

Middle Persian Transitive Preterite

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Middle Persian transitive verbs require an ergative construction in the preterite in distinction from intransitive ones which are actively construed. In the ergative construction the agent is put in the ergative (casus obliquus) and the person and number of the verbs agree with those of the 'logical object' (casus rectus). The latter point is sometimes misleading but the distinction between the ergative and the passive must be sharply drawn.¹⁾ It is interesting to note that the ergative construction is widely attested in modern Iranian languages.²⁾ In this paper I would like to discuss some problems concerned with this construction.

Middle Persian *LY*

Any reader of Middle Persian is familiar with the *uzwārišn* (Aramaic ideogram) which covers not only nouns and verbs but also 'grammatical words' such as pronouns and prepositions. In the following lines I would like to take up the *uzwārišn* used for personal pronouns.

Mid. Persian personal pronouns and their ideographic equivalents are as follows.³⁾

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. sg. $L(Y) = man$ | 1. pl. $LNH = amā$ |
| 2. sg. $LK = tō$ | 2. pl. $LKWM = ašmā$ |
| 3. sg. $'LH = ōy$ | 3. pl. $'LH-š'n = awēšān$ |

For the 1st pers. sg., *L* is the usual form in Book Pahlavi, while *LY* is met with in the Psalter and inscriptions. The origin of *L(Y)*, *LK*, $'L\overset{4)}{H}$ etc. is transparent. They represent Aramaic *ly*, *lk*, *lh* etc. which are formed by attaching pronominal suffixes to the preposition *l-*.

In the following discussion I will use *LY* to stand for the above-mentioned *uzwārišn*. It has been agreed that *LY* should be read as *man*. But to my knowledge, the exact relationship between *LY* and *man* has never been explained. We may start by examining the use of the Aramaic preposition *l-*. It is said to express 'every aspect of direction' i.e. local, temporal, modal and final. It is further used to indicate

ownership, and indirect and direct objects. A few examples will suffice.

1. *ḏny'l l-byth 'zl* 'Daniel went to his house.' (Dan. 2. 17)
2. *'nh 'tyt 'lyḵ wyhbt ly tr' byt' zylk lmbnh 'gr I tmh* 'I came to you and you have given to me the gateway of your house to build I portico (?) there.'⁶⁾
3. *'hr [ḡnh] nbwsmiskn rby' w'mr ly 'l tdhl* 'Then answered Nabusumiskun the officer and said to me.'⁷⁾
4. *'nh yhbt lky l-byt' zy yhb ly mšlm ... bdmwh[y]* 'I give you the house which Meshullam ... gave me for its price.'⁸⁾
5. *l-drywš mlk' šlm' kl'* 'To king Darius, all greetings.' (Ezra 5. 7)

Although we have an example like 4, where *l-* is used as an object marker, the basic significance of *l-* is 'direction', the English equivalents for which are 'to, for.'

Turning now to Iranian, Old Persian *mana* (or *-mai*) which is the forerunner of Mid. Persian *man* (or *-m*) is the genitive-dative 'my, to me.' E.g. DB 1.4 *mana pitā Vištāspa* 'my father is Hystaspes', DB 1.12 *Ahuramazdā xšačam mana frābara* 'Ahuramazda bestowed the kingdom upon me.' DB 1.27 *ima taya mana krtam pasāva yaθā xšāyaθya abavam* 'this is what I did after that I became a king.' Cf. also XPf 28f. *Dārayavahauš puça anyai-ci āhanta* 'Darius had other sons.'

Middle Persian *man* is used in all functions except that of subject. Its main uses may be summarized here.⁹⁾

6. direct object: *man ōzanēnd* 'they kill me.'
7. object of a preposition/ possessive modifier: *ō man* 'to me', *kanīzag ī man* 'my maid-servant'
8. ergative: *man ēn dām dād* 'I created this creature.'¹⁰⁾
9. dative: *man ... saḥēd* '(it) seems to me ...'

But in later texts we see *man* functioning as subject (casus rectus)

10. *man Šābuhr ham* 'I am Shapour', *man dānēm* 'I know.'

While in Old Persian *mana* the function of the genitive and the dative appears side by side, that of the genitive is lost in Mid. Persian *man*. Indeed we find such an example as *cis ī man frazandān* 'the conditions of my children', but man by itself can never be a genitive in its own right. The condition which defines *man* as genitive is nothing but the context in which it appears.¹¹⁾

Note in passing that Mid. Persian knows another *uzwārišn* for the 1st pers. sg., namely 'NH which comes from Aramaic 'nh('nā) 'I'. How to read this *uzwārišn* is

debatable among Iranists (*az* may be preferred¹²⁾). Originally this *az* was used as casus rectus but later it became obsolete and was replaced by *man*. In Parthian the distinction between *az* and *man* was strictly observed and never confounded¹³⁾.

Since Aramaic *ly* clearly signifies 'to me, for me', it is reasonable to assume that the Iranian equivalent *man* must also have the same or close meaning. Where does the point of contact lie between *ly* and *man*? We have seen four uses of *man* above. Of the four the second use is the case where *man* is used with a preposition or *ezāfe* (*ī*), and this use can be excluded from our comparison, since *man* is here dependent upon the preceding word. The first use can also be found with Aramaic *ly* (see 4), but this use seems to be too peripheral in Aramaic to be introduced into Mid. Persian. As far as the third and the fourth uses are concerned, the dative and the ergative are very close in function. Cf. the parallelism between *u-m brād ast* 'I have a brother' and *u-m ēn kard* 'I did this.'¹⁴⁾ But in Mid. Persian while the dative is for the most part replaced by periphrastic expressions with *ō*, *pad* etc., and the use of the dative as an independent case is rather rare, the ergative is used exclusively as an independent case (=agent). In view of this, it is clear that it was for *man* with the dative-ergative, especially ergative function that Aramaic *ly* was used.

This consideration is of some importance to O. Klíma's recent argument¹⁵⁾. According to him P. Horn was the first to have seen the true nature of Old Persian *mana kartam*, translating this by 'mein Gethanes'¹⁵⁾. But to my mind the fact is not so. Klíma says, 'Die Bildungen *manā kartam* und *-maiṯ kartam* sind ihrer Struktur nach Nominalsätze, in denen das Prädikat ein passives Partizip, das Subjekt aber infolge der passivischen Bedeutung des Prädikats ein Agens ist, und zwar im Genitiv: *manā, piçā*.'¹⁷⁾ What he means by 'Nominalsätze' and 'Genitiv' is summed up in his 'literal' translations of the two Mid. Persian sentences.¹⁸⁾ He renders *Husrav amat* and *Husrav guft* into Latin by 'Chosroes venit' and 'Chosrois dictum' respectively. I cannot understand why the two complete sentences, which differ only in that one is intransitive and the other is transitive, are rendered in one case by a complete Latin sentence and in the other by a phrase! What, then, will the translation of *man kart* be? As we saw above Mid. Persian *man* itself does not have the function of the genitive independently, so the translation 'meum factum' can never be justified. The absurdity of the translation 'Chosrois dictum' becomes

more apparent when we consider the above-cited sentence (8) *man ēn dām dād*. Could this be translated as 'my creation of this creature'? It should be a complete sentence! Klíma should know that the Mid. Persian transitive preterite is not nominal but certainly verbal.

Furthermore, Klíma says on Mid. Persian *man kart* that 'das logische Subjekt (Agens) ist der ehemalige Genitiv ...'¹⁹⁾ I think the wording 'der ehemalige Genitiv' needs qualification. Old Persian *mana* has both the genitive and the dative functions, besides which in the expression *mana kartam* we can see the emergence of the ergative which is close to the dative. In view of the fact that this dative-ergative function became prevalent later in Mid. Iranian times, the wording 'der ehemalige Dativ' would better suit the historical development.

Though citing E. Benveniste,²⁰⁾ he shows his lack of understanding of the true character of the Mid. Persian transitive preterite which is ergatively constructed. I believe that the discovery of the ergative construction in Old (and Middle) Persian should be credited not to P. Horn but to E. Benveniste.

Some notes on Manichaean Middle Persian

Although M. Boyce's *A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian*²¹⁾ is indispensable to any student of Mid. Iranian, it contains misleading or even erroneous glosses.

The very first text (a. 1) begins with this sentence: *dyn 'yg nm wcyd 'c 'b'ryg'n dyn 'y pyšyng'n pd dh xyr fr'y 'wd wyhdr 'st* 'the religion which I chose is more excellent and better in ten respects than the other religions of the ancients.' Here *dyn 'yg nm wcyd* is glossed by (literally)' the religion which by me was chosen.' This kind of 'literal' translation can be found almost everywhere in the whole body of the texts. Other examples are as below.

(b. 2) *xrd 'wd d'nyšn 'yg rw'ncynylh, 'ym 'c h'n nrjmyg pdyrypt hynd* 'the wisdom and knowledge for the gathering of souls, which-by-me (*ī-m*) was received from that Narjamig.'

(b. 3) *'wd 'ym xyr 'y nrjmyg 'w nm ncyst, 'ygmw mwyšt 'w pydr 'wd 'wystiv'r'n gw'n 'wd ncyh'n. 'wš'n, k' 'xšyd, wdymwšt hwd hynd* 'and this thing which by Narjamig to me was taught, then-by-me it was begun speaking and teaching (it) ... and when by them it was heard, ...'

(n. 1) *'wš dst 'hmwnc ny šwst* 'and by him the hand(s) were not yet washed.'

It is useless to repeat Benveniste's argument for the possessive/ergative character of Mid. Persian transitive preterite, but brief notes will be useful. Firstly we must note that in Mid. Persian there is a passive form morphologically assured by the specific suffix *-yh(-yhystrn)*.²²⁾ Secondly as we saw above, Mid. Persian *mn* does not have a meaning which may be translated as 'by me'. If we take into account (b.3) *nrjmyg 'w mn ncyt*, the situation will become clearer. Here *nrjmyg* does not take any suffix which may indicate 'casus obliquus', which is completely identical with 'casus rectus'! There are, in fact, no criteria for distinguishing between the two, since by this time Old Persian nominative and genitive-dative had completely fused in the singular. Therefore the translation 'by Narjamig' is quite without foundation. It should be borne in mind that, as Klimov states,²³⁾ the ergative is never felt as the passive in the consciousness of the speaker of this construction. Thus the ergative construction should be translated by the active even in 'literal' renderings into any active language.

(h. 8) has the following passage : *ps dw gyyg nzd gwš 'st'd, pd gwyšn 'y xwš wypt, 'w gy'g 'y dwr nyyd, 'wš 'wzd, gnzyš 'pwrđ* 'Then two thieves stood at (his) car. He was deceived by sweet speech (i.e. their words). He was led to a distant place and was killed by them (lit. him), and his treasure was taken away.'²⁴⁾ In addition to the above-mentioned misconception of the ergative, Boyce explains *'wš 'wzd* by 'and (he) was killed by them (lit. him)', assuming an error (?) on the part of the MS. It seems strange to me that *'wzd* alone should express the agent in the sequence of transitive verbs which do not express it. If we take *-š* to be the agent, it must be *-š'n* as Boyce herself admits.²⁵⁾ But I would rather regard this *-š* as the object which might have been transferred from the present tense which is active in form. This suggestion is supported by the following considerations. (h. 7) has *h'n dyw wyybyd, 'wš 'wznyd* 'That demon deceives (him) and kills him.' 'Kill' is strictly *'wz(ny)[d]*²⁶⁾ and *-ny-* is not clear but the reading seems to be confirmed by the preceding present form *wyybyd* 'deceives'. If so, the agent is not needed here and *-š* must be looked upon as the object, which Boyce does.²⁷⁾ In view of the fact that (h. 8) immediately follows (h. 7), I believe that (h. 8) *'wš 'wzd* rightly expresses '(they) killed him.' Besides, *w'xtynd* in (j.1) *'wd w'xtynd kw ...*, as Boyce justly explains, is a later form which replaced the regular *'wš'n w'xt.*²⁸⁾ This

transference or analogy is evidently based upon the present tense or the preterite of intransitive verbs. The appearance of this example may justify the analogy on the part of 'wš 'wzd.

Finally I should like to add that the ordinary paradigm given for the Mid. Persian preterite of transitive verbs, namely *man kard*, *tō kard*, *ōy kard*, etc. shows only one aspect of their conjugation. The complete paradigm should run as follows.

the person of the nominative	ergative (casus obl.)	nominative (casus rec.)	verb
1. sg.	E*	<i>man(az)</i>	<i>kušt ham</i> 'someone killed me,' etc.
2. sg.	E	<i>tō</i>	<i>kušt hē</i>
3. sg.	E	<i>ōy</i>	<i>kušt</i>
1. pl.	E	<i>amā</i>	<i>kušt hēm</i>
2. pl.	E	<i>ašmā</i>	<i>kušt hēd</i>
3. pl.	E	<i>awēšān</i>	<i>kušt hēnd</i>

*E=ergative which varies according to the person of the agent

(*man*, *tō*, *ōy*, *amā*, *ašmā*, *awēšān* or *-m*, *-t*, *-š*, *-mān*, *-tān*, *-šān*)

Notes

- 1) See Noda, 'On the Old Persian construction *mana kertam*' (in Japanese), *The Journal of the Faculty of Literature, Nagoya University*, 70, 1977, pp.51—59, arguing for Benveniste's theory (BSL 48, 1952, pp.52—62=*Problèmes de linguistique générale*(I), Paris, 1966, pp.176—186)
- 2) Most recently, D. Édél'man, *Voprosy jazkoznanija*, 1974, 1, pp.23—33
- 3) Transcription of Mid. Persian is due to D. N. Mackenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*, Oxford, 1971
- 4) On 'LH see Nyberg, MO 17, 1923, pp.214—5
- 5) F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, Wiesbaden, 1968, pp.34—35. S. Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1975, p.349f.
- 6) A. Cowley(ed.), *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford, 1923 (repr. Osnabrück, 1967), No.5. 3—4
- 7) Cowley, *Aḥiqar* 54
- 8) Cowley, No.13. 2—3
- 9) C. Brunner, *A Syntax of Western Middle Iranian*, Delmar, New York, 1977, p.55f. Examples of Mid. Persian are taken from H. Nyberg, *A Manual of Pahlavi II*, Wiesbaden, 1974, p.124.
- 10) Nyberg's explanation (p.124) 'by me, as the agent of the pret. pass.' is quite misconceived, see the latter part of this paper and Noda, pp.55—6.
- 11) Nyberg, p.124

- 12) MacKenzie, p.15 (*az), P. Gignoux, *Glossaire des inscriptions pehlevies et parthes*, London, 1972, p.16 (az), Nyberg, p.16 (an, anē)
- 13) Brunner, p.57
- 14) Strictly speaking, *man* and *-m* are different in function.
- 15) O. Klíma, *Ar. Or.* 45, 1977, pp.54—58.
- 16) Klíma, p.54. Note Horn's various translations, *am kart* 'von mir (ward) gethan', *man kart* 'mein Gethanes', (*ima tyā*) *mana kartam* 'dies ist von mir Gethane.' This last translation seems to me an amalgam of the passive(verbal) and nominal. (*Grundriß der iran. Phil.*, I, II, p.148)
- 17) Klíma, p.55
- 18) Klíma, p.58.
- 19) Klíma, p.56
- 20) Klíma, p.54
- 21) *Acta Iranica* 9, Téhéran-Liège, 1975
- 22) See note 1), especially Noda, pp.56—58.
- 23) G. Klimov, *Očerok obshchej teorii ergativnosti*, Moscow, 1973, p.106.
- 24) Boyce, p.42
- 25) See her note 'them(lit. him)'
- 26) Andreas-Henning, *Mitteliranische Manichaica* II, p.305.
- 27) Boyce, p.42.
- 28) Boyce, p.42. Strictly this is Parthian but is a useful example of analogy.
- 29) E.g. C. Salemann, *Grundriß der iran. Phil.*, I, I, p.314. V. Rastorgueva, *Srednepersidskij jazyk*, Moscow, 1966, p.96. Finally I would like to thank Prof. M. Horne who was kind enough to correct my worst English, but the responsibility rests wholly upon me.

中世ペルシア語の他動詞の過去 野田 恵 剛

中世ペルシア語(MP)にはウズワーリシュン(訓読語)として多くのアラム語がとりいれられたが拙稿では人称代名詞のLYをとりあげる。LYをMPでmanとよむことは問題がないが、両者の関係は十分に考えられていない。筆者はこれをMPの他動詞の過去に用いられた能格構文と関連づけることを主張する。アラム語のlyは基本的には「私に」を意味するのでmanの用法(本文の例6~10)のうちlyで訳されうる場合は与格と能格の場合である。与格と能格は機能的に類似しているが、MPではmanは早くから独立して与格をあらわすことは少ない。これに対しmanが能格として働くときはMPをつうじて独立して用いられたので、特にこの能格に対してlyがあてられたと考えられる。

またBoyce教授のReader中には能格をby...と訳した例がおおいが、これは直訳でも能動文とすべきこと、およびh.8の'wš'wzdの-šを同教授はš'nのあやまりとみているが筆者はこれを目的語とみることを主張する。