HEIKKI PALVA

THE FORM *jāk* IN BEDOUIN NARRATIVE STYLE[1]

In his article *The Verbal Affix -k in Spoken Arabic* (1968), T. M. Johnstone launched a theory that the *-k* affixed to the perfect tense of the two commonest verbs of motion in Bukhara Arabic (*jāk* 'he came', *ḡadāk* 'he went') and the same suffix used with both the perfect and the imperfect tense of the verb *jā* 'to come' in Northern and Eastern Arabian dialects have the same morphemic provenance. According to him, they cannot be regarded as suffixed pronouns, but as deictic particles comparable with the distal *-k* element in the demonstratives *hāḏāk, hāḏōlāk,* etc. Johnstone was led to this conclusion by two important observations. Firstly, in Bukhara Arabic the verbs *jā* 'to come' and *ḡadā* 'to go' have three different forms in the 3rd person sing. of the perfect tense: masc. *jāk, jakēn, jākin; ḡadāk, ḡadākēn, ḡadākin,* fem. *jāt, jātakēn, jātakin; ḡadt, ḡadtakēn, ḡadtakin.*[2] According to W. Fischer, the suffixes *-kēn, -kin,* and *-k* derive their origins from *kāʾin.*[3] However, Johnstone calls attention to the fact that the short affix *-k* is only suffixed to the 3rd p. sing. masc., which does not have any suffixless form. Secondly, the affix *-k* occurring in the Eastern Arabian dialects studied by Johnstone is invariable, like its counterpart in Bukhara Arabic. Therefore, he considers it plausible to conclude that these affixes have the same morphemic provenance and that they cannot be regarded as pronominal suffixes.

On the other hand, Johnstone points out two differences in the form and function of the affix: in Eastern Arabian dialects,

> "unlike the *-k* affix in the Bukhārā dialects, this particle can be suffixed to both perfect and imperfect forms, and again unlike the Bukhārā dialects it has a distinct deictic function."[4]

Since Johnstone wrote his article, much additional material which sheds new light upon the feature, has been published. From the texts published by Bruce Ingham (the Āl Ḍafīr in northeastern Arabia and the Āl Murra in the Empty Quarter), Judith Rosenhouse (Galilean Bedouin), Saad A. Sowayan (Šammari Bedouin from Najd), Frank H. Stewart (Sinai Bedouin), and this writer (Jordanian Bedouin), it appears that the suffix

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[1] This is a paper read at the XIX North American Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, March 6-9, 1991.

[2] The 67 texts in Vinnikov abound in these forms; Fischer, p. 257f.

[3] Fischer, p. 257, n. 4; p. 258, n. 1.

[4] Johnstone (1968), p. 251f.

-k/-ak used with the verb *jā* actually is a common device in the Bedouin oral narrative style in Northern Arabia and the adjacent areas. Therefore it is necessary to reconsider the use of the form, especially from a stylistic point of view.

In the Bedouin dialects of the Northern Arabian type, the verb *jā* 'to come' usually occurs as a verb of motion taking, as in Classical Arabic, a direct object, e.g. *jāk* 'he came to you', *yijīk* 'he comes to you'. This is always the case when the suffixed pronoun is other than that of the 2nd p. sing. masc. *(V-k, C-ak).* On the other hand, the *-k /-ak* morpheme cannot always be interpreted as a true object marker denoting 'to you'.

The instances

Let us examine these kinds of *jā + -k* constructions attested in published texts. It may be appropriate to divide the material into different types according to different syntactic patterns:

Type 1 *jā + -k +* imperfect

Type 2 *jā + -k +* active participle

Type 3 *jā+ -k* used independently, in one-verb phrases

In all these constructions the verb *jā* is inflected in the perfect and imperfect, and it agrees in person, gender and number; more infrequently, the *-k (V-k/C-ak)* morpheme is suffixed to active participles and imperatives as well. The *-k/-ak* morpheme, on the other hand, is always invariable.

TYPE 1: *jā + -k +* IMPERFECT

The attested occurrences of Type 1 are relatively few:

Sinai Bedouin (Stewart)
15.4. *wana ajīk axaruṭha* 'and I rode her down'

The Gulf (Johnstone)
(1967), p. 168 (Qaṭar) *jāk [y]xazxiz lē wuṣal ilgaṣir* 'he came creeping till he reached the castle'

The Šammar al-Jazīra (Montagne)
IX 10 *hāḏa jāk elḥadeb xeyyāl yekedd; hāḏa eben derʿān ja xeyyāl yekedd* 'Elḥadeb vint à cheval, d'un pas rapide et Eben Derʿān de même, confiant'
IX 16 *jāk eben dreʿ menāḥi geṣṣād igūl* 'alors, Eben Dreʿ Menāḥī, un poète, improvisa'

The Šammar Najd (Sowayan)
165 *wyijūnik yḥadōn wyaǵdōn* 'so they came along, goading their camels with song and stick'
166 *wuhu yijīk ybaššr alʿwāji* 'he hurried to al-ʿWāji to bring him the good news'

204 *wuhum lak killin yāxd slāhuh wyijūnik wara rćāb al'nūz ytidahharōnuhum*
     So each one of them grabbed his weapon and ran behind the camel mounts of
     the 'Anazis. They came behind their backs...'
306 *jāk yarkid yaby addilūl ya wallah rāyhatn addilūl* 'he ran after his mount but
     found that the mount was gone'

In these cases *jā* retains its true verbal status, and the imperfect following it can be
interpreted as the predicate of an asyndetic circumstantial clause. In its form, the suffix
-k /-ak does not differ from an object marker, but from the contexts it clearly appears
that semantically it does not function as such here. Considering its semantic function,
the example from Montagne IX 10 is instructive: it implies that no difference in
meaning is found between *jāk yekedd* and *ja yekedd*. The difference lies solely on
the stylistic level. The examination of the context shows that *jāk* is used to indicate a
transition to a new action or development ('now el-Hadeb came riding a horse, at full
gallop'). When the parallel action is described ('and also Ibn Der'ān came riding a
horse, at full gallop'), the verb *jā* is used without suffix.

TYPE 2: *jā + -k + ACTIVE PARTICIPLE*

The instances are relatively numerous:

Palestinian peasants (Schmidt/Kahle)
29,3 *wajāk sāyik* 'und er trieb an'
29,4 *kām hāda ajāk fāziz wimrawwih 'albalad* 'Sofort sprang er auf seine Füsse
      und ging ihnen voran nach Hause'
38,7 *hāda ričib wajāk rāyih* 'Jener stieg auf, ritt hin,...'
38,11 *kām hāda axūh libis ihdūme w-ajāk rāyih la'indha* 'Da zog sein Bruder seine
      Kleider an und ging zu ihr'
125,24 *kāmu lifdāwīye ajūk šārdīn* 'Da liefen die Räuber davon'

Galilean Bedouin (Rosenhouse)
p. 186, line 111f. *urahhalam hattarš uhaləbyūt ujōk mšamlīn ... gallak...* 'He led the
      herds, took the tents and went off to the north... He thought'

Syrian Bedouin (Wetzstein)
p. 90, line 1 (= 21,17) *wjāk hsēn matlib 'ala lbarza* 'Hosēn kam zur Berza gelaufen'

Sinai Bedouin (Stewart)
4.2. *wsālim yjīk tāyi'* 'Salim immediately set off in pursuit'
6.9. *wana ajīk tabb alwādiy* 'I went down to the wadi'
7.1. *wihna njīk m'aggdīn* 'we set off'
9.1. *wyjīk mgōtirīn bah* 'and he went -- they went off with him'

9.8. *wnjīk m'aggdīn* 'and we set off'

11.8. *uhū yjīk m'āwid* 'and he went back' (cf. 8.7. without -*k*)

13.1. *whum yjūk kāttīn* 'and they rode off downstream'

16.5. *whū yjīk miglī' bay* 'and he took me away'

The Gulf (Johnstone)

(1964), p. 104, lines 1-2 (Dōsiri, Kuwait) *šaddēna 'a rikābna wijīnāk im'awwidī(n)* 'we loaded on to our camels and back we came'

(1968), p. 251 (Qaṭar) *wiyjūnik āl xalīfa mṭaršīn 'ala jāsim* 'then came the Āl Xalīfa (of Bahrain) sending envoys to Jāsim'

The Šammar Najd (Sowayan)

042   *yōm xaḏāhum, wyijīk minćif* 'he plundered them and turned back'

058   *wyāxiḏhum wyijīk minćif* 'he headed back home'

105   *wuhu yarćibah wyijīk miṭlibhum* 'he rode her and rushed after them'

106   *wyijīk lāḥiġhum ṭāni nōbih* 'so he came after them for a second time'

255   *wyijīk minćfin bihin* 'he drove them back home'

257   *wihi tijīk fāz'atin ma' alliġf* 'they came through al-liġf in answer to the call'

391   *wyijūnak bhalgēḏ alḥamar msīmīnin 'alēhin* 'they pushed on in the scorching heat of summer time, urging their mounts'

The verb *jā* occurs either in the perfect or imperfect, and the form preceded by it is the active participle of a verb of motion or a verb closely related to this category. In this construction the verb *jā* is obviously not used in the meaning 'to come', but rather as an ingressive auxiliary modifying verbs of motion, either as an ingressive present or an ingressive past tense, without subsequent duration. In Palestinian narratives, according to J. Blau, *aja* is only used as an expletive (Füllwort) which simply renders the active participle a past time function.[5]

As a matter of fact, *jā* + active participle (without -*k*) is used relatively often in this function in oral narrative style, e.g.

Palva (1976), 37 *uyəji nāčes* 'then he came back'

40 *yəsḥab ḥālo wyəji māši* 'then he left'

Palva, Balqa/Jordan III 7 *aju gāṣdīn bāb alla w-māddīn* 'they set off and started their long journey'

III 20   *haḏōla 'aju migfīn* 'they started back'

XIV 28 *waja muṭlib warāha* 'he rushed after her'

Schmidt/Kahle 89,11 *ḵām hāḏa aja rāyiḥ 'abar 'assulṭān* 'da machte er sich auf und ging zum Sultan hinein'

39,10 *jabad sēfe waja fāzi' 'ala sa'īd ḍarabe bissēf kaṭa' rāse* 'er zog sein Schwert, eilte auf Sa'īd los und schlug auf ihn mit dem Schwerte und hieb den Kopf ab'

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[5] Blau, pp. 102 and 130.

The use of *jā/aja* as an ingressive auxiliary is well attested in many texts covering a great area. In the sedentary dialects of Greater Syria it is used side by side with *ʾām (qām)*, but the normal construction there is perfect + perfect or imperfect + imperfect: *ʾām rāḥ* 'then he left'; *ʾəža katab* 'then he wrote'; *biʾūm birūḥ, byəži byəktob*. On the other hand, as pointed out by J. Blau, *jāʾa* and other verbs of motion are also used with predicative participles of verbs of motion in Old Classical Arabic, e.g. *jāʾa wāridan, iḥtamala rājiʿan, xaraja sāʾiran, xaraja muqbilan, inṣarafa mudbiran*.[6]

Since the verb *jā* in these constructions does not have the status of a true verb, the morpheme *-k/-ak* suffixed to it cannot be interpreted as an object marker. From an analysis of the contexts it also appears that even though the *-k/-ak* suffix does not add anything to the meaning[7], the forms with and without the suffix are not freely interchangeable. The use of the suffix regularly concurs with a transition to a new action or development, but it is optional, whereas in all other contexts only suffixless forms are used, e.g. *jīnāk. yōm jīna grayyib [...] wmār njiy nliff [...]* 'Well, we arrived. When we got near [...] and we went on and round [...]' (Stewart 6.1).

In Sowayan's text there are two interesting passages in which the less dramatic form *jāk* is transformed to the equivalent descriptive imperative. As is well known, the verb *jā* is normally not inflected in the imperative. In this text, the imperative of the verb **ʾata/ʾita* is therefore used,[8] and the *-ak* is suffixed to it:

056 *wītak msannid* 'so, he turned west'

101 *irćab alfaras wītak lāḥiġhum* 'he got on his horse and rode after them'

The fact that the incomplete paradigm of *jā* can be complemented with forms of a synonymous verb seems to imply that the verb *jā*, even when used as an ingressive auxiliary, yet does not wholly lose its character as a verb of motion. As in all other cases under discussion, the use of the *-k/-ak* suffix is optional here as well, as appears from the following example in which the narrator makes use of a series of descriptive imperatives all beginning with a consecutive *w-*:[9]

Sowayan 036f. *wgum, ṭāl ʿimrak, winṣ haluh. warsil haka-lʿabīd, ant ya-bin gdūr, wītaw annāgat witliġwah [...] wxūḍuwah* 'He got up, may your life be long, and went straight home. Ibn Gdūr sent certain slaves who came to the camel and set it loose [...] and took it'

TYPE 3: *jā + -k* USED INDEPENDENTLY, IN ONE-VERB PHRASES

Like Type 2, this type also occurs relatively frequently:

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[6] Reckendorf, p. 263f.

[7] According to Fischer, the *-k* suffix does not change the meaning of the verb in the Bukhara Arabic forms *jāk* and *ġadāk*, Fischer, p. 257 n. 4.

[8] Cf. Johnstone (1961), p. 263: only imperfect (*yātī*) and imperative are used; the latter always seems to be used in conjunction with *w-: w-it* 'come'.

[9] Cf. Abboud, p. 89; Palva (1977), pp. 17-21.

Jordanian Bedouin (Palva)

(1976) 43 nəjīk bəlli ṣār warā[h] 'we shall tell you what happened behind them'

46 nəjīk əbhaḏōla 'now we shall come back to those (other men)'

57 nəjīk əbʿabdalla 'now we come back to ʿAbdalla'

Sinai Bedouin (Stewart)

3.1. wana ajīk warāh 'I set off after him'

6.1. jīnāk. yōm jīna grayyib... 'Well, we arrived. When we got near...'

7.3. whummah yirkabaw ʿazámilhum, wyjinnak bhummah 'They mounted their riding camels, and the camels brought them to the spot.'

11.7. wyjīk lannugṭah 'and he went straight to the police post'

14.1. whum yjūk 'so off they went'

16.5. wyjīk wylaggiy bay ʿa-almarkaz 'and he took me to the government center'

17.1. wyjīk bayī 'so he went off with me'

The Gulf (Johnstone)

(1968), p. 251 wiyōk fī ḏīč ilbāxira uwaddōh 'then they came in that ship and took him away'

(1968), p. 251 (Qaṭar) ...(wuṣal ilgaṣir) wiyijīk 'and then he came'

The Āl Murra (Ingham)

(1986b), p. 284, l. 17 jāk aba lxēṭān ṭimmalē lfwād 'then along came Aba al-Khaiṭān and there was the heart'

p. 284, l. 22 jāk billəhama 'he brought the piece of meat along'

The Šammar al-Jazīra (Montagne)

VI 1 jawk ʿeneze werkebow reʿeb ǧeneim ebenbeker ʿala berrešīd 'voilà que les ʿAnezé envoyèrent en délégation Ǧeneim Eben Beker auprès d'Eben Rešīd'

VIII 2f. haḏak jāk emḥammed 'voilà que vint Mḥammed'

IX 3f. hāḏa jāk eben derʿān men rebʿ elḥadeb menaʿ xeyyāl 'Survint Eben Derʿān, du parti d'Elḥadeb'

IX 6 āk elḥadeb gāl 'Elḥadeb vint alors'

The Šammar Najd (Sowayan)

300 yijīk hiḏlūl wuhu yaḥarf aḏḏilūl bwajhahum 'Hiḏlūl swung his mount to face them'

557 wyijīk siʿdūn wyazʿaj luh haka-ṣṣlibi yamm almaʿārih 'so, you see, Siʿdūn sent a Ṣlibi to the battlefield'

Although the geographical distribution of the occurrences of Type 3 constructions is very uneven, the number of instances is far too small to justify speculations about eventual differences in the use of the feature in different dialect areas; rather than dialect

differences, the distribution probably reflects personal styles of individual narrators.

Apart from a few cases in the Šammari texts (Sowayan 300 and 557, probably Montagne VI 1 and IX 6 as well) the verb *jā* in Type 3 most often retains its status as a true verb. As in the cases discussed above, here too the *-k* suffix is no object marker, and its use implies a transition to a new action or development.

The *-k/-ak* morpheme under discussion can even be suffixed to active participles. The two examples which I have come across occur in texts published by Ingham, one from the northeastern Arabian tribe of Āl Ḍafīr, the other from the Āl Murra of the Empty Quarter:

Āl Ḍafīr, Ingham (1986a), p. 57, l. 14f. *wlawinn dġayyim jāyak assēf biḏrāʿu* 'up he [Dġayyim] came with his sword cradled in his arm'

Āl Murra, Ingham (1986b), p. 283 *wʿaššaw wila ba xēṭān jayyik maʿih šōḥaṭ imsawwīha miṯil rumḥ wiyjīk* 'in the evening, there was Aba Khaiṭān coming with a *šōḥaṭ* stick, carrying it like a lance and approaching'

Morphologically, this construction is by no means exceptional, since active participles are regularly used in verbal function and are freely suffixed with object markers.[10]

Discussion

Johnstone's observation of the invariability of the *-k* morpheme still holds true in light of the texts published since he wrote his article. However, although this *-k* cannot be regarded as a true object marker, the invariability does not necessarily imply that it cannot be a suffixed pronoun. Thus, according to Sowayan, in his Šammari text

'the narrative context clearly shows that the *-k* refers to the addressed person but in the sense that *yijīk* means 'he comes for you, for your sake'. Actually, the meaning is simply 'he came', but expressed with courtesy to the listener, or with what we might call the *-k* of courtesy'.[11]

Sowayan thus suggests that the function of the *-k/-ak* morpheme resembles that of the ethic dative. As pointed out by Sowayan, both can be omitted without any change in the meaning. However, the omission does involve the disappearance of one of the traits characteristic of oral narrative style: the social link between the narrator and the listeners, created by a number of different means such as direct address, rhetoric question, actualizing comparison, gesticulation, intonation, etc.

The personal pronouns suffixed to the preposition *l-* of the ethic dative can refer either to persons of the narrative or to the listener(s). In the latter case an interesting feature can be noticed: the suffixed pronoun of the 2nd p. sing. masc. may be used irrespective of the sex of the addressed person and the number of the listeners.[12]

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[10] In some Bedouin dialects, the nominal and verbal functions are distinguished by using *tanwīn* before object marker: *ḍarbo* (nom.), *ḍarbinno* (verb).

[11] Sowayan, p. 63.

[12] See, e.g., Rosenhouse, p. 186, l. 111f. *ujōk mšamlīn...gallak* 'and [they] went to the north... He thought'; narrated to a female listener, cf. p. 198, l. 86: *mā tesmaʿi balxaḍra?* 'Haven't you heard of Xaḍra?' As a matter of fact, there are several other forms which have become ossified and are always used

Thus the invariability of the -k/-ak suffixed to the verb jā is no unique phenomenon. The schematic use of the same suffix in the ethic dative is particularly frequent in the Najdi Šammari texts recorded by Sowayan. In these narratives this kind of ethic dative usually has no antecedent and can thus be clearly distinguished from the well-known "ordinary" ethic datives which refer to the subject and are in agreement with the person referred to. In addition to an instance quoted above (Sowayan 204), the following instances may illustrate the feature:

062   *wuhu lak yatirk aššararāt* 'he left aš-Šararāt alone'
483   *wuhu lak yalkdah wuhu lak yiṣīḥ ṭūl ḥissuh* 'he spurred it with his heels and he shouted at the top of his voice'
543   *wuhum lak yinćfūn* 'they turned back home'

For the use of the 2nd p. sing. masc. form, Sowayan gives a plausible explanation:
"Perhaps it is not far fetched to think of the principal listener to whom the narrator addresses his words, for whom he performs, so to speak, not so much as a real person but as a postulated idealized abstract listener , a poetic motif like the deputy *(an-nidīb)*, the confidant *(an-nidīm)*, the blamer *(al-ʿadūl)*, and the rest of the stock characters. In other words, this addressed person is a cognitive paradigm."[13]

Even though the -k/-ak suffix can be omitted without the slightest change in meaning, it is interesting to observe the contexts in which it occurs in different texts. As far as the historical development of the form is concerned, it is significant that the ingressive structure *jā* + active participle is a feature typical of narrative style, and, more specifically, of vivid narrative style. Another, perhaps even more relevant, observation is that the contexts in which the form *jā + -k* occurs usually abound in descriptive imperatives. In the present material, this is the case in the majority of instances. It is to be pointed out that in light of dialect texts published to date, in Šammari dialects the descriptive imperatives seem to be used less dramatically than in other dialect areas.[14] In the same dialect area, the attested instances of both the ethic dative and the *jā + -k* constructions are more frequent than in other areas. The plausible explanation is that the Šammari texts represent the core area of the so-called Nabaṭi poetry which is associated with a particular narrative style used in the *sālfas* of the poems. That the narrative style belonging to this tradition is well established among the Šammar tribe is illustrated by the fact that the above-mentioned stylistic traits are of common occurrence in the texts from the Šammar al-Jazīra, dictated to Montagne in the early 1930's, before the modern techniques made it possible to record more vivid and spontaneous narratives. In other dialect areas these devices usually involve more dramatic and vivid narration seldom documented in dictated texts.

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in the 2nd p. sing. masc. form, e.g. *ma yxafāk* 'you see', 'it is obvious', *gul* 'now', 'then', 'in brief', *tigl* 'you would say', 'like'.

[13] Sowayan, p. 61.

[14] Palva (1977), p. 24f.; cf. id. (1984), p. 390f.

Conclusion

In the Bedouin oral narrative style associated with the so-called Nabaṭi poetry the verb *jā* often occurs with the suffixed pronoun of the 2nd p. sing. masc., which does not function as an object marker. It is mainly used in contexts involving a transition to a new action or development; its use is optional, and its omission does not change the meaning. Other conspicuous devices typical of Bedouin narrative style such as descriptive imperatives and schematically used ethic datives often occur in the same stylistic environments.

As to the point of departure of the use of the verb *jā/aja* with the invariable *-k/-ak* suffix, it could have been the use of the verb as an ingressive auxiliary modifying the active participle of verbs of motion. In this function the verb loses its denotation 'to come' and becomes an expletive to which a suffixed pronoun without an object marker function can be added. From this use the feature could have spread to cases in which *jā* retains its true verbal status. As to the form, both the ethic dative and the *-k/-ak* suffix under discussion are supplements to the preceding verb, but functionally they are sentence supplements.

As far as the provenance of the suffix *-k* is concerned, there is little doubt about its being the suffixed pronoun for the 2nd p. sing. masc., schematically used without reference to any concrete person.

Although it is difficult to believe that a stylistic device typical of Bedouin narrative style would have become generalized in Bukhara Arabic, there is no conclusive evidence that could rule out Johnstone's hypothesis about the common provenance of the *-k/-ak* suffix discussed above and the *-k* occurring in the Bukhara Arabic forms *jāk* and *ǧadāk*. However, the parallel existence of the closely related suffixes deriving their origins from *kāʾin* in Bukhara Arabic suggests that historically the latter two belong together.

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