa'a mu'allimi-hī ḡattā ya'rifa l-iḡtilāfa*  
The man is not aware of his teacher's mistake until he is acquainted with the disagreeing [opinion]. (*'Uyūn* 2, 143)

(11.14) *lā yazālu l-mar'u 'āliman mā ṡalaba l-'ilma*  
The man does not cease to be learned as long as he asks for lore. (*'Uyūn* 2, 134)

Verbs introducing direct speech form a special class of clauses. They may be realized either in nominal clauses, specifying the source of the saying, or in verbal clauses, serving to announce the saying. The verb may take the form of either *yaf'alu* or *fa'ala*. The generic-episodic opposition between the two forms, even if not entirely forgotten, seems to be worn down to a large extent with these verbs:

(11.15) *wa-yaz'umu 'ahlu l-tawrāti*  
And the people of the Torah maintain ... (*Ta'riḡ* 1, 190)

(11.16) *fa-'ammā 'ahlu l-tawrāti fa-'inna-hum yaz'umūna*  
As for the people of the Torah, they maintain ... (*Ta'riḥ* 1, 251)

(11.17) *qālat-i l-'aṭibbā'u [...]* *wa-taqūlu l-'aṭibbā'u*  
The physicians said [...] and the physicians say ... (*Uyūn* 3, 302–304)

Besides conditional structures, the occurrence of *fa'ala* in generic clauses is rather restricted. The most obvious case in which *fa'ala* assumes a generic sense is in proverbs. The example *'anḡaza ḥurrūn mā wa'ada* 'A free man fulfills what he promises' is one repeatedly quoted since de Sacy's grammar in every discussion on the generic use of *fa'ala*. Other such examples abound in proverb collections such as al-Maydānī's *maḡma' l-'amtāl*, e.g.: *'arafa ḥumayqun ḡamala-hū* '[Even] a foolish man knows his camel', *'āda l-sahmu 'ilā l-naza'ati* 'The arrow comes back to the shooters', *taraka l-zabyu zilla-hū* 'The gazelle has forsaken its shelter'.

Proverbs, as is well known, form a special kind of generic statements. In terms of their syntactic structure, proverbs, like verse, are allowed much latitude and flexibility, thus manifesting a great variety of patterns. In fact, what identifies a proverb as such is not necessarily a distinct syntactic structure (though typical structural features common to proverbs naturally exist), but rather its being acknowledged as a proverb. In other words, a proverbial statement is defined by its unambiguous generic reading, regardless of its syntactic structure.<sup>15</sup> The generic interpretation of *fa'ala* in proverbs is thus advanced by the given generic context, or by what may be described as the 'proverbization' of the clause.<sup>16</sup>

Apart from proverbs, *fa'ala* seems to assume a generic sense in certain patterns of negation. With a generic subject, *fa'ala* negated by *mā*, occasionally reinforced by *qaṭṭu*, refers not to the non-occurrence of an episode, but to the whole interval of time in which a certain occurrence did not take place. In a similar manner, the negated form *lam yaf'al* may also be used to indicate such a 'sweeping' negation. As mentioned above, negation triggers as a rule the order of the verbal clause:

15 As pointed out by Taylor, *Proverb*, 3, it is 'an incommunicable quality', rather than a certain structural property, that 'tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not'.

16 What is meant here by 'proverbization' are the linguistic shaping and stabilization of the proverbial statement, as well as the extralinguistic process of its being acknowledged as such.



- (11.18) *mā naqaša mālun qaṭṭu min zakātin*  
Money never grew less through charity. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 50)
- (11.19) *mā warraṭat-i l-ʾābāʾu l-ʾabnāʾa šayʾan ʾafḍala min-a l-ʾadabi*  
Fathers never bequeathed to their sons anything better than fine education. (*ʿUyūn* 2, 136)
- (11.20) *tumma lam yūlad šabiyyun maḥtūnun qaṭṭu*  
Afterwards, never was a circumcised boy born. (*Ḥayawān* 7, 27)
- (11.21) *fa-lam tazal-i l-suḥafāʾu tastaḥiffu l-ʿulamāʾa*  
The fools never ceased to scorn the wise people. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 120)

Another case in which a generic interpretation of *faʿala* suggests itself is the following interrogative clause. In the contour of a rhetoric question, this statement implies that people *always* waste their money on ghee and honey:

- (11.22) *wa-hal ʾafsada l-nāsu ʾamwāla-hum ʾillā fi l-samni wa-l-ʿasali*  
Did people [ever] lose their wealth but [through spending] on ghee and honey?! (*Buḥalāʾ*, 79)

In one more case *faʿala* seems to assume a generic sense: this is when it is preceded by the operator *rubbamā* ‘many a time’, or its subject is constructed with *rubba* ‘many’. The operator *rubba(mā)* does not indicate universal quantification. Nevertheless, *rubba(mā) faʿala* conveys the implication that the occurrence which took place several (few/many) times in the past is bound to repeat itself again in the future, as illustrated in the examples below. Notice that in [11.24] *faʿala* is followed by *yafʿalu*, the latter form is referential to the first, indicating a succeeding event:

- (11.23) *wa-ʾinna l-šaḡīra rubbamā ʾaẓuma*  
The small one many a time turned great. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 71)
- (11.24) *wa-ʾinna l-malika l-ḥāzima rubbamā ʾabḡaḍa l-raḡula wa-kariha-hū*  
*tumma yuqbilu ʾalay-hi wa-yuqarribu-hū*  
The judicious king many a time hated a man and detested him and afterwards he would turn to him and bring him close. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 121)

- (11.25) *'inna-hū rubba mutahayyilīn 'awqa'at-hu ḥīlatu-hū fī šarrin*  
 Many a swindler was brought down to worse by his [own] deceit.  
 (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 116)

As pointed out above, the form *yaf'alu* serves to indicate an order of things, an unbounded situation, thus it is very suitable for generic utterances. The form *fa'ala*, by contrast, is essentially episodic and used to indicate framed situations, thus its use in generic clauses is limited. The generic reading of *fa'ala*, to summarize the above discussion, is advanced by: (a) a generic contextual frame, such as a proverb; (b) a 'sweeping' negation, i.e., a negation valid for an entire interval of time (in this case, *lam yaf'al* may also be employed); (c) an interrogative carrying the implication of an experience never contradicted; or (d) the operator *rubba(mā)* implying the reoccurring of past occurrences. As opposed to the 'universal' generalizations marked by *yaf'alu*, *fa'ala* is used in what may be described as 'existential' generalizations, i.e., generalizations that form a set of actual cases that create a certain commitment or expectation regarding the yet-to-occur cases. That is, while *yaf'alu* may well have a generic reference, *fa'ala*, as it appears, can only have a generic inference.

The participle is not often found in generic utterances. As mentioned earlier (5.2.1), the participle assumes a temporal value when it has deictic anchoring, i.e., when it is personally (hence spatiotemporally) bounded. By contrast to a particular participle, which refers to a temporally bounded state, a generic participle is temporally indeterminate; it serves to predicate an inherent property of an entity. Whether active or passive, the generic participle indicates a static aspect, as opposed to the dynamic, frequentative aspect indicated by the generic *yaf'alu*:

- (11.26) *wa-l-mālu zāhirun nāfi'un mukarrimun li-'ahli-hī mu'izzun*  
 Money is bright, beneficial, endowing honor and esteem to those who own it. (*Buḥalā'*, 91)

- (11.27) *wa-l-zuḡāḡu 'abqā 'alā l-mā'i wa-l-turābi min-a l-ḡahabi l-'ibrīzi wa-huwa ma'a ḡālīka maṣnū'un wa-l-ḡahabu maḥlūqun*  
 Glass is more resistant to water and earth than pure gold, though it is artificial while gold is created [by God]. (*Buḥalā'*, 42)

#### 11.4 Modal Verbal Forms in Generic Clauses

Generic utterances exhibit not only the indicative forms, but also modal forms such as the imperative *ifʿal*, the prohibitive *lā yaʿfʿal* and the energetic (*lā*) *yaʿfʿalanna*. A modal form conveys the meaning of a prescriptive statement rather than a descriptive one.<sup>17</sup> It serves to express a norm, an ideal, a desired order of things rather than an existing one. The second person, inherent in the imperative, is also very common with the other modal forms. Generic dictations and interdictions often stem from a *ḥuṭba* ‘speech’, once delivered in front of a particular audience and now transferred to the pages of history for the benefit of the succeeding generations. The following set of examples illustrates the use of modal forms in generic clauses:

(11.28) *iʿmal li-dunyā-ka ʿamala man yaʿišu ʿabadan wa-ʿmal li-ʾāḥirati-ka man yamūtu ḡadan*

Do for your life in this world as one who lives forever and do for your life in the hereafter [as] one who dies tomorrow. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 154)

(11.29) *lā yarḡuwanna ʿabdun ʾillā rabba-hū wa-lā yaḥāfanna ʾillā ḡanba-hū*

The servant of God should not ask [for anyone] but his lord and should not be afraid [from anything] but his sin. (*ʿUyūn* 2, 135)

(11.30) *lā taḥqiranna ʿaduwwan wa-ʾin kāna ḥaqīran ḡaʿfan*

Do not despise an enemy, even if he is despised and weak. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 105)

(11.31) *lā taṭlub taqwīma mā lā yastaqīmu wa-lā taʿdība mā lā yarʿawī*

Do not try to fix what cannot be fixed and to enlighten what cannot see the light. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 113)

#### 11.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have dealt with a subset of generic utterances in Classical Arabic whose predicate is verbal. Generic reference was defined as the establishment of a non-exclusive relation between the linguistic expression and the

17 For the semantic distinction between descriptive and normative ‘nomic’ statements, see Dahl, *On Generics*, 101.

subject engaged in discourse, providing its deictic center. It was shown that of the two finite indicative forms, the non-episodic *yaf'alu* displayed a much wider use than the episodic *fa'ala*. The latter assumed a generic sense (or implication) only in restricted syntactic environments where its episodic meaning was overridden. With normative generic clauses, the modal forms *if'al*, *lā yaf'al* and (*lā*) *yaf'alanna* were attested. These served to express a desired order of things rather than to describe an existing one. Generic clauses were attested in the corpus either as self-contained textual units or as units integrated in dialogues or commentary parts of the text, supporting as such the particular exchange of discourse.

## Conclusions

The study of classical languages is challenging for many reasons. Firstly, there are no speakers to consult but only (silent) written texts, often handed down and adapted by a long chain of transmitters and copyists. Secondly, these texts consist of a closed corpus which, even if extensive, represents only some literary and formal genres, though not discourse in its fullest scope. But over and above all, texts written in a classical language are culturally remote from the modern reader, or better yet, interpreter. A clear understanding of the world of notions reflected in them and their particular idiomaticity is thus not trivial in any sense.

All this seems to be even more complicated in the case of Classical Arabic, the literary branch of a language which in a recent study was designated as ‘the most interesting language in the world’ for the linguist.<sup>1</sup> The author of these words was obviously aware of the provocative nature of his claim; however, he was correct in pointing out the challenge of studying a language with a great linguistic heritage which is not only ‘constitutive of the Arabic-Islamic tradition’ but also ‘continues to be of central importance in the contemporary teaching of Arabic’.<sup>2</sup>

This study undertook to examine the problem of the tenses in Classical Arabic. While aware of the long tradition which shaped the discussion of this subject, and building, in fact, on some important insights offered by medieval and modern grammarians, this study has attempted to redefine the discussion and propose a new analysis of the tenses, based on a functional discourse-oriented investigation of a large corpus of Classical Arabic prose.

More specifically, the starting point of the analysis was the verbal form *yafʿalu*. The intriguing thing about *yafʿalu* is that it is a finite verb which in itself is semantically indefinite or *mubham* in the traditional terminology. It stands to reason, thus, that in the grammatical literature the semantic content of *yafʿalu* was not positively defined, but rather described with respect to other verbal forms: the Arab grammarians stressed its resemblance (*muḍāraʿa*) to the participle, while Western scholars defined it as the opposite of the perfect form *faʿala*.

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1 Owens, *House of Sound Structure*, 1.

2 *Ibid.*, 5.

The definition of *yaf'alu* as either 'resembling' or 'imperfect' is too abstract and general. It does not account for the functional relationships between *yaf'alu* and the entire system of the indicative tenses, thus it fails to capture the cluster of meanings conveyed by *yaf'alu*. Furthermore, such definitions do not consider the extended syntactic patterns in which *yaf'alu* occurs and the contextual features which affect its interpretation. In other words, they do not provide a satisfying explanation to the question of what defines the meaning of the indefinite form.

In this study, I have tried to offer a comprehensive answer to this question, by examining the syntactic distribution of the indicative verbal forms and their paradigmatic relationships, and by giving due consideration to the relevant discursive, textual, syntactic, and lexical parameters which play distinctive roles in the interpretation of the verbal forms. Table 12.1 presents the system of the indicative (affirmative) verbal forms which were the focus of this study. Table 12.2 below it summarizes the contextual and lexical parameters which were found to affect the interpretation of these forms:

TABLE 12.1 *The indicative (affirmative) verbal forms*

Simple	Modified	Compound	Modified-compound
<i>yaf'alu</i>	<i>qad yaf'alu</i> <i>sawfa/sa-yaf'alu</i> <i>la-yaf'alu</i>	<i>kāna yaf'alu</i>	<i>qad kāna yaf'alu</i>
<i>fa'ala</i>	<i>qad fa'ala</i>	<i>kāna fa'ala</i>	<i>qad kāna fa'ala</i> <i>kāna qad fa'ala</i>
<i>fā'ilun/maf'ūlun</i>	<i>la-fā'ilun/maf'ūlun</i>	<i>kāna fā'ilan/maf'ūlan</i>	<i>qad kāna fā'ilan/maf'ūlan</i>

TABLE 12.2 *The contextual parameters*

Parameter	Internal taxonomy
deictic reference	first person : third person narrator : third generic person
text type	dialogue : narrative [first person : third person] : generic utterance
interdependency	main : dependent : mutually dependent : embedded
clause type	verbal clause : nominal clause
lexical class	bounded : unbounded [dynamic : static]

The interaction between the verbal lexeme (the lexical aspect) and the verbal form (the grammatical aspect) was found to be significant throughout. This interaction to a large extent determines the relative temporal value of the verbal forms. Verbal forms which do not indicate a certain bounding of the verbal situation obtain different values with bounded and unbounded lexemes, whereas verbal forms which indicate such bounding have only one value:

TABLE 12.3 *The temporal-aspectual values of the indicative forms*<sup>3</sup>

Verbal form	Grammatical bounding	Lexical bounding	
		Bounded	Unbounded
<i>yaf'alu</i>	–	posterior	concurrent-dynamic
<i>sawfa/sa-yaf'alu</i>	+	posterior	
<i>fa'ala</i>	–	anterior	persistent
<i>qad fa'ala</i>	+	resultative-dynamic	
<i>fā'ilVn</i>	–	posterior	concurrent-static
<i>maf'ūlVn</i>	+	resultative-static	

In my discussion of the verbal paradigms I distinguished between dependent and embedded clauses, analyzed at the complex-clause level, and main clauses and mutually dependent constructions, analyzed at the text level.

The discussion of the verbal paradigms in embedded clauses was divided into content *'anna*-clauses, adjectival (or relative) clauses introduced by *lladī*, *mā*, *man*, or asyndesis, and adverbial *hīna*-clauses. In most cases, the verbal forms retained their typical temporal-aspectual values; however, these were often conflated with other semantic nuances, specifically with modal meanings. Thus, the posterior *yaf'alu* was often modally colored, indicating such meanings as possibility, ability, and obligation ([7.25], [7.39]–[7.42], [7.64],

3 The table summarizes the most common and predictable values of the verbal forms. Cases which deviate from the normal use are referred to in the subsequent discussion.

[7.65], [7.85], [7.86]). Textual and pragmatic features such as repetition, presupposition, and reference type also affected the interpretation of the verbal forms. Thus, the concurrent or posterior reading of *yaf'alu* was found to be context-derived rather than lexically conditioned in some cases ([7.10], [7.22], [7.62], [7.63], [7.102]). Certain functions of the verbal forms were found to be clause-specific. Thus, a consequential meaning of *fa'ala* and *qad fa'ala* was observed in adjectival asyndetic clauses whose antecedent is an internal object ([7.48]–[7.50]). In adjectival *man*-clauses, on the other hand, *fa'ala* displayed a loose temporality, which allowed for both anterior and non-anterior readings of the form ([7.91]). Moreover, some embedding operators, such as the adverbial operator *hīna*, were found to have great bearing on the interpretation of the verbal forms, regardless of the nature of their verbal lexeme.

Predicative verbs which participate in complex predications were dedicated a separate discussion. These consist of *yaf'alu*, the participle, and *qad fa'ala*, marking an ongoing situation, a state, and an outcome, respectively. All three are co-temporal, either simultaneous or coincidental with the time frame established in the main clause. The predicative paradigm was shown to operate both at the complex-clause level, with verbal complexes (8.2) and dependent circumstantial clauses (8.3), and at the text level, with mutually dependent constructions (8.4). The aspectual and temporal values of the predicative forms are summarized in table 12.4 (reproducing table 8.1 above):

TABLE 12.4 *The predicative paradigm*

Predicative form	Aspect	Temporal value
<i>yaf'alu</i>	dynamic-progressive	simultaneous, coincidental (terminal)
<i>fā'ūVn/maf'ūVn</i>	static	simultaneous
<i>qad fa'ala</i>	resultative	coincidental (initial)

The discussion of the verbal paradigms at the text level was divided into dialogue, narrative, and generic text types. In the dialogue, the following types of clauses or speech-acts were examined: plain declarative (9.2.1), argumentative (9.2.2), asseverative (9.2.3), performative (9.3), optative (9.4) and interrogative clauses (9.5); negative clauses were submitted to a limited inspection (9.2.4). In all these, the egocentric and interactional nature of the dialogue was clearly reflected. Rather than plain temporality, the verbal forms were found to signal a variety of inter-subjective categories such as: current relevance and



actuality, cognitive evaluation, emotional involvement, personal identification, directness and rapport.

In the discussion of narrative texts, three types of plotline structures were distinguished: (a) the unmarked 'event-by-event' *fa'ala* CONN-*fa'ala* chain (10.2.1); (b) the internally portrayed complex event marked by *fa'ala yaf'alu/fā'ilan* (10.2.2); and (c) the consequentially related chain of events marked by *fa'ala fa-yaf'alu* (10.2.3). In the discussion of background units, a distinction was drawn between free *kāna*-clauses and dependent circumstantial clauses (10.3.1), and between eventive background involving *fa'ala* and *qad fa'ala* and descriptive background involving *yaf'alu* and the participle (10.3.2). Some observations were made regarding dramatic devices such as setting and presentative clauses (10.4).

The discussion of the verbal paradigm in generic utterances has shown that of the two simple finite tenses, the non-episodic *yaf'alu* displayed a much wider use than the episodic *fa'ala*, which assumed a generic sense (or implication) only in restricted syntactic environments ([11.18]–[11.25]). In normative generic clauses, expressing a desired order of things, the modal forms *if'al*, *lā yaf'al* and (*lā*) *yaf'alanna* were mostly employed ([11.28]–[11.31]). Generic clauses were attested either as self-contained textual units or as units integrated in dialogues or commentaries, supporting as such the particular exchange of discourse.

Table 12.5 summarizes the main functions of *yaf'alu* in all three text types, by comparing it to its 'opposite' *fa'ala* and its 'analogous' *fā'ilVn*. Not all the semantic nuances could have been specified in the table, yet it is easy to see on the vertical axis how temporal, aspectual, and modal meanings interact with different text types so as to produce a specific function of the verbal form in each case:

TABLE 12.5 *The functions of yaf'alu, fa'ala, and fā'ilVn in different text types*

Text type	<i>yaf'alu</i>	<i>fa'ala</i>	<i>fā'ilVn</i>
Dialogue	concurrent-dynamic	persistent	concurrent-static
	posterior-intention	anterior	posterior-readiness
	declarative-performative	transaction-performative	
	asseverative-dynamic		asseverative-static
	(optative)	optative	

Text type	<i>yafʿalu</i>	<i>faʿala</i>	<i>fāʿilVn</i>
Narrative	complex-event chain	event-by-event chain	complex-event chain
	consequential chain		
Generic utterance	descriptive background	eventive background	descriptive background
	<i>kāna yafʿalu</i>	<i>kāna faʿala</i>	<i>kāna fāʿilan</i>
	<i>wa-huwa yafʿalu</i>		<i>wa-huwa fāʿilun</i>
Generic utterance	frequentative generic situation	overridden episodicity implied genericity	static inherent property

Table 12.5 makes it plain that the question of the meaning of *yafʿalu*, or for that matter, of any of its mutual opposites, does not have a short satisfying answer. The verbal form *yafʿalu* is semantically indefinite. Its function is determined by the interaction of its inherent indefiniteness, the specific syntactic environment in which it occurs, and the overall dialogic, narrative, or generic context. To be sure, in a strict formal analysis, the semantic opposition between *yafʿalu*, *faʿala*, and *fāʿilVn* could have been reduced to such notions as eventivity and phasality, *yafʿalu* being the opposite of the eventive *faʿala* and the stative *fāʿilVn*. However, as amply demonstrated in this study, the functional oppositions between *yafʿalu* and other verbal forms are always more nuanced, delicate, and pragmatically (rather than logically) motivated in actual discourse.

The functional analysis of the semantically indefinite *yafʿalu* forces one to go beyond the categories of tense and aspect, and examine the contextual frames in which it is used. This is certainly true in the analysis of tense forms in other Semitic languages as well and, at least to some extent, in other language families. Indeed, it appears that the particularizing effect of context on the interpretation of grammatical forms is universal in nature, inherent in the relationship between language and discourse. It is hoped, then, that the principles of contextual analysis presented in this work can also be of use in the study of tense systems in other languages, thereby bringing us closer to understanding the intricacy of the relationship between the system of language and language use.



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