Tense and Text in Classical Arabic
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A Discourse-oriented Study of the Classical Arabic Tense System

By

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This is a discourse-oriented study of the indicative tenses of Classical Arabic. The pivot of the analysis is the verbal form yaf’alu 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. 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. 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

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 *faʿal-a* and the circumfixed *y-affal-u*. The problem which these analyses set out to resolve is defining the real essence of the semantic opposition marked by *faʿala* and *yafʿalu*. 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 *faʿala* and *yafʿalu* 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 *faʿala* commutes with the jussive, whereas in setting and circumstantial clauses *yafʿalu* commutes with the participle (see below 8.4.1). Or considering, for example, narrative texts: *faʿala*, as is well known, is the narrative, plot-carrying, form. It does not interchange with *yafʿalu* in this environment the same way as, say, the *passé simple* and *imparfait* in French may interchange. In fact, *yafʿalu* is never a free form in the narrative, but always dependent upon a previous *faʿala* form. Thus, the opposition between *yafʿalu* and *faʿala* 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 *faʿala* and *yafʿalu*. 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 *faʿala* and *yafʿalu*, but also the participle, the modified *quadfaʿala* and *sa-yafʿalu*, and the compounds *kāna faʿala* and *kāna yafʿalu*, among other combinations, are part of the system of oppositions constituting the indicative tenses in Classical Arabic.3

(c) The meaning of *faʿala* and *yafʿalu* 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 faʿala and yafʿalu 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 faʿala and yafʿalu, then a whole new set of questions opens up. What is the syntactic distribution of faʿala and yafʿalu? 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 faʿala and yafʿalu—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 faʿala and yafʿalu, I aim to define the relations between all the forms constituting the ensemble of the indicative tenses.
(b) I do not treat *faʿala* as the semantic pivot or marked element, in respect to which the unmarked or neutral *yafʿalu* is defined (e.g., perfect : imperfect, past : non-past, certain : uncertain). Rather, I take *yafʿalu* 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’.4 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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4 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’.

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’. 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. 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. 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.

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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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.\(^\text{10}\) 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:\(^\text{11}\) 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.\(^\text{12}\) 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.\(^\text{13}\) 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.\(^\text{14}\) Only a few suggestions

\(^{10}\) 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.


\(^{13}\) 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. Hopper, for instance, maintains that the essential role of tense-aspect morphology is to mark the fundamental and universal distinction between foreground and background. A yet more radical approach, notably advanced by Weinrich, suggests to ‘forget all about time and aspect’. 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. Furthermore, this study draws on applications and elaboration of this theory in descriptions of specific, Semitic and other, languages. 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.

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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.20

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 compatibly

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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’.
ability 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 ǧāʾa Zaydun
rākiban ‘Zayd came riding’ the participle rākiban functions as a circumstan-
tial expression. The verbal form yafʿalu may occupy the same position as the
participle in this syntagm and function as a circumstantial clause, e.g., ǧāʾa
Zaydun yarkabu ‘Zayd came riding’. Since the participle and the verb fulfill
the same function in the given sequence, they are considered to be paradig-
matic.

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 R1 and R2) 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-Maḡāzī text:
The Example slot cites (in the Arabic script) the shortest stretch of text relevant for the analysis. Thus, R1 cites the one word clause *na‘zilu* ‘we will abstain’ (lit. ‘separate ourselves’), while R2 cites a larger unit comprising the compound *kuntu‘a‘zilu* ’I was abstaining’ in which the targeted *ya‘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 R1, D is checked since the example is a dialogue clause; in R2, 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. *‘illa*-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 R1, the Aff-Indep box is checked, whereas in R2 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 *ya‘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-ʿArabiyya.21 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 C.E.22 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.23 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.24 Admittedly, the most important of these is the phe-

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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-luğa al-fuṣḥā and al-luğa al-ʿāmmiyya.

24 Fischer, Classical Arabic, 397–398.
nomenon of ʿiʿrāb, 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.25 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.26 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. 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 belles-lettres works (e.g., the stories of ‘aṣyām al-ʿarab ‘the battles of the pre-Islamic Arab tribes’ in the Kitāb al-ʿAjānī) and in ḥadīṯ 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 (maḏāʿī), and later works, in which the writing of annalistic history (tāʾrīḫ) comes to the fore. In the examined corpus, the first are represented by the foundational work of Ibn Ḥishām (after Ibn ʿIṣḥāq), Sīrat Sayyidīna Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh (‘The life of our Master Muḥammad the Messenger of God’) and that of al-Ṭabarī, Kitāb al-Maḏāʿī (‘The book of expeditions’), and the latter by the chronicles of al-Ṭabarī, Tāʾrīḫ al-rusul wa-l-mulūk (‘The history of the messengers and the kings’).

Tradition—Closely related to the field of history, ḥadīṯ collections are yet another fundamental branch of Arabic literature. While the sīra is concerned with the recording of the Prophet’s life, the ḥadīṯ 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 ḥadīṯ is represented by the authoritative work of al-Buḥārī, Al-Ǧāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ (‘The comprehensive collection of authentic reports’).

Belles-lettres—As far as themes and artistic expression are concerned, belles-lettres 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 Kilpatrik, 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, ‘adab.\textsuperscript{28} 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, \textit{Kalīla wa-Dīmna}, translated and adapted from Pahlavi to Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffā‘; two works by al-Ǧāḥiẓ, the most important figure in classical Arabic literature, \textit{Kitāb al-Buḫalāʾ} (‘The book of misers’) and \textit{Kitāb al-Hayawān} (‘The book of animals’), in which anecdotes related to the general topics of ‘misers’ and ‘animals’ are collected; Ibn Qutayba’s literary thesaurus \textit{ʿUyūn al-ʾaḥbār} (‘The springs of knowledge’); \textit{Rannāṭ al-maṭālīṭ wal-maṭānīfīriwāyātal-ʾAġānī} (‘The sounds of the second and third cords in the traditions of the songs’), an abridgment of \textit{Kitāb al-ʾAġānī} (‘The book of songs’), the great anthology on poets, singers and poetry by ʾAbū al-Farağ 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):

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lll}
\hline
Title and abbreviation & Author/compiler & Editor \\
\hline
\textit{Sīrat Sayyidīna Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh} (\textit{Sīra}) & Ibn Hišām (d. 834) & Wüstenfeld \\
\textit{Kitāb al-Maġāzī} (\textit{Maġāzī}) & al-Wāqidī (d. 823) & Jones \\
\textit{Tāʾrīḫ al-rusul wa-l-mulūk} (\textit{Tāʾrīḫ}) & al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) & De Goeje \\
\textit{Al-Ǧūmī al-ṣaḥīḥ} (\textit{Ṣaḥīḥ}) & al-Buḫārī (d. 870) & Krehl \\
\textit{Kalīla wa-Dīmna} (\textit{Kalīla wa-Dīmna}) & Ibn al-Muqaffā‘ (d. 757) & Cheikho \\
\textit{Kitāb al-Buḫalāʾ} (\textit{Buḫalāʾ}) & al-Ǧāḥiẓ (d. 869) & ʾAbd al-Sātir \\
\textit{Kitāb al-Ḥayawān} (\textit{Ḥayawān}) & & \\
\textit{ʿUyūn al-ʾaḥbār} (\textit{ʿUyūn}) & Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) & Hārūn \\
\textit{Rannāṭ al-maṭālīṭ wal-maṭānīfīriwāyātal-ʾAġānī} & al-ʾIṣbahānī (d. 967) & Šāliḥānī \\
(Riwwāyāt) abridgment of \textit{Kitāb al-ʾAġānī} & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Titles and abbreviations of works examined in this study.}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{28} For a discussion of the term ‘adab, its development, and the notions it has come to convey, see Bonebakker, \textit{ʾAdab}. After much contemplation, the author arrives at a rather technical definition of ‘adab, based on ‘one particular aspect of the ‘Abbasid meaning of \textit{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 (ʾisnād), 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 ʾaḫbār ‘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 ʾaḥbār conveys the impression of authenticity and keeps the reader conscious of what may be described as the situation of narration. 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. 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 ʾaḥbār, 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.

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 com-
prises the general introduction in chapter 1 and the discussion of the rele-
vant 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
faʿala and yafʿalu 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 dis-
cusses the semantic oppositions marked by the verbal forms in a selection of
substantival, adjectival, and adverbial embedded clauses. Chapter 8 discusses
the paradigm of yafʿalu, the participle, and qad faʿala which function as pred-
icative 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 faʿala-initiated chains, free and depend-
dent, eventive and descriptive background units, and setting-presentative con-
structions, 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 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 (*ʾiʿrāb*) 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. ‘Abū Su fyān).

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*).
CHAPTER 2

The Verb in Arabic Grammatical Tradition

2.1 Two Frames of Discussion

The category of the *fiʿl* ‘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 *ʾiʿrāb* ‘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: the first is concerned with their internal essence (*dāt, ḥadd*), the latter with their distinctive features (*ʿalāmāt*). 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 *fiʿl* ‘verb’ and the *harf* ‘particle’. Admittedly, this tripartite classification has its sources in the Greek grammatical tradition, which in itself was influenced by Greek philosophy. 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. According to Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, the tripartite division is the only one possible, since

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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 in 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.

it exhausts all the expressions in language, those thinkable and imaginable.\textsuperscript{5} Universal and given as it is, al-Zaǧǧāǧī 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.\textsuperscript{6}

The rationale underlying the division into noun, verb, and particle is not presented in a systematic way in the \textit{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’.\textsuperscript{7} 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 \textit{ḥadāth} ‘happening’ and \textit{zamān} ‘time’.\textsuperscript{8} 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-Sarrāǧ defines the noun as ‘that which indicates a single meaning’ whereas the verb ‘indicates a meaning and time’.\textsuperscript{9} Al-Zamaḫšarī states that the verb is ‘that [word] which indicates an event coupled with [the expression of] time’.\textsuperscript{10} A further systematization of these definitions, employing the features of \textit{ma’nā\textsuperscript{fī} nafṣī-hī ‘meaning in itself’ and iqtirān bi-zamān ‘coupled with time’}, is found in late grammars, such as al-Suyūṭī’s \textit{Hamʿ 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 (\textit{ma’nā\textsuperscript{fī} ġayrī-hī’).\textsuperscript{11}

Sibawayhi’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 \textit{fa’ala}, the future indicated by \textit{if’al} (‘in ordering’) and \textit{yaf’alu} (‘in reporting’), and the present indicated, too, by \textit{yaf’alu}. In chapter ten, however, Sibawayhi speaks of only two

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5} Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, \textit{ʿAsrār}, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{6} al-Zaǧǧāǧī, \textit{ʾĪḍāḥ}, 42.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb}, 1, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 11.
\item \textsuperscript{9} Ibn al-Sarrāǧ, \textit{ʾUṣūl}, 1, 38.
\item \textsuperscript{10} al-Zamaḫšarī, \textit{Mufaṣṣal}, 108.
\item \textsuperscript{11} al-Suyūṭī, \textit{Hamʿ}, 1, 7.
\end{itemize}
times, the past (mā maḏā min-a l-zamānī) and the future (mā yastaqbilu min-a l-zamānī), the first is illustrated by ḏahaba and the latter by sa-yaḏhabu. 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’.12 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.13 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 ḏahaba is adduced to illustrate a past verb governing a noun such as ʾamsi ‘yesterday’, while sa-yaḏhabu (rather than the ambiguous yaḏhabu) is adduced to illustrate a future verb governing a noun such as ġadan ‘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.14 Time, as expressed by verbs, is relative in nature. Al-ʾAstarābāḏī, for instance, makes it plain that the past form indicates time qabla zamānī talaffuẓi-ka bi-hī ‘prior to the time you pronounce it’.15 Ibn Yaʿīš, too,

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12 Versteegh, Greek Elements, 77.
13 Mosel, Syntaktische Terminologie, 32.
14 Cf. Ibn al-Sarrāġ, ʾUṣūl, 1, 38.
15 al-ʾAstarābāḏī, 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.\textsuperscript{16}

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.\textsuperscript{17} Some grammarians, like Ibn Yaʿīš, argue that the present is the interval which separates (\textit{tafsīlu}) the past from the future.\textsuperscript{18} Others, like al-ʾAstarābāḏī, see the present as residing in ‘both sides of the now’, i.e., as consisting of both past and future parts.\textsuperscript{19} 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 (\textit{ʿawwal}) of the future.\textsuperscript{20} The terminology employed also attests to the unequal status of the three times: the past and the future are consistently referred to as \textit{al-māḍī} and \textit{al-mustaqbal}, respectively; the present, by contrast, is variously referred to as \textit{al-ḥāḍir} ‘the present’, \textit{al-ḥāl} ‘the current’ or \textit{al-dāʾim} ‘the continual’.\textsuperscript{21}

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 \textit{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.\textsuperscript{22} Al-Zaǧǧāǧī presents the opposite view: since the flow of time starts with the future (proceeding to the past), \textit{yafʿalu} is genuinely a future form which may also refer to the present, conceived by al-Zaǧǧāǧī as the first part of the future.\textsuperscript{23} For al-ʾAstarābāḏī the problem is settled by assuming that the

\textsuperscript{16} Ibn Yaʿīš, \textit{Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal}, 4, 207.
\textsuperscript{17} Greek thinking apparently had much influence on the Arabic theory of time. Cf. Versteegh, \textit{Greek Elements}, 75–76, for a short discussion of the category of present in Greek grammar and logic.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibn Yaʿīš, \textit{Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal}, 4, 207.
\textsuperscript{19} al-ʾAstarābāḏī, \textit{Šarḥ al-Kāfyya}, 4, 12.
\textsuperscript{20} al-Zaǧǧāǧī, \textit{ʾĪḍāḥ}, 86 ff.
\textsuperscript{21} Since time is essentially a \textit{ḥaraka} ‘movement’, the latter term, \textit{al-dāʾim}, is severely criticized by some grammarians, cf. al-Zaǧǧāǧī, \textit{ʾĪḍāḥ}, 86, specifically the editor’s footnote on this page.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibn al-Sarrāǧ, \textit{ʿUṣūl}, 1, 39.
\textsuperscript{23} al-Zaǧǧāǧī, \textit{ʾĪḍāḥ}, 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’.24

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'āl*, 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 *ʿirāb* and *bināʾ*
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 *mağāri ʿawāḥiri l-kalimi* ‘the ways of the endings of the words’.25 According to Sibawayhi, all types of words may be defined with respect to two opposite concepts: *ʿirāb* ‘declension’ and *bināʾ* ‘no-declension’ (lit. ‘fixed structure’). The *ʿirāb* is realized through the changing of the word’s final vowel or morpheme, due to the effect (ʿ*amal*) of a certain grammatical operator (ʿ*āmil*). The *bināʾ*, by contrast, is ultimately marked by final vowellessness, and more generally, by the word’s unchanged final vowel or morpheme. The *ʿirāb* and *bināʾ* 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 *ʿirāb* from those

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marking \textit{binā}, although both refer to the same vowel quality. These terms are presented in the table below:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lll}
\hline
Vowel quality & \textit{ʾiʿrāb} (declension) & \textit{binā} (no-declension) \\
\hline
\textit{u} & raf' & ḍamm \\
\textit{a} & našb & fath \\
\textit{i} & ġarr & kasr \\
\textit{∅} & ġazm & waqf \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Two sets of terms for final vowels in the Kitāb} \end{table}

The \textit{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. Nouns are typically declinable and thus may end in \textit{raf} (‘nominative’), \textit{našb} (‘accusative’), or \textit{ḡarr} (‘genitive’). Particles are typically indeclinable and thus end in \textit{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 \textit{raf} (‘indicative’), viz. \textit{yafʿal-u}, \textit{našb} (‘subjunctive’), viz. \textit{yafʿal-a}, or \textit{ḡazm} (‘jussive’, lit. ‘apocopate form’), viz. \textit{yafʿal-∅}; those which are indeclinable end in \textit{fath}, viz. \textit{faʿal-a}, or in \textit{waqf}, viz. \textit{ifʿal}. The table below illustrates the relative position of each type of word on the scale of declension:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lll}
\hline
Vowel quality & \textit{ʾiʿrāb} (declension) & \textit{binā} (no-declension) \\
\hline
\textit{u} & raf' & ḍamm \\
\textit{a} & našb & fath \\
\textit{i} & ġarr & kasr \\
\textit{∅} & ġazm & waqf \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Two sets of terms for final vowels in the Kitāb} \end{table}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} E.g. Ibn al-Sarrāǧ, \textit{ʿUṣūl}, 1, 50: \textit{wa-ʿalam ʿanna l-ʾiʿrāba ʿinda-hum ḥaqqu-hū ʿan yakāna li-l-ʾasmāʾi duna l-ʿafāli wa-l-ḥurūfī ‘Know that the declension for them (i.e. the Arabs) is due to the nouns but not to the verbs and the particles’.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Nouns which are fully declinable are termed by Sibawayhi \textit{ʾasmāʾ mutamakkina}, i.e., nouns which are ‘firmly established in the nominal character’, see Levin, \textit{Kalima}, 432. Some nouns are indeclinable and thus end in a fixed vowel. For instance, the noun \textit{kayfa} ‘how’ ends in \textit{fath}.
\item \textsuperscript{28} The form \textit{faʿala} may come in the place of a simple adjective or interchange with \textit{al-muḍāriʿ} \textit{al-maḡẓūm} (in conditionals), thus it bears some resemblance to both the noun and the ‘resembling verb’, cf. Sibawayhi, \textit{Kitāb}, 1, 2–3. For this reason it does not end in \textit{waqf} but gets closer to declension by ending in \textit{fath}. See also below 2.3.2.
\end{itemize}
### Table 2.2  The scale of ʾiʿrāb and bināʾ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particle</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>min from, of</td>
<td>[sa-] yafʿal-u</td>
<td>hāḍā Zayd-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi-in</td>
<td>[lan] yafʿal-a</td>
<td>raʿaytu Zayd-ān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[lam] yafʿal-∅</td>
<td>marartu bi-Zayd-in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 ġarr and ġazm 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.29

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 (ḥurīf al-zawāʾid) 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 ∅ of yafʿal, which stands in (formal) opposition to the endings -u and -a, is ascribed a different value than the final ∅ of ifʿal, standing for sheer vowellessness. Sībawayhi defines the declinable verbal pattern as al-ʿafʿāl al-muḍāriʿa li-ʾasmāʾ al-fāʾilīna ‘the verbs resembling the agent nouns/participles’, and terms it in short al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʾ, or simply, al-muḍāriʾ.30 This has become

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29 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, 1, 3, explains that the imperative ʿidrib ‘Hit!’ is assigned the waqf due to the fact that baʿdat min-ā l-muḍārīati buʿda kam wa-ʿid min-ā l-mutamakkinati ‘[the imperative] is so distanced from the resembling [declinable] verbs as [the indeclinable vowelless-ending nouns] kam and ʿid are distanced from the fully declinable nouns’. According to Sībawayhi, Kitāb, 1, 2, indeclinable nouns ‘resemble’ (muḍārīa) 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-ʾamr* ‘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-muḍāriʿ* ‘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-muḍāriʿ*

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

In the *Kitāb*, however, *ḍāraʿa* and its derivatives are extensively used. Sībawayhi describes a *muḍāraʿa* ‘resemblance’ between different kinds of elements at all levels of linguistic analysis. The term *muḍāraʿa* may refer to either phonological assimilation, analogical word formation, or similar syntactic behavior. The later *muḍāraʿa* is the most elusive and abstract; no doubt, it takes a keen eye as that of Sībawayhi to identify syntactic resemblance between elements so different as, for example, the conditional particles and the agent noun.\(^\text{34}\) Going over the instances where *muḍāraʿa* is used to signify syntactic resemblance, it becomes apparent that the nature of the *muḍāraʿāt* is quite diverse, as well as the motives which bring them about.

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

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\(^{31}\) Troupeau, *Lexique-index*, 129.


\(^{34}\) Sībawayhi, *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 *muḍāra‘a* or *muḍāri‘* and other concepts, such as *qiyyās* and *mušabbah*. According to Carter, *muḍāra‘a* is a ‘descriptive’ term, referring to ‘empirical resemblances in the data’, while *qiyyās* is a ‘systematic’ term, denoting ‘abstract regularities in the system’.35 Following the same line of reasoning, Carter maintains that the active participle *muḍāri‘* is associated with ‘inherent’ resemblance, whereas the passive participle *mušabbah* stands for ‘similarity that has been imposed on the word by speakers’.36 In what follows, I wish to further examine these observations, and explore in greater detail the term *al-muḍāri‘* and the nature of the resemblance which it serves to indicate. For this purpose I will go back to the *locus classicus* where the *muḍāri‘* is discussed in the *Kitāb*.

The term *al-muḍāri‘* is first introduced in chapter two of the *Kitāb*. Sibawayhi uses this term to refer to the prefixed verbal pattern *y-af‘al-V* which, like nouns, exhibits final vowel/morpheme change, due to the effect of a certain grammatical operator. Sibawayhi explains this fact by saying: *wa-ʾinnamā ḍāra‘at ʾasmāʾa l-fā‘ila l-iǧtimā‘a l-iḥimā fī l-ma‘nā* ‘And ... that they (i.e. *yaf‘alu* forms) resembled the agent noun since both converge (lit. ‘come together’) in meaning’.37 Shortly after that, Sibawayhi repeats that *ʾanna-hā ḍāra‘at-i l-fā‘ila l-iǧtimā‘a l-iḥimā fī l-ma‘nā* ‘... that they (i.e. *yaf‘al* forms) resembled the agent noun since both converge (lit. ‘come together’) in meaning’.38 Sibawayhi thus contends that the resemblance of the verbal pattern *yaf‘al* to the agent noun *fā‘il* is due to their common meaning. In order to fully understand what is meant by *ma‘nā* in this context, we turn to al-Mubarrad who makes it plain that *ʾinna-mā qīla la-hā muḍāri‘atun li-ʾanna-hātaqa‘umawāqiʿal-ʾasmāʾi* ‘They were termed [the] resembling [forms] because they take the same position of the [agent] nouns in [conveying the same] meaning’.39 In a similar manner, Ibn Yaǧīṯ states that *yaf‘al* forms resemble the agent noun because they *yaqa‘u mawāqiʿa l-ʾasmāʾi wa-yuʿaddī ma‘āniya-ha* ‘occupy the place of the nouns and convey their mean-

36 Ibid., 6.
37 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 2.
38 Ibid.
ings’. 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. This latter feature is explained by Sibawayhi’s commentator, al-Sīrāfī, as follows: the plain verb yaf’alu, which indicates either a present or a future time, resembles a mubham ‘indefinite’ noun such as raǰulun, which does not refer to a specific man. The adding of the definite article to raǰul 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. The semantic vagueness (ʾibhām) or polysemy (iḥtilāf al-ma‘ānī) 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-ʿinsān), ‘well’ (‘ayn al-mā’), ‘direction of prayer’ (‘ayn al-qibla), and the ‘cavity of the knee’ (‘ayn al-rukba). Some grammarians after Sibawayhi took up all these (as well as other) features and composed lists of wuǧūh ‘aspects’ in respect to which yaf’alu resembles the agent noun. 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 baʿda stihqaqī l-ʿirābī ‘after the declension was rightly claimed [by the resemblance]’. 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-muḍāriʿ al-marfuʿ. This stands to reason, since the features of resemblance mentioned above apply only to yaf’alu. The
two other forms ending in *naš* and *ğazm*, viz. *yafʿala* and *yafʿal*, are called *muḍāriʿ* only by extension: they share the same morphological pattern with *yafʿalu*, but they do not occupy the position of a noun in the clause or convey its meaning. Moreover, *al-muḍāriʿ al-marfūʿ* is distinct from *al-muḍāriʿ al-mansūb* and *al-muḍāriʿ al-maqżūm* in being affected by an ‘abstract operator’ (‘āmil *maʾnawiyy*), rather than a ‘literal operator’ (‘āmil *lafżīyy*), such as the negative particles *lān* or *lām*, preceding *yafʿala* and *yafʿal*, respectively.⁴⁶ According to Sibawayhi, the form *yafʿalu* is assigned the *rafʿ* due to the fact that it occurs in the clause in a position where a noun could occur (not necessarily an agent noun!). Thus *yafʿalu* 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.⁴⁷ Sibawayhi admits that the substitution of *yafʿalu* and *fāʿilun* is limited: in some positions the occurrence of *yafʿalu* 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*.⁴⁸ This is explained by the fact that, however similar, *yafʿalu* is not a noun but ultimately a verbal form.

So far I have discussed the resemblance of the verbal form *yafʿalu* to the agent noun, however, the similarity between the two forms also works in the opposite direction. Sibawayhi attributes the ability of the agent noun to govern an indefinite noun in the accusative to the fact that it is similar to *yafʿalu* in both its grammatical effect (‘*amal*) and meaning (‘*maʾnā*).⁴⁹ Thus, in a clause such as *hāḏā ḍāribun Zaydan ġadan* ‘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 *hāḏā yaḍribu Zaydan ġadan* ‘This one will hit Zayd tomorrow’. If the agent noun does not indicate the same meaning as *yafʿalu* but refers to a past occurrence, it will not govern an accusative object but a genitive complement, e.g., *hāḏā ḍāribu Zaydin* ‘This one has hit Zayd’. In the Sibawayhian terminology, the verb is *muḍāriʿ* ‘resembling’ the agent noun and thus entitled to ‘*iʿrāb* ‘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.

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⁴⁶ For a general discussion of the theory of ‘*amal* and the distinction between both types of ‘*awāmil*, see Levin, ‘*Amal*.
⁴⁹ Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 70.
The similarity between *yafʿalu* and the agent noun is not strictly reciprocal or of equal status, as one could argue. Careful attention to the terminology used by Sibawayhi is revealing of the different nature he ascribes to the similarity in each case: the agent noun is not *muḍāriʿ*, but *ḡarā maḏrā al-fiʿl al-muḍāriʿ*. This brings us back to the question of the meaning of *muḍāraʿa* against other terms indicating analogy and similarity. Sibawayhi does not interchange between *muḍāriʿ* and *ḡarā maḏrā*; however, he substitutes the latter term with ‘*ašbaha* or *šubbiha* ‘to be or be made similar’. Sibawayhi argues that the agent noun was made similar (*šubbiha*) to the verb that resembled it (*ḏāraʿa-hū*), the same way that the verb was made similar (*šubbiha*) to the agent noun in declension. 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 *muḍāraʿa* indicates inherent resemblance. We can refine Carter’s observation by saying that *ḏāraʿa* refers to the acquiring of an inherent property through resemblance whereas *ḡarā maḏrā*, *ašbaha*, or *šubbiha* refer to a conditioned behavior brought about by similarity.

Later grammarians are not as careful as Sibawayhi in maintaining the distinction between *ḏāraʿa* and other terms indicating analogy. Thus Ibn al-Sarrāġ draws an equation between *yafʿalu* and *fāʿilun* saying that the first *ʾaʿrabali-muḍāraʿati l-ismi* ‘declined due to resemblance to the noun’ while the latter *ʾaʿmalabi-muḍāraʿatil-fiʿli* ‘governed [the object] by virtue of resemblance to the verb’. Ibn Yaʿīš, too, freely interchanges between *muḍāraʿa* and *mušābaha*, conceived by him as two synonymous terms, thus saying that *l-mušābahatu ʾawḡabat la-hū l-ʾiʿrāba* ‘the resemblance granted it [i.e. the verb] the declension’. 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 *muḍāraʿa* (or *mušābaha*) is the cause and the *ʾiʿrāb* is the effect.

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50 Carter, *Muḍāriʿ*, 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 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, 1, 70 ff.: *šubbiha bīmā ḍāraʿa-hū min-a l-fiʿli kāmā šubbiha bī-hi fi l-ʾiʿrābi*.

52 Ibid., 73.

53 Ibn al-Sarrāġ, *ʾUṣūl*, 1, 123.

Apparently, this causal relation was not wholly understood or maintained in the writings of some modern scholars. Brockelmann, for instance, translates muḍārı́ as ‘(dem Nomen in der Annahme der Kasusendungen) ähnelndes’.\(^{55}\) More explicitly, Ryding argues that the term muḍārı́ ‘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’.\(^{56}\) Evidently, Ryding describes an inverse relation between muḍara’a and ʾiʿrāb, 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 muḍārı́ is so designated ‘since the verbal forms of the imperfect have almost the same endings as the nouns’.\(^{57}\) Even Carter’s insightful article on the term muḍārı́ in the Kitāb of Sībawayhi 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).\(^{58}\) 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 Sībawayhi, 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-muḍārı́ ‘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

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55 Brockelmann, Grundriss, 2, 145.
56 Ryding, Modern Standard Arabic, 442, no. 7.
57 Versteegh, Greek Elements, 78.
58 Carter, Muḍārı́, 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. 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.

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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 λοίει ‘He washes’ is equivalent to the periphrastic form esti loúûn ‘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, 153ff.), and not to its syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations with the participle.
CHAPTER 3

The Verb in Arabistic Literature

3.1 The Verbal System in Arabic and Semitic

Unlike the Arab grammarians, whose grammatical description of the ʿArabīyya 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’.¹

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.² 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.³ 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.⁴ 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. 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’. 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.’ 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’. 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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6 de Sacy, *Grammaire arabe*, 1, 148.
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. 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. 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. māḍi ‘past’) and another after its form (i.e. muḍāriʿ ‘resembling’). Rather than a temporal value, Ewald ascribed to the verbs meanings which would later on be referred to as aspeccual. 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’. 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

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9 Although Sibawayhi speaks of a verbal situation which lam yanqaṭi ‘has not ceased’ (Kitāb 1, 1), and of a situation which qad waqa’a wa-nqaṭa’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. Such semantic relations are also identified by other scholars such as Wright, who lists the various temporal uses of the perfect and imperfect, or Brockleman, who stresses the contrast between the ‘stating’ function of the perfect and the ‘describing’ function of the imperfect. 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.

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). 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. 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.

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14 Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 1ff.
15 Brockelmann, *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. Brockelmann, “Tempora”, 139ff. The latter terms were borrowed by Rundgren, in his studies of the Semitic aspect, and later on by Reuscher, in his study of tense and aspect in the Qurʾān (see *Aspekt und Tempus*, 24).
17 Cohen, *Système verbal*.
18 Gaudefroy-Demombynes and Blachère, *Grammaire de l’arabe*, 246.
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.  

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’.  

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’. 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.  

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’. 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. 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. 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

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20 Fleisch, *Verbe arabe*, 177.  
21 Beeston, *Arabic Language*, 76.  
22 Ibid., 79.  
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?*.  
'+dimensionalization', whereas the imperfect embodies either the negative (-) or the neuter (±) values of these features.\footnote{Bahloul, Arabic Verb, 140 ff.}

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.\footnote{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 tempo-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.} It is noteworthy that Comrie’s paragraph-long description of the tenses in Classical Arabic has gained currency is 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.\footnote{Comrie, Tense, 63.} 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...
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 faʿala is generally described as the complete-anterior form, most scholars have difficulty to capture the content of yafʿalu 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 faʿala and yafʿalu 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.
CHAPTER 4

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,1 ‘micro-linguistics’ vs. ‘sociolinguistics’ or ‘stylistics’,2 ‘a priori grammar attitude’ vs. ‘emergence of grammar attitude’,3 or simply ‘formal linguistics’ vs. ‘functional linguistics’.4 Recalling the Saussurean program, we may say that the contrast reflected in this terminology lies in different understandings of the langue-parole dichotomy.5 However diverse (and even contradicting) general theories of language may be,6 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.7 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’.8 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,9 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.10 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.11 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-

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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. In a similar manner, Waugh presents a hierarchy of 'contextual meanings', which are categorized as 'pragmatic', 'textual', 'modal', 'discursive', 'expressive' and 'referential'. 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. 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. 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,

12 Fleischman, Theory of Tense-Aspect.
14 Schiffrin, Discourse Markers, 24ff.
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 [...]'.

THE STRUCTURE OF CONTEXT 43
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.\(^\text{16}\)

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.\(^\text{17}\) 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-

\(^{16}\) 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.
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.18

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.\textsuperscript{19}

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, what-
ever the referential point may be.\textsuperscript{20} 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.\textsuperscript{21} Subjectiv-
ity is sometimes expressed in generic utterances, albeit in an implicit and
restricted fashion. Due to the inherently non-anchored nature of generic utter-
ances, 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:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Deictic center & Type of reference \\
\hline
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 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Three reference points}
\end{table}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{19} Bühler, \textit{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.
\textsuperscript{20} In his much-quoted article on this topic, Benveniste, \textit{Subjectivity}, 225, says: ‘Language is
possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a \textit{subject} by referring to himself as \textit{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’.
\textsuperscript{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, \textit{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’.
\end{flushleft}
4.3 Text Types

The notion of text, as worked out by linguists, has emerged by contradistinction to the notion of the sentence. 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’. 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. 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.

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. 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 Petőfi, *Text vs. Sentence*, dedicated to the definition of the linguistic unit of text relative to that of the sentence.
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’. 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. 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. 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.30

(c) The dynamics of dialogues is that of stimulus-and-response.31 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.32 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.33

(e) The dialogue reflects the information transmitted while the narrative describes it.34

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.35 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-
able.\textsuperscript{36} 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.\textsuperscript{37} 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

\footnotesize{
\textsuperscript{36} A rather restrictive view of the narrative is proposed by Hamburger, \textit{Logic}, who identifies proper fiction with the third person and the ‘fictive’, non-historical time only. Benveniste, \textit{Correlations of Tense}, 206, on the other hand, defines the ‘historical’ utterance as the ‘narration of past events’. Genette, \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{37} In the words of Fleischman, \textit{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). 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Reference point</th>
<th>Cohesive structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dialogue</td>
<td>first person speaker</td>
<td>exchange pairs, short and segmented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative</td>
<td>first person narrator</td>
<td>chains, sequences of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>third person narrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generic utterance</td>
<td>third generic person</td>
<td>self-contained propositions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. 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.

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’. Hai-

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.\textsuperscript{42} 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\textit{ elaboration} to a pole of maximal\textit{ compression} (or condensation) of lexical and grammatical information’.\textsuperscript{43} 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.\textsuperscript{44} 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.\textsuperscript{45}

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).\textsuperscript{46} Embedding, on the other hand, refers to the mechanism by which a clause comes to function as a constituent within another clause.\textsuperscript{47} 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

\textsuperscript{42} Haiman and Thompson, “\textit{Subordination}”.
\textsuperscript{43} Lehmann, \textit{Clause Linkage}, 216.
\textsuperscript{44} Raible, \textit{Junktion}, 29.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid. 31.
\textsuperscript{47} Halliday, \textit{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. 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. 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. 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.

(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

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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).  

(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. 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’. 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. 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’. 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 *yafʿalu*, due to its degradation in finiteness. Yet, the participle commutes with *yafʿalu* 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. 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 fiʿliyya* ‘verbal clause' and

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56 Matthiessen and Thompson, *Discourse and Subordination*, 280.
57 Goldenberg, *Verbal Structure*, 173.
the ǧumla ismīyya ‘nominal clause’. The distinction between these two types of clauses was first defined by the Arab grammarians. The verbal clause consists of a ʿil fī ‘verb’ followed by a fāʿil ʿagent’. 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 ʿsubject’ and a ḫabar ʿpredicate’, 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).58

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’.59

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 fāʿala forms prevail, while yafʿalu forms are more common in nominal clauses, which are characteristic of expository or descriptive texts.60 Khan regards the aspect of the verb as the ‘operative factor’ behind this distribution.61 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.62 The table below summarizes the outlined distinctions between the verbal clause and the nominal clause:

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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.


62 Beeston, Arabic Language, 76–79.
### 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.\(^{63}\)

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\(_1\)’ and ‘aspect\(_2\)’ is constantly debated and redefined.\(^{64}\) 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’.\(^{65}\) Indeed, such semantic features as durativity and telicity, stativity and dynamicity, as well as inception, progression,

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\(^{63}\) 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 \textsc{aspect}_1 and \textsc{aspect}_2 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. 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.

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. 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.
Chapter 5

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):

| a.  | *yasmaʿu* | He hears | *sa-yasmaʿu* | He will hear |
|     | *yaqūlu* | He says/will say | *sa-yaqūlu* | He will say |
| c.  | *ʾindaḫala fa-yarā* | If he goes in he will see | *ʾindaḫala fa-ṣa-yarā* | If he goes in he will see |

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. Rather, the forms belonging to the indicative system are modally unmarked and can express a wide range of meanings including desire,

1 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 ǧaf’alu (see also below 5.3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>You will/shall go in</th>
<th>Go in</th>
<th>(directive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tadḫulu</td>
<td></td>
<td>udḫul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʾadḫulu</td>
<td>I will/shall go in</td>
<td>la-ʾadḫulanna</td>
<td>I shall go in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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: faʿala and ǧaf’alu. The formal distinction between them lies in the position of their pronominal theme: faʿala has a suffixed pronoun, hence it is labeled the suffix conjugation; ǧaf’alu has a prefixed pronominal index, hence it is labeled the prefix conjugation.² In fact, in

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² 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:

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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix conjugation</th>
<th>Prefix (circumfix) conjugation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sg.</td>
<td>pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>fem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faʿal-tu</td>
<td>faʿal-nā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faʿal-ta</td>
<td>faʿal-ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faʿal-a</td>
<td>faʿal-at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>du.</td>
<td>du.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>fem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faʿal-tumā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faʿal-ā</td>
<td>faʿal-atā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.\(^3\) 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.\(^4\) Other adjectival patterns, such as *faʿil* 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

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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.\footnote{Palmer, \textit{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, \textit{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.} 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.\footnote{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 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:

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lccc}
\hline
Modifiers & fa’ala & yaf’alu & fa’ilun \\
\hline
qad & + & + & – \\
la- & – & + & + \\
sawfa/sa- & – & + & – \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{The verbal modifiers}
\end{table}

**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

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5 Palmer, \textit{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, \textit{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 *faʿala* and by comparison to the modified *qad yafʿalu*.

The syntactic distribution of *faʿala* is distinct from that of *qad faʿala*. 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 *faʿala* or *qad faʿala*, or feature only one of them (we recall that *qad faʿala* almost never occurs in interrogative and negative clauses, for exceptions see [9.76], [9.83]). In these clauses, *faʿala* and *qad faʿala* partake in different systems of oppositions, so that (synchronously 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 faʿala* has a far larger scope of application than *qad yafʿalu*. The modified form *qad yafʿalu*, as opposed to *qad faʿala*, does not occur, in principle, in dependent clauses. It is not used with every lexeme. In dialogues, *qad yafʿalu* is occasionally found with the verbs *raʾā* ‘to see/comprehend’, *ʿalima* and *ʿarafa* ‘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 *yafʿalu* is less tight than that of *qad* and *faʿala*: in *kāna*-compounds, *qad* precedes as a rule the auxiliary with *yafʿalu* (the same as it precedes the auxiliary with the participle), whereas it is often interposed between the auxiliary and *faʿala* (see below 8.2.1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.4 qad faʿala vs. qad yafʿalu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juncture in compounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.2.2 The Modifier *la*-

The modifier *la*- co-occurs with either *yafʿalu* 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 *ḥattā* or the circumstantial *wa*-. The operator ‘*inna*’ may also head a mutually dependent construction (see below 8.4). Only in very rare cases, *yafʿalu* preceded by *la*- occurs outside the frame of an ‘*inna*-clause.

The verbal form *faʿala* 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.7 The apodotic *la*- is prefixed to *faʿala* 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 *tawkīd* ‘emphasis’, is prefixed either to *yafʿalu* or to the participle (see below 9.2.3),8 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 faʿala* (*law faʿala* … *lā-mā faʿala* …), while the latter is incompatible with negation.9

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

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

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

9 For a detailed survey of the various taxonomies of the occurrences of *la*- proposed 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.\footnote{It appears that the preference of either la-fa’ala or la-qad fa’ala is in part lexeme-sensitive, cf. Kinberg, Qad.}

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.\footnote{The technical use of the term ‘concurrent’ in this work is explained below, see 7.2.} 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.\footnote{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.} 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
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.14

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 Taʾrīḫ and Maġāzī texts, while ʾan yakūna qad faʿala is mostly found in the Buḫalāʾ text.

The conditional yakun/kāna form compounds with all the simple forms and the modified form qad faʿala.15 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.16 The use of faʿala after kāna brings about

14 The relatively uncommon mā kāna li-yafʿala, involving the so-called lām al-ğuḥūd ‘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 lamnā, 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 *faʿala* and its compound counterpart *kāna faʿala*. 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 *ʿidā*-constructions, *faʿala* may depict an habitual occurrence which is temporally unbounded, while *kāna faʿala* depicts a past habitual occurrence. In conditionals introduced by *ʿin*, 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 *faʿala* and the compound *kāna faʿala* 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 *yafʿalu* and the participle (see below [7.76], [7.81]); and (c) the conditional *kāna* does not indicate a step back in time, neither in *ʿin* nor in *law*-conditionals: *ʿin kāna yafʿalu*/*fāʿilan* has an implied non-past reference while *law kāna faʿala* has the same past time reference as *law faʿala*. Table 5.5 below summarizes the above discussion on compound *kāna* forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auxiliary</th>
<th><em>faʿala</em></th>
<th><em>yafʿalu</em></th>
<th><em>fāʿilan</em></th>
<th><em>qad faʿala</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘anterior’ <em>kāna</em></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘posterior’ <em>yakūnu</em></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘subjunctive’ <em>ʿan yakūna</em></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘conditional’ <em>ʿin/ʿidā/law yakun/kāna</em></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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’.\(^\text{17}\) Modality, in this sense, converges to a large extent with the notion of subjectivity, and thus may be considered as omnipresent in language.\(^\text{18}\) 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).\(^\text{19}\) 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.\(^\text{20}\) According to more recent diachronic and typological studies of modality, four types of modality can be distinguished: agent-oriented, speaker-oriented, epistemic, and subordinating.\(^\text{21}\)

In Classical Arabic, modality is often expressed through the verbal forms.\(^\text{22}\) 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 clauses.

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\(^\text{17}\) Jespersen, *Philosophy*, 313.

\(^\text{18}\) 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’.

\(^\text{19}\) Narrog, *Inter(sub)jectification*, 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’.

\(^\text{20}\) 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.

\(^\text{21}\) 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(sub)jectification*, proposes yet another model of modality, consisting of two dimensions: a dimension of ‘volitivy’ and a dimension of ‘speaker-orientation’.

\(^\text{22}\) 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*.- The apocopate *yafʿal* has yet another modal use: it functions as a conditional form (see also below). 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. 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-ʾin* 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. The subjunctive occurs in complement clauses of mental verbs or in consecutive and final clauses introduced by *ḥattā*, *ʾan*, 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 *sababiyya* ‘causal’ *fa-* or *ʾiḏan* 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 *maḏzūm* and the *mansūb* 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 *maḏzūm*, 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 *ʾan* 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, *Yaqum 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.27 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*.28 Table 5.6 below summarizes the above discussion on the modal forms:

### TABLE 5.6  The modal forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deontic</td>
<td>imperative if‘al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jussive li-yaf‘al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>energetic li-yaf‘alanna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>optative fa‘ala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>subjunctive yaf‘ala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemic</td>
<td>conditional yaf‘al; fa‘ala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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 Giorfo, *Yaqum 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 ġayr. 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 ġayr 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>faʿala</th>
<th>yafʿalu</th>
<th>faʿilNn</th>
<th>yafʿal</th>
<th>yafʿala</th>
<th>yafʿalanna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lā</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>[ʾan cl.]</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mā</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+ [bi-]</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laysa</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+ [bi-]</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lam</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lan</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ġayr</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negation</th>
<th>Auxiliary</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lam</td>
<td>yakun</td>
<td>yaf'alu fa'ilan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mā</td>
<td>kāna</td>
<td>yaf'alu fa'ilan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auxiliary</th>
<th>Negation</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kāna</td>
<td>lā</td>
<td>yaf'alu fa'ilan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāna</td>
<td>ġayr</td>
<td>fa'ilin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Independency 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.  

1 Waltisberg, *Satzkomplex*, 70ff.
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initiality</th>
<th>Symmetry</th>
<th>Substitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>main clause</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutually dependent clause</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependent clause</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>embedded clause</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 ∅. 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)  *dahkan* *yawman ‘alā ‘ishāqi bni ‘ibrāhima l-mawṣiliyyi*

I came one day to ‘Ishāq b. ‘Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣili. (Riwāyāt 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. 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* Ḍ-*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 Ḍ-*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:

(6.2)  *‘atā-hu ḥabaru ‘abi-hi ‘atā-hu bi-hi rağulun min ‘iğlin*

The news on his father came to him, a man from ‘Iğl 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, *ṣifā* 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.

(6.3) *wa-ʾamarala-humbi-ḫādimin yahdimu-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 (ṯāni) ‘(second) object’ and ḥabar ‘predicative’. The fact that the first two terms (ḥāl and mafʿūl ṣāḥiḥ) 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). 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-ḥaraǧnā nasʾalu ʿan rasūlillāhi*
We went out to seek the Messenger of God. (*Sīra* 1, 294)

(6.5) *kunnā ǧulūsan ʿinda ṣanamin [...] naḥarnā ǧazūran fa-ʾiḏā ṣāʾiḥun yaṣīḥu*
We were sitting near an idol [...] we slaughtered a camel when suddenly someone was shouting. (*Taʾrīḫ* 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 *ḏū 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 ‘translocal’ verbs (i.e., verbs of motion or caused motion), the following clause is to be interpreted as ‘modal’ or ‘final’ rather than attributive. 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

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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.

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 ṭariqi-hī ʿalā waʿlāyni yatanāṭahāni
He passed in his way by two goats butting/that were butting one another. (Kalila wa-Dimna, 78)

(6.7)  wa-ṣṭaṣḥaba maʿa-hū raḡulan yadullu-hū ʿalā l-ṭariqi
He took as companion a man, to show/that would show him the way. (Riwaṭayt 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-ʾaqbala ʿabū sufyāna bi-l-ʿīri wa-ḥawfan šadidan ḥīna danaw min-a l-madīnati
ʿAbū Sufyān came with the caravan and they feared a lot when they approached Medina. (Maḡāzī, 39)

(6.9)  qadima ḍamḍamu fa-ṣāḥa bi-l-nafīri
Ḍamḍam came and shouted at the troop. (Maḡāzī, 34)

(6.10)  wa-ṭalaʿat qurayšun wa-rasūlu llāhi yaṣṣuffu-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, faʿala-to-yafʿalu). 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-ʿišāʾa tumma ǧāʾa ʿilā manzili-hī
The Prophet prayed the evening prayer and then he came to his house. (Ṣaḥīḥ 1, 42)

(6.12) fa-rağaʿu 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 | initial | subsequent |
| implicit linking | # | wa- | wa- | wa- | wa- | wa- |
| explicit linking | wa- | wa- | wa- | wa- | wa- | wa- |
| tumma | tumma | tumma | tumma | tumma | tumma | tumma |
| hattā | hattā | hattā | hattā | hattā | hattā | hattā |

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) \( \text{wa-ʾaqbala l-mušrikūna fa-staqbalū l-šamsa} \)

The polytheists came forward and faced the sun. (Maġāzī, 56)

(6.14) \( \text{wa-ʾaṣḥābu rasūli llāhi yaqdamūna} \)

The companions of the Messenger of God started to arrive. (Maģāzī, 371)

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.\(^7\) 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.\(^8\) In some cases, this attention involves a comparison and even contrast between two topics:

\[(6.15)\quad \text{fa-nahnu na’budu l-malāʾikata wa-l-yahūdu ta’budu ʿuzayran} \\
\text{We worship the angels while the Jews worship ʿUzayr. (Sīra 1, 236)}\]

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:

\[(6.16)\quad \text{qāla ʿayna turīdu qāla ʿyyā-ka ǧiʾtu li-ʾūmina bi-ka} \\
\text{He said: ‘where are you heading?’ He replied: ‘To you I came to believe in you.’ (Magāzī, 406)}\]

\[(6.17)\quad \text{yā sayyid-ī l-sāʾata wallāhi taḥruḍu rūḥ-ī} \\
\text{My lord, now, by God, my spirit flies away. (Riwasāyāt 1, 249)}\]

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: faʿala forms are more common in verbal clauses whereas yafʿalu forms are characteristic of nominal clauses. A nominal clause featuring a faʿala form is thus highly marked in terms of distribution; it usually serves to lay emphasis on the preposed nominal theme:

\[(6.18)\quad \text{fa-qāla ʿabū bakrin ʿa-lā tarā mā yaṣnaʿu hāḍā l-safīhu qāla ʿanta faʿalta} \\
\text{hāḍā bi-nafsi-ka} \\
\text{ʿAbū Bakr said: ‘Don’t you see what this fool does?’ He replied: ‘You did it yourself.’ (Sīra 1, 246–247)}\]

### 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

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\(^8\) See Khan, Studies, 31ff.
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 preposed 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 substantive (content or maṣdar) clauses, adjective (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. 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:

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9 For a detailed account of the discussion in both medieval and modern literature regarding the conjunctival or pronominal nature of exponents such as mā and llaḏī, which may introduce either a substantival or an adjectival clause, see Goldenberg, Allāḏī al-Maṣdariyyah.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embedded clause</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>substantival/content clause</td>
<td>ʾanna</td>
<td>ʾanna occurs independently or preceded by a preposition, e.g. li-ʾanna. In the latter case, the embedded clause functions as the genitive complement of the preposition. ʾanna together with mā, can constitute a compound operator ʾannamā. The clause introduced by ʾanna exhibits the order of the nominal clause; the subject is assigned the accusative case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjectival/relative clause</td>
<td>ʾllaḏī</td>
<td>The pronoun ʾllaḏī is inflected for number and gender, and, in the dual, also for case. The pronoun ʾllaḏī and its conjoined clause are related by apposition, as clearly observable with the plural form ʾllaḏīna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mā/man</td>
<td>The pronouns mā/man occur independently or preceded by a preposition, e.g. bi-mā, mīm-man. In the latter case, the embedded clause functions as the genitive complement of the preposition. mā and man may introduce the protasis of a conditional construction; mā may also introduce content clauses (the so-called mā al-maṣdarīyya) and temporal clauses (the so-called mā al-daymūma). These cases will not be treated in the present work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverbial clause</td>
<td>ʾḫīna</td>
<td>The operator ʾḫīna is a nominal form in the construct state. Its conjoined clause has thus the status of a genitive complement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Sub-group</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modificatory</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>ʾinna [la-],</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modal</td>
<td>lākinna, laʾalla,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>layta</td>
<td>Clauses headed by ʾinna and its ‘sisters’ exhibit the order of the nominal clause. The nominal subject is assigned the accusative case. ʾinna has a number of functions: it introduces exposition and explication clauses; often when co-occurring with la-, it indicates asseveration. lākinna denotes contrast between clauses. laʾalla and layta denote the modal meanings of possibility and wish, respectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ʾinnamā</td>
<td>The compound restrictive particle ʾinna-mā 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 mā, the embedding operator or nominalizer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Sub-group</td>
<td>Operator</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>ʾa, hal</td>
<td>ʾa, hal</td>
<td>ʾa, hal introduce yes-no questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mā(dā), man, ʾayy</td>
<td></td>
<td>The pronominal interrogatives mā(dā), man, ʾayy, and the adverbial interrogatives introduce WH-questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kayfa, ʾayna, matā</td>
<td></td>
<td>kayfa, ʾayna, matā, introduce WH-questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentative</td>
<td>ʾidā</td>
<td></td>
<td>The particle ʾidā functions as a presentative in the narrative. The presentative clause consists of a nexus, i.e., a nominal entity and a predicative expansion. ʾidā-clauses are in complementary distribution with ʾid-clauses, in which a verbal form follows the presentative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>ʾammā [fa-]</td>
<td>The particle ʾammā introduces the (nominal or other) topic and fa-the comment of a main clause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>ʾinna [la-]</td>
<td></td>
<td>The particle ʾinna heads the first clause in a mutually dependent, setting-presentative construction in the narrative. The setting clause exhibits the nominal clause order; ʾinna precedes the subject (in the accusative) and la-the predicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bayna(mā)</td>
<td></td>
<td>baynā/baynamā head the first clause in a mutually dependent, setting-presentative construction in the narrative. The setting clause exhibits the nominal clause order.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clauses introduced by different operators may be nested in each other, as in the following example:

(6.19) \( fa\text{-}‘amm\text{ā} \text{ mā qāla bnu ’ishāqa fī dālika fa}\text{-}‘inna-hū ‘innamā štadalla bi\text{-}za’mi-hī ’alā ‘anna dālika ka-dālika li-‘anna llāha ‘azza dikru-hū faraqa min ḥalqi ḏamīr-i ḥalqi-hī yawma l-‘um\text{ā}ti \)

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 \( fa\text{-} \), takes the form of an ‘inna-clause with a ‘dummy’ pronominal theme (\( damīr al-ša’n \)), 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 (\( ġumlakubrā \)) or a ‘low-rank’ comment clause (\( ġumlaṣuğrā \)); 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
analyze into phases, i.e. (dynamic) activities, and ones which are not, i.e. (static) states.¹

The verbal forms may be sorted into two groups: the first comprises the simple forms *yafʿalu*, *faʿala*, and the active participle, which do not mark the verbal situation as necessarily bounded; the second group comprises the modified forms *sa-yafʿalu*, *qd faʿala*, 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-ʾanna*, *ka-ʾanna*, *maʿaʾanna*. 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 *yafʿalu* and *fāʿil Vn* indicate concurrence with unbounded (including stative) lexemes and posteriority with bounded ones.² 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*, 12ff., for a classification of events according to the ‘two aspektual properties’ defined as [±stage] and [±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.³

– 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 anteri- ority with dynamic, either bounded or unbounded, lexemes.⁴

– 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,⁵ while maf’ūlVn refers to the resultant state alone.

Table 7.1 summarizes the aspectual and temporal distinctions marked by the verbal forms in ʾanna-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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal form</th>
<th>Timereference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bounded lexeme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaf’alu</td>
<td>posteriority [7.1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fā’ilVn</td>
<td>posteriority [7.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa-yaf’alu</td>
<td>posteriority [7.5]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 ʾanna-clauses (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal form</th>
<th>Bounded lexeme</th>
<th>Unbounded lexeme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>faʿala</td>
<td>anteriority [7.6]</td>
<td>persistence [7.7] (stative lexemes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mafʿūlVn</td>
<td></td>
<td>resultativity-static [7.8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qad faʿala</td>
<td></td>
<td>resultativity-dynamic [7.9]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7.1) *faʿalima l-qawmu ʾanna-hum yulāqīna l-qitāla*
And the people knew that they will meet battle. (*Mağāzī*, 49)

(7.2) *faʿlam ʾanna-hū yurīdu qatla-ka*
Then know that he wants to kill you! (*Kalila wa-Dimna*, 109)

(7.3) *ʾaʿlim-hum ʾannī sāʿirun ʾilay-him*
Make them know that I am going to them!6 (*Riwāyāt* 2, 11)

(7.4) *fa-lammā raʾā l-raḡulu ʾanna l-diʾba qāṣidun nahwa-hū*
And when the man saw that the wolf was proceeding toward him ... (*Kalila wa-Dimna*, 63)

(7.5) *waʿarafa ʾanna-hū qad ʿawqaʿa fi nafṣī-hī mā ʿalaba waʿanna l-ʿasada sa-yahḍaru l-ṭawra wa-yatahayyaʿu 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. (*Kalila wa-Dimna*, 95)

(7.6) *ʿuḫbira ʾannaʾ amra bna sālimin wa-lāshāba-hū rāḥū ʾamsi*
He was informed that ʿAmr b. Sālim and his companions had gone yesterday. (*Mağāzī*, 205)

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

And I asked about the singers, where do they gather [...] I came to know that the people gather at your [place]. (Rīwāyāt 1, 17)

The verb *yaḡtamiʿūna* 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*.

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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.
balağa-nī. The same frequentative meaning of yaf’alu with bounded lexemes is also observed in generic ʾanna-clauses, which by definition refer to information that is presented as common ground shared by all:

\[(7.11)\]
\[yāʾaḡaban man raʾāʾaw samʿa ʾanna l-buzāta taḥtatifu l-ğilmāna\]
O how astonishing! Who [ever] saw or heard that falcons snatch children. (Kalīla wa-Dīmna, 119)

As opposed to the frequentative yaf’alu, 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:

\[(7.12)\]
\[kāna bi-yaqīnin maʿlūman ʾanna l-zamāna muḥdatun\]
It was surely known that time is created. (Tārīḥ 1, 18)

Substantival ʾanna-clauses also feature compound forms with the anterior kāna. The situation expressed by kāna yaf’alu 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):

\[(7.13)\]
\[iʿlamʾannīmunḏuyawmiwaladtu-hā [...] kuntuʿarfaʿumin daqīqi kulliʾaḡínatin hafnatan\]
Know, ever since I gave birth to her [...] I used to take a handful of flour from every piece of dough. (Buḥalāʾ, 55)

\[(7.14)\]
\[fa-ʾaḫbara-nāʾannamuḥammadan kānaʿaraḍalī-ʾiri-nāfībadʿati-nā\]
And he informed us that Muḥammad had been observing our caravan since we started our [journey]. (Maḡāzi, 28)

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

\[(7.15)\]
\[wa-waqaʿa fī nafṣi-hī ʾanna-hū lāyarǧīʿu ʿilā makkata\]
It occurred to him that he is not going back to Mecca. (Maḡāzi, 36)
(7.16) *maʿ annī lā ʾāmanu ṣan takūna l-dāʾīratu ʾalay-kum*
Along with that, I am not sure that you will have any success. (*Mağāzi*, 63)

The negated forms *mā faʿala* and *lam yafʿal* 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 *ʾanna*:

(7.17) *fal-yaʾlam ʿanna-hū lam yuʿta fi ʿādlika min qibali-nā wa-ʿinnamā ʿutiya min qibali baʿdī nāqīli-hi ʾilay-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. (*Taʾrīḥ* 1, 7)

(7.18) *wa-kāna man taḥallafa lam yulam li-ʾanna-hum mā ḥaraḡū ʿalā qītālin wa-ʿinnamā ḥaraḡū li-l-ʿīri*
Whoever stayed behind was not scolded because they did not go out for a battle, but rather they set out for the caravan. (*Mağāzi*, 21)

On very rare occasions, *ʾanna*-clauses follow desiderative verbs. In my corpus, such examples were only encountered in the Ṣaḥīḥ text, where *ʾanna*-clauses followed the verb *wadda* ‘to wish’, featuring both *yafʿalu* and *faʿala*. 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 *yafʿalu* is used to refer to a hypothetic yet possible state of affairs, while *faʿala* is used to refer to a counterfactual one (see also above 5.3.2):

(7.19) *wa-la-wadidtu ʿannī ʿuqtalu fi sabili llāhi*
I wish that I would be killed for the cause of God. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 17)

(7.20) *la-wadidtu ʾanna-ka dakkarta-nā kullayawmin*
I wish that you had reminded us every day. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 29)

In [7.19], *ʿuqtalu* 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 mawsūl ‘conjunctive pronoun’, semantically representing the nominal antecedent and syntactically appositive to it. The mawsūl, 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. 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. 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) llaḏī 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 llaḏī-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 ʾanna-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 faʿala, the apocopate yafʿal), are clearly distinct from the ones found in adjectival clauses.

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

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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 *llaḏī*-clauses may be either particular and specific or generic.

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

The form *yafʿalu* indicates concurrence with unbounded lexemes:

(7.21) \( \text{fa-taqaddama bi-hāʾ īlā mawḍī′i-hā *llaḏī* yurīdu rasūlu llāhiʾ ʿān yaḏaʿa-hā fī-hī} \)

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 *yafʿalu* with bounded lexemes:

(7.22) \( \text{man hāḏā l-raḡulu *llaḏī* yaḍribu ʿalay-ki bāba-ki kull laylatin} \)

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: \( \text{fa-raʾaytu ʾinsānan yaʾtī-hā min ǧawfi l-} \)

\( \text{laylī fa-yaḍribu ʿalay-hā bāba-hā ʿān} \)

\( \text{And I saw a man coming to her in the middle of the night and knocking on her door}. \)

The adverbal phrase *kulla laylatin* makes it plain that the situation expressed by *yaḍribu* is frequentative.\(^{10}\) The same frequentative meaning of *yafʿalu* is also observed in *llaḏī*-clauses whose antecedent is generic:

(7.23) \( \text{wa-l-lāzibhu huwa *llaḏī* yaltaziqu baʿdu-hū bi-baʿdīn} \)

And the sticking [substance] is that which sticks to something else. (*Taʾrīḥ* 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

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\(^{10}\) The presence of the adverb *kulla laylatin* is by no means a necessary condition for the habitual interpretation of *yafʿalu*. 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 *yafä’alu* within a *llaḏī*-clause indicates plain futurity. Consider the following example:

(7.24) ʾanḏiḏ *ḥubz-ī* *llaḏī* yūḏaʾu bayna yaday-ya
Prepare well my bread that is served to (lit. ‘put in front of’) me! *(Buḫalāʾ, 84)*

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

(7.25) wa-man-i *llaḏī* yuḥriḏu-nā min-hu ʾa-lasnā ʾaʿazza l-ʿarabi wa-ʾakṭara-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) nahnu nuṭī-ka *llaḏī* saʿalta
We will give you that which you asked for. *(Maǧāzī, 373)*

(7.27) fa-raḡaʾa wa-ḥaḏḍara ʾašḥāba-hū *llaḏīna* 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) ʾaštahī l-laḥma *llaḏī* qad taharraʾa
I crave for the meat that has been overcooked. *(Buḫalāʾ, 91)*

Participial forms, both active and passive, are not very common in *llaḏī*-clauses. In my corpus, there were only examples in which the participle could be interpreted as concurrent, with both unbounded and bounded lexemes:
In cases when the time reference indicated in the main clause is (concrete or fictional) past, the distinction between *yafʿalu* and *kānayafʿalu* 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) *fa-ḥaraḡat min madḥali l-māʾi llaḏī kāna yahruḡu 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) *fa-waḍaʿā-hāʿalāšafīril-nahrillaḏī yaṣubbu fīl-ġadīri*
And they both laid it on the edge of the river that flows to the pond. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 91)

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

(7.33) *wa-ʾayna llaḏī kunta ḥabbarta-nī bi-hī*
Where is that which you have told me about? (*Rīwāyat 2*, 193)

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

(7.34) *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi llaḏī lā yubramu mā naqaḍa*
Praise be to God; what He has destroyed will never be re-established. (*Taʾrīḵ 6*, 3286)
(7.35) *wa-kāna qad balağa fi-l-buḥli wa-l-takdiyati wa-fī kātirati l-mālī l-mabāli-ği llati lam yabluğ-hā ʾaḥadun*

He has attained, through his greed and mendicancy and [his] great wealth, sums of money that no one has ever attained [before]. (*Buḥalā*, 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 (‘*aḥadun* ‘[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 *llaḏī*-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-ḡa’alū kullamā hāğa-hum ʾaḥadun min-a l-ʾawsi wa-l-ḥazraği bi-šay’in yakrahūna-hū lam yamši baḍu-hum ʾilā baḍin*

Whenever someone from ʾ Aws or Ḫazraḡ provoked them with something they hated, they stopped (lit. ‘began not’) going to one another [for help]. (*Rīwāyat* 2, 14)

(7.37) *ibʿaṯ maʿī raḏulan min ʾiqāti-ka yafhamu bi-l-ʿarabiyyati*

Send with me one of your trustworthy men who understands Arabic! (*Rīwāyat* 2, 192)

The same concurrent meaning of *yafʿalu* is also evident with dynamic, unbounded lexemes:
Rather than mere futurity, it is often the case that *yaf'alu* with bounded lexemes conveys the modal meanings of ability or possibility:

(7.39) *'arāfi hādıhi l-'ağamati samakan kaṭīran naṣīdu-hū li-muddatin*
I see in this swamp many fish that we could fish for a while. (*Kalīla wa-Dīmna*, 84)

(7.40) *hal ġa’ala fi yad-i min ġađa šay’an *'arġi‘u bi-hi ‘ilā bayt-i*
Did he thereby put anything in my hand I could take back to my home? (*Buḥalā‘*, 49)

In certain cases the exact modal nuance expressed by *yaf’alu* 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-sta’mala rasūlu llāhi ‘alā l-ḥarasi muḥammada bna maslamata fī ḥamsīna raḡulan yaṭūfūna bi-l-ʿaskari*
The Messenger of God appointed Muḥammad b. Maslama as the head of the guard of fifty men, who would go around the army [camp]. (*Maġāzī*, 217)

(7.42) *wa-‘amara la-hum bi-ḥādimin yaḥdimu-hum wa-‘abdin yasqī-him l-mā‘a*
He ordered [to provide] them [with] a servant that would serve them and a slave that would provide them water. (*Riwives* 1, 7)

In all the above examples, the interpretation of *yaf’alu* 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-‘in lam taḥ’alū kāna la-hū fi-kum dabhun ṯumma bu’ittum min ba‘di mawtī-kum fa-ġu’ilat la-kum nārūn tuḥraqūna 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 *tuḥraqūna* indeed functions as an assertion of future event.

Just as in substantival ṣanna-clauses and adjectival ḍalū-clauses, in asyndetic adjectival clauses, *faʿala* with stative lexemes indicates persistence, whereas with dynamic lexemes it indicates anteriority relative to the time frame established in the main clause:

(7.44) *suʿila l-nabiyyuʿ an ʿašyāʿa kariha-hā*

The Prophet was asked about things he detested. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 36)

(7.45) *ʿutiyahiraqlubi-raḡulin ʿarsala bi-hi maliku ġassāna*

Heraclius was brought a man, whom the king of ġassān had sent. (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 9)

The modified form *qad faʿala*, 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) *inṭaliqbi-nāʾ ilā ʿadnā māʾi l-qawmi [...] bi-hā qalībun qadʿaraftu ʿuḏū-bata māʾi-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. (*Maġāzi*, 53)

(7.47) *fa-ḡalasatā ʿalā sarīrin qad wuḍīʿa la-humā*

They both sat on a bedstead that had been put down for them. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 24)

We observe a special use of *faʿala* and *qad faʿala* 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, *faʿala* and *qad faʿala* 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’):
fa-ṣāḥa šayḥatan samʿa-hā raḥtu-hū
He shouted [such] a shout that it reached his troop (lit. ‘that his troop heard it’). (Riwāyāt 2, 24)

wa-ʾinna burğūṭan dāfa-hā dāta laylatin fī firāši dālika l-šarifī fa-ladaʿa-hū laḍʿatan ʿayqazat-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-Dīmna, 93)

fa-ʾinna-hū qad ʿafraṭa fī ʿamri l-tawri ṣifrātan qad ḥaǧjana raʿya-hū
For he had exaggerated in the matter of the ox [such] an exaggeration that made him (lit. ‘his mind’) scorned. (Kalīla wa-Dīmna, 81)

In my corpus, the participle occurred only in very few cases as the predicate of an asynadetic 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 yafʿalu, 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.11

wa-qad ruwiya ʿan rasūli llāhi [...] ʿaxbārun ʿanā dākirun min-hū baʿda 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. (Taʾrīḥ 1, 61)

Asynadetic adjectival clauses also exhibit compound forms. As elsewhere, kāna indicates an anterior point of reference (relative to the main clause), while the predicative forms faʿala and yafʿalu are left to indicate the aspectual opposition between bounded/incidental and unbounded/habitual situations. The compound kāna faʿala accentuates the meaning of anteriority whereas kāna qad faʿala 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, 249ff. 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) *hādhīhi riwāyatul-kalbīyyifī qaṣā'ida kaṭīratīn kānā yaqūlu-hā fī-hi*
This is al-Kalbi’s version as to many poems he used to compose with regard to him. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 187)

(7.53) *fa-staḫraǧasayfaqānā la-hū wa-dir‘a hadīdin kānā dufinā fī nāhiyati l-mazrā‘ati*
And he drew out a sword he had and an iron armor that had been buried at the corner of the field. (*Mağāzi*, 208)

(7.54) *fa-lammā staṯqalā nawman ‘amadat ʾilā sammin kānat qad hayya'at-hu*
And when he fell into heavy sleep, she took up a poison that she had fixed. (*Kalila wa-Dimna*, 78)

In my corpus, asyndetic adjectival clauses featured the negation of *yafʿalu* with either *lā* or *mā*. As is the case in main clauses, *mā yafʿalu* 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 ʾarā-ka qulta-hū li-ʾaḥadi raʿiyati-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. (*Taʾrīḫ* 3, 1145)

As already illustrated above, the negative *lā yafʿalu*, like the affirmative *yafʿalu*, 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) *ḥattāḥabasa-hū fī maḥbasin lā yadḥulu ʿalay-hi fī-hi ʿaḥadun*
To the point that he put him in prison in which no one would/could come to [visit] him. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 187)

(7.57) *ʾinna min-a l-šaḡari šaḡaratan lā yasquṭu waraqu-hā*
There is a kind of tree (lit. ‘a tree among the trees’) whose leaves never fall. (*Ṣaḥīḥ* 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 fu‘i‘at nafs-ī bi-fu‘i‘atīn mā ‘aṣabtu min-hā ‘iwa‘dan
My soul was afflicted by [such] a disaster, for which I could not find consolation. (Kalila wa-Dimna, 120)

(7.59)  
wallāhi la‘in ‘iṣtu la-ka la-aqtulanna-ka qitlatan lam yuqtal-hā ‘ara- bóyyun 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. (Rīwāyat 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).12 Clauses headed by mā may occur independently or as genitive complements of prepositions or nouns in the construct state.13

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:

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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 ‘id ‘amara-hum ‘amara-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 ta‘āma-kum l-šayḫu llaḏī qad ḍahaba famu-hū wa-l-
ṣabiyyu llaḏi lam yunbat famu-hū wa-‘at’imū-hum mā ya’rifsūna*
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! (Buḥalā‘, 105)

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

(7.62) *fa-lam ya’riḍ’alay-hil-ṭa‘āmawa-naḥnuna’kulu [...]*
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.’ (Buḥalā‘, 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 *yaʃ’alù* is occasionally corroborated by adverbs referring to the present
situation of speech:

(7.63) *wa-ʾinnamā kānat ʿīšat-ī’aylā 1-yawmi mim-mā ʾaʃīdū hāhunā min-a l-
samakī*
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 *yaʃ’alù*:

(7.64) *ʾinnī qad taraktu la-ka mā ta’kulu-hū ʾin ḥafażta-hū*
I have left you what you could eat (i.e. live from) if you are careful of it.
(Buḥalā‘, 73)

In [7.64], as is usually the case with bounded lexemes, *yaʃ’alù* indicates poste-
riority. The meaning of futurity is nevertheless coupled with that of possibility:
the certainty of the prediction expressed by *ta’kulu-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)  yāʾālaʾawsinqātilūʿalāl-ʾaḥsābiwa-ṣnaʿūmīlamāmāʾaṣnaʿū
O people of ’Aws, fight for honor (lit. ‘for the noble descents’) and do as I will do! (Mağāzī, 224)

When generically interpreted, yafʿalu is not located in a time relative to the temporal frame established in the main clause. The generic yafʿalu 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. (Rīwāyāt 2, 21)

(7.67)  lammā qadimaʾalāl-nuʿmāniṣādafa-hūlāmālaʿinda-hūwa-lāʿatāfatāla yasluḥu li-malikin
When he arrived to Nuʿmān he found him with neither money nor property or whatever is appropriate for a king. (Rīwāyāt 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 faʿala indicates with stative lexemes a persisting situation, as shown in [7.68]. With dynamic lexemes, faʿala 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)  nafʿalu yāʾabāl-qāsimimāʾaḥbabta
O ’Abū Qāsim, we will do what you want. (Mağāzī, 364)
(7.69) ʾa-lā tahmusu mā ʾašabta min bānī l-naḍīrī ka-mā ḥamasta mā ʾašabta min badrin
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? (Maǧāzi, 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) ʾaṣāba-nā min-a l-ʾamri mā qad ʿalinta
The matter that you know (lit. ‘you have come to know’) of has befallen us. (Maǧāzi, 411)

(7.71) wa-ʾinnā naḥšā 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 bnuʾīsḥāqa mā qad maḍā ḍikru-hū
IbnʾĪsḥāq said what has already been mentioned. (Taʾrīḫ 1, 192)

Just as yafʿalu, the active participle faʿilun may indicate either concurrence with unbounded lexemes or posteriority with bounded ones. The differences are that: (a) faʿilun indicates a static rather than a frequentative situation, and (b) the future indicated by faʿilun 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-ʾin ṣafirtum lam nanam ʿan-i l-ṭalabi [...] wa-yašgal-kum min šaʾnī-nā māʾantum-u l-ʾānā min-hu ḥaliına
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]. (Riwa yat 2, 40)
(7.74) wa-qad ḥadat qurayšun fa-ġalasu fī ʿandidiyati-him yantazirūna mā ʿabū ḡahlin fāʾilun
Qurayš had already had breakfast and sat in their assemblies to watch what ʿAbū Ġahl was about to do. (Sīra 1, 190)

In mā-clauses the compound form kāna yafʿalu 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 ʿalā mā kāna yaqīfu l-nāsu ʿalay-hi fī 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 yafʿalu and kāna fāʾilan in mā-clauses, where kāna serves to indicate a hypothetic 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 byʾammā 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 turīdiinā ʿan tašnaʿū yawman min-a l-dahri fa-min-a l-ʿānī
And that which you would have liked to do someday—now is the time [to do it]. (Maḥāzī, 364)

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

(7.77) wa-salaba-hū mā kāna ʿātā-hu min mulki l-samāʾi l-dunyā wa-l-ʿārdī
He deprived him of the rule that he had (lit. ‘had come to him’) over the lower heaven and the earth. (Taʾrīḥ 1, 101)

(7.78) qad ʿalinta ḥaqqa-ka ʿalay-yaw wa-widda mā bayn-i wa-bayna-ka wa-mā kuntu ʿaʿaltu la-ka min nafṣ-i wa-ḏimmat-i ʿayyāma ʿarsala-nī ilay-ka l-ʾasadu
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 *yaʿfalu* 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. (*Taʾrīḥ* 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 mulattaḥan*) which came about prior to the past event indicated in the comment (*dulika)*:

(7.80) *fa-mā kāna min-hā mulattaḥan dulika dālika dalkan šadidan*

And that part of it (i.e., of the thick bread) that had been smeared—this was rubbed well. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 85)

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

(7.81) *fa-mā kunta šāniʿan `idā hallū bi-ka fa-šnaʿ-hu*

Then do what you would do when they stay with you! (*Maḡāzī*, 204)

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

(7.82) *ʾinna ḥāḍā l-ʿaʾmā l-mulḥida l-zindiqa qad haḡā-ka fa-qāla bi-ʿayyi šayʿin fa-qāla bi-mā lā yantuqu bi-hi 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 yaʿfāl*. Here, again, one can assume that the use of the negative particle *mā* is precluded since it is homonymic with the pronominal operator *mā*:
Because they both are countrymen, describing what they have not seen. (Riwayat 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, yaf’alu indicates concurrence with the time frame established in the main clause:

\[
\text{(7.84) } \text{iǧtamaʿa nāsun fī l-masǧidi mimman yantaḥilu l-iqtiṣādā fī l-nafaqati}
\]

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

With bounded lexemes, yaf’alu is normally interpreted as having a posterior time reference. As noticed above, the future meaning of yaf’alu 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/executor, 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:

\[
\text{(7.85) } \text{fa-lammā ġtamaʿū bi-bābi-hī ʾamara riǧālan min ǧundi-hī ʾan yadḥulū l-ḥāʾira llaḏi banā tūmma yaqtulū kullā man yadḥulu ʿalay-him min-a l-yahūdī}
\]

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. (Riwayat 2, 11–12)
(7.86) \( \text{wa-la-‘amr-ī la-‘in kāna muḥammadun kādīban ‘inna fī l-‘arabi la-man yakfī-nā-hu} \)
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) \( \text{fa-ḥalaqa fī ‘awwali sā‘atin min hādihi l-ṭalāṭi l-sā‘āti l-‘āğāla man yahyā wa-man yamūtu} \)
And in the first one of these three hours he created the [fixed] terms, who will live and who will die. (Tā’rīḥ, 20)

The pronoun man often represents a generic entity. In such cases yafʿalu 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) \( \text{fa-daqqā ‘alay-hi l-bāba daqqā wātiqin wa-daqqā mudillīn wa-daqqā man yahāfu ‘an yudrika-hū l-‘asasu} \)
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. (Buḫalāʾ, 66)

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

(7.89) \( \text{‘ayyu l-‘islāmi ḫayrun qāla tuṭʿimu l-ṭaʿāma wa-taqraʿu l-salāma ‘alā man ‘arafta wa-man lam taʿrif} \)
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, faʿala may refer not only to anterior situations but also to posterior situations:

(7.90) \( \text{wa-‘ašāra ‘ilay-hi man ḥadḍara-hū wa-qāliū uskut fa-sakata} \)
Those who brought him in signaled to him and said: ‘Shut up!’ So he became silent. (Rīwāyāt 1, 254)
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, faʿala 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) \[\text{al-muslimu man salima l-muslimūn min lisānī-hī wa-yadi-hī}\]
The Muslim is one who the Muslims are safe from [the harm of] his tongue and hand. (Ṣaḥīḥ, 11)

Since faʿala in generic man-clauses does not indicate a temporally bounded event, one may encounter such cases where it interchanges with yafʿalu, the typical form in generic clauses:

(7.93) \[\text{ṭalāṭun man kunna fi-hi waḡada ḥalāwata l-ʿimāni […] wa-man yakra-hu ʿan yaʿūda fi l-kufri baʿda ʾiḏ ʾaḏā-hū llāhu ka-mā yakrahu ʿan yulqā fi l-nāri : (in the title) bābu man kariha ʿan yaʿūda fi l-kufri}\]
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 ʿawwal ‘(the) first’ as genitive complements. In these cases, too, faʿala is not used to indicate anteriority (unless the genitive construction is preceded by kāna):

(7.94) \[\text{fa-ʿanā ʿawwalu man ʿaḡāba ʿilā dālika wa-banū ʿabdī manāfin maʿī}\]
Then I am the first to agree to it and Banū ‘Abd Manāf are with me. (Maḡāzī 1, 200)

\[\text{Cf. Reckendorf, Syntaktischen Verhältnisse, 2, 605.}\]
Another special use of *faʿala* in *man*-clauses is observed in ‘tautological’ constructions such as illustrated in the next example:

\[(7.95) \quad \text{ʾanta ʿarsalta ʾilā qurayšin ʿan tarğıʿa fa-rağaʿa man rağaʿa wa-maḍā man maḍā} \]
\[\text{You have instructed (lit. ‘sent to’) Qurayš to come back, so some came back (lit. ‘he who came back came back’) and some went on (lit. ‘he who went on went on’). (Maġāzī 1, 45)\]

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 rağaʿa* is both indefinite (as opposed to *al-rāğiʿu*), and not quantified (as opposed to *rāğiʿun/rāğiʿūna*).\(^{15}\)

I could not find a single example in my corpus in which *qad faʿala* was employed in a *man*-clause.\(^{16}\)

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):

\[(7.96) \quad \text{maqrūnan dīkru kulli man ʿanā dākiru-hū min-hum fī kitāb-ī hāḍā bi-dīkri naʿmālī wa-ḡumali mā kāna min ḥawādiṭi l-ʾumūri fī ʾaṣrī-hī} \]
\[\text{To the account on everyone whom I mention in this book of mine, an account on his graces and a summary of the events which took place at his time is added. (Taʾrīḥ 1, 5)}\]

The compound forms are employed in *man*-clauses as elsewhere: *kāna yafʿalu* 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 faʿala* 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 faʿala* within a *man*-clause: ‘*ʾinna ʿawsan man qadʿ arafta* ’ Aws ist einer, den du kennst’.
(7.97)  *fa-bnu ‘ubayyin lā yāsūrbu ḥulufā‘a-hū wa-man kāną yamnā‘u-hū min-

a l-nāsī kulli-him*

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

(7.98)  *wa-ma‘a rasūlī lāhī ‘ammu-hū ḥamzatu bnu ‘abdī l-muṭṭalibī wa-‘abū bakrī bni ‘abī quḥāfata l-ṣiddīqu wa-‘alīyyu bnu ‘abī ṭālibin fi riḏālī min-a l-muslimīnā mimmān kānā ‘a QA mâ‘a rasūlī lāhī 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 is interpreted as its genitive complement.

Adverbial *ḥīna*-clauses follow the main clause as a rule.17 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.18 The verbal forms occurring

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17 I encountered one exception to this rule in my corpus: *fa-ḥīna darabā faḥḍā-hū darabtu 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 ḥīna-clauses are fa‘ala and yaf‘alu, nearly always in the affirmative. While ḥīna fa‘ala indicates recentness with respect to the event in the main clause, ḥīna yaf‘alu indicates simultaneity, with both bounded and unbounded lexemes:

(7.100) fa-nṭalaqa ḥīna ‘atā-hu kitābu-hū
    And he left as soon as his letter had reached him. (Riwaṭ 2, 193)

(7.101) law nazarta ‘ilay-hi ḥīna yadhulu ‘alay-ka
    If you look at him, when he enters upon you ... (Kalīla wa-Dimna, 95)

(7.102) ‘in ra‘ayta l-‘asada ḥīna yanzuru ‘ilay-ka
    If you see the lion, when he looks at you ... (Kalīla wa-Dimna, 109)

The distinction between ḥīna and other time-denoting operators, such as lam-mā ‘after’ and baynā/baynāmā ‘while’, is described in the grammatical literature mostly in semantic terms. According to Reckendorf, lam-mā and ḥīna 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. Beeston defines the functional contrast between lam-mā and ḥīna as that between the marking of ‘past time’ (with stative aspect) and the marking of ‘actual simultaneity’. Though not incorrect, these descriptions overlook two important syntactic facts: (a) lam-mā co-occurs only with fa‘ala, while ḥīna co-occurs with both fa‘ala and yaf‘alu; and (b) lam-mā-clauses come first in the chain while ḥīna-clauses nearly always follow their matrix clause. In fact, from a syntactic point of view, lam-mā-clauses are better compared with baynā/baynāmā-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 ḥīna, on the other hand, are embedded in the main clause and function as local adverbialexpansions. Also from a semantic point of view, the definition of the

---

19 Reckendorf, *Syntaktischen Verhältnisse*, 2, 662, adduces one example in which ḥīna is followed by a negated form: numsiku l-ḥayla [...] ḥīna 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.


21 Beeston, *Arabic Language*, 99. Beeston ascribes to lam-mā 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/baynāmā* the inclusion of one interval in another (‘while’), *ḥīna* indicates a temporal adjacency which may extend from a single point of contact (with *faʿala*) to total overlapping (with *yafʿalu*). These observations are summarized in the table below:

### Table 7.2 The contrast between ḥīna, lammā, and baynā/baynāmā

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ḥīna</th>
<th>lammā</th>
<th>baynā/baynāmā</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal form</td>
<td><em>faʿala, yafʿalu</em></td>
<td><em>faʿala</em></td>
<td><em>yafʿalu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>subsequent</td>
<td>initial</td>
<td>initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency status</td>
<td>embedded</td>
<td>mutually dependent</td>
<td>mutually dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic relation</td>
<td>immediate adjacency</td>
<td>succession (‘after’)</td>
<td>inclusion (‘while’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(‘upon’, ‘when’)

### 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 *faʿala* and *qad faʿala* was observed in asyndetic adjectival clauses whose antecedent is an internal object. In *man*-clauses, *faʿala* 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 *ḥīna*-clauses, for instance, express the meaning of ‘sloppy simultaneity’ with both *faʿala* and *yafʿalu*, regardless of the nature

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22 For the concept of ‘sloppy simultaneity’ see Declerck, *When-clauses*, 231, 244–248.
of the verbal lexeme. The exclusion of *qad faʿala* 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. 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. 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.

1 For a detailed discussion of these categories and some relevant literature, see Premper, “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. 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, 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: \textit{yaf‘alu}, the participle, and \textit{qad fa‘ala}. In this well-defined syntactic slot, one may speak of a basic aspectual meaning of the forms, \textit{yaf‘alu} marking a dynamic-progressive situation, the participle marking a static state, and \textit{qad fa‘ala} 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:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lll}
\hline
Predicative form & Aspect & Temporal value \\
\hline
\textit{yaf‘alu} & dynamic-progressive & simultaneous, coincidental (terminal) \\
\textit{fā‘il}Vn/\textit{māf‘il}Vn & static & simultaneous \\
\textit{qad fa‘ala} & resultative & coincidental (initial) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{The predicative paradigm}
\end{table}

The triad of \textit{yaf‘alu}, the participle, and \textit{qad fa‘ala} constitutes the core of the predicative paradigm. The form \textit{fa‘ala} seldom functions as a predicative. This may be explained by the fact that \textit{fa‘ala} is used to indicate self-contained events

\footnotesize

(hence its use as the narrative form), not coinciding with other events. The same goes for sa-yafʿalu, which rarely participates in complex predications (see below 8.2.4). Quite often, when faʿala and sa-yafʿalu 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. 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. 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 (ʿafʿāl l-qulūb), in which the predicative is deemed as kernel, and structures...
initiated by intransitive and mono-transitive verbs, in which the predicative is considered peripheral. The Arab grammarians designate the first type of predicative ḥabar ‘rhemé’ (paired-off with ism ‘theme’), whereas the latter is termed ḥāl ‘circumstantial’ (defined in contrast to a proper mafʿūl ‘object complement’). 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 (fadla). However, the distinction between ḥāl and ḥabar is not always kept, and the fact that the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably 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). 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.

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; 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,
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 yafʿalu was thoroughly studied by Nebes, who applied a semantological method of categorization to his Classical Arabic material.11 The form kāna yafʿalu, according to Nebes, is an imperfect whose marked time reference is past. This meaning of kāna yafʿalu stands in opposition to the marked perfectivity of faʿalu, on the one hand, and the unmarked time reference of yafʿalu, on the other.12

The present discussion in not concerned with the general function of kāna yafʿalu. Rather, the opposition between yafʿalu 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 yafʿalu 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).13 As for its grammatical aspect, yafʿalu 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 Yafʿalu, 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*. 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) \[ \text{wa-kāna rasūlu llāhi yuḥibbu l-fa'la wa-yakrahu l-ṭīrata} \]
The Messenger of God used to love the good omen and hate the evil omen. (*Mağāzī*, 218)

(8.2) \[ \text{ʾayyu-hā l-maliku kunna qawman ʿahla ǧāhiliyyatin naʿbudu l-ʾaṣnāma wa-naʾkulu l-maytata wa-naṭi l-fawāḥiša wa-naqṭu l-ʾarḥāma wa-nusīʾu l-ǧiwārā} \]
O king! We were people of the Ğāhiliyya, 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) \[ \text{wa-kāna mraʾan tanāṣṣara fī l-ǧāhiliyyati wa-kāna yaktubu l-kitāba l-ʿibrāniyya fa-yaktubu min-a l-ʾinjerī bi-l-ʿibrāniyyati mā šāʾa llāhu ʾan yaktuba} \]
And he was a man [who] became Christian in the Ğāhiliyya. 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 *ʿarafa* ‘to know’:

(8.4) \[ \text{fa-ʾaḥrağa qawsa-hū wa-ʾgu'bata-hū wa-sayfa-hū wa-kāna yuʾrafu bi-l-šaḡāʾati} \]
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, perception, or action:

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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.
The compound kāna yafʿalu often co-occurs with adverbs and adverbial clauses which specify the frequentative nature of the verbal situation:

(8.8) wa-kāna ʿidā rakiba yabʿatu ʿilay-himā bi-baʿīrayni yarkabāni maʿa-hū And whenever he rode, he used to send to both of them camels so that they would ride with him. (Riwaṭ 1, 58)

(8.9) wa-kāna ʿabū bakrin kaṭīran mā yastaʿḏinu rasūlallāhi fī l-hiǧrati ʾAbū Bakr kept asking the Messenger of God for permission to [set out] on the Hiǧra. (Sīra 1, 323)

In some cases, kāna yafʿalu 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 hāḍā fa-qālū hāḍā fulānū bnu fulānin fa-qāla l-ʿasadu qad kuntu ʿaʾrifu ʿabā-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) \textit{la-qad kunnā narā riǧālan bīḍan ‘alā ḥaylin bulqin mā kunnā narā-hū qablu wa-lā ba’du}

Indeed, we saw white men on piebald horses. We never saw them before or after. (Maḡāzī, 409)

Following \textit{kāna}, the predicative \textit{yafʿalū} is always negated with \textit{lā}:

(8.12) \textit{fa-ḥaraḡnā nas’alū ‘an rasūl illāhi wa-kunnā lā na’rifū-hū lam nara-hū qabla ḏālika}

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 \textit{kāna fāʿilan/mafʿūlan} shows a clear contrast to \textit{kāna yafʿalū}, 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) \textit{wa-kullu-hum kāna lī muḥibban wa-ʿilay-ya māʿilan wa-lī muṭīʿan}

And everyone loved me and was favorably inclined to me and was obedient to me. (Riwāyāt 1, 35)

Notice that \textit{muḥibban} is connected with its object by means of the preposition \textit{l-}, whereas \textit{yuḥibbu} in [8.1] has a direct object. Derived from verbs of mental state and disposition, the adjectival patterns \textit{faʿīl}, \textit{faʿīl}, and \textit{faʿlān} often serve as predicative forms side by side with the participle:

(8.14) \textit{wa-našaʾa l-naḡāšiyu maʿa ‘ammi-hī wa-kāna labīban ḥāziman min-a l-riǧāli}

The Negus grew up with his uncle, and he was wise and resolute from among the men. (Sīra 1, 222)

\textsuperscript{16} The Arab grammarians consider this \textit{l-} as \textit{al-lām li-taqwīyat al-ʿāmil} ‘the \textit{lām} which strengthens the regent’, cf. Wright, \textit{Grammar}, 2, 61ff. Being a nominal form, the participle has less ‘power’ to govern an object complement; the \textit{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) \textit{wa-kāna ‘ādīyyu bnu zaydin wāqifan bayna yaday-hi}  
‘Adi b. Zayd was standing in front of him. (Rīwāyāt 2, 184)

(8.16) \textit{ḥattā ‘idā kunnā bi-l-muṣallā rāği‘īna 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’). (Maġāzī, 25)

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

(8.17) \textit{wa-kāna dāri‘an wa-‘alay-hi miḥfarun lā rafrāfa la-hū fa-kānat ḥanĝa-ratu-hū bādiyatan}  
And he was wearing armor and a helmet with no visor, so his neck was exposed (lit. ‘visible’). (Maġāzī, 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) \textit{ʾiḏkānal-iḫtilāfufīḏālika mawǧūdan bayna ẓawīl-naẓarifī-hi}  
As the controversy about that [matter] exists between those holding a view about that. (Ta’rīḥ 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) \textit{wa-qāla li-ʾuḫti-hī ʾaʿṭī-nī hāḏihi l-ṣaḥīfata [...] anẓuru mā hāḏā llaḏī ġā‘a bi-hī muḥammadun wa-kāna ʾumaru kātiban}  
And he said to his sister: ‘Give me this leaf [of book ...] so that I may take a look at that which Muḥammad has brought,’ for ‘Umar was literate (lit. ‘writer’). (Sīra 1, 226)

Comparing the participle in [8.19] and \textit{yaf‘alu} in [8.3], we observe two points of contrast: (a) the participle \textit{kātiban} has no object complement, and (b) rather than indicating recurring instances of writing like \textit{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.  

The compound *kāna fa‘īlan*/maʃ‘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 fa‘īlan*/maʃ‘ūlan; *la-qad* stresses the veracity of the verbal situation:

(8.20) *qad kuntu ‘anā ǧāhilan miṭla-ka ḥattā waffaqa-nī llāhu ’ilā mā huwa ʿaršadu*  
I used to be ignorant like you until God made me successful in achieving the right way. (*Buḥalā’, 40)*

(8.21) *la-qad kāna ʾilay-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 *ġayr*:

(8.22) *wa-kānat-i l-ʾamʿāʾumuttaṣilatan ġayra mutabāyanatin*  
The intestines were intertwined [and] not separated from each other. (*Buḥalā’, 99)*

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

(8.23) *wa-kānū qad ʿuṭū baṣṭatan fi l-ḥalqi*  
They were given a large stature. (*Taʿrīḥ*, 1, 167)*

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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-ʾin kunta lā ḡākilan šayʿan sakattu ʿanā wasakatta ʿanta* (*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.
The compound paradigm

The compound form *kāna faʿala* is less frequently used than *kāna qad faʿala*. 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 faʿala* occurs with the state verb *makaṭa* ‘to stay’:

(8.24) **wa-qad kāna ʿuṭiya fatāa l-sinni**

He was given youth (lit. ‘the youth of age’). *(Riwayāt 1, 19)*

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

(8.25) **fa-lammā raḡaʿa baʿda ḥinīn ṭalaḥa ḥadīda-hū wa-kāna l-raḡulu qad bāʾa-hū**

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

(8.26) **wa-kāna ʿabū ʿāmirin-i-l-fāsiqu qad ḥaraḡa fi ḥamsīna raḡulan min ʿawsī llāhī ḥattā qadīma bi-him makkata ḥīna qadīma l-nabīyyu l-madīnata ʾAbū ʿĀmir, the sinner, had already gone out with fifty men from ʾ Aws Allāh until he arrived with them in Mecca, at the time when the Prophet arrived in Medina. *(Magāzī, 205)*

(8.27) **fa-ʾin kāna ʿdālika ka-ʿdālika fa-qad kāna l-māʾu wa-l-rīḥu ḥuliqā qabla l-ʿarṣī**

If this is so, then the water and the wind were created before the throne. *(Taʾrīḥ 1, 37)*
(8.28) *kāna nūhun makaṭa fī qawmi-hī ’alfa sanatin ’illā ḥamsīna ’āman yadʿū-hum ’ilā llāhi*

Noah had stayed among his people for 950 years (lit. ‘thousand years minus fifty years’), calling upon them to [worship] God. (*Taʾrīḥ* 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 wadaʿtu ḥadīda-ka fī nāḥiyatin min-a l-bayti faʾ-akala-hū l-ǧur-ḏānu* (*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 ġabalun ḥaraḡa laylan min mawḍīʾin kāna fī-hi*

Gabal had gone out at night from the place where he had been. (*Buḫalāʾ*, 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-qāṭīlu min-humā ʾaḥā-hu ʾanna llāha ʿazza wa-ĝalla ʾamara-humā bi-taqrībi qurbānin*

The fact of the matter is that one of them killed his brother because God ordered them to offer a sacrifice. (*Taʾrīḥ* 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:
They often endowed him with special honor and put in front of him a plump francolin. (*Buhalā*, 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 yahrusu rasūla llāhi lam yufāriq-hu*

He used to guard the Messenger of God; he would not leave him. (*Mağāzi*, 217)

### 8.2.2 Modifying Verbs

Modifying verbs, ‘*āḥawāt *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, 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 *ǧaʿala* ‘to start’. The verbal complex *ǧaʿalayafʿalu* is found with all classes of verbs, in affirmative and negative forms:

(8.34) *fa-ǧaʿala yamsī wa-yaqʿudu wa-yanzūru ilā l-ṭariqi ḥattā rufiʿa la-hū dimnatu muqbilan*

And he started to walk and sit and look at the road until Dimna, [while] approaching, came into his sight. (*Kalīla wa-Dīmna*, 75)

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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 *ǧaʿala* had by far the greatest number of tokens.
(8.35) \(fa-\text{\textgreek{g}a'al\u{u} ya\textgreek{dribun\u{u}}-hum}\) \(\text{hatt\u{a} nuqi\textgreek{d}at }\text{\textgreek{sufufu}-hum}\)
And they started to hit them until their lines were destroyed. (\textit{Ma\textgreek{g}z\u{a}zi}, 226)

(8.36) \(fa-\text{\textgreek{g}a'al\u{u} l\u{a} ya\textg\u{a}rabun\u{a} la-hum\u{u} wa-l\u{a} yu\textg\u{a}bun\u{a} bi-him\u{a} k\u{a}m\u{a} k\u{a}n\u{u} ya\textg\u{a}rabun\u{a}}\)
And they stopped (lit. ‘started not’) being moved and delighted by them the way they used to be. (\textit{Ri\textgreek{w\u{a}y\u{a}t} 1}, 57)

With cognitive verbs which are, by their nature, static, \(\text{\textgreek{g}a'\u{a}la}\) indicates the entrance into a state or a disposition, thus the meaning of becoming (‘starting to be’):

(8.37) \(wa-\text{\textg\u{a}a'la }\text{\textg\u{a}b\u{u} y\textg\u{a}h\u{a}lin yusarru bi-m\u{a} l\u{a}nu\textg\u{a}sri\textg\u{u}kun\u{a} bi-\text{\textg\u{a}t\u{a}ba}\)
And ‘Abu \(\text{\textg\u{a}h\u{a}l\u{a}}\) became delighted by what the polytheists did with ‘Utba. (\textit{Ma\textg\u{g}z\u{a}zi}, 66)

Besides \(\text{\textg\u{a}a'\u{a}la}\), there are other verbs which indicate inchoative meaning. These originate from diverse lexical classes, e.g.: ‘\(\text{\textg\u{o}b\u{a}h\u{a}la}\) ‘to be [in] day time’, ‘\(\text{\textg\u{a}h\u{a}d\u{a}}\) ‘to take’, ‘\(\text{\textd\u{a}fsa'\u{a}}\) ‘to rush off’. The modifying verb ‘\(\text{\texts\u{a}r\u{a}}\)’, illustrated in [8.38], also functions as a motion verb indicating the arrival at a certain place or destination (e.g. ‘\(\text{\texts\u{a}r\u{a} \text{\texti{l\u{a}} ful\u{a}nin}\) ‘He came to such a one’):

(8.38) \(fa-\text{\texti{\textg\u{d\u{a}} \text{s\u{a}rtu ka-\textg\u{d\u{a}}lika fa-qad }\text{\textg\u{d\u{a}}haba k\u{a}sb-i min }\text{\textg\u{a}l\u{a} y\textg\u{a}b\u{a} y\textg\u{a}r-i wa-\textg\u{a}s\u{a}r\u{a}\text{\textg\u{a}y\textg\u{a}r-i yaksib\u{u} min-n\u{u}}\)
If I become like that, my earnings from someone else’s money will disappear and someone else will start earning from me. (\textit{Bu\textg\u{h}\textg\u{a}l\u{a}}, 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:\(^{21}\)

(8.39) \(fa-\text{\textlamm\u{u} ntah\u{a} }\text{\texti{l\u{a}} l-nahri lam ya\textg\u{a}gid 'alay-hi qan\textg\u{a}taran li-yaq\u{a}ta'a-h\u{u}\) \(wa-l-di'bu k\u{a}da yudriku-h\u{u}\)

\(^{21}\) In the Arabic grammatical tradition, ‘\(\text{\textaf\'u\u{u}l al-\textg\u{a}f\u{u}l}\) ‘the verbs of beginning’ and ‘\(\text{\textaf\'u\u{u}l al-muq\u{a}rab\u{a}}\) ‘the verbs of approximation’ are lumped together, cf. Wright, \textit{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. (Kalila wa-Dimna, 63)

The predicative yaf'alu 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 yaf’alu, the first indicates a static situation while the latter indicates a dynamic one:22

(8.40) wa-naḥnu lam nazal naḍribu-hū bi-suṣuyīn-nā ma’a l-ʾawsī fī ʾhartī-him kulli-hā
And we continued to fight him with our swords, together with ’Aws, throughout their war. (Mağāzī, 369)

(8.41) wa-qīla ’anna-hū lam yazal muqīman bi-makkata yaḥuǧǧu wa-yaʿta-miru
It was reported that he continued to stay in Mecca, performing the pilgrimages of the Hajj and the Ḫumra. (Ṭarīḥ 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 ’aṣbaḥtu muṣṭāqan ʾilā murāfuqati-hī l-ǧannati
By God, O Messenger of God, I have come to yearn to accompany him in Heaven. (Mağāzī, 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:

22 Taʾrīḥ 3, 1150, provides a parallel example, in which yaf’alu specifies, by negation, the dynamic aspects of ‘standing still’: fa-mā ziltu wāqifan mā ’ataqaddamu ʿamām-i ws-lā ʿarqī-u warā-i ‘And I kept standing, I did not proceed forward or returned back.’
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-Dīmna, 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 maḍā ‘to pass’ and labiṭa ‘to abide’, which in some contexts undergo semantic bleaching:

As mentioned above, modifying verbs expressing either inchoative or durative meaning are incompatible with qad faʿala. Also the simple faʿala is rarely found with modifying verbs; the few existing examples stem mostly from poetry. In my corpus, I have encountered one example in which the form ʿarāda ‘he wanted’ co-occurred with the modifying verb ʿasā ‘it might be’. The compatibility of ʿarāda and ʿasā may be explained by the fact that, as opposed to qad faʿala, faʿala does not indicate the complete and concrete realization of the verbal situation:

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 yafʿalū, fāʿilan/mafʿūlan, and qad faʿala, marking the opposition between a

23 Cf. Reckendorf, Arabische Syntax, 297, for poetry quotes such as ʾaṣbaḥat ʿaḍalatnī.
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, faʿala—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)nominant antecedent, i.e. dū 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 yafʿalu is considered to have two manifestations: (a) as ḥāl muqārin ‘simultaneous circumstantial’, or as (b) ḥāl muqaddar ‘intended circumstantial’. Modern grammars maintain the same distinction between yafʿalu forms which are ‘ simultaneous with or following the action expressed by the governing verb’. In his short article, Abboud diverts attention from yafʿalu to the semantics of the main verb: since yafʿalu 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’. 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 yafʿalu, Waltisberg suggests a neat separation between a ‘modal’ (simultaneous) and a ‘final’ (posterior) function of yafʿalu, which are then paired off with syndetic circumstantial clauses and final clauses, respectively.

A detailed examination of all the possible combinations shows that the temporal value of yafʿalu 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 yafʿalu is interpreted as simultaneous (totally overlapping); if neither is unbounded, then yafʿalu is interpreted as coincidental (partially

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 \textit{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 \textit{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; \textit{yaf’alu} is thus interpreted as simultaneous:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{8.46} \textit{fa-rağa’a bi-hā rasūlu llāhi yarḡufu fiwādu-hū}
    \begin{flushright}
    And the Messenger of God returned with them (i.e. the verses) his heart shivering. (Ṣaḥīḥ, 5)
    \end{flushright}
  
  \item \textbf{8.47} \textit{fa-labisa dir’a-hū wa-‘aḥadā sayfa-hū fa-ḥarağa ya’dū}
    \begin{flushright}
    He wore his armor, took his sword and went out running. (Maḡāżī, 370)
    \end{flushright}
\end{itemize}

In [8.48] the main verb belongs to the first group of motion verbs while the predicative verb indicates a bounded situation; \textit{yaf’alu} is thus interpreted as coincidental:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{8.48} \textit{fa-ḥaraḡū yaṭlubūna-humā fī kulli waqīhin}
    \begin{flushright}
    They went out looking for both of them in all directions. (Rīwāyāt 2, 24)
    \end{flushright}
\end{itemize}

In [8.49] the main verb belongs to the second group of motion verbs; \textit{yaf’alu} is thus interpreted as simultaneous:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{8.49} \textit{wa-marrū yaḍribūna bi-l-dufūfi wa-yazmirūna bi-l-mazāmīri}
    \begin{flushright}
    They marched striking tambourines and playing the pipes.\textsuperscript{28} (Maḡāżī, 375)
    \end{flushright}
\end{itemize}

In [8.50]–[8.51], where the main verb belongs to the third group of state verbs, \textit{yaf’alu}, whether unbounded or bounded, is interpreted as simultaneous:

\textsuperscript{28} The verb \textit{marra} 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].
The predicative paradigm

(8.50)  \textit{fa-bāta yabkī}
He spent the night crying. \((\textit{Riwayāt} \text{ 2, 32})\)  

(8.51)  \textit{fa-bātū yaṭlubūna-hū ḥattā yaʾisū mīn-hu}
They spent the night looking for him until they gave up all hope of [finding] him. \((\textit{Riwayāt} \text{ 2, 178})\)

Not only with verbs of (vectorial) motion, but also with verbs of caused motion, \textit{yafʿalu} indicates the goal of the event launched by the main verb:

(8.52)  \textit{fa-ʿarsala ʿilay-hi yadʿū-hu}
And he sent to him [a messenger] inviting him [to come]. \((\textit{Riwayāt} \text{ 2, 29})\)

In these cases, too, \textit{yafʿalu} 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, \textit{inter alia}, by the fact that proper final clauses, such that are introduced by an explicit operator (e.g. \textit{li}– ‘for’), are external to the verbal situation and hence can be negated, whereas the terminal \textit{yafʿalu}—being an internal and inseparable part of the verbal situation—is never negated.

While coincidental or terminal \textit{yafʿalu} forms cannot be negated, \textit{yafʿalu} indicating simultaneity does exhibit negation with \textit{lā}. Quite often, \textit{lā yafʿalu} paraphrases the content expressed by the preceding (affirmative) predicative form:

(8.53)  \textit{wa-bātat šāhilatan ḥaylu-hum lā tahdaʿu}
Their horses stayed up the night neighing; they would not calm down. \((\textit{Mağāzi}, \text{ 217})\)

(8.54)  \textit{wabaqītum mabhūtan lā ʿastāṭiʿu l-kalāma wa-lā l-ğawāba wa-lā l-ḥara-kata li-mā ḥalāta qalb-ī}
I remained speechless; I could not talk nor respond or move for what had befallen me. \((\textit{Riwayāt} \text{ 1, 46})\)

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: mutawwaṣṣiḥan); Example [8.57] demonstrates the functional opposition between the participle and yafʿalu with regard to transitivity: the first is used in intransitive verb-phrases whereas the latter takes an object complement:

(8.55) \(fa-maḵaṭa\) mumallakan ʿalay-hā ʿašhuran
He remained its king (lit. ‘enthroned’) for several months. (Riwāyāt 2, 184)

(8.56) \(fa-ʾaqbala\) muṣlitan sayfa-hū fi nafarin min-a l-yahūdi
He approached unsheathing his sword amid a group of Jews. (Maḡāzī, 372)

(8.57) \(fa-ḥaraḡnā\) ḥāʾifina naḥāfu l-raṣada
We set out afraid; we were fearing an ambush. (Maḡāzī, 28)

The last example illustrates a general principle of complex predcations. 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 ʾarkab ḥaṭwatan dāhiban wa-lā rāḡiʿan
I did not ride a single step either going or coming. (Maḡāzī, 26)

(8.59) ʿaqbaltu rākiban ʿalā ḥīmarin ʿatānin
I came close, riding on a she-ass. (Ṣaḥīḥ, 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.29 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) \( \text{wa-`}aqbala ʿabū ǧubaylata sāʾiran mīn-a l-šāmī \)
And ʿAbū Ėubayla came proceeding from al-Šām. (Riwaṭāt 2, 11)

(8.61) \( \text{ḥattā qumtu fī qiblati-hī mustaqbila-hū} \)
Until I stood in his direction of praying facing him. (Sīrā 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) \( ġiṭu-ka ʿāʾidan bi-ka \)
I came to you asking for your protection. (Riwaṭāt 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 Sīrā, 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) \( \text{fa-baʿaṭa llāhu ʾiblīsa qāḍīyan yaqṭī bayna-hum} \)
God sent ʾIblīs as a judge to judge among them. (Taʿrīḥ 1, 85)

(8.64) \( \text{fa-baʿaṭa llāhu l-nabīyyīna mubašṣirīna wa-munḍirīna / wa-lākinna llāha baʿaṭa-ni baṣīran wa-naḍīran} \)
God sent the prophets as bringers of glad tidings and warners. (Q 2:213; Taʿrīḥ 1, 184) / But God sent me as a bringer of glad tidings and a warner. (Sīrā 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 faʿala, 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 yafʿalu, the tangent point of qad faʿala and the main verb is not the terminal stage of the latter but its initial one:

(8.65) fa-ǧāʾaʾaʿrābiyyun qadʾaqbala min tihāmata
    A Bedouin arrived [after] approaching from Tihāma. (Maġāzi, 46)

(8.66) wa-ʾaqbalal-mušrikūna qadṣaffū ʿsufūfa-hum
    The polytheists approached [being] already arranged in lines. (Maġāzi, 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 by analyzed as an exclusive member of either.30

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’).31

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 raʾā and waǧada are not intended in their physical denotation (i.e., in the sense of ruʿyat al-ʿayn ‘the seeing of the eye’ or wiǧdānal-ḍālla ‘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 ‘anna are not free variants of raising constructions, but mostly interchange with the pattern of notional perception; 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, yaf‘alu, qad fa‘ala, and the participle, the pattern of notional perception also includes fa‘ala and sa-yaf‘alu, both referring to events which are not envisaged as co-occurring with the situation of perception.

The predicative form yaf‘alu occurs with both patterns of concrete and notional perception. With the first pattern, yaf‘alu depicts an ongoing situation, simultaneous with the moment of seeing, hearing, or finding:

\[ (8.67) \quad fa-ra‘ā-nī ‘atawadda‘u min kūzin ḥazafin \]
He saw me performing the ablution using a pottery jug. (Buḥalā’, 37)

\[ (8.68) \quad ‘a-mā wallāhi la-samī‘tu muḥammadan yaqūlu \]
Verily, by God, I heard Muḥammad saying. (Maġāzī, 35)

\[ (8.69) \quad wa-‘tabir ʾayḍan ḏālika bi-l-milḥi llaḏī yūḍa‘u taḥta l-misraği ṣa-l-nuḥālati llati tūḍa‘u hunāka li-taswīyati-hā wa-taṣwibi-hā kāyfa taṯidu-humā yan‘aṣirāni duḥnan \]
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. (Buḥalā’, 41)

In the negative form as well, lā yaf‘alu 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):

\[ (8.70) \quad wa-lākinnī wallāhi ra‘aytu qawman lā yurīdūna ‘an ya‘ūbū ‘ilā ‘ahlī-him \]
But, by God, I saw people not willing to return to their families. (Maġāzī, 62)

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32 Waltisberg, Satzkomplex, 340.
The predicative *yafʿalu* is also compatible with *raʾā*, 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) ʾinnī qad raʾayt ruʿyan [...] wa-ʿarā bn-ī ʿaṭlubu-nī ṭalaban ḥaṭītan
I dreamt (lit. 'I saw a dream') [...] and I see my son looking for me anxiously. (*Sūrat 1* 254)

With the second pattern of notional perception or comprehension, *yafʿalu* 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-yafʿalu* may also be used:

(8.72) fa-ṭarā muḥammadan ʿaḥṣirū-nā sātanān
Do you think that Muḥammad will besiege us for a year? (*Magāzī* 368)

(8.73) wa-ʿammā ṭaluʿu bn-ī ʿiyāʾ ya ṭumma ḥabsu-hū ʿann-ī fa-ʾinnī ʿarā-hū sa-yaḡḥadu ʿan yuṣība-hū māʾ 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]. (*Sūrat 1* 254)

As with verbs of motion and caused motion, when *yafʿalu* co-occurs with permission verbs it may be coincidental, referring to the terminal stage of the complex situation:

(8.74) fa-qad ʿamara-nā ʿan lā nadāʿa-ka ṭastāqirru ʿalā l-ʿardī
He has instructed us to not let you stick to the ground. (*Riwāyat* 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) ʿumma ḏāʾat-i mraʿat l-haḡğāmi baʿda sāʿatīn li-muṣāmarati ṣadiqatī-hā mraʿatī l-ʾīskāfi fa-waḡadat-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 waḡada-hū qāʾidan fī ’ašẖābi-hī ’akabba ’alay-hi wa-ʾānaqah-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 ḩinnī la-ʾarā-hu muʾminan*

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 *yafʿalu* has an object complement:

(8.78) *fa-ʾaḥbara-nā ṧanna muḥammadan kāna ʿaraḍa li-ʾīri-nā fī baḏʿi-ti-nā wa-ʾanna-hū taraka-hū muqīman yantaẓiruraḏʿa-nā*

And he informed us that Muḥammad was observing our caravans since we started our [journey], and that he had left him to stay [there] and watch for our return. (*Maḡāzī, 28*)

The predicative form *qad faʿala*, 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) *ʾasmaʿul-ṣawta qad irtafaʿa fīʾaʿlāqawrā*

I hear the voice already risen at the top of Qawrā. (*Riwāyāt 2, 47*)

(8.80) *ʾinnī ʾarā qurayšan qad ʾazmaʿat ʿalā l-ḥurūği*

Indeed, I think that Qurayš have already decided to go out. (*Maḡāzī, 36*)

As is usually the case, *qad faʿala* is preferred to *faʿala* when the chronological order of the events is deemed salient to the narrative. Thus in [8.81], the fact that ʿAdī 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) *ʾinnī waḡadtu ʿadiyyan qad mātā qablā ʿan ʿadḥula ʿalay-hi*

I had found ʿAdī 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 yafʿalu, and qad faʿala—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:

\[(8.82) \quad \text{wa-la-ka-ʾanī} \quad \text{ʾanżuru} \quad \text{ʾilay-kum} \quad \text{ẓāʾinīna} \quad \text{yataḍāġā} \quad \text{ṣibyānu-kum} \quad \text{qad} \quad \text{taraktum} \quad \text{dūra-kum} \quad \text{ḥulīfan} \quad \text{wa-ʿamwāla-kum} \]

It is as if I look at you departing, your children crying out, [after] you have left your homes and possessions neglected. (Magāzī, 365)

In my corpus, a predicative faʿala was not found in raising constructions very often. Unlike the temporally bounded, coincidental qad faʿala, faʿala refers to a self-contained period of time. With concrete perception, faʿala is found with lexemes indicating an enduring state. Notice in [8.83] the indefinite time frame indicated by the adverb zamānan ‘for a while’:

\[(8.83) \quad \text{ʾinnī qad raʾaytu l-malika} \quad \text{ʾaqāma} \quad \text{bi-makāni-hī} \quad \text{ḥāḏā} \quad \text{zamānan} \quad \text{lā yabrāḥun-hu} \]

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 faʿala is more likely to occur when perception is not intended in its physical sense, but in its mental sense. Thus, faʿala is used in visions and dreams, or in the expression of realizations and conclusions:

\[(8.84) \quad \text{raʾaytu rākiban} \quad \text{ʾaqbala} \quad \text{ʾalā} \quad \text{baʾirī-hī} \quad […] \quad \text{fa-ʿarā} \quad \text{l-nāsa} \quad \text{ǧtamaʿū} \quad \text{ʿilay-hi} \]

I saw [in a dream] a rider [that] approached on his camel […] and I saw [that] the people gathered to him. (Maġāzī, 29)

\[(8.85) \quad \text{fa-ʾinnī} \quad \text{ʿarā rīhan} \quad \text{qad} \quad \text{ḥāğaṭ} \quad \text{min} \quad \text{aʾlā} \quad \text{l-wādī} \quad \text{wa-ʾinnī} \quad \text{ʿarā-hā} \quad \text{buʿat} \quad \text{bi-naṣri-ka} \]

I see a wind has risen from above the valley and I think it has been sent to help you. (Maģāzī, 29)

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33 Though they fill the same functional slot in the clause, the participle, yafʿalu, and qad faʿala 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 *faʿala* is not encountered in the negative form; instead, *lam yafʿal* is used:

(8.86) \( \text{inhaḍ-i l-sāʿata 'ilā l-faḍlī bni yahyā fa-ʿinna-ka taqidu-hū lam yaʿdan li-} \text{ˈaḥadin baʿdu} \)

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 *yafʿalu* 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) \( qāla l-ˈašā yamdaḥu l-samawʾala \)

Al-ʾAšā said praising al-Samawʾal. (*Riwāyāt* 2, 27)

(8.88) \( qāla l-walīdu rāfiʿan ˈsavta-hū \)

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: *yafʿalu* indicates an ongoing situation or process, the participle indicates a static state, and *qad faʿala* indicates a result.

The category of *al-ǧumla 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 *ǧumla ḥāliyya* do not interchange freely with each other. 34 In fact, there are a number of formal and functional distinctions between them:

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(a) The subject of the syndetic circumstantial clause is not necessarily coreferential 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. 

(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). 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 adverbiaal (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-. 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

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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 inalienabilis): kuntu ʿinda šayḥin minʾahlimarwa-ṣabiyyun la-hū šajiran yat'ābu bayna yaday-hi (Buḫalaʿ). 


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.38

wa‘ al-ḥāl ‘the circumstantial wa-’ may introduce either a nominal or a verbal clause (see above 4.5). When the predicate is yaf‘alu or the participle, the nominal clause pattern is mandatory; with qad fa‘ala, 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 yaf‘alu 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)  fa-ḡa‘alt u ḍamšī ṭuwaway dan wa-rasūlu llāhi qā‘imun yuṣallī yaqra‘u l-qur‘āna
I started to walk slowly while the Messenger of God was standing, praying, [and] reciting the Qur‘ān. (Sīra 1, 228)

(8.90)  fa-daḫala‘ al-ay-hi raḡulun kāna la-hū ḍārūn wa-kāna lī ṣadīqan fa-lam ya‘rīd ‘alay-hi l-ta‘āma wa-naḥnu na‘kulu
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. (Buḫalā’, 38)

Like the asyndetic yaf‘alu, the circumstantial yaf‘alu—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)  fa-lammā qāla surāqatu mā qāla wa-huwa yanṭıqu bi-lisāni ʾiblīsa šaḡu‘a l-qawmu
And when Surāqa said what he said, and he was speaking with the tongue of ‘Iblis, the people were encouraged. (Maġāzī, 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 *yaḥṭu*bu bi-l-kūfati
I heard ‘Ali 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 hadīt on the period of pause in revelation. (*Ṣahih* 1, 6)

In circumstantial clauses *yafaqalu* is negated by *lā*. Quite often, *lā yafaqalu* 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-hazanati wa-hum lā ya’lamūna*
The snake passed by the keepers [and entered] while they did not know. (*Tārīḥ* 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 mutawasšiḥun bi-sayfi-hū*; see also [8.17] and [8.56] above):

(8.95) *fa-ǧā’-a-nī wa-huwa ḥazīnun munkasirun*
He came to me sad and [heart] broken. (*Buḥalā’,* 90)

(8.96) *wa-‘aḥaḍa l-nabīyyu l-qawṣa wa-‘aḥaḍa qanāṭan 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 safiḥun min sufahā’i qurayṣin wa-huwa ʿāmidun ‘ilā l-ka’bati*
One of the Qurayṣ fools came across him while he was heading towards the Ka’ba. (*Ṣira* 1, 246)
(8.98) *li-ʾanna-hū lā šayʿa yatawahhamu-hū mutawahhimun fī qawli qāʾīli āḏlika ʾillā wa-huwa mawţūdun fī qawli qāʾīlin*

Because there is nothing which one may presume [to be implied] in this statement without existing in a statement such as ... (Taʿrīḥ 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 yastaṭīʿuḏālikawa-huwa ʾākilun ʿušban*

How is he able to do that while being a grass-eater? (Kalīla wa-Ḍīmna, 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-raḫaʿa l-nağašíyyu wa-qad ʿahlaka llāhuʿaduwwa-hū*

The Negus came back [after] God had already destroyed his enemy. (Ṣīra 1, 221)

(8.101) *wa-ḥarağa l-ḥabaru ʿilā l-nāsiwa-riǧālu banī l-muṣṭāliqī 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 ... (Maġāzī, 411)

A plausible explanation to the different clausal pattern of *wa-qad faʿala* vis-à-vis *wa-huwa yafʿalu/wa-huwa faʿilun* 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 `ʾinna la-`clausal pattern. The operator `ʾinna` 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-ʾinna la-clauses: unlike the first, wa-ʾinna 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 raʾaytu-hū yanzilu ʿalay-hi l-wahyu fi l-yawmi l-šadīdī l-bardi fa-yufšimuʾan-hu waʾinna ǧabiṇa-hū la-yatafaṣṣadu ʿaraqan
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 maymūnatu waʾinna-hū la-šāʾimaturun
And Maymūna was given the medicine while she was fasting. (Sīra 2, 1007)

In [8.102], ʿĀʾiša 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 faʿala is also not found in the ʾinna la- pattern. Nevertheless, qad faʿala is compatible with the emphasizing la- which precedes the modified form. The same as wa-ʾinna-hū la-yafʿalu/wa-ʾinna-hū la-fāʾilun, also wa-la-qad faʿala has an evaluative function: it imparts the impression of the narrator regarding the related event:

(8.104) la-qad ḥaddaṭa-nī ʿabdu llāhi bni ʿaqqāsin ʿanna ʿadama nazala ǧīna nazala bi-l-hindi wa-la-qad ḥağğa min-hā ʿarbaʿīna hiğgatan ʿalā ri-ģlay-hi39
ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās told me that when Adam came down it was in India; from there he had performed the pilgrimage to Mecca on foot forty times. (Taʾrīḥ 1, 124)

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39 Interestingly, wa-la-qad ḥağğa does not refer to an anterior event relative to the preceding nazala. It may be that la-qad faʿala, as opposed to qad faʿala, serves mainly an expressive goal and is not used for the purpose of grounding. This suggestion awaits further research.
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. Conditional clauses may be introduced by the same conjunction as modifying adverbial clauses, e.g.: 'in 'if', 'iḍā ḥaṣil '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. The seemingly inverted order of the conditional construction marks the relation of mutual dependency, whereby both clauses have an equal syntactic status. 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—faʿala or yafʿal—triggers off the verbal form in the apodosis—faʿala or yafʿal, and both forms assume a hypothetical meaning.

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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 šarṭ, and a postposed modifying conditional, termed ṣarf; 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, 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 ʿamšī ʿid samītu șawtan min-a l-samāʾī
As I was walking, I suddenly heard a voice from heaven. (Ṣaḥīḥ, 6)

(8.106) fa-baynamā humā wāqīfāni bayna yaday-hi ʿid saqaṭa ṭāʾirāni ʿalā l-sūrī
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
faʿala 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 ʿanā fi maǧlis-ī wa-l-ḥadamu qad ḥaffū bī wa-ġawāriy-ya yata-raddadna bayna yaday-ya ʿidā ʿanā 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. (Riwyāt 1, 45)

Setting clauses may also take the form of the ʿinna la-pattern. The same as in baynā/baynamā-clauses, yafʿalu and the participle function as verbal predicates. The distinction between setting clauses introduced by baynā/baynamā and those introduced by ʿinna is not a syntactic one: 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 ʿinna signal the presence and stance of an internally involved, ‘homodiegetic’ narrator, telling the story from his own first-hand experience.

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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 ʿinna. 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 yafʿalu (the imperfect) in the baynā/baynamā-clause is obtained due to its being dependent upon and concomitant with faʿala (the perfect) in the following superordinate clause. In ʿinna-clauses, by contrast, yafʿalu does not assume its past meaning relative to faʿala, 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: yafʿalu and the participle in both cases mark the same aspectual distinctions, while the temporal frame of reference is established by the eventive-narrative faʿala. Moreover, the general qualification of ʿinna as ‘emphatic’ can be further specified. To be sure, ʿinna 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, ʿinna (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 ʿinna 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 ʿidā: fa-ʿinna ʿabda l-ḥakami yawman la-fi l-masğidi l-ḥarāmi ʿidā fatan dāhilun (Riwyāt 1, 64)—‘One day while Abd al-Ḥakam was in the holy mosque, there came in a young man.'
(8.108) fa-wallāhi ʿinnī la-ʿamšī nahwa-hū [...] ʿīd ḥarağa nahwa bābi banī saḥ-min
By God, I was walking toward him [...] when suddenly he went out toward the gate of Banū Sahm. (Maḡāzī, 31)

(8.109) fa-wallāhi ʿinnī la-qāʿidun fīʾahl-īʾiḏnaẓartuʾilāẓaʿīnatin
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 ʾiḏā and exhibit the pattern [nominal-phrase + predicative form]. The predicative paradigm comprises the triad of yafʿalu, the participle, and qad faʿala. Interestingly, the participle in ʾiḏā-clauses—rather than taking the accusative case (as in verbal complexes)—assumes, as a rule, the nominative case:

(8.110) fa-qāla unẓurūmāhāḏāl-ʾaḏānu fa-ʾiḏā baššārun yuʾaḏḏinu 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 ʾiḏā 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 ʾiḏā-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 hāḏā in direct speech, in which the participle takes the accusative, e.g.: fa-qāla yā rasūla llāhi hāḏā ʿumaru bnul-ḫaṭṭāb mutawaššiḥan l-sayfa (Sīra 1, 227)—‘And he said: O Messenger of God, [out] there is ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb girding the sword’. This double manifestation of the participle is explained by Bloch, Presentative Structures, as a semantigrammatical 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 adverbs (e.g., temporal or locative), forms part of the predicative core of the clause, see above 8.2.
(8.111) *fa-ĝi’tu ʾilā ʿibrāhīma l-mawṣilīyyi fa-ʾidā l-bābu maftūḥun wa-l-dīhlīzu qad kunisa wa-l-bawwābu qaʾidun*  
I came to ʿIbrāhīm al-Mawṣili, and behold, the door was opened, the hall was already swept, and the door-keeper was sitting. (*Riwaʿyāt* 1, 28)

(8.112) *fa-fataḥa-hā la-hū fa-ʾidā fi-hā šūratu ʿādama wa-durriyyati-hī kulli-him fa-ʾidā kullu raǧūlin maktūburn ʿinda-hū raḡalu-hū wa-ʾidā ʿādamu qad kutība la-hū ʿumru ʿalfi 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. (*Taʾrīḫ* 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The predicative triad</th>
<th>Other verbal forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verbal complexes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yafʿalu</em></td>
<td><em>faʿala</em> (auxiliary, perception)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>fāʿilun/mafʿūlun</em></td>
<td><em>sa-yafʿalu</em> (perception)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>qad faʿala</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circumstantial clauses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>wa-huwa yafʿalu</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>wa-huwa fāʿilun/mafʿūlun</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>wa-qad faʿala</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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), fa’ala and yaf’alu do not function as a binary pair. As a predicative form, fa’ala is quite marginal vis-à-vis the dominant role played by yaf’alu and its counterparts, the participle and qad fa’ala. Secondly, despite their close syntactic muḍāra’a ‘resemblance’ (see above 2.3.2), yaf’alu and the participle are distinct at several semantic levels, as presented in table 8.3 below:

**Table 8.3  yaf’alu vs. the participle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>yaf’alu</th>
<th>Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical aspect</td>
<td>dynamic-progressive</td>
<td>static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal attribute</td>
<td>habit / goal</td>
<td>property / appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitivity</td>
<td>(mostly) transitive</td>
<td>intransitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical informativity</td>
<td>higher</td>
<td>lower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirdly, it is clear that qad fa’ala is not simply an extension of fa’ala, at both the syntactic and semantic levels: (a) qad fa’ala is far more frequent as a predicative, whereas fa’ala usually functions as the main verb; and (b) qad fa’ala indicates a temporally bounded situation, whereas fa’ala indicates a self-contained event. These distinctions are summarized in table 8.4 below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><em>qad faʿala</em></th>
<th><em>faʿala</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favored syntactic position</td>
<td>predicative</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical aspect</td>
<td>resultative</td>
<td>perfective-eventive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal reference</td>
<td>coincidental</td>
<td>self-contained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 9

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. 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.

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.

---

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 in 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) ṯumma qāla li-l-yahūdi ʾinna l-malika yurīdu ziyārata-kum fa-ʾaʿiddū nuzlan fa-ʾaʿaddū-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. (Riwaṭ 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. 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. 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. Literary dialogues, by contrast, serve primarily an expressive function: besides transmitting information, the dialogue contributes to the

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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.6

Dialogues, then, may vary to a great deal depending on the communicative situation is 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’.7

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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. 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 ʾinna.

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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tion marked by faʿala and yafʿalu, the first indicating past perfective meaning, the latter indicating non-past (or present-future) imperfective meaning:

\[(9.2)\]
\[
\text{wayla-kum qatalum ʿabā-hu bi-lʿamsi wa-ʾaqtulu-hū l-yawma}
\]
Woe unto you! You killed his father yesterday and am I to kill him today?! (Ṣira 1, 222)

There are two basic problems with such an analysis of the meanings of faʿala and yafʿalu. 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, ʾaqtulu-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:

\[(9.3)\]
\[
\text{qāla māḍā tasmaʿīna qālat ʿasmaʿu riḥālan yaqūlūna yā ʿala lʿawsi wa-
riḥālan yaqūlūna yā ʿala lḥazraṯī qāla lʿāna ḥamiya l-qitālu}
\]
He said: ‘What do you hear?’ She said: ‘I hear men saying “O people of ʿAws [come to battle]” and men saying “O people of Ḥazraṯ [come to battle].’” He said: ‘Now the battle is fierce.’ (Riwayāt 2, 47)

\[(9.4)\]
\[
\text{qālaburaydatu ʿarkabu lʿāna fa-ʾātī-kum bi-ǧamʿinkaṯīfinmin qawm-ī}
\]
Burayda said: ‘I will ride now and come [back] to you with a group of tough men from my people.’ (Mağāzī, 405)

In both examples the adverb lʿāna ‘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 faʿala 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 yafʿalu forms ʿarkabu and ʿāti 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 ʾinna are discussed and, thereafter, asseverations taking the form of the ʾinna 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 ʿafʿalu forms are more prone to occur in nominal clauses than ʿaʿala 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., ʿafʿalu, ʿaʿala, and ʿafʿalun, and those which impose such bounding, i.e., sawfa/sa-ʿafʿalu, qad ʿaʿala, and ʿafʿalun.

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 *yafʿalu*, with unbounded lexemes denoting activities or states, is normally interpreted as concurrent with the zero-time of the dialogue. In [9.5]–[9.7], *yafʿalu* occurs with cognitive verbs, indicating perception or mental states. Although the examples exhibit all three persons, with this type of verbs, *yafʿalu* 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) *ʾasmaʿu* riḡālan yaqūlūn yā ʾāla l-ʾawsī wa-riḡālan yaqūlūn yā ʾāla l-ḥazraḡī

I hear men saying ‘O people of Aws [come to battle]’ and men saying ‘O people of Ḥazraḡ [come to battle].’ (*Riwayneṭ*, 2, 47)

(9.6) *taʿlamu* wallāhimā ba-makkata min qurašīyyin wa-lā qurašīyyatin la-hū naššun fa-ṣāʿidan [...] ʾillā wa-qad baʾaṭa bi-hī maʾa-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. (*Magāzī*, 41)

(9.7) *al-ḥiwānu* ḥiwānu-hū fa-huwa yurīdu ʾan yudassima-hū

The table belongs to him and he wants to grease it. (*Buḥālā*, 45)

With verbs denoting a continuous or recurring activity, such as *ʿabada* ‘to worship’, *yafʿalu* also has a concurrent meaning:

(9.8) *fa-naḥnu* naʿbudu l-malāʾikata wa-l-yahūdu taʾbudu ʿuzayran

We worship the angels while the Jews worship ‘Uzayr. (*Ṣira* 1, 236)

With bounded lexemes, the verbal form *yafʿalu* is interpreted as having a posterior time reference relative to the zero-time of the dialogue. However, futurity expressed by *yafʿalu* appears to involve in most cases a modal nuance, especially in the first and second persons:

(9.9) *qālā* naḥruḡu fa-nuqātilu-hū fa-bakā wa-qāla lā tahruḡā fa-wallāhi ʾinna-hū la-nabiyyun
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] nahruğu 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. Motion and action verbs such as represented by nahruğu 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-hāḏā l-baladu mawlidu-hū wa-mab’atū-hū ūthma yuḥriṯu-hū qaw- mu-hū min-hā wa-yakrahūna mā ġā’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’rīḥ 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’. 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’. 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)  \[yā sayyid-i l-sāʿata wallāhi taḥruġu rūḥ-i\]
My lord, now, by God, my spirit flies away. (Riwāyāt 1, 249)

(9.12)  \[fa-qāla yā rasūla llāhi kayfa yaʾtī-ka l-wahyu fa-qāla rasūlu llāhi ʾaḥyā-nan yaʾtī-nī miṭla ṣalṣalati l-ḥarasi\]
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)  \[wayla-ka tuharribu-nī ka-ʾannī maṭālibun\]
Woe to you! you force me to flee as if I were a wanted man. (Buḥalā’, 69)

(9.14)  \[ṯumma ʾaʾala yaʾmalu safīnatan fa-yamurrūna fa-yasʾalūna-hū fa-yaqūlu ʾaʾmalu-hā safīnatan fa-yasharūna min-hu wa-yaqūlūna taʾmalu safīnatan fi l-barri fa-kayfa taǧrī\]
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?!’ (Taʾrīḥ 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 *yaʃalu* forms may assume a concurrent reading is with speech verbs, specifically with *qāla* ‘to say’. The saying reported by *yaʃulu* 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 yaʃulu la-ka ‘amīru l-muʾminīna ʿaġgilʿilhayya*

He said to me: ‘The Commander of the Faithful tells you: “Hurry up [and come] to me.”’ (Rīwāyāt 1, 65)

To recapitulate the hitherto discussion of the meaning of *yaʃalu* in the dialogue: with unbounded, static and dynamic lexemes, *yaʃalu* refers to a concurrent ongoing situation; with bounded lexemes, *yaʃalu* 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 *yaʃalu* can be preceded by the modifiers *la-*, *qad*, and *sawfa/sa-* (see above 5.2.2). The form *la-yaʃalu* will be discussed below in section 9.2.3. The modified *qad yaʃalu* is scarcely found in dialogue clauses; it is usually used in generic clauses (see below 11.3). In the dialogue, *qad yaʃalu* is attested with the verbs *raʾā* ‘to see’ and *ʿarafa* ‘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 *yaʃalu*:

(9.16) *qumʿilay-hi fa-qad ʿarā llāha ʿatā-ka bi-mā yuḥzī-ka*

Get up [and go] to him, for I see that God brought you something that will humiliate you. (Rīwāyāt 1, 247)
The modified form *sa-yafʿalu*, and to a lesser extent, *sawfa yafʿalu*, are more frequently attested in the dialogue. *sawfa/sa-yafʿalu* 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 *yafʿalu* (see [6] above) and the posterior *sawfa/sa-yafʿalu*, as illustrated below:

(9.17) ʿumma ǧaʿala yaʿmalu safīnatan fa-yamurrūna fa-yasʿalūna-hū fa-yaqūlu ʿaʾmalu-hā safīnatan ǧiʾtu-ka li-ʾūminabi-lāhi bi-hī wa-bi-mā ʿamantu bi-hī
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.’ (Ṭaʾrīḥ 1, 186)

The verbal form *faʿala* refers either to anterior occurrences, with dynamic lexemes, or to persistent situations, with stative lexemes:

(9.18) fa-qāla ʿumaru yā rasūla llāhi ġiʾtu-ka li-ʾūminabi-lāhi wa-bi-rasūli-hī wa-bi-mā ʿāmantu bi-hī
‘Umar said: ‘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-raḡulu āmantu bi-mā ġiʾta bi-hī
The man said: ‘I believe in what you have brought.’ (Ṣaḥīḥ, 26)

The persistent meaning of static *faʿala* forms is explained by the fact that *faʿala*, by contrast to *qad faʿala*, 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 *faʿala* exists only in the dialogue. In the narrative, the chain structure imposes a perfective-eventive reading of *faʿala*, regardless of the type of the verbal lexeme (see below 10.2.1).

Interestingly, there is a small group of stative lexemes with which *faʿala* is not used to indicate persistence but rather concurrence. Two such lexemes are *ṣadaqa* ‘to tell the truth’ and *kaḏaba* ‘to tell lies’. When directed to the addressee, *ṣadaqa* and *kaḏaba* do not report on anterior events, but judge one’s words as either true or false. To some extent, *ṣadaqa* and *kaḏaba* 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 kaḏaba may explain their concurrent reading:

\[(9.20) \text{ṣadaqtumā wa-kaḏaba man qāla ḡayra ḍālika}\
\[\text{You are both right and anyone who says otherwise lies. (Sīra 1, 248)}\]

Other stative lexemes which indicate concurrence with faʿala are šāʾa ‘to want’ and āḥabba ‘to like’, when referring to a current desire of the speaker:

\[(9.21) \text{wa-qad kabirat sinn-i wa-raqqa ʿazm-i wa-āḥbabtu liqāʾa rabb-i}\
\[\text{[...] I have grown old, my bones have become tender, and I desire to meet my Lord. (Maḡāzī, 213)}\]

In cases such as [9.21], the speaker uses faʿala in order to mark politeness and humbleness. Such examples are particularly challenging to the common temporal-aspectual analysis of faʿala, since it is not the past-perfective meaning of faʿala, but its association with remoteness and indirectness, which makes this form suitable for polite requests.

In contrast to faʿala, the verbal form qad faʿala, with both static and dynamic lexemes, marks a bounded situation. With stative lexemes, qad faʿala indicates the completion of the transition from one state to another (e.g., ‘not knowing’ → ‘knowing’):

\[(9.22) \text{qadʿarftu maqālata-ka fa-rāğiʿ aqla-ka wa-ʿlam ʿanna li-kulli ʿinsānin}\
\[\text{manzilatan wa-qadran}\
\[\text{I already know your position, but, reconsider the matter! Know that every man has an [assigned] status and rank! (Kalīla wa-Dimna, 66)}\]

Resultativity, while very characteristic of qad faʿala, is not the only meaning expressed by this form. In the sphere of the dialogue, qad faʿala 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 faʿala.\(^\text{12}\) 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-, 85ff., 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 faʿala* 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 faʿala* surface:

(9.23) *lā tantaẓirū-nī bi-l-ʾakli fa-qadʾakaltu*  
Don’t wait for me with the food, for I have already eaten. (*Riwāyāt* 1, 40)

In [9.23] it is clear that *qadʾakaltu* ‘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 ʾa-hāḍā šiʾru-ka llaḍiʾ anšadta-hū l-farazdaq qultu naʿam fa-qāla qad wallāhi ʾaṣabta wallāhi la-ʾin kāna hāḍā l-farzadaqu šāʾiran 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 ʾaṣabta* ‘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 faʿala* in the dialogue vis-à-vis the narrative. First of all, *qad faʿala* 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 faʿala* is mostly used to present the background or offer an explanation to a certain position, the same as argumentative *ʾinna*-clauses. This causal meaning of *qad faʿala* 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 ʾahlaka*, is mentioned twice, first in the dialogue and then in the narrative:

\[
\text{that } qad faʿala \text{ is generally incompatible with negation may be taken as evidence for the proposal that its core meaning is assertorial.}
\]
In the dialogue, *qad ʾahlaka* clearly serves to explain the request expressed by the imperative *abširū*. In the narrative, *qad ʾahlaka* 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 faʿala* suggests itself more strongly.

The active participle *fāʿilun*, in the dialogue as elsewhere (see above 7.2), does not impose a certain bounding of the verbal situation. In contrast, the passive participle *mafʿūlun* depicts a terminally bounded situation. With unbounded lexemes, *fāʿilun* refers to a situation concurrent with the zero-time of the dialogue. As opposed to *yafʿalu*, *fāʿilun* does not indicate an ongoing or recurring situation, but a static one:

(9.26) *qad samʿtunn sūʾi raddī-hī ʿalay-kunna wa-ʿanā ḥāʾifun 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, *fāʿilun* is interpreted as having a posterior time reference relative to the zero-time of the dialogue. In many of these cases, *fāʿilun* serves to express an immediate future. In contrast to *yafʿalu*, which states the speaker’s intention to take action (and, hence, predicts the occurrence of that action), *fāʿilun* 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 ʿutbatu là šaʾyaʾ anā ḥāriḡun*

‘Utba said: ‘Nothing. I am leaving!’ (*Maḡāzī*, 38)

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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 \textit{yafʿalu} and \textit{fāʿilun} 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) \textit{yā rasūla llāhi l-qawmu maḏʿūrūna faziʿūna}

O Messenger of God, the people are scared and frightened. (\textit{Maǧāzī}, 54)

Table 9.1 below summarizes the discussion of the functions of the verbal forms in declarative clauses:

<table>
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<th>Table 9.1 The verbal forms in declarative clauses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal lexeme</strong></td>
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<td>\textit{sa(wfā)-yafʿalu}</td>
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<td>\textit{qad faʿala}</td>
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9.2.2 Argumentative ʾinna-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’.14 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 ʾinna-clauses. The operator ʾinna is used for a number of functions.15 One of its major roles is to introduce what may be described as ‘expository’ clauses, i.e., clauses which outline a certain position. Expository ʾinna-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 ʾinna-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 ʾinna-clauses consist of yafʿalu, faʿala, qad faʿala, and the participle. As far as their temporal, aspeectual, and modal meanings are concerned, these forms exhibit the same distinctions as the ones observed in plain declaratives, as illustrated below:

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14 Schiffrin, Discourse Markers, 18.
15 The syntactic distribution and discourse functions of ʾinna were thoroughly studied in Marmorstein, ʾInna-Sentences.
(9.29) ‘ʾinna-nī ʾasmuru ʾl-laylata maʿa ʾamīrī ʾl-muʿminīna fa-hal tuḥsinu ʾan taḥduwa
I will spend the night chatting with the Commander of the Faithful—are you good in singing the songs which urge the camels? (Riwaṭā 1, 25)

(9.30) ‘ʾinna raḡulan min ʾaṣḥābi-ka qatała raḡulayni min qawm-i wa-la-humā min-ka ʾamānun wa-ʾahdun fa-bʿaṭ bi-diyati-hīmā ʾilay-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) ‘ʾinnī qadǧiʿtu bi-ʿirsāli-ka fa-māʾinda-ka
I have come with your release, what do you have at your [disposal]? (Riwaṭā 2, 190)

(9.32) yā maʿšara l-ʿuṣāti ʾinnī muǧirun fa-ʾaftirū
O people of disobedience, I am breaking my fast, so break your fast! (Maḡāzī, 47)

Argumentative ʾinna-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 ʾinna-clause follows a (direct or indirect) command, request or question. The position which explicative ʾinna-clauses serve to support is often not explicitly stated, but implicit in the content of the ʾinna-clause itself. The explicative ʾinna thus encodes both sides of the argument (i.e., the position and the reaction to this position), thereby encapsulating its dialogic nature.16

Explicative ʾinna-clauses feature the verbal forms yafʿalu, faʿala, qad faʿala, and the participle, and to a smaller extent, sa-yafʿalu, as illustrated in the following set of examples:

(9.33) iḥmū la-nā ẓuhūra-nā fa-ʾinnā naḥāfu ʿan nuʿtā min warāʾi-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 ʾinna, 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 fi ‘amri-hī bi-yamīnīn ḡamūsin

I am your servant, O Commander of the Faithful; ask whatever you want but Baššār, for I took the ḡamūs-oath in his case. (Riwaḥāt 1, 258)

(9.35) fa-tanakhā nāhiyatan wa-l-samā’u tumtīruri ’alay-hi yaqūlu ‘utbatu ‘inna hādā huwa la-nakdun wa-‘inna-hum qad ʾaḥadī 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) inṭaliq bi-nā ‘ilā ‘adnā mā‘i l-qawmī fa-‘innī ʾālimun bi-hā wa-bi-qulubi-hā

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 samī’ta fa-‘innī sa-ʾuḥadditu-hū bi-mitlī ḥadīti-ka

Tell the king the truth about what you have heard, for I will give him the same account as yours. (Riwaḥāt 2, 193)

It is important to note that the explicative meaning may be imparted by other syntactic means, such as the connective fa-. The verbal form, too, specifically qad fa’ala which carries a causal meaning, is sufficient in marking the explicative relation. However, unlike the other exponents, ʾinna is the only grammatical device which indicates explicitly (unambiguously) the explicative relation.

9.2.3 Asseverative ʾinna la-clauses

Besides its argumentative function, the operator ʾinna also has an expressive function. The fact that ʾinna 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 ʾinna; however, some clarifications as to the distribution and use of the emphatic ʾinna are deemed necessary.

It should first be stated that ʾinna 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 ʾinna 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.\(^{17}\) 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’.\(^{18}\) 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’.\(^{19}\) 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 *yafʿalu* and the participle, to which the modifier *la-* is prefixed. Not only with unbounded, but also with bounded lexemes, *yafʿalu* 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 ʾanta qāla balā Waltawrātī *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 ḫadīǧatu kallā wallāhi mā yuḥzī-ka llāhu ʾabadan *innā-ka la-taṣīlu l-raḥīma wa-taḥmilu l-kalla wa-tuksibu l-maʿdūma wa-taqrī l-ḍayfa wa-tuʿīnu ʾalā nawāʾibi l-ḥaqqi*

Ḥadīǧa said: ‘Never, by God, God will never disgrace you! You bestow upon the relatives, carry the burden, grant the poor with help, receive

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\(^{17}\) 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 'inna 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 'inna 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 balağa-nā ʾillā anna nabiyya-nā yuṣallī ʾilā l-šāmi wa-mā nurūduʾan nuḥālîfa-hû qāla fa-qāla ʾinnī la-muṣallin ʾilay-hâ
By God, we are only informed that our Prophet praystowardsal-Šām, and we do not want to contradict him. (he said) He said: ‘I am surely praying towards it (i.e. the Ka’ba).’ (Sīra 1, 294)

The strong ties between asseveration, as marked by the 'inna 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.20 The grammarians allowing for a future reading of la-yafʿalu adduce the following verse from the Qurʾān: wa-ʾinna rabbu-ka la-yaḥkumubayna-humyawmal-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 'inna 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).21

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, ‘inna 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 \( \text{fa'ala} \) and its negation \( \text{lam yaf'alu} \), and between \( \text{la-qad fa'ala} \) and its negation \( \text{mā fa'ala} \). With \( \text{yaf'alu} \), the correspondence goes as follows: \( \text{mā yaf'alu} \) negates the present \( \text{yaf'alu} \), whereas \( \text{lā yaf'alu} \) negates both the future \( \text{yaf'alu} \) and the energetic \( \text{la-yaf'alanna} \). 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 \( \text{mā} \) and the verbal forms \( \text{fa'ala} \) and \( \text{yaf'alu} \), respectively. The connection between emphasis and reference to present time was lucidly explained by Wehr. The negative particle \( \text{mā} \), 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 \( \text{mā} \) 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.

The grammarians account of the verbal negation and Wehr's insightful description of \( \text{mā} \) 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 \( \text{yaf'alu} \), when negated by \( \text{lā} \), may be interpreted as either concurrent or posterior. The time reference of \( \text{lā yaf'alu} \) 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, \( \text{lā yaf'alu} \) is normally interpreted as concurrent:

\[\text{22 Sibawayhi, Kitāb, 1, 408–409.}\]
\[\text{23 Wehr, Arabischer Negationen.}\]
\[\text{24 Ibid., 31.}\]
Contexts which include an explicit reference to future time induce a posterior reading of lā yafʿalu, also with unbounded lexemes. The negated lā yafʿalu, the same as yafʿalu, 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-ʾinnā wallāhi lā nuʿminu bi-l-raḥmāniʾa ʿabādān
And, by God, we will never believe in al-Raḥmān! (Sīra 1, 189)

As amply demonstrated by Wehr, the negative marker mā is used for expressive or ‘affective’ negation. Indeed, mā yafʿalu is very common in oaths and other asseverative contexts, where reference to a future event is often intended:

(9.44) fa-wallāhi mā yadḫulu ʿalay-kaʾaḥadun
By God, no one is to enter upon you. (Sīra 1, 249)

The negated mā yafʿalu 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-māʾ uḥbibbu ʿan taʾlama qurayšun māʾ aqūlu l-ʿāna
I don’t want Qurayš to learn what I say now. (Maḡāzī, 36)

I adduce one example for the negation of yafʿalu with laysa, which in Classical Arabic prose, as opposed to Qurʾānic Arabic, is not uncommon.25 From a structural (and perhaps also historical) point of view, the compatibility of

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25 Concluding his discussion of laysa in the Qurʾān and in Sibawayhi’s Kitāb, Sakaedani, Laysa, 170–171, says that since laysa yafʿalu is not attested in the Qurʾān, 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) kayfā ra‘ayta bna ǧāmi‘in yā bunay-ya qultu la-hū ‘a-wa-tu’fī-nī ġu’īltu fidā-ka fa-qāla lastu ‘u’fī-ka fa-qul (Riwāyāt 1, 3)
My little son, what is your opinion about Ibn ġāmi‘? 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 lāfa‘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-ʾin ṭalaba-nī l-ḥalifatu
I said: ‘By God, I shall not do that even if the Caliph asks me to.’ (Riwāyāt 1, 3)

The negated form māfa‘ala, the same as māyaf‘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) ʾinna-hū wallāti walʾuzzā mā nazala bi-kum ʿaẓamu min ǧālika
By al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā, surely nothing greater than that has come down to you! (Maġāzī, 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)

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 tahḏiba-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. (Riwa‘āt 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 ġayra (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) fa-qāla iqra‘ fa-qultu mā ‘anā bi-qāri‘īn
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 ‘aǧartu l-ǧamala wa-lastu ġādiran bi-hī
I have protected the camel and I am not about to betray him. (Kalīla wa-Dimna, 103)
The verbal form *qad faʿala* 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 faʿala* 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). 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-

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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 *yaʿalū* is used; in the second, *faʿala* and *qad faʿala* 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, *yaʿalū*-performatives are lexeme-specific and occur only with declaration verbs:

(9.54) *yā kašadu hal raʿayta ʿaḥadan min ʿuyūni muḥammadin fa-yaqūlu ʿaʿūdu bi-llāhi wa-ʿannā ʿuyūnu 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’? (*Maˀṣāzī*, 20)

(9.55) *ʿudakkiru-kum-u llāha wa-dīna-kum wa-nabiyya-kum*

I [hereby] remind you of God, your religion, and your Prophet. (*Maˀṣāzī*, 219)

(9.56) *ʾaḥlifu bi-llāhi la-qad ġāa-kum ʿusaydun bi-ġayri l-waḏhi llaḏī ḏahaba bi-hī min ʿinda-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, *faʿala/qad faʿala*-performatives occur with all types of lexemes, though rarely with declaration verbs. 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-muhāḏirīn wa-yaḵūnūna fi dūrī-nā kamā kānū wa-nadat-i l-ʿanšāru raḏīnā wa-sallamnā yā rasūla llāhi*

O Messenger of God, you may rather apportion it to the Muḥāḏirūn and they will stay at our homes as they used to. The ʿAnṣār then called out: ‘We are satisfied and approve [it], O Messenger of God.’ (*Maˀṣāzī*, 379)

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27 Grammars do quote a few examples of declaration verbs realized in the *faʿala* form, e.g.: *ʾanšadtu-ka llāha ‘I conjure you by God’* (*Wright, Grammar*, 2, 1). Such examples, however, are seldom found in Classical Arabic prose.
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 aspektual 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 \(ra'dinâ\) and \(sallamnâ\) 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 aspektual 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
(9.60) & \quad \text{mal'ûnatun-i l'-ar'du llatî hulîqta min-hâ la'natan hattâ tata'hawwala \allowbreak \text{timâru-hâ \allowbreak šawkan}} \\
& \quad \text{Cursed is the earth from which you were created in such a curse that its fruits will turn into thorns. (Ta'rîh 1, 106)}
\end{align*}
\]

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 \(ârûrâ hâvâdâmâ hâ'âbûrekâ\)). In any event, \(mal'ûnatun\) 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal form</th>
<th>Type of performative</th>
<th>Temporal-aspectual value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yafʿalu</td>
<td>declarative-performative</td>
<td>concurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faʿala</td>
<td>transaction-performative</td>
<td>persistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qad faʿala</td>
<td>transaction-performative</td>
<td>resultativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mafʿūlun</td>
<td>blessings and curses</td>
<td>resultativity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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 *faʿala* form, followed by the explicit mention of *allāh* or *rabb* ‘God’: [*faʿala*-object pron. *llāh/rabb*]. In the passive voice, the reference to *allāh* or *rabb* is implicit:

(9.61) *fa-mā ḥāḡatu l-ʾamīriʾi ilay-yay qaʿala-nī llāhu fidā-hu*  
What need is there in me for the ‘Amīr? May God make me his ransom!  
*(Rīwāyāt 1, 246)*

(9.62) *ḡuʿiltu fidā-kaʾibil-iwaʾamānati*  
May I be made your ransom, [what about] my camels and trusted goods?  
*(Rīwāyāt 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 *faʿala* (as well as the conditional *faʿala* which is not dealt with in the present work). Any attempt to derive the optative meaning of *faʿala* from its ‘basic’ past-perfective meaning is bound to result in circular reasoning.28 We might get

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28 Wright, *Grammar*, 2, 2ff., argues that *faʿala*—when occurring in promises, oaths, cond-
closer to understand the optative meaning of faʿala 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 faʿala. This use of faʿala was explained too by the indirectness or remoteness associated with faʿala (see [9.21] above). Yet, in what may look as quite the opposite circumstances, the optative faʿala is not only used to signal politeness in the face of nobility, but also as means to show friendliness and generosity:

(9.63) fa-qālaʾa-lāʾ uḥaddītu-kum bi-mā samītu min rasūlī llāhi [...] fa-qulnā balā rahima-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!’ (Taʾrīḥ 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 rahima-ka llāhu to show rapport. That rahima-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 nafāḥa fi-hi l-rūḥa fa-dāḥala l-rūḥu fi raʾsi-hi ʿaṭasa fa-qālat-i l-malāʾikatu qul-i l-ḥamdu li-l-lāhī fa-qāla l-ḥamdu li-l-lāhī 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!’ (Taʾrīḥ 1, 92)
I suggest, then, that the use of *faʿala* 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. 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:

(9.65) *fa-ḥarağa Ḱay-ya ʿabū ḡahlin fa-qāla marḥaban wa-ḥaḥlan yā bna ʿuḥt-ī mā ḡāʾa bi-ka qāla ḡiʾtu ʿuḥbiru-ka ḡannī qad ṣamantu bi-للāḥi wa-bi- rasūlī-ḥī muḥammatīn wa-ṣaddaqqū bi-mā ḡāʾa bi-hī qāla fa-ṣarraba l-bāba fi waḡh-ī wa-qāla qabbaḥa-ka llāhu wa-qabbaḥa mā ḡiʾta bi-hī*  
Then ʿAbū ḡahl 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!’ (Ṣīra 1, 230)

So far we have seen optative clauses in which *faʿala* was employed. However, few examples feature the verbal form *yafʿalu*. Unlike *faʿala*, the use of *yafʿalu* 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 *yafʿalu* forms are singled out by the clausal pattern in which they are realized [*yafʿalu*-object pron. llāḥ/rabb]:

(9.66) *ḫalaqa llāhu ʿadamī bi-yādī-ḥī wa-nafakhā fi-hī min rūḥī-ḥī wa-ʿamara l-malāʾikata fa-saḡadū la-ḥū fa-ḡalaṣa fa-ʾatasa fa-qāla l-hamdu li-للāhi fa-qāla la-ḥū 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!’ (Taʿriḥ 1, 156)

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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.
9.5 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’. 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:

\[ qāla \, 'a-fa-lā \, 'adullu-ka \, 'alā ḥayrin \, min dālika qāla \, qultu \, wa-mā huwa \]
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:

\[ yā \, 'ahla \, makkata \, 'a-na'kulū \, l-ṭa'āma \, wa-nalbasu \, l-tiyāba \, wa-banū ḥāshi-\, min \, halkā \, lā \, yubā'ūna \, wa-lā \, yubtā'u \, min-hum \]
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)

\[ 'a-yazunnu \, muḥammadun \, 'an \, yuṣība \, min-nā \, mā \, 'aṣāba \, bi-nahlata \, wa-\, 'aṣḥābu-\, hū \]
Does Muḥammad think that he can get from us what he and his companions got in Nahla? (Mağāzī, 39)

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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.32 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’.33 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 yaf’alu in ʾa-interrogatives typically indicates concurrence:

(9.71)  yāʾabā ḥālidin ʾa-taḥāfuʾ an yubayyita-nā l-qawmu
               O Ḥālid, do you fear that the people will attack us at night?  
          (Maġāzī, 52)

32 Lyons, Semantics, 2, 755.
33 Hansen, Syntax in Interaction, 467.
With bounded lexemes, *yafʿalu* 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) *ʿa-takfū-nī l-ʿaraba*

Will you [be able to] protect me from the Arabs? (*Riwaʿyāt* 2, 184)

Put in doubt, externalized observations, with both unbounded and bounded lexemes, yield a concurrent reading of *yafʿalu*:

(9.73) *ʿa-tadḥabu bi-l-ṭaʿāmi ʿilā banī hāšimim*

Are you taking the food to Banū Hāšim? (*Sīra* 1, 232)

Interrogative clauses in which the verbal form *faʿala* is used present the same opposition as in declarative clauses: with stative lexemes, *faʿala* indicates persistence; with dynamic lexemes, *faʿala* 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) *ʿa-ʿalimta ʿanna ḥubza l-baladī yanbutu ʿalay-hi šayʿun šabīhun bi-l-ṭīni*

Did you know that upon the local bread there grows something like soil? (*Buḥalāʾ*, 89)

(9.75) *ʿa-rabbu-ka ʿaḥbara-ka bi-hāḍá*

Did your Lord tell you about that? (*Sīra* 1, 249)

In my corpus, I have encountered almost no examples of the verbal form *qad faʿala* in interrogative clauses. The only example I did find was not introduced by *ʿa*- but initiated by the connective *wa*-.

34 The fact that *qad faʿala* 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 faʿala* is employed in interrogatives suggests

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34 In Classical Arabic, there is nothing unusual in the introduction of a new stretch of speech through the connective *wa*-.*wa*- in this case does not simply connect one clause to the previous one. Rather, is 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-hūḥu ba‘du*

The plums have come in already? (*Buḥalā‘*, 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-‘aṣlaḥtu ‘a-rāġi‘-i ‘anta ‘ilā l-ġannati*

If I repent and improve, you might let me return to Paradise? (*Ta‘rīḥ* 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.35

In interrogative clauses *ya‘falu* 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 tarḍā yā ‘abda llāhi ‘an yu‘ṭiya-ka llāhu bi-hā dārān ḥayran min-hā fi l-ġannati*

O ‘Abdallāh, are you not pleased that God will give you for it a better house in Heaven? (*Sīra* 1, 339)

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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’. 
Negative interrogatives also exhibit the negated forms lam yafʿal and mā faʿala. With stative lexemes, these refer to persistent situations, with dynamic lexemes, to anterior ones:

\[(9.81) \quad ʾa-lam taʿlam ʾannī ʾammantu l-ǧamala wa-ǧaʿaltu la-hū ǧimmatan \]

Didn’t you know that I reassured the camel and provided him protection? (Kalīla wa-Dīmna, 103)

\[(9.82) \quad subḥāna llāhi ʾa-mā rahinta-nī mimmā ṣanaʿa bī \]

God forbid, had you no pity on me in what you did to me? (Buḫalā’, 166)

It was noted above that the corpus featured only one example in which qad faʿala was used in a positive interrogative. In negative interrogatives, on the other hand, qad faʿala 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:

\[(9.83) \quad ʾa-wa-laysa qad māta ʾamīru l-muʿminīna \]

Hasn’t the Commander of the Faithful died yet? (Rīwāyāt 2, 29)

The death of the Caliph is not truly questioned by ʾa-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.
CHAPTER 10

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’,¹ and that narration means ‘someone telling someone else that something happened’.² 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’,³ 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’.⁴ 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

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 wayyiqṭol in Biblical Hebrew), or in the postulation of a basic ‘narrative function’ of a verbal form, such as foreground or background. 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’. 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’). 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 aspeclual 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’.9

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.10 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.11

Classical Arabic does not have verbal forms dedicated for narration. It does not have a clear signpost of narrativity such as wayyiqtol 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’.12 Considering both their syntactic structure and textual function, we can identify three main types of narrative constructions or strategies: (a) the faʿala-initiated chain, which mainly serves a referential or reportative

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9 Hamburger, Logic, 81.
10 Fleischman, Tense and Narrativity, 118.
11 Ibid., 53ff.
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 *Taʾrīḥ*). 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. Rather, the difference between both types of narratives resides in the proportions of their referential and evaluative components: the historical *‘aḥbār* tend to be very informative and eventive, while the anecdotes collected in *Kitāb al-ʾAġānī* or which are told by al-Ǧāḥiẓ are often less eventive and more expositive 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. 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. 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.

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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 *‘aḥbār* and the narrative techniques through which they are shaped, see Leder and Kilpatrick, *Classical Arabic Prose*, 10ff.

15 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 228 and 243ff., 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, formulized as fa’ala CONN-fa’ala.\(^{16}\) The connective particles are: wa- ‘and’, fa- ‘and then’, tumma ‘thereafter’ and ḥattā ‘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, ḥattā 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:

\[(10.1)\quad \text{fa-rağa‘ū ‘alā ḥāmiyatihim ḥattā qadimū l-madīnata fa-nazalū-hā [...] fa-ntašarū fi nawāḥī l-madīnati kullī-hā ʿīlā l-ʿāliyati fa-ttaḥaḍī bi-hā l-ʿāṭama wa-l-ʿamwāla wa-l-mazārīʾa wa-labiṭū bi-l-madīnati zamānan ṭawīlan tumma żaharatī l-rūmu ‘alā baniʾisrāʾla ḏamīʾan bi-l-šāmi fa-waṭiʾī-hum wa-qatalū-hum}\]

\(^{16}\) 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-ʿĀliya (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 faʿala form. The events range from purely static and intransitive situations, such as labiṭū ‘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 faʿala 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 ẓaharat serves, in fact, as an abstract for the following waṭiʾū-hum and qatalū-hum, the same way as the verb labiṭū serves as a coda for the preceding intašarū and ittaḥadū.

The quoted passage reports on the settling of the Jews in Yaṯrib, 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) ẓumma ndafaʾtu fa-ṭannaytu l-şawta fa-waṭatabat-i l-ğāriyyatu fa-qālat li-mawla-hā hāḍā wallāhi ābū ʿutmān bnu misḡaḥin fa-qultu ‘i wallāhi ʿanā huwa wallāhi lā ʾuqīmu ʿinda-ka
Then I burst and sang the song and the maid jumped and said to her master: ‘By God, this is ʿUṯmān b. Miṣḡaḥ.’ 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.\(^{17}\) 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/ fa’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).\(^{18}\) 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 fa’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:

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\(^{17}\) 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*. 
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 *fa’ala* conn-*fa’ala* 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 *fa’ala* conn-*fa’ala* 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 *fa’ala* 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 *yaf’alu*:

(10.5) *lammā ṣā‘ajma’a ṣabū salamata ʾl-ḥurūğa ʾilā l-madinati raḥala li ba’ira-hū ṭumma ḥamala-nī ʾalay-hi wa-ḥamala ma‘ī bn-ī salamata bna ‘abī*
When ʾAbū 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. ʾAbī 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. (ṣīra 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 faʿala fa-yafʿalu Pattern

So far, two forms of narrative chaining have been discussed: the unmarked faʿala conn-faʿala pattern, and the verbal complex pattern, marking an internally focalized chain of events. A third pattern, far less attested, consists of the sequence faʿala fa-yafʿalu. In contrast to the faʿala conn-faʿala pattern, faʿala fa-yafʿalu does not exhibit a symmetrical configuration, where each link has the same syntactic status. Unlike the asyndetic yafʿalu in the verbal complex, fa-yafʿalu is not embedded but connected to the previous faʿala. We may say, thus, that fa-yafʿalu holds an intermediate position between the two other patterns: fa-yafʿalu is dependent on the previous faʿala, 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-yafʿalu with respect to its two other competitors, fa-faʿala and θ-yafʿalu. Comparing the following set of examples:

(10.6) tumma nṣarafū fa-waḡadū qurayšan bi-baṭnī rābigin
Then they turned and found Qurayš in Baṭnī Rābig. (Maḡāzi, 205)

(10.7) fa-ʾaqbalū nḥwa-humā yastamiʿūna
And they came toward them to listen closely [to their talk]. (Riwâyāt 1, 253)
They proceeded towards al-Ẓurayb and found at that well, which the Messenger of God mentioned, the watering camels of Qurayš [and] in it their water carriers. (Maġāzī, 51)

We observe that the pattern *faʿala fa-yafʿalu* indicates something different than mere sequence. While *nṣara fa-waʿad* in [10.6] indicates an ‘event-by-event’ progression and *fa-ʾaqbal yastamiʿa* in [10.7] indicates a compressed dynamic progression, *fa-nafaʿa* 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Syntactic status</th>
<th>Semantic relation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>faʿala fa-faʿala</em></td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>chronological sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>faʿala fa-yafʿalu</em></td>
<td>dependent, not embedded</td>
<td>logical sequel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>faʿala yafʿalu</em></td>
<td>embedding</td>
<td>event integration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although of marginal use, the pattern *faʿala fa-yafʿalu* 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’.¹⁹ 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 *wayyiqtol* in Biblical Hebrew is ‘the most usual method in which a series of events is narrated’.²⁰ As demonstrated by Niccacci, *wayyiqtol* can be used in both initial and medial positions, and it is not marked particularly for the meanings of consequence or result.²¹ Moreover, the formal resemblance between *fa-yafʿalu* and *wayyiqtol*

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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 qaṭal to express background information.

Another way to understand the sequence fa’ala fa-yaf’alu was proposed by Nebes. 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 reminder 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-yaĝidu, follows a motion verb is relatively common. Example [10.9] is another such case.

22 Nebes, Kāna Yaf’alu, 198–199.
This example is extracted from a story about the Prophet asking his ʾaṣḥāb, 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-yaǧidūna then fa-waǧadū. The first ‘finding’ of the ʾaṣḥāb 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-yaǧidūna rasūla llāhi bi-ḥaybara fa-šaḥašū ʾilay-hi fa-waǧadū-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 faʿalafa-yafʿalu then the narrative continues in the normal sequence of faʿala forms:

(10.10) fa-ʾaḫaḏal-liwāʾabi-l-yusrā fa-ʾaḥmilu ʿalāyadi-hī fa-ḍarabtu-hā fa-qatātu-hā

He took the flag in his left hand, so I attacked his left hand and struck it and cut it. (Maġāzī, 227)

(10.11) fa-qultu staʾsirā fa-ʾabayā fa-ʾarmī ʾaḥada-humā bi-sahmin fa-ʾaqṭulu-hū wa-staʾsaral-ʾāḫaru

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:
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)

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. (Rīwāyāt 1, 51)

When he brought in the donkey and its front part was inside, ʾIblīs—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]. (Taʾrīḥ 1, 190)

In the last two examples the introduction of speech was made by a verbal complex: ǧaʿalūyaṣīḥūna, ǧaʿala yaqūlu. It is often the case that ǧaʿala yafʿalu initiates a chain followed by the sequential fa-yafʿalu. 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:

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-yafʿalu 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.' (Taʾrīḥ 1, 186)

(10.16) fa-ḡ’a’ala yas’alu ʾabā-hu mā ḥādā fa-yuḥbiru-hū ʿan-i l-baʿīrī ʿanna-hū baʿīrun wa-ʾan-i l-baqarati ʿanna-hā baqaratun wa-ʾan-i l-farasi ʿanna-hū farasun wa-ʾan-i l-šāti ʿanna-hā šātun

And he started to ask his father what this is, 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. (Taʾrīḥ 1, 258)

The chains in [10.15] and [10.16] may appear as an extension of the verbal complex, viz.: ḡ’a’ala yas’alu ... fa-yuḥbiru-hū. The complex ḡ’a’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 ḡ’a’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-ḡannaytu-hū ʾīyyā-hu wa-mā zāla yaqtariḥu ʿalay-ya kulla ṣawtin ḡunniya bi-hī fī šiʿrī-hī fa-ʾuḡannī-hi wa-yašrabu wa-yabkī hattā šārat-i l-ʿatamatu

I sang 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. (Riwyāt 1, 4)

(10.18) wa-ḡ’a’alat tuḡannī l-ṣawta ba’da l-ṣawti wa-ʾuḡannī ʾanā fī ḥilāli ǧināʾi-hā

She started to sing one song after the other and I [too] was singing during her singing. (Riwyāt 1, 249)

In [10.17] the chain is initiated by the modifying verb mā zāla 'to continue'; fa-ʾuḡannī-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-ʾuḡannī-hi is continued by wa-yašrabu wa-yabkī which clearly do not indicate this kind of logical relation. In contrast to that, wa-ʾuḡannī in [10.18] is not ensuing but rather (as indicated by the adverbial fī 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 \( ġawâb \) ‘apodosis’ of conditional constructions (and other bipartite constructions, such as those discussed above in 8.4), and explicative clauses introduced by \( fa-ʾinna \). 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). Table 10.2 summarizes the comparison between both forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( faʿala )</th>
<th>( fa-yafʿalu )</th>
<th>result</th>
<th>consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modal</td>
<td>( ifʿal ), ( lâ yafʿal ), ( hal ), ..., ( layta ), ..., ( lâ ), ...</td>
<td>( fa-yafʿala )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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’.

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24 Cf. Sadan, *Subjunctive Mood*. The existence of free \( yafʿala \) forms was acknowledged by some grammarians, however these were always regarded as exceptional (282).

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 accord-
ingly ‘but one component of the comment mode’ and ought to be regarded as
‘roughly synonymous to “setting information”’.26

In this section I will not deal with the entire complexity of the comment
mode, but only make some observations regarding the background or orien-
tation component. Labov and Waltezky define orientation as that section of
the narrative which serves to ‘orient the listener in respect to person, place,
time and behavioral situation’.27 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 lex-
ical items.28 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 con-
sidering two distinctions: a syntactic one and a functional one. Firstly, a dis-
tinction 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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26 Ibid.
28 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’. This should not be taken to mean that \textit{kāna}-clauses occur randomly in the text: though they do not form part of the chronological sequence, \textit{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) \textit{kāna ma’badun qad ‘allama l-ḡinā’a ḡāriyatan min ḡawārī l-ḥiḡāzi ṭud‘ā ḣabṭa wa-ˈuniya bi-taḥrīği-hā fa-ṣtarā-hā raḡulun min ‘ahlī l-’irāqi Ma’bad had taught the singing to a maid from Ḥiḡāz named Ḥabya; he was invested in her becoming an accomplished [singer]. Then, a man from the people of Iraq bought her. (Rīwāyat 1, 9)

(10.20) ‘aḥadna-hū ‘an ḡāriyatin kānat lī btā-a-hā raḡulun min ‘ahlī l-baṣrati min makkata wa-kānat qad ‘aḥadat ‘an ʿābi ‘abbādin ma’badin wa-ˈuniya bi-taḥrīği-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 ʿAbū ʿAbbād Ma’bad; he was invested in her becoming an accomplished [singer]. (Rīwāyat 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 \textit{kāna}-clause serves as general background, in the latter case it serves to answer a specific question.

While \textit{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 \textit{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:

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29 Labov and Waletzky, \textit{Narrative Analysis}, 22.
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.\(^\text{30}\)

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-ʾinna 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-ʾinna la- pattern is used it is not the external voice of the author that is expressed; rather, it is an expression of the narrtor’s internal stance, whether it be the first person or third person narrator, as illustrated below:

\[(10.22) \text{ḥattā ʾaqbala raǧulun min-a l-ǧinni min ʾasfali makkata yataǧannā bi-} \]
\[
\text{ʿabyātin min šiʿrin ġināʾa l-ʿarabi wa-ʾinna l-nāsa la-yattabiʿūna-hū yasmaʿuṇa șawta-hū wa-mā yarawna-hū} \]

Until a man of the ǧinn 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-ʾinna 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*, 64ff.
background does contain events. Background events are distinct from mainline 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.  

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 faʿala* and *kāna qad faʿala* serve to indicate background events, whereas *kāna yaʿala* and *kāna faʿilān/mafʿulān*, 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 baʿaṭa*; 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 ʿimrāna qad baʿaṭa l-ġunūda ʾilā l-ġabābirati min ʿahlī l-qurāyā yاغū-hum fa-baʿaṭa mūsā bnu ʿimrāna ʾilā l-ʿamālīqi ʿayšan min banī ʿisrāʾīla wa-ʾamara-hum ʿan yaqtulū-hum ʿamī qaMūsā b. ʿImrān had sent the troops to the tyrants from the people of the villages to attack them, then Mūsā b. ʿImrān sent an army of the Israelites to the Amalekites and commanded them to kill them all. (Riwāyāt 2, 7)

(10.24) ḥattā ʿatat bi-hī waraqata bna nawfali [...] *wa-kāna mraʾan tananṣara fi l-ġāhilīyyati wa-kāna yaktubu l-kitāba l-ʿibrāniyya fa-yaktubu min-a l-ʾingilī bi-l-ʿibrāniyyati mā šāʾa llāhu ʾan yaktubu wa-kāna šayḥan kabīran qad ʿamiya fa-qālat la-hū ḥādiqatu Until [Ḫadīqa] went with him to her cousin Waraqa b. Nawfal [...] and he was a man [who] became Christian in the Ġāhilīyya; he used to write

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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. Ḥadiğa then told him ... (Ṣahih, 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 faʿilan 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 ʾāḫiḏan bi-yadi rasūli lllāhi wa-naḥnu natamāšā ǧamīʿan nahwa l-maḡri bi wa-qad ṭafalat-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. (Tārīḥ 1, 61)

Table 10.3 summarizes the discussion on free and dependent, eventive and descriptive background clauses in the narrative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal form / clause</th>
<th>Dependency</th>
<th>Type of background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kāna yafʿalu / faʿilan</td>
<td>free (initial or subsequent)</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāna qad faʿala</td>
<td>free (initial or subsequent)</td>
<td>eventive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-huwa yafʿalu / faʿilan</td>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa-qad faʿala</td>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>eventive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 ǧālisan fi nāḥiyati l-bayti
When I saw Ibn ʿUbayy sitting at the corner of the house ... (Mağāzī 370)

(10.27) dāḥaltu l-masǧida fa-ʿīḍā rasūlu llāhi ǧālisun waḥda-hū
I entered the mosque and there the Messenger of God was sitting all by himself. (Taʿrīḥ 1, 152)

(10.28) fa-ǧāʾaʾ ilā rasūli llāhi wa-huwa ǧālisun fiʾaṣḥābi-hī
He came to the Messenger of God while he was sitting with his companions. (Mağāzī, 370)

(10.29) bāynamā huwa ǧālisun fi l-masǧidi wa-l-nāsumaʿa-hūʾiḏʾaqbalaṯalā-tatunafarin
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.\textsuperscript{32}

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.\textsuperscript{33} 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.\textsuperscript{34}

\subsection{10.4.1 Setting and Preposed Temporal Clauses}

As far as their function in the narrative is concerned, setting clauses introduced by \textit{baynā}/\textit{baynamā} can be paired-off with preposed temporal clauses introduced by \textit{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 \textit{faʿala} in the second clause; both \textit{lammā} and \textit{baynā}/\textit{baynamā} can be preceded by the conjunction \textit{fa-}. However, in \textit{lammā}-clauses the verbal form \textit{faʿala} comes right after the operator,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{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, \textit{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.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Cf. Chafe, \textit{Adverbial Clauses} and Ramsay, \textit{Functional Distribution}.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Fleischman, \textit{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’.
\end{itemize}
while baynā/baynāmā-clauses exhibit the order of the nominal clause, where the subject precedes the verbal predicate yaf’alu or the participle. Table 10.4 summarizes the structural properties of lammā-clauses and baynā/baynāmā-clauses:

Table 10.4 lammā : baynā/baynāmā

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preposed temporal clause</td>
<td>(fā-)lammā fā’ala</td>
<td>fā’ala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>setting clause</td>
<td>(fā-)bayna(mā) N&lt;sup&gt;nom&lt;/sup&gt; yaf’alu/ fā’ilun</td>
<td>(fā-ʾiḏ) fā’ala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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/baynāmā-clauses introduce ongoing situations with yaf’alu or states with the participle. Moreover, lammā-clauses are mostly anaphoric, presenting information that is accessible from the previous context. baynā/baynāmā-clauses, on the other hand, are primarily cataphoric, often initiating a new episode of the narrative. The following examples illustrate the function of these two types of clauses:

(10.30) fā-lammā sāra ǧayra baʿidin-i ‘taraḍa la-hū ḏībun
After he went not too far, [suddenly] a wolf stood in his way. (Kalīla wa-Dimna, 63)

(10.31) fā-baynā huwa yuḥadditu-hū yawman ʾid qāla la-hū
While he was talking to him one day, he suddenly said to him. (Riwāyāt 1, 59)

(10.32) baynā ʾanā nāʾimun ʿutītu bi-qadaḥi labanin
While I was sleeping, I was [suddenly] brought a cup of milk. (Ṣaḥīḥ, 33)

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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 raǧulan 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) ‘inna la-nataraḥḥalu ʾilāʾ arḍi l-ḥabašati [...] ʾiḏ ʿaqbala ʿumaru bnu l-ḥattābi

We were departing to Abyssinia [...] when suddenly ‘Umar b. al-Ḥattāb 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 ‘iḏ followed by the verbal form faʿala.

The structure of static presentatives, which are introduces by the particle ʾiḏā, was presented above (8.4.2). Both ʾiḏ and ʾiḏā can be preceded by the conjunction fa- (and occasionally by wa-). Table 10.5 summarizes the structural properties of presentatives introduced by ʾiḏ and ʾiḏā:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dynamic</td>
<td>(fa-)bayna(mā) Nnom yafʿalu/fāʿilun</td>
<td>(fa-ʾiḏ) faʿala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presentative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>static</td>
<td>faʿala</td>
<td>fa- wa-ʾiḏā Nnom yafʿalu/fāʿilun/qad faʿala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presentative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presentative clauses introduced by ʾiḏ and ʾiḏā express something unexpected, mufāṯaʾa ‘surprise’ in traditional terms, a sudden development or realization, perceived or grasped by a certain character. However, while ʾiḏ-clauses present...
a further progression in the plot, ʾida-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 ʾid-initiated presentatives, a static situation (baynā/baynāmā-clause) is interrupted by a dynamic peak in the story. In ʾida-initiated presentatives, a dynamic step forward in the plot (faʿala) 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 ʾid while in [10.35]–[10.37], reproducing [8.110]–[8.112], the presentative is introduced by ʾida followed by the predicative forms:

(10.34) baynā anāʾ amšī ʾid samīṭu sawtan min-a l-samāʾī
While I was walking, all of a sudden I heard a voice from the sky. (Ṣahih, 6)

(10.35) fa-qāla unẓurūmāhāḏāl-ʾaḏānufa-ʾiḏā baššārun yuʿaddinu sakrāna
And he said: 'Look what is this call!' And there was Baššār calling for prayer while drunk. (Riwayāt 1, 261)

(10.36) fa-ḡiʾtuʾilāʾibrāhīmal-mawṣiliyyi fa-ʾiḏā l-bābu maftūḥun wa-l-dihlīzu qad kunisa wa-l-bawwābu qāʿidun
I came to ʾIbrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, and behold, the door was opened, the hall was already swept, and the door-keeper was sitting. (Riwayāt 1, 28)

(10.37) fa-fataḥa-hā la-hū fa-ʾidā fi-hā šūratu ʾādama wa-ʿurriyyati-hi kulli-him fa-ʾidā kullu raḡulīn maktūbun ʾinda-hū ʿaḡalu-hū wa-ʾidā ʾādamu qad kutība la-hū ʿumru ʿalfi sanatin (Taʾriḥ 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 faʿala-initiated chain of events, which is amplified by background units; some also feature dramatic patterns, such as the setting-presentative
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’. Al-Ǧāḥiẓ 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 faʿala-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 yafʿalu, and conditional constructions comprising the verbal form faʿala. 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.\textsuperscript{37} 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 \textit{faʿala} as the eventive chain-initiating form, and distinguished between three types of chains: (a) the externally reported sequence of events marked by the \textit{faʿala conn-faʿala} pattern, (b) the internally portrayed complex event marked by the \textit{faʿala yafʿalu/ fāʾiln} pattern, and (c) the consequentially related events indicated by the \textit{faʿala fa-yafʿalu} 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.

\textsuperscript{37} Fleischman, \textit{Tense and Narrativity}, 104.
CHAPTER 11

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.¹ 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.²

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.³ 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 ‘sitiuiert’ 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’. 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. 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’. 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 ‘ʾinna’ 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 ʾinna l-nāsa yamzaḥūna wa-yalʿabūna wa-lā yuʾāḫaḏūna bi-şay’in min ḏālika fa-rudd-i l-qamīṣaʿāfā-kallāhu

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!

\[(Buḫalā’, 63)\]

6 Ter Meulen, *Generic Information*, 125.
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:7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominal subject</th>
<th>Verbal predicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>particular</td>
<td>episodic clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generic</td>
<td>episodic clause</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.8

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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*. 

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(11.2) lā tanẓuranna ʾilā šiğar-ī wa-ḍuʿ-ī fa-ʾinna l-ʾumūra laysat taḡrī ʾalā l-quwwatī wa-l-šiddatī wa-l-ḍuʿī

Do not look at my smallness and weakness, for the matters are not guided by power, strength, [or] weakness. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna* 82)
11.2 The Structure of Generic Clauses

Generic clauses are often introduced into discourse by formulas involving the verb *qāla*, e.g.: *wa-qad qīla* (*Kalīla wa-Dīmna*, 69) ‘It has been said’, *fa-yuqālu* (*Buḥalāʾ*, 41) ‘It is said’, *wa-qad kāna yuqālu* (*Kalīla wa-Dīmna*, 66) *on disait*, *wa-mā zālū yaqūlūna* (*Buḥalāʾ*, 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 ‘ʾammā fa- ‘as for ... so’ clause, or be headed by the operator ‘ʾanna or one of its ‘sisters’, viz., *lākinna* ‘but’, *liʾanna* ‘since’ or ‘ʾanna ‘that’ (introducing the content clause of verbs such as *zaʿama* ‘to maintain’, *ʿalima* ‘to know’, and *raʾā* ‘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 *ʾinnamā* 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 *yanbaġī* ‘it is desirable’ taking a content clause as their subject; and (d) passive verbs. An accumulation of these elements is also encountered (e.g. *ʾinnamā yanbaġī ʾan*).

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.9

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.10 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.11 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.12

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:

\[
(11.3) \text{fa-qad ġama’a hādā l-ismu l-ḥamda wa-l-māla wa-smu l-buhli yaḡma’u l-māla wa-l-damma}
\]

And this noun (i.e. ‘generous’) has comprised praise and money, while the noun ‘miserliness’ comprises money and dispraise. (Buḥalā’, 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-

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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.


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 predictive (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.13

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 yuʿarriḥūna bi-mulūki-him wahum l-yawma fi-māʾ ālamu yuʿarriḥūna bi-ʿahdi yazdaḡirda 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 Yazdḡard b. Šahriyār. (*Taʾrīḫ* 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 *qadyafʿalu* always precedes the subject, thereby realizing the order of the verbal clause:

(11.5) *al-ġāhilulāyakūnumunṣifan wa-qadyakūnu l-ʿālimumuʿānidan*

The ignorant cannot be just whereas the learned may [well] be obstinate. (*ʿUyūn* 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/lowlow) 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 générlicité*, 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 tanḡahu hilatu l-ʿaḡalati wa-l-ʿirhāqi*
   The hasty and excessive device seldom succeeds. (Kalila wa-Dimna, 91)

(11.7) *man-istaqallabi-dāʾi-hī fa-lā yatadāwayanna fa-ʾinna-hū rubba yūريعtu l-dāʾa*
   He who cares little for his disease and does not treat himself, many [a time] transmits the disease. (ʿUyūn 3, 296)

The modifier *la-* is rarely conjoined with a generic *yafʿalu*. The form *la-yafʿalu*, as discussed above (9.2.3), occurs in the frame of *ʾinna* clauses. The clausal pattern *ʾinna la-* marks the predicative relation, the nexus, as focused:

(11.8) *wa-mā ḥumqu l-rubaʿi wallāhi ʾinna-hū la-yaḡtanibu l-ʿudawāʾa wa-yatbaʿu ʿumma-hū fi l-marʿā wa-yurōwiḥu bayna l-ʿaṭbāʾi wa-yaʿlamu ʾanā ḥanīna-hā ruḡāʿun fa-ʾayna ḥumqu-hu*
   And what is the stupidity of the *rubaʿ* (i.e., a young camel born in the season called *rabīʿ*)? By God, it surely avoids uneasiness, follows its mother in the pasture, alternates between [its mother’s] dugs 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. Subjectivity is explicitly marked in the clausal pattern *ʾinna la-* or when the operator *ʾinnamā* 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, *yafʿalu* 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.

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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 *yafʿalu* forms are nearly always negated by *lā*. Only in rare occasions *laysa* is used and *mā* was encountered on only one occasion. The negated *yafʿalu* usually follows a definite subject and precedes an indefinite one:

(11.9) *inna-nī la-kum ẓayfūn wa-l-ẓayfū lā yuṣāriʿu 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 muʾminun muʾminan 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 *yafʿalu* also precedes the definite subject: (a) when the verb is in the passive, or (b) when the content negated is restricted by either ‘ʾillā ‘except’, ḥattā ‘until’, or *mā l-daymūma ‘mā of duration’:

(11.11) *maktū bun fi l-tawrāti lā yuʿādu l-ḥadīṯumarratayni*
It is written in the Torah: The story is not to be repeated twice. (*ʿUyūn* 2, 194)

(11.12) *fa-lā yubʿidu llāhu ʾillā man ṣalama*
And God does not remove but the one who does wrong. (*Buḫalāʾ*, 150)

(11.13) *lā yaʿrifu l-raḡulu ḥaṭaʿa muʿallimi-hī ḥattā yaʿrif al-iḥtilāfa*
The man is not aware of his teacher’s mistake until he is acquainted with the disagreeing [opinion]. (*ʿUyūn* 2, 143)

(11.14) *lā yazālu l-marʿu ʾalimān mā ṭalaba lʿilmā*
The man does not cease to be learned as long as he asks for lore. (*ʿUyūn* 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 *yafʿalu* or *faʿala*. The generic-episodic opposition between the two forms, even if not entirely forgotten, seems to be worn down to a large extant with these verbs:

(11.15) *wa-yazʿumu ʿaḥlu l-tawrāti*
And the people of the Torah maintain ... (*Taʿrīḥ* 1, 190)
Besides conditional structures, the occurrence of *faʿala* in generic clauses is rather restricted. The most obvious case in which *faʿala* assumes a generic sense is in proverbs. The example *ʾanǧaza ḥurrun mā waʿada* ‘A free man fulfills what he promises’ is one repeatedly quoted since de Sacy’s grammar in every discussion on the generic use of *faʿala*. Other such examples abound in proverb collections such as al-Maydāni’s *maḡmaʿ l-ʾamṭāl*, e.g. *ʿarafa ḥumayqun ǧamala-hū* ‘[Even] a foolish man knows his camel’, *ʿādal-sahmuʾ ilāl-nazaʿati* ‘The arrow comes back to the shooters’, *taraka l-ẓabyu ẓilla-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.\(^{15}\) The generic interpretation of *faʿala* in proverbs is thus advanced by the given generic context, or by what may be described as the ‘proverbization’ of the clause.\(^{16}\)

Apart from proverbs, *faʿala* seems to assume a generic sense in certain patterns of negation. With a generic subject, *faʿala* 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 yafʿal* 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.
Money never grew less through charity. (Buḥalā’, 50)

Fathers never bequeathed to their sons anything better than fine education. (ʿUyūn 2, 136)

Afterwards, never was a circumcised boy born. (Ḥayawān 7, 27)

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:

Did people [ever] lose their wealth but [through spending] on ghee and honey?!

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:

The small one many a time turned great. (Kalīla wa-Dimna, 71)

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)
Many a swindler was brought down to worse by his [own] deceit. (*Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 116)

As pointed out above, the form *yafʿalu* serves to indicate an order of things, an unbounded situation, thus it is very suitable for generic utterances. The form *faʿala*, by contrast, is essentially episodic and used to indicate framed situations, thus its use in generic clauses is limited. The generic reading of *faʿala*, 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 yafʿal* 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 *yafʿalu*, *faʿala* 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 *yafʿalu* may well have a generic reference, *faʿala*, 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 *yafʿalu*:

(11.26) *wa-l-mālu zāhirun nāfiʿun mukarriminun li-ʾahli-hī muʿizzun*

Money is bright, beneficial, endowing honor and esteem to those who own it. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 91)

(11.27) *wa-l-zuḡāḫu ʾabqāʿ ʿalā l-māʾi wa-l-turābi min-a l-ḏahabi l-ʾibrīzi wa-huwa maʿa dālikā maṣnūʿun wa-l-ḏahabu mahlūqun*

Glass is more resistant to water and earth than pure gold, though it is artificial while gold is created [by God]. (*Buḥalāʾ*, 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 *if‘al*, the prohibitive *lā ya‘f‘al* and the energetic (*lā*) *ya‘f‘alanna*. A modal form conveys the meaning of a prescriptive statement rather than a descriptive one.\(^{17}\) 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) *i‘mal li-dunyā-ka ‘amala man ya‘īšu ‘abada n wa-‘mal li-‘āhirati-ka man yamūtu gada n*

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. (*Buḥālā*, 154)

(11.29) *lā ya‘rūwanna ‘abdun ‘illā rabba-hū wa-lā yaḥāfanna ‘illā ḍanba-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 ‘adawwan wa-‘in kāna ḥaqīrann Ṭa‘ifann*

Do not despise an enemy, even if he is despised and weak. (*Kalīla wa-Dīmna*, 105)

(11.31) *lā taṭlub taqwīmamāla yastaqīmu wa-lā ta‘dība mā lā yar‘awī*

Do not try to fix what cannot be fixed and to enlighten what cannot see the light. (*Kalīla wa-Dīmna*, 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

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\(^{17}\) 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 *yafʿalu* displayed a much wider use than the episodic *faʿala*. 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 *ifʿal*, *lā yafʿal* and (*lā*) *yafʿalanna* 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. 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’.

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 *yaf‘alu*. The intriguing thing about *yaf‘alu* 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 *yaf‘alu* was not positively defined, but rather described with respect to other verbal forms: the Arab grammarians stressed its resemblance (*muḍāra‘a*) to the participle, while Western scholars defined it as the opposite of the perfect form *fa‘ala*.
The definition of \textit{yaf'alu} as either ‘resembling’ or ‘imperfect’ is too abstract and general. It does not account for the functional relationships between \textit{yaf'alu} and the entire system of the indicative tenses, thus it fails to capture the cluster of meanings conveyed by \textit{yaf'alu}. Furthermore, such definitions do not consider the extended syntactic patterns in which \textit{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:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{The indicative (affirmative) verbal forms}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
Simple & Modified & Compound & Modified-compound \\
\hline
\textit{yaf'alu} & \textit{qad yaf'alu} & \textit{kāna yaf'alu} & \textit{qad kāna yaf'alu} \\
 & sawfā/sa-\textit{yaf'alu} & & \\
 & la-\textit{yaf'alu} & & \\
\hline
\textit{fa'ala} & \textit{qad fa'ala} & \textit{kāna fa'ala} & \textit{qad kāna fa'ala} \\
 & & \textit{kāna qad fa'ala} & \\
\hline
\textit{fa'ilun/maf'ūlun} & la-fa'ilun/maf'ūlan & \textit{kāna fa'ilun/maf'ūlan} & \textit{qad kāna fa'ilun/maf'ūlan} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{The contextual parameters}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Parameter & Internal taxonomy \\
\hline
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] \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal form</th>
<th>Grammatical bounding</th>
<th>Lexical bounding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bounded</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yafʿalu</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>posterior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sawfa/sa-yafʿalu</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>posterior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faʿala</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>anterior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qad faʿala</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>resultative-dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fāʿilVn</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>posterior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mafʿulVn</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>resultative-static</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 ʾanna-clauses, adjectival (or relative) clauses introduced by ḫaḍī, mā, man, or asyndesis, and adverbial ḫīna-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 yafʿalu was often modally colored, indicating such meanings as possibility, ability, and obligation ([7.25], [7.39]–[7.42], [7.64], [7.65]).

---

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.
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 *yafʿalu* 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 *faʿala* and *qad faʿala* was observed in adjectival asyndetic clauses whose antecedent is an internal object ([7.48]–[7.50]). In adjectival *man*-clauses, on the other hand, *faʿala* 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 *ḥīna*, 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 *yafʿalu*, the participle, and *qad faʿala*, 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicative form</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Temporal value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>yafʿalu</em></td>
<td>dynamic-progressive</td>
<td>simultaneous, coincidental (terminal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>fāʿilVn/mafʿūlVn</em></td>
<td>static</td>
<td>simultaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>qad faʿala</em></td>
<td>resultative</td>
<td>coincidental (initial)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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’ faʿala conn-faʿala chain (10.2.1); (b) the internally portrayed complex event marked by faʿala yafʿalu/ fāʿilan (10.2.2); and (c) the consequentially related chain of events marked by faʿala fa-yafʿalu (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 faʿala and qad faʿala and descriptive background involving yafʿalu 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 yafʿalu displayed a much wider use than the episodic faʿala, 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 ifʿal, lā yafʿal and (lā) yafʿalanna 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 yafʿalu in all three text types, by comparing it to its ‘opposite’ faʿala and its ‘analogous’ fāʿilVn. 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>yafʿalu</th>
<th>faʿala</th>
<th>fāʿilVn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>concurrent-dynamic</td>
<td>persistent</td>
<td>concurrent-static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>posterior-intention</td>
<td>anterior</td>
<td>posterior-readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>declarative-performative</td>
<td>transaction-performative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asseverative-dynamic (optative)</td>
<td>optative</td>
<td>asseverative-static</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.5  *The functions of yafʿalu, faʿala, and fāʿilVn in different text types*
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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