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Prospective in Pashto and the usage of *wə́-* and *ba/bə*, with sideviews on Persian *bi-* (and its predecessors)

Johnny Cheung

1. Introduction

Pashto is classified as an East Iranian language, and is principally spoken in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Afghanistan it has official status, together with Persian, whereas it only has regional status in Pakistan as the dominant language of the province Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Although Pashto could easily be mistaken for an Indic language in terms of pronunciation and phonetics, it has clearly maintained its Iranian character, especially in grammar and lexicon. The “Iranianness” of Pashto has also been reinforced by the massive borrowing of Persian forms and even grammatical elements, one of which will be discussed here.¹

In this contribution I will examine the question whether there is a prospective category in Pashto, together with its eventual origin and formal expression. Particularly relevant here are two aspectual-modal particles. In the first place, there is the particle *wə́-*, which is prefixed to the finite verb and is always accented. It conveys a modality or aspectuality that is usually referred to as “subjunctive”, or “perfective”, depending on the definition of the researcher.² The second particle, *ba/bə*, is enclitic, and is usually found after the first word (or nominal phrase) of the clause. With the present tense it indicates “future”. Finally, we shall also look at the origin or historical background of these two particles.

2. On the meaning and function of *wə́-* and *ba/bə*

2.1 *wə́-*

The functions of these two particles have been described in some detail in several handbooks and grammatical studies of Pashto. According to the widely used manual *Lehrbuch des Pashto* by Manfred LORENZ, the use of *wə́-* with the present tense conveys the following functions:

- in main clauses it expresses modal nuances (“modale Nuancen”), such as wish, exhortation or doubt, especially if in conjunction with the particles *di* ‘may ...’, *kāški* ‘if only ...’;

¹ This paper has also benefitted from the comments and additional references suggested by Agnes Korn, for which I would like to express my gratitude.

² In some descriptions of Pashto, even a definition of the label employed is lacking. Notably, the reference grammar compiled by the American-Afghan scholars Habibullah TEGEY and Barbara ROBSON (TEGEY / ROBSON 1996) for the US Center for Applied Linguistics gives elaborate tables of verbal paradigms and declensional nominal classes, but a further clarification of their meaning and usage is wanting. This also applies to their formal description of Pashto in the recent handbook *Iranian Languages*, in which it is merely stated that “[s]imple verbs form their perfective stems by adding the prefix *wə́-* to the imperfective present and past stems” (ROBSON / TEGEY 2009: 739).

- in dependent clauses it expresses the “subjunctive” (LORENZ 1979: 77).

Similarly, Neil MACKENZIE’s Pashto outline in COMRIE’s *The World’s Major Languages* says that “[b]etween the present I [i.e. without *wá-*] and II [i.e. with *wá-*] there is a difference of mood, I being indicative, ‘falls, is falling’, II subjunctive, ‘(that, if) it fall’ (MACKENZIE 1989: 561).

The *Grammar of Pashto* by the Austro-American linguist Herbert PENZL, which is based on fieldwork around Kandahar, rather describes the absence or presence of *wá-* as the opposition of perfective and imperfective: “The present I forms [without *wá-*] refer to action going on at the present time or any action or state at the present time level. ... Idiomatically,³ present I forms may also express the wish of a person”. And not surprisingly, “Present I forms can be used with expressions referring to the future.” The present forms with the particle *wá-* are therefore labeled “perfective” (PENZL 1955: 89).⁴

- “In main clauses they seem to express habitual and probable occurrence ...; they also occur in questions ..., and in commands or wishes”.

- “Present II forms [with *wá-*] occur most frequently in dependent (subordinate) clauses that are usually introduced by the conjunctions *ke (ka)* [‘if’]”. Present II forms occur in conditional clauses that indicate a mere possibility. After temporal particles present II forms may indicate the completion of an action... . They occur in clauses introduced by *tshi* after expressions of compulsion ..., purpose ..., possibility ..., subjective belief, emotions, and generalizations ... (PENZL 1955: 114).

Moreover, PENZL (ibid.) states that “it is obvious that in many of their occurrences present II forms express a subjunctive mood rather than a perfective aspect”.

This definition is generally also endorsed in the description of Džadrani Pashto by SEPTFONDS, where “Le présent 2 a la valeur modale d’un *subjonctif*. On le trouve essentiellement en proposition subordonnée (en simple parataxe ou introduit par la particule /*če*/) ; en emploi délibératif ; après diverses particules exprimant le souhait (/konde/ ‘pourvu que, il est possible’), la nécessité (/boyda di/ ‘il faut’), etc.; dans la protase (après /ka/ ‘si’) des énoncés conditionnels, avec un sens potentiel” (SEPTFONDS 1994: 144f.).

A rather vague description is given by the native speaker FAROOQ BABRAKZAI in his dissertation, stating that: “The distinguishing property of these verbs [i.e. marked by *wá-*] is that they are dynamic in nature, that is, they denote activities” (BABRAKZAI 1999: 154).

Describing the absence or presence of *wá-* in terms of imperfective / perfective is of course straightforward for Russian descriptions of Pashto grammar, e.g. ŠAFEEV (1955: 1093ff.): “The verb in modern Pashto has two aspects – perfective and imperfective.” This is further elaborated by GRJUNBERG (1987: 161ff.), for whom the perfective aspect in general principally “encompasses a reference to the completion, indivisibility of the action.”⁵ In the past tense it always has an aorist meaning, i.e. it indicates a fact without a reference to the

³ Actually, this is rather contextual and only applies to the verb *dz-* ‘to go’ (and some synonymous verbs), cf. ex. P 6:18: *dzáy ěi dzú* ‘Let’s get going [= lit. **we go** from it] ...’

⁴ It seems that PENZL was the first scholar to introduce the term imperfectivity / perfectivity to Pashto grammar.

⁵ “В семантике форм совершенного вида содержится указание на целостность, неделимость действия.”.

present result of a past action.⁶ An additional observation by GRJUNBERG is that the Pashto “perfective” does not just indicate a once occurring [i.e. lacking repetition or duration], completed event or action, but it is used to denote the concrete or factual completion of the action as well.⁷

The opposite configuration, the imperfective without the particle *wə́-*, emphasizes the factual, habitual or recurring nature of an event or an action. SEPTFONDS (2001: 133f.) does point out that, although the Pashto system differs from the Slavic model, perfectivity seems to be determined by the presence of preverbs, as in Russian.

It must be added that certain verbs are irregular (this especially concerns basic verbs) in showing unpredictable stem alternations marked by different stress, or suppletive perfective and imperfective stems, such as *k(x)enastəl* ‘to sit (down)’ (perf. *k(x)énastəl*), *kawəl* ‘to make, do’ (perf. *krəl*), *kedəl* ‘to become’ (perf. *š(w)əl*), *tləl* ‘to go’ (perf. *lār-š(w)əl*), *rātləl* ‘to come, arrive’ (perf. *rāγ(ə)ləl*). With compound verbs in *-(k)awəl* and their passive / intransitive correspondences in *-edəl*, the perfective stem is regularly constructed with auxiliary verbs, perfective *krəl* and *š(w)əl* respectively, e.g. *paydā krəl* ‘to find; to create’ (imperf. *paydā kawəl*), *tayār krəl* ‘to prepare, ready’ (imperf. *tayārawəl*), *tayār š(w)əl* ‘to be prepared, become ready’ (imperf. *tayāredəl*).

In the most recent publication on Pashto,⁸ Anne Boyle DAVID (2014) discards the Slavic oriented terminology. She rather revives the classical Greek term “aorist” for the “perfective” and the expression “continuous” (borrowed from the traditional description of English grammar) for the imperfective: “continuous” stresses the “unfinished” or “ongoing” action of the verb, whereas “aorist” draws the attention to the “indeterminate” character of the action, such as a simple event, without specification of its completion or continuation, etc. (DAVID 2014: 203f.). Unfortunately, these terms are not entirely suitable either, as they insinuate additional functions such as those attested in Classical Greek and modern English, respectively, that are not found in Pashto.

As it is often the case in many languages (of Indo-European origin), the verb for ‘to be’ is a special case. Although Pashto ‘to be’ has some remarkably archaic forms, it does not have a dedicated “perfective” category (nor a formal infinitive). There is however, an auxiliary 3rd person *wi* in standard Pashto that has strongly epistemic modal overtones (‘may be, were’).¹⁰

⁶ In contrast, the Pashto perfect tense does contain the reference to the present result of a past action.

⁷ “Эта форма употребляется обычно для обозначения конкретного завершившегося единичного действия в плане прошедшего времени (конкретно-фактическое значение)”.

⁸ This very new publication was mentioned by an anonymous reviewer of an earlier version of this study.

⁹ This is the literal translation of the Greek term ἄοριστος, which the influential Hellenistic grammarian Dionysius Thrax (170-90 BCE) considered to be part of the *tenses* (χρονοί) in his Τέχνη Γραμματική.

¹⁰ The old suggestion by James DARMESTETER to derive *wi* from the optative aorist **bū yāt* (cf. Av. *buiiā*, Skt.

bhūyāt), was rejected by MORGENSTIERNE (1942: 105) for phonological reasons: **bū yāt* would rather give

**w(i)yā*. His suggestion, **b^h/yat*, is based on later Iranian correspondences, Yidgha *vī*, Khotanese *vīya*.

In addition, *wi* can also be habitual, e.g. *pə janūb ki hawā tod wi*. ‘It is usually hot in the South.’ (LORENZ 1979: 78). This *wi* has no doubt a different etymological origin (perhaps: indicative present 3sg. **bawati* ?).

2.2 *ba/bə*

The other aspectual particle, *ba/bə*, does not receive stress in Pashto and it is detached from the finite verb. It is found in the three formal moods of Pashto, i.e. the indicative, imperative and the conditional-potential. The particle conveys several meanings, depending on the mood or tense of the main, finite verb. MORGENSTIERNE's definition (*NEVP*: 13) of *ba/bə* is quite broad: "enclitic verbal particle marking the future, habitual past, etc." (similarly DAVID 2014: 369; GRJUNBERG 1987: 120). It can be found with and without *wə-*. As described by LORENZ (1979: 129f.), *ba/bə* denotes a future event or action in the present. In the past, however, it emphasizes the recurring, i.e. iterative, character of the imperfective. Its use with the *wə-* perfective past is less frequent, and limited to verbs with stative meaning (e.g. 'to sit', 'to know', etc.). The iterative character of *ba/bə* is also stressed by BABRAKZAI (1999: 160f.). With the potential-conditional mood, also labelled 'past subjunctive', *ba/bə* refers to "an unrealised or hypothetical obligation or situation in the past" (BABRAKZAI 1999: 56).

The first, more extensive study is the one by KALININA 1976.¹¹ She looks at several cases in which *ba/bə* occurs, but unfortunately the examples lack context and are not comprehensive despite claims to the contrary.

According to KALININA, *ba/bə* is encountered in two specific situations, viz.

- the first one in which "the speaker assumes the completion of a specific action based only on the objective possibility of its realisation in the past",
- the second one in which "the speaker knows, on the basis of actual facts, about the reality of a specific action that should be completed at the moment of speaking. It is unknown to him whether it has been accomplished or not" (KALININA 1976: 69). This presentation is somewhat skewed since most examples involve verbs in the potential-conditional mood that are used to illustrate these points.

In a contribution dedicated to Émile Benveniste, LAZARD (1975) posited a new, semantic category (or "sème") in the verbal system for several (modern) Indo-Iranian languages (and Armenian), the so-called "éventuel". With a single formal marker, this category would express the irrealis and the habitualis in the past tenses, but the future sense with a formal present.¹² Furthermore, it uses "la contiguïté « substantielle » de ces sens et représente l'un des découpages possibles de la « substance du contenu » par la « forme du contenu » qui est propre à chaque langue" (LAZARD 1975: 353). In this study Lazard also discusses Pashto *ba/bə*,¹³ which would convey this "éventuel".

¹¹ Arseniy Vydrin has drawn my attention to this study during the Frankfurt conference, for which I would like to express my sincere gratitude.

¹² "Par ailleurs nous avons vu que dans un certain nombre des langues que nous avons évoquées l'analyse du système verbal, c'est-à-dire des relations sémantiques fonctionnelles des formes du verbe, fait apparaître l'existence d'une catégorie que nous avons appelée « Éventuel », en d'autres termes d'un « sème » grammatical qui, associé au « sème » de présent, donne un sens de futur et, associé au « sème » de passé, des sens d'irréel et d'habituel" (LAZARD 1975: 358). Intriguingly, in his conclusion, LAZARD emphatically states that the French language does not have such a semantic category or "sème", but rather has "seulement un Prospectif", notably the verbal forms in *-r-*, such as the formal present *fera* (> future 'will do') and past *ferait*.

¹³ In the same study attention is also given to Persian *bi-*, which will be discussed below.

In a similar vein, SEPTFONDS (1994: 153ff.) defines *ba/bə* as an aspectual particle that “marque un décrochage ... par rapport à la situation d’énonciation”. This disconnect from the present, i.e. the “désactualisation”, also affects its occurrence with the particle *wə́-*, which, after all, rather signals a connection between the present and the unfolding event (or with the past tense: a connection between a past event and the present). A more elaborate study is presented in SEPTFONDS (2001: 141f.).

2.3 Approach of this article

In what follows, I will discuss the semantic aspects of the following pairings:¹⁴

Table 1: A conventional grammatical classification of verbal forms with (+) or without (-) *wə́-*, used with (+) or without (-) *ba/bə*

	simple present	simple past / preterite
+ <i>wə́-</i>	subjunctive, perfective	perfective
- <i>wə́-</i>	indicative	imperfective
+ <i>ba/bə</i> - <i>wə́-</i>	indicative future	customary / habitual, imperfective
+ <i>ba/bə</i> + <i>wə́-</i>	perfective/subjunctive future	customary / habitual, perfective

We will focus on relevant examples drawn from actual Pashto texts recorded by PENZL 1965 (abbreviated P), and by SEPTFONDS 1994 in his description of the Dzadrani dialect (abbreviated S). In addition, the examples given without context by BABRAKZAI 1999 (B), LORENZ 1979 (L) and DAVID 2014 (D) will be quoted where relevant.

3. Data

In the examples to follow, bold face marks the relevant verbal forms. The examples are accompanied by an English translation as provided in the works written in English, but the translation of the French and German interpretation given by SEPTFONDS 1994 and LORENZ 1979 is mine. On the whole, the transcription of MORGENSTIERNE 2003 is applied to the Pashto forms and sentences cited below, with the following exceptions:

- the voiceless alveolar sibilant affricate [tʃ] is transcribed here as {ts}, rather than as *c*.
- the corresponding, voiced affricate [dʒ] is transcribed here as {dz}, rather than as *j*.

Readers not versed in the intricacies of Pashto phonology are reminded of the following:

- Pashto *ḡ* and its voiced counterpart *ḡ* indicate sounds that show great dialectal variation. They range from so-called “hard” to “soft” pronunciation, i.e. in the case of *ḡ* varying from palatal fricative [ç⁺] and velar [x] in the northern dialects, to palatal sibilant [ʃ] and retroflex [ʂ] in the southern dialects. For *ḡ* the realizations vary between palatal fricative [ʒ⁺] and velar stop [g] in the northern dialects, while in the south the pronunciation of *ḡ* ranges from palatal sibilant [ʒ] to retroflex [ʒ].
- letters with a dot below indicate retroflex sounds, such as *ṛ* [ɽ], *ṭ* [ɽ], *ḍ* [ɽ], *ṇ* [ɽ].

¹⁴ It can be noted that the particle *ba/bə* is used in other modal situations (optative, potential, irrealis, etc.) as well, but it is beyond the scope of this discussion of the prospective category to include them here.

- Pashto distinguishes two regular series of affricate consonants, viz. alveolar sibilant *ts*, *dz* and palato-alveolar *č* [tʃ], *ǰ* [dʒ].
- stress in Pashto is phonemic. When indicated, it is with an acute sign ´.
- another typical feature of Pashto phonology is the absence of the fricative *f* in inherited words. In loanwords, *f* is often replaced by its occlusive correspondence *p*, e.g. *fikər* ‘thought, thinking’ → *pikər*.

3.1 *wə́-* and present

“subjunctive, perfective”

The present forms with *wə́-* are used in conditional clauses and in the imperative.

- P 6:13 *spingíri čí inám wáxist, no pāčáta ye wáwayel: wágora čí zmá wáne tsánga zər mewá wániwála.* ‘When the old man received the prize, he said to the king: “**Look** how quickly my tree bore fruit.”’
- 6:18 *dzóy čí dzú, ka də dé spingíri sara nór háw wáðareǰu nó də paysó na ba mó xlás kři.* ‘Let’s get going [= lit. we go from it]. If **we stay** still longer with this old fellow, then he will relieve us of all (our) money.’
- D 8.132 *ǰə baləl kéǰi če maᅇa ləpoᅇaki səra wə́-xoᅇla ši* ‘it is considered good to eat an apple along with its peel’ [lit. ‘it is considered good that / if an apple **is eaten** with its peel’]

A present form without this prefix represents a factual statement without expressing expectation or doubt on the part of the speaker, e.g.:

- P 1:11-12 *bírtə ᅇilifún iǰdí, də dé sərí tsəxə puᅇtánə kəwí:* ‘He **puts** the telephone back. He **asks** that man **a question**:’
- S 31. *čə dáse baléǰi ka gés čə kəse.* ‘who so **shines** like a gaslamp that you **see**’.

3.2 *wə́-* and past / preterite

“perfective”

The past with *wə́-*, including its equivalent construction with suppletive stems (*kᅇra*, *šwa*, *wet*), is used notably in narration, when a series of events is being described:

- P 2:6 *čí jumát ta ránánawot táləbāno tre puᅇtána wə́kᅇra čí melmá də kúm dzāy ye?* ‘When **he entered** the mosque [= *jumát*], the students **asked** him: “Guest, where are you from?”’
- 2:7 *də wərta wə́wayəl čí də plāní dzāy.* ‘He **told** them about such and such a place.’
- 6:2: *yáw sá’at wərta pəfikər kᅇe wə́dared.* ‘For a while [*yáw sá’at* lit. ‘one hour’] he **stood** thinking about him.’

6:13 *spingíri čí inám wáxist, nopāčá taye wáwayel: wágora čí zmá wáne tsángazór mewá wániwala.* ‘When the old man **received** the prize, he **said** to the king: “Look, how quickly my tree **bore** fruit.”’

- S 24. *yewa osáyxwday ó-orzawəla.*¹⁵ ‘God **made** a gazelle **jump up**.’
 25. *wá-ye-xosta, wá-ye-xosta, wá-ye-xosta. če dera lóre ye stórye-kra.* ‘He **pursued** her continuously, until he had **exhausted** her, from afar.’
 27. *da kánda ta če zne paná-šwa, day če day, da kánda ta če wérayay,* ‘While she **hid** in the ditch, it is him when he **arrived** at the ditch,’
 28. *če tsáрге wer nána-wet, da kánda ta* ‘so he **entered**, in the ditch,’
 29. *če pákar ye wer ta wá-kə* 30. *čeyewa péyla zne jora-šáwye-do.* ‘when he **got sight** of her, she **had transformed** herself into a girl.’

This also includes the initiation or the closure of these events:

- S 6. *yewá wredz ye wer ta ó-we če* ‘one day, he **said** to him’
 46. *... wer ta wá-ye-we če dera xa do.* ‘... he **said** to her: “That is very well !”.’
- B 41. *talayla wá-pežanda.* ‘you recognized Layla (once)’
 (cf. imperfective: 40. *ta layla pežanda.* ‘you **knew** Layla (for a certain period of time)’).

In SEPTFONDS (1994: 309ff.), a local story-teller retells the mystical work “Safar ul-‘Išq”, better known under the name of its chief protagonist, “Sayf ul-Malūk”. This allegory is one of the famous works of the Kashmiri Sufi master, Miyān Muḥammad Baxš (1830 -1907). The version recorded by SEPTFONDS (ibid.), however, appears to be more inspired by the stories of “1001 Nights”; the protagonist’s name is here Sayfalmalik and appears rather similar to Ḥasan of Basrā. The story describes the quest of Prince Sayfalmalik for a fairy princess, named Bədrəy. In line 6, the sentence starts with *yewá wredz* ‘one day’ and signals a new event that was about to unfold when the king's son, named Sayfalmalik, went on a hunting trip, together with his entourage. During the hunt, Sayfalmalik thus caught sight of that elusive gazelle as described in the lines 24-29 (above). The fairy princess who had disguised herself as this gazelle, ordered Sayfalmalik to forge seven pairs of iron sandals if he wished to follow her. He duly complied (line 46).

“imperfective”

In contrast, the imperfective form indicates a factual non-narrative fact, especially noticeable in an anecdote, when it is merely a clarifying comment. It closely corresponds to the English past continuous.

- P 3:2 *pəxwā paḫtanó tól muhimāt pə jərgá faysalá kawál.* ‘Formerly the Pashtoons **were deciding** all important matters by council.’
- S 8. *we če: z(ə) dás(e) yáy(ə)m če pə* ‘He **was saying**: “I say that he / they’ll be going on a hunt.”’
 9. *we če: bəlkol sai do.* ‘He **was saying**: “It is totally fine.”’

¹⁵Dzadrani *ó-* in *ó-orzawəla* and *wé-* in *wérayay* are allomorphs of *wá-*.

3.3 *ba/bə* and present

“indicative future”

The meaning of the enclitic particle *ba/bə* with the formal present,¹⁶ constructed without *wá-* (or alternatively with a suppletive imperfective stem) refers to a future event that is factual:

- P 6:8 *zə ye pə dé niyát nə karám či zə ba* ‘I don’t plant it with this intention that I
žwandáy yəm aw zə ba ye mewá xw rəm. **shall be** alive and **shall be eating** its fruit.’
- S 20. *bál saráy makip day. nə be pse* ‘(to) another man it is off limits (he cannot
drimi, aya be pse tsi. interfere). He **will not set to go** after it, the former **will go** after it.’
- 44-45. ... *ner be owá jora de yé sponé* ‘then you **shall prepare** seven pairs of iron
tsapláy jorawé, á be pə mó se zarawé, sandals, you **shall wear** them (while looking)
tər da be pása tə mo mime. for me, until **you’ll** find me.’”.
- B 139. *alwatəka ba pinzə bajá rākuzé ġi.* ‘The airplane **will land** at five o’clock’
- D 8.25. *də de xalko ɣam* ‘I feel these people’s sorrow, and I **am going to take care**
rāsərə day aw ɣam bə ye of it [lit. the sorrow of these people is with me, and I **will**
xorəm **eat** (their) sorrow]’.

“perfective future”

The statement becomes less factual in combination with the prefix *wá-*. According to GRJUNBERG (1987: 163) this form denotes a concrete, once occurring action in the future. It is particularly used “in the apodosis [= the main, consequent clause] of a conditional sentence with a real condition, relating to the future.”¹⁷

- P 1:8 *māpǝ́ín bə ye stási huzúr wǝ́ndi* ‘in the afternoon, I **will submit** them [= the
kəm finished articles] to you.’ This implies that the articles are ready to be sent away.
- 6:9 *bálke zə ye də dé pāra karám či* ‘But I plant it in order that indeed after me
zmā na wrústa nór xalk xo ba ye mewá other people **will eat** its fruit.’
wá xw ri.
- The old man emphasizes that the goal of his planting is not for himself, but rather for future generations.
- 6:18 *dzəy či dzú, ka də dé spinǝ́iri sara* ‘Let’s get going. If **we stay** still longer with
nór hám wǝ́dareǝ́u nó də pə ysó na ba this old fellow, then **he will relieve** us of all
mó xlās kǝ́ri. (our) money.’
- Clearly, the emptying of the money, expressed by the apodosis *ba ... kǝ́ri*, will logically follow after a longer stay with the old man.

¹⁶ In the Dzadrani examples given by S, *be* is the dialect form of standardized *ba/bə*.

¹⁷ “в аподосисе условного предложения с реальным условием, относящимся к будущему времени”.

7:15 *də dé saʁi dá xúy da. zə dāréǵəm* ‘It’s a habit of this man. I fear that he **will**
či ős ba wəwāyi či dáxár aw čapán hám now **say** that this donkey and ‘chapan’ are
de má di. also his [= literally: ‘mine’].’

11:11 *harú marú ba wə arabí žəbe ta* ‘Inevitably we **will depend** on the Arabic
ár šū aw ka ná, yawá líka yá dwé dré language and if not: one or two, three lines
líke ba pə dər zyār wə-likàle ši. will be written with a great effort.’

S 8. *we: z(ə) dás(e) yáy(ə)m čepə* ‘He was saying: “I say to you that (whether) **he/**
šxór be lór-ši. **they’ll be going** on a hunt.”’
 In the next lines, the hunt is affirmed by Sayfalmalik. The next morning, the hunt is
 thus taking place.

P 6:6 *noxwdāyxabár day či stā ba dómra* ‘Thus god knows whether yours **may be**
úmər wi aw ka nə wi či də dé wáne such a long life or **not** that **you might eat** the
mewá wəxwre. fruit of this tree.’
 Obviously, only God can know whether the old man who is planting the tree will live
 long enough.

“subjunctive future”

In the construction of *ba/bə* with 3sg. modal **wi**, the emphasis is on the (strong) probability
 that an event may take place (in the future), rather than on the future its completion, e.g.

L 30.3.4. *pə rātlúnke miyāšt ki bə wāwra* ‘Next month there **will be** (probably)
wi snow.’
- dā haqiqát bə wi ‘this **may be** true.’

P 6:6 *noxwdāyxabár day či stā ba dómra* ‘Thus god knows whether yours **may be**
úmər wi aw ka nə wi či də dé wáne such a long life or **not** that you might eat the
mewá wəxwre. fruit of this tree.”.

S 9-10. *we če: bəlkol sai do. pə* ‘He was saying: “This is entirely fine. For the hunt the
šxór, gaijta, xwád čedi, páwǵ next morning, these two have prepared / selected for
ye wer sa tawórkə, ner be če themselves a group of men, well a group of how many
tsimra pawǵ wi? men **will** it **be** then [do you think]?”’

3.4 *ba/bə* and past / preterite: “habitual / customary”

without *wə-*:

In the past domain, the particle *ba/bə* expresses the habitual or customary aspect, which
 makes it especially apt for the narration of historic events or actions. In the unmarked,
 “imperfective” form (without *wə-*), the action or event is continuous:

P 3:2 *wāyi či sultān Bālól Lodin də* ‘The story goes that Sultan Bahlol Lodin, the
hindustān pāččā ba də pařtanó King of India, **would have** a council of the
sardārāno jərgá dər lóda. Pashtun chiefs’.

6:1 *wāyi čipəyaw dzāy kčeyaw zór saráy lagyā wə də xowān wāna ye karāla.* ‘it is said that somewhere an old man **was** busy **planting** an olive tree.’

12:8 *hāya wāxt čihewādūna yāw lə bəla dəra lāre wə, awulāsūna bayāw də bəl pə žəba xā nā pūhedāl, byā hām pə žəbo ke daxil kalimāt mawjūd wə* ‘At that time when countries were very far from one another and peoples **did not (usually) understand** each other’s languages well, even then loan words were present in the languages’

B 43. *laylā-ba harmāxām yəw kitāb lwāst.* ‘Layla would read a book every evening.’

For this sentence, BABRAKZAI (1999: 161) comments in brackets: “perhaps she would read the same book.” In other words, *ba* with the imperfect merely accentuates the habit of reading (in a specific period of time, i.e. every evening).

This pattern also serves to express the counterfactual mood in certain conditional sentences, when the verb of the main clause is in this imperfective past (always construed with *bə*, s.v. 3.5), followed by a dependent clause (introduced by *ka* ... ‘if ...’) with the verb in the (present) irrealis mood, cf. LORENZ (1979: 203):

L 34.2.2. *ka bārān oredāy zə bə landedōləm* ‘If it would rain, (then) I would be wet’

Another example is cited by GRJUNBERG (1987: 158f.) and VYDRIN (2011: 73): *ka obó wāray wāy, no mór bə me tsə dzawāb warkāwāl* ‘“If the water would carry me away, then what reply would I give to my mother?”’¹⁸ Again, while the protasis is with a verb in the conditional, irrealis mood (*wāray wāy*), the verb of the apodosis (*warkāwāl*) is formally an imperfective past with counterfactual meaning.

with *wə*-:

Not only is the action customary as expressed by the particle *ba*, but its completion is also envisaged:

P 3:4 *har wāxt ba čidā jərgá taškíl šwa, dáy ba də pāčāháy də taxi rākúz šu.* ‘Every time the council **was assembled**, he **would come down** from the throne of royalty.’
3:5 *də nōro sara bayāwāze də paštānə pə dawl k(x)énāst.* ‘With the others he **would sit** only in the manner of a Pashtoon.’

B 44. *laylā-ba harmāxām yəw kitāb wə-lwāst.* ‘Layla **would read** a book every evening.’

Layla read and finished a different book, i.e. Layla had the habit of reading and finishing a book each evening (vs. 43. in the section above).

S 78. *wertawə-ye-we če: xā, tsərge wol day, tsərge swol day? we če: ay! zay deməř-ša!* ‘He asked her: “Well, how / what is the situation, how / what is the matter?” She said: “Ah! You bastard [= lit. ‘may your son die’]!’

¹⁸ The exclamation mark after the cited form *warkāwāl!* is a typo.

ye to watan be de se ó-γwǎǎt. če I **have traversed** your whole country **to look** for
da tsǎ be čerta ldalay-wǎ, da you, this country **I have traversed.**¹⁹
watán be de(r) se ó-γwǎǎt.

In 78, the long complaint to Sayfalmalik clarifies the external circumstances when Bǎdrǎy had to go to great lengths in her search for him. Of course, the “perfective” verb indicates that she has really completed travelling round in the country, while the particle *ba* accentuates her strenuous, repeated efforts to do so.

3.5 Observations

Judging by the examples cited above, the particle *ba/bǎ* seems to indicate the inevitability of an event that will take (+ present), or has taken place repeatedly (+ past / preterite). On the other hand, the particle *wǎ-* (or its equivalent suppletive verbal or differently accented stems) expresses a relation between a present event and the event that may unfold afterwards, hence one could envisage its completion (hence the designation “perfective”), or its possible consequence or goal (hence modal “subjunctive”). In stories and reports the series of events that are taking place are most often expressed with *wǎ-*. Without *wǎ-* (therefore “imperfective”), the factuality of the event / action is stressed. The combination of *ba/bǎ* with *wǎ-* (perfective” / “subjunctive” with its implicit uncertainty), results in a situation that envisages a completion, *fait accompli* on the basis of a customary trajectory, e.g. in the examples of P 3:4 f., we can be sure that Sultan Bahlul Lodin “**would come down** from the throne of royalty” and “**would sit** only in the manner of a Pashtoon”, on the basis of past experiences. It has been stated by SEPTFONDS (2001: 141f.) and LAZARD (1975: 358) that *ba/bǎ* conveys “eventuality”, with its “*désactualisation*” or disconnect (“*découpage*”) from the present (cf. Section 2.2).

I suggest that *ba/bǎ* is a particle of sequentiality since with the past tense it indicates the habitual or iterative character of an event. With the simple present tense, it indicates the transition from a present to a future event, regardless of whether there is a connection between the two or not. A sense of sequencing is clearly felt in our examples of P 3:4 f. This is even more pronounced in a conditional sentence (of the type ‘if X, then Y’), with both constituent clauses in the “perfective” / “subjunctive” *wǎ-* form:¹⁹ the apodosis (‘then Y’) needs to have *ba/bǎ*. The value of “*désactualisation*” is therefore secondary and follows from the sequentiality²⁰ of the events or actions.

As for the exact meaning of the particle *wǎ-*, it appears to specify an expected connection between a present event and a future event (+ present tense) or, conversely, between a past and the present event (+ past tense). In fact, *wǎ-* may be defined as a marker of actualisation. Pashto *wǎ-* combines the values of both the “Slavic” perfective aspect (envisaging the completion of an event) and of the subjunctive mood (expectation, goal).

The results may be summarized as in Table 2.

¹⁹ Or its semantic equivalent with suppletive verbal or differently prefixed / accented stems.

²⁰ Cf. BABRAKZAI (1999: 232): “The second clause contains the future clitic *ba*, which in these constructions does not indicate tense, but that the event is subsequent to the event expressed by the conditional clause”.

Table 2: The posited meanings of the verbal forms
with (+) or without (-) *wǎ-*, in conjunction with (+) or without (-) *ba/bə*

	simple present	simple past / preterite
+ <i>wǎ-</i> (envisaging completion, expecting goal)	Present Ev. A → Event B (maybe or maybe not)	Past Event A → Present B
- <i>wǎ-</i>	Present Event A	Past Event A
+ <i>ba/bə</i> (sequentiality) - <i>wǎ-</i>	Present A Future Event B consecutive yet disconnected	Past Event A1 Past Event A2 Past Event A3 the recurring events are the same (hence: habitual, customary), but they are not connected.
+ <i>ba/bə</i> (sequentiality) + <i>wǎ-</i> (envisaging completion, expecting goal)	Present A → Fut Event B consecutive & connected	Past Ev. A1 → Pres. Ev. B Past Ev. A2 → Pres. Ev. B Past Ev. A3 → Pres. Ev. B iterative

4. The historic background

4.1 On the origin of *ba/bə*

The particle *ba/bə* is usually connected to the Avestan adverb *apaiia* (*NEVP*: 13), but this equation needs some discussion. Av. *apaiia* is only attested in two stylistically similar passages in the *Zamyād Yasht* (ed. HINTZE 1994):

- Yt. 19.48: *nōiṭ apaiia uzraocaiiāi* (2sg. subj. act.) ‘**then** you shall not light up’;
- Yt. 19.50: *nōiṭ apaiia afrapatāi* (2sg. subj. act.) ‘**then** you [daevic Dahāka] shall not flutter around’.

Av. *apaiia* does not need to mean ‘künftig’ as suggested by HINTZE’s translation,²¹ but (as indicated by the subjunctive) it could merely indicate a transition to a future event just like in Pashto: ‘then, afterwards’. No further Iranian cognates are cited in *EVP* and *NEVP*, but, on the basis of the postulated meaning ‘then, afterwards’ for Avestan *apaiia* and the established usage of Pashto *ba/bə*, we may include a possible third correspondence in Iranian, viz. Khwarezmian *b’*. According to MACKENZIE (1990: 106), *b’* is a contrastive particle, but it can also signal a subsequent event, e.g. in the description of a divorce dispute:

148. *šy’w^or^ap^ur’cⁱyhⁱkyn h’βrx* “You are thrice divorced that you gave them.
149. *kb’cw’ m’čkyšy* that **rather**, ‘Why do you give me the lie in this (matter)?’
150. *kyn’-b’nyh’βrx mnc’c* If **rather** you should not have given them.”
(transl. MACKENZIE 1990: 60)

The meaning of the verb sometimes changes somewhat unexpectedly, notably *bi-būd* ‘he remained’ (*būd* ‘was’ ← *būdan* ‘to be’), as in this passage from the famous chronicle *Tārix-i Bayhaqī* (11th century CE): *Bahrām yak sāl bi-būδ wa bi xidmat-i ō bi-ēstāδ wa dilaš tang šuδ* ‘Bahram **remained** one year and **stood** at his service and his heart became narrow’, or *bi-dāšt* ‘guarded, kept an eye on’ (*dāšt* ← *dāštan* ‘to have, keep, hold’).

On the basis of three verbs that are frequently attested in the literary sources, viz. *āmaḍan* ‘to come’, *raftan* ‘to go’, and *guftan* ‘to say’, LAZARD (1963: 300ff.) observes the following:

- *bi-* is not found in combination with preverbs (notably *bāz* ‘again, back, re-’, *pēš* ‘for(ward)’, (*an*)*dar* ‘in’, *bar* ‘on’),
- nor with a nominal / adverbial complement of the verb (complex predicate), e.g. *bērūn* ‘outside’, *gird* ‘around’, *padīδ* ‘visible, appearing’, *nazdīk* ‘near’ (*bērūn āmaḍan* ‘to come out’, *raft nazdīk-i šahr-i Kaid* ‘he **went** near to [= arrived at] the town of Kaid’).
- In addition, *bi-* is also absent if the goal of the movement with *āmaḍan*, *raftan*, or the circumstances of *guftan*, is stated: *az Makka bi-gurēxtand wa bi Madīna raftand* ‘they **fled** (Fr. s’enfuirent) from Mecca and **went** to Medina’, *durōy guftan* ‘to say a lie [= to lie]’, *bi suryānī guft* ‘he **said** (it) in Syriac’.

LAZARD suggests that forms with *bi-* are “strong” or “emphatic” forms, and the forms without *bi-* are “weak”. This is rather vague, though, and one wonders which origin could possibly have given rise to this “emphatic” quality of *bi-* and at the same time for the quasi-perfectivizing meaning of *bi-* in certain cases in New Persian and in its predecessor, viz. Middle Persian *be*. It can be noted (cf. LENEPVEU-HOTZ 2012: 283) that *bi-* does not have a specific (modal) aspect in the attested (early) New Persian sources, being present in the indicative as well in the subjunctive, but also absent in many imperative forms. According to LENEPVEU-HOTZ (2012: 284f.),²³ the particle *bi-* merely expresses “rhematicité”: the attention is drawn to the verb with prefixed *bi-*, whereas the “rhème” is elsewhere in the phrase when the verb is without *bi-*.²⁴

In the *Memorial volume* for Nyberg, LAZARD (1975b) undertakes a systematic study of the usage of Middle Persian *be* (or, in a different, interpretative transcription, *bē*) in the Pahlavi texts compiled by NYBERG (1931/I). The first observation is that Middle Persian *be* syntactically behaves in the same way as other preverbs (LAZARD 1975b: 3) in terms of its position and exclusivity in the sentence.²⁵ Another observation is that *be* is remarkably

²³ “[C]’est au niveau de la syntaxe qu’il convient de l’analyser [scil.: *bi-*] : le verbe sera ou non le centre rhématique en fonction de la syntaxe de la phrase. Quand il n’est pas marqué, c’est parce qu’il s’efface au profit d’un autre centre rhématique, un type de complément différent selon les types de verbes et leur construction (complément de lieu pour un verbe de déplacement, objet indirect indiquant le destinataire pour un verbe de déplacement d’objet ou de personne, discours direct pour un verbe de déclaration, par exemple).”

²⁴ The terms “rhematicité” and “rhème” are taken from the famous Prague School of linguistics functionalism as founded by Vilém Mathesius and Jan Firbas. The term “rhème” corresponds roughly to the more familiar notion of “focus” in the Anglo-Saxon literature (barring some minor differences in definition), whereas the antonym “theme” may be translated as “topic”. It is beyond the scope of the present study to discuss the differences in usage in more detail.

²⁵ “Comme eux [= the other preverbs], ordinairement il [= *bē*] précède immédiatement le verbe, mais, comme eux, il peut s’en trouver séparé par un complément: *bē o pēš rōšn ēstād* (Bd 79.2), comp. *abāz o xwēših ī man nē*

infrequent, although it must be added that generally the usage of preverbs (such as *andar* ‘in’, *abar* ‘over, on, up’) is relatively rare. The presence of *be* modifies the meaning of the verbs in the following ways:

Table 3: A selection of frequent MP verbs and their occurrence with *be*

1. Verbs of motion

	<i>šudan</i>	<i>raftan</i>	<i>widardan</i>	<i>rasīdan</i>	<i>ōbāstan</i>
without <i>be</i>	go (to: + <i>ō</i>)	walk, march	pass	arrive	fall (to: + <i>ō</i>)
with <i>be</i>	go away (to: + <i>ō</i>)	set off, march off	pass by, cross over	attain (+ <i>abar</i>)	fall off

2. Verbs of activity

	<i>hištan</i>	<i>zadan</i>	<i>nimūdan</i>	<i>dīdan</i>	<i>guftan</i>	<i>kardan</i>
without <i>be</i>	let go	hit, strike	show, indicate	see	say	make, do
with <i>be</i>	abandon, neglect	combat, fight	show, reveal	see (at that moment)	recite	1. remove 2. complete 3. make, elevate (to a higher degree)

Most recently, JÜGEL (2013) also discussed the multi-faceted functions and meanings of the particle *be* in Middle Persian and its continuation in later Persian. His conclusion is that the different, often contradictory meanings probably point to different origins for which he provides several possible etymologies (cf. GERSHEVITCH 1964: 92 f.):

1. IE adverb / preposition **b^he* >> Ir. **ba-id* (+ emphatic **id*) > MP *bē*,
2. IE emphatic particle **b^he/b^ho* >> **ba-id* > MP *bē*,
3. Ir. **āpa-id* > MP *abē*.

All these forms would then have coalesced. One implication is that every case has to be studied individually.

The problem with the proposed etymologies for MP *be* (or New Persian *bi-*, for that matter) is that none of the suggested preforms can be shown in Old Persian, and even the constituent elements, i.e. **ba* and **id*, are not found in the Old Persian corpus of inscriptions, which, admittedly, is somewhat limited and often repetitive in nature. Unfortunately, the Pahlavi and Manichaean scripts that are used to write Middle Persian do not allow us to distinguish word-final short or long vowels (i.e. [i]/[i:] or [e]/[e:]), which would be helpful in establishing the most likely etymology (the different transcriptions *be*, *bē* reflect this ambiguity). Only in New Persian we may differentiate the length and also quality of the final front vowel in the verbal preverb *bī-*, preposition *bī(h)* ‘to, near’ and the nominal prefix *bē-* (‘outside, out-’). As the verbal preverb *bī-* is always stressed,²⁶ the short *-ī* is genuine and derives from Old Persian / Old Iranian short **i*.

rasēnd (Bd 66.18). D’autre part la présence de *bē* devant le verbe exclut celle de l’un quelconque des autres préverbes, tout comme ceux-ci s’excluent mutuellement.”.

²⁶ In an unstressed syllable, the vowel could also reflect a long vowel that became shortened afterwards.

Finally, JOSEPHSON (2013) also refers to the appearance of *be* in the subjunctive of late Middle / New Persian. According to her interpretation (which is similar to earlier ones, cf. NYBERG 1974/I: 46f.; JOSEPHSON 1993: 117ff; MACKINNON 1977: 16), the preverb *be* means ‘out’ ‘with the secondary meaning of completion. It is found in classical MP as a lexical item ‘out’ which combines with verbs to give new lexical meanings, e.g. *šudan* ‘go’ when collocated with the preverb *be* as *be šudan* means ‘go out, leave, exit’; *kardan* ‘to make’ with *be* as *be kardan* ‘carry out, complete’; *guftan* ‘say’ together with *be* as *be guftan* ‘recite’” (JOSEPHSON 2013: 69). Etymologically, though, *be* with the meaning of ‘out’ is unrelated to the preverbal *be* in these cited cases.²⁷ The adverb *be* ‘out’ (= Manichaean MP ‘by’) is identical to New Persian *bē*.²⁸ Purely synchronically viewed, we might arguably accept her interpretation of *be* ‘out’ becoming a marker of completion in some of the cited verbs (the term “perfective” appears to be intentionally avoided).²⁹ However, notably, the verb *guftan* ‘to say’ / *be guftan* (+ direct object, i.c. prayer, sim.) ‘recite’ does not agree with her explanation (cf. Russian *skazat’* ‘to say, tell’ / *vy-skazat’* ‘to speak out’): *be guftan* does not refer to the completion of the saying, but it is either intentional (e.g. wishing to say a prayer), or at least, it indicates some kind of “emphasis” or “rhematicité” (as discussed above).

Still, at least in one specific instance we may infer the origin of *be*, viz. in its occurrences with the verb *šudan*, which is well attested in both Middle and Old Persian. In those instances where the destination is specified, *šudan* is always accompanied by *be*, followed by the preposition *ō*:

- Ardā Wirāz (ed. VAHMAN 1986) 38:17ff. *ōy druwand mard kē pad zīndagān waran-kāmagihā ud abārōnīhā be ō zan ī šōymand was šud* ‘that wicked man who while living went very often to married women lecherously and sinfully’;
- Bundahišn (cit. by LAZARD 1986: 248f.) *ka andar ō āb ōftēd ayāb abganend tēz bē ō bun ī āb šawēd* ‘when he falls or they throw it in the water, it goes quickly to the bottom of the water’;
- Dādestān ī Dēnīg (ed. JAAFARI-DEHAGHI 1998) 18:1 *ruwān ī ahlawān ud ruwān ī druwandān ka be ō mēnōgān šawēnd ēg-išān ohrmazd ud ahreman be abāyēd dīd <ast ī> ayāb nē?* ‘when the soul of the righteous and the wicked go to the spiritual world, is it possible for them to see Ohrmazd and Ahriman or not?’.

MP *šudan be ō* ... ‘go to...’ is clearly the continuation of Old Persian patterns like the following passages (ed. SCHMITT 1991):

- DB I 40 f.: *pasāva kāra haruva hamičiya abava hacā Kambūjiya abi avam ašiyava* ‘Afterwards all the people became rebellious from Cambyses (and) went (over) to him [= Gaumata],’. 79 f.: *pasāva kāra haya Bābiruviya haruva abi avam Nadintabairam ašiyava*

²⁷ The explanation is also disproved by the New Persian data: “Eu égard [sic] à ces exemples, on ne peut souscrire à l’argument de MacKinnon pour qui l’exclusion réciproque entre *bi-* et un complément directionnel est due au sens premier du préverbe moyen-persé *bē*, « hors de ». Même si cela explique que *bi-* exclut d’autres préverbes, il n’y a aucune raison à ce qu’une phrase ne puisse pas mentionner un déplacement “hors d’un lieu” vers un autre. La raison de cette exclusion est à chercher ailleurs : lorsqu’il n’est pas fait mention d’une destination, c’est le verbe de déplacement qui reste le centre du thème” (LENEPVEU-HOTZ 2012: 286).

²⁸ This may be derived from OP *apa* ‘off, away’ + *idā* ‘here’. For an overview of other, previous reconstructions, cf. JÜGEL (2013: 33f.).

²⁹ This is perhaps semantically comparable to the use of the Russian perfectivizing preverb *vy-* ‘out’ in *éxat’* ‘to go’ / *vy-exat’* ‘to go out, depart’, *stroit’* ‘to build’ / *vy-stroit’* ‘to arrange, form up’.

‘Afterwards the Babylonian people, all (of them), **went (over) to that** Nidintu-Bēl’. The precise destination is preceded by *abi avam*.

Cf. DB I 32-34: *pasāva Kambūjiya Mudrāyam ašiyava, yaθā Kambūjiya Mudrāyam ašiyava, pasāva kāra arīka abava utā drauga dahyauvā vasai abava* ‘Afterwards Cambyses **went off to** Egypt; when Cambyses **had set out** for Egypt, after that the people became disloyal and falsehood grew greatly in the land’. In this case, only the direction of the going is indicated by the accusative case of *Mudrāyam* ‘Egypt’.

It thus seems likely that the composite MP *be* *ō* goes back to OP *abi avam*. From this expression, a preposition (or indirect object marker, see below) *ō* may have been abstracted in Middle Persian. The demonstrative-personal pronoun (accusative sg.) *avam* developed into Middle Persian *ō*. This *ō* acquired the function of directional preposition (or complement), after the formal disappearance of the accusative case *-am*.³⁰ The directional function, formerly indicated by this accusative, was subsequently taken over by *ō*.³² This may remove the doubt expressed by MACKENZIE (1968: 255): “by [the Judaeo-Persian correspondence of MP *be*, NP *bi-*] is scarcely from Ar. *bi*, or a survival from OIr. *abi*; it could be a specialization of the particle, Pahl. *BR*’, used to strengthen the preposition *ō*, as *be* *ō*.” The origin of *bi-* from **abi* may also explain the distribution of *bi-* in early New Persian: not only is *bi-* absent when there are other preverbs, but it is also absent when the clause contains the preposition *bi*, which is etymologically identical to the preverbal *bi-*, e.g. *az Makka* [preverb] *bi-gurēxtand wa* [preposition] *bi Madīna raftand* ‘they fled from Mecca and went to Medina’.

It is beyond the scope of this contribution to discuss all the other aspects of MP *be*, NP *bi-* (especially in the senses of contrast or separation, which indeed, may go back to OP *apa-* ‘off’, or even to *apiy* ‘thereto, too’³³). At least, some of the functions may be explained by the broad range of semantic nuances already displayed by OP *abi* (and of course also of Av. *abi*, Bactrian *αβο*, Skt. *abhi*, etc.).³⁴ If OP *abi* indeed evolved into a marker of

³⁰ In Old Persian, as in many (older) Indo-European languages, the accusative case can also indicate direction.

³¹ As shown recently by PAUL (2013: 187ff.) in his excursus, *ō* is actually not only found as part of a directional complement (with *bē/be*), but it also regularly marks the (definite) indirect object. The etymological connection with the pronoun *ōy* ‘he, she, that’ was probably no longer perceived.

³² The enclitic particle *apiy* is surely continued in the Middle Persian “hortative” particle *hēb* (Manichaean MP *hyb*, Inscriptional Parthian *hyp*), from (*h*)*ē* optative 3rd sg. of ‘to be’ + enclitic *-b* < OP subjunctive 3rd sg. *ahatīy* ‘let it be’ and *apiy*. The last element is more likely to be *apiy*, rather than an unattested OP particle **ba* (as cited in SIMS-WILLIAMS 1996: 184).

³³ This can be attributed to the (Indo-)Iranian conflation of originally two different Indo-European forms, viz. **mb^hi* ‘around’ and **ob^hi* ‘near to, by’. The regular (Indo-)Iranian outcome of these preforms **mb^hi* and **ob^hi* was identical, resulting in homonymous **abi* (and Skt. *abhi*), on which see, for instance, MAYRHOFER (1992/I: 91f.). Complicating the matter further, the later outcome of Old Persian particle *patiy* ‘against, in, on’ may have partially merged with *bi-* (< OP *abiy*) during the New Persian period. The grammatical functions of OP *patiy* are similar to those of *abiy* (preposition, prefix), and even similar meanings (although depending on the case: accusative, instrumental or locative). The difference between OP *patiy* and *abiy* is still maintained in Judaeo-Persian and Pahlavi texts (Old Persian *patiy* > Pahl. *pad*, Judaeo-Persian *p’* and Old Persian *abiy* > Pahl. *bē*, Judaeo-Persian *by*). As observed by LAZARD (1986: 246f.), Pahl. *bē*, Judaeo-Persian *by* is always employed with verbs of movement (‘go’, ‘bring’, ‘arrive’, ‘send’, ‘come’, sim.), but Pahl. *pad*, Judaeo-Persian *p’* is used more widely: *pad/p’* is also found with verbs such ‘to command’, ‘to accept’, and it has other syntactical functions (indicating

specification,³⁵ viz. of the intention or destination stated by the speaker (most noticeable in the verbs of movement), it is perhaps not a great leap to assume that it was ultimately also grammaticalised in the verbal system as an aspectual / modal particle (besides its function as locational preposition in Persian) in instances where it indicated the intention of the speaker (→ subjunctivity) or the goal of the action (→ perfectivity).

Pashto *wá-* seems to be particularly similar to early New Persian *bi-* in terms of its function and usage, and the identical manner of stressing may suggest that the function of Pashto *wá-* has been borrowed from Persian. This is perhaps not quite surprising: modern Iranian languages such as Balochi,³⁶ Kumzari, and the so-called Iranian “dialects” spoken in Central Iran, which have had culturally close relations with New Persian for centuries, show a similar usage of a preverbal particle (*bi-*, *be-*, or similar) as a marker of intention of the goal in the mind of the speaker (envisaging its completion).

A similar usage of this preverbal **abi* may also be found in the older East Iranian languages, Chorasmian *f'* and Sogdian *-βy*, which SIMS-WILLIAMS (1996: 183f.) connects to Persian *bi-*. The similarity of the usage of *f'* in Chorasmian and *-βy* in Sogdian makes it likely that they are related to each other: Chorasmian *f'* and Sogdian *-βy* are found exclusively in negative sentences. SIMS-WILLIAMS’ reasoning for their connection to Persian *bi-* is that “all these particles are typically used in sentences referring to the past or future rather than to the present” (SIMS-WILLIAMS 1996: 185).

5. Conclusions

5.1 Pashto *wá-* & *ba/bə* ~ Persian *bi-*

As shown above, the Pashto aspectual / modal markers *wá-* and *ba/bə* are instrumental in the specification of the external circumstances under which an event or action is taking place. The enclitic particle *ba/bə* expresses the sequence of the events that:

- a. are taking place (with the present tense),
- b. took place, stressing their habituality / repetitiveness (with the past tense).

This sequentiality can be construed as disengagement from the current situation (as postulated by LAZARD and SEPTFONDS).

The preverbal marker *wá-* (or its equivalents: a different / differently accented verbal stem) on the other hand, adds a nuance of subjectivity, i.e. uncertainty, on the completion of the

location, circumstance or instrument) as well. The reason why this distribution cannot be shown in (early) New Persian texts is probably simply due to the fact that the voiceless *p* {پ} was not distinguished from voiced *b* {ب} in the Arabic script of these New Persian manuscripts (LAZARD 1986: 250f.). The exclusively directional use of *bē/be* is further confirmed by an exhaustive study of Judaeo-Persian documents by PAUL 2003.

³⁴ There is a parallel in Bactrian: the preposition αβο frequently marks a (human) direct object (SIMS-WILLIAMS 2007: 185).

³⁵ As in modern Persian, the particle *bi-* (or variants such as *be-*) marks the imperative and subjunctive, but it is omitted in complex verbs. Moreover, *bi-/be-* is also used in the past subjunctive to convey counterfactuality (doubt, wish, unreal conditions), e.g. *nake ōda be-rapt-ēn-ā* ‘I wish I had gone there’. In subordinate clauses it may be found as well to indicate the iterative past, e.g. *puč wa nān masrap-ē ki man bi-dāšt-ēn-un mnā dāt* ‘he gave me clothes, food, and [other] consumables that [= *kī*] I needed’ (JAHANI / KORN 2009: 661, 674).

event: it specifies the intention or expectation of the speaker that the event may take place (with the formal present) or it has taken place singularly in concreto (with the past). The implication is also that, in the mind of the speaker, there is a connection between the present event and the event in past or future respectively.

With regard to the origin of the two particles, *ba/bə* may be connected to the Avestan particle *apaiia*, which seems to indicate a following event ('then'). To this comparison we can add Khwarezmian *b'*, which signals a new (contrastive) event. In the case of the preverbal, stressed *wá-*, it strongly suggests a connection with Persian *bi-*, which may have originally specified the destination or intention of the speaker, going back to **abi* 'near to; by'. The Pashto usage of *wá-* has probably been introduced from Persian, or, at the very least, it has been strongly influenced by the employment of *bi-* in early New Persian.

5.2 The Pashto prospective

The data suggest a positive answer to the main question of whether we can indeed assign the category of prospective to Pashto. Of all the verbal categories with / without *ba/bə* and / or *wá-* discussed above, it appears that the construction of the present tense with *ba/bə* and *wá-* (often labelled "perfective / subjunctive future", see Table 1) renders the category of prospective most closely. As defined by JOHANSON (2000: 36), the prospective "presents a non-realized event as foreseen (expected, intended, predicted, etc.) at some O [O = present time, nunc]." This definition clearly matches the description given by DAVID (2014: 275) for the Pashto construction, viz. "an unrealized event that is expected to happen". JOHANSON (ibid.) adds that "[T]his projection into the future can be interpreted as relative posteriority ("conceived time"), though many +PRO[SPECTIVE] items have modal (epistemic) shades of meaning, presenting the occurrence as less certain". Again, this also applies to the Pashto case. To put it more succinctly, the prospective comprises two components, viz. futurity (i.e. of the event) and expectancy (as expressed by the speaker). For Pashto, futurity is implied by the present tense modified by the particle of sequentiality *ba/bə*, while expectancy is conveyed by the specification marker *wá-*.

Abbreviations

Av.	Avestan	MP	Middle Persian	Pahl.	Pahlavi
Bd	Bundahishn (MP text)	OIr.	Old Iranian	perf.	perfective
DB	Behistun inscriptions under Darius	OP	Old Persian	Yt	Yasht (Avestan text)
		NP	New Persian	Skt.	Sanskrit
imperf.	imperfective				

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