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ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE VERBAL PARTICLE *LA-QAD* IN MODERN STANDARD ARABIC

1. Introduction

The particle *qad*, when used with past verbs,¹ may be part of three compound signs. These are *fa-qad*, *wa-qad*, both comprising conjunctions, and *la-qad*, comprising the particle *la-* (sometimes also preceded by a conjunction to give *fa-la-qad* or *wa-la-qad*). The functions of these compound units have been studied by several scholars, e.g. Ghazali (2007) on bare *qad* and *wa-qad*, Sarig (1995) on *wa-qad*, *fa-qad* and *la-qad* (also *wa-la-qad* and *fa-la-qad*), and Bahloul (2008: 72-103) on *qad*, *fa-qad*, *wa-qad*, and *la-qad*. However, the analyses of *la-qad* and its function(s) have not been fully accurate since examples disproving their findings can be encountered (Bahloul) or the findings require to be supplemented (Sarig). This will be illustrated by means of sentences excerpted from a corpus of prose texts, mostly literary, with two exceptions,² and a supplementary solution will be proposed.

In this paper, *la-qad* will be treated as a fixed indivisible whole and a self-contained word, the function(s) of which cannot be determined in terms of a sum of functions of *la-* and *qad*. This is in contrast to many descriptions in which *la-*

¹ I use the terms “past” and “present” to indicate the *fa'ala* and *yaf'alu* forms respectively. The term “perfect”, which some authors use when referring to the *fa'ala*-forms, will be reserved here for “perfect meaning” of some verbs, viz. those which denote events the result of which is relevant for subsequent situations.

² The corpus comprises: 2 short stories by Egyptian writer Nagīb Maḥfūz [NM], a collection of short stories by Egyptian writer Bahā' Ṭāhir [BT1] and his novel [BT2], a novel by Moroccan writer Muḥammad Zafzāf [MZ], a novel by Palestinian writer Ġassān Kanafānī [ĠK], and 2 public speeches of Egypt's former president Ḥusnī Mubārak [ḤM1 and ḤM2]. The number after the author's initials indicates page number.

qad is not regarded as an independent unit and instead is conceived of as a variant of *qad* in which *la-* is just a (usually reinforcing) addition. Thus, for instance, Badawi et al. treat *la-* as an addition to *qad* without commenting it (2004: 366), Buckley says that *la-* may be prefixed to *qad* “for greater emphasis” (2004: 552), Danecki sees in *la-qad* a *qad* strengthened by means of *la-* (1994: 154) and Corriente speaks of semantic reinforcement in this respect (2002: 149). Ryding, who lists *la-* along with *wa-* and *fa-*, says that “[t]hese particles do not change the meaning of *qad* although they may imply a temporal sequence such as ‘and then’” (2005: 450). Finally, Beeston either does not differentiate between *qad* and *la-qad* at all (Beeston 1968: 49) or says that *la-* “is now only used mechanically – and quite optionally – as an accompaniment of the functional *qad* (*la-qad*)” (Beeston 1970: 103).

Most of the above-mentioned descriptions see only one general function of *qad* and, consequently, *la-qad*. These various explanations proposed by different authors have been divided by Bahloul into three major groups (2008: 73-77). These groups are labelled: “temporal hypothesis”, “aspectual hypothesis” and “emphatic hypothesis”. However, “informational hypotheses” and a “multifunctional hypothesis” can be distinguished as well, the latter meaning that *qad* (*la-qad*) combines more than one function. In what follows, these hypotheses will be briefly discussed and some examples encountered in the corpus will be adduced to show that these hypotheses are unable to explain some of the real occurrences of *la-qad*.

2. Temporal hypothesis

According to the “temporal hypothesis”, *qad* and, by extension, *la-qad* are indicators of temporal relations. Beeston explains the function of *qad* in terms of a distinction between narrative past and descriptive past (which he also calls “situational”), the latter being his term for perfect meaning or resultative (“to picture a situation arising from an anterior event”) (1968: 49). This, however, is invalidated by the following examples:

(1) *la-qad fakkara fī d-ḡahābi ilā ūrūbbā*

LA-QAD he.thought of def-going to Europe

lākinna-hu lam yastaḡi‘ il-ḡuṣūla ‘alā ta’šīratin [MZ27]

but-he not he.could def-obtaining prep visa

‘He thought of going to Europe but could not obtain a visa.’

(2) *naḡnu lam na’kul bi-mā fī-hi l-kifāyatu laylata amsi. la-qad šaribnā kaḡīran,*

we not ate enough night yesterday LA-QAD we.drunk much

wa-lam na’kul illā qalīlan [MZ22]

and-not ate but little

‘We didn’t eat enough last night. We drank a lot and ate very little.’

The fact that the person in (1) did not obtain the visa, which interrupted his thinking of going to Europe, and the expression *laylata amsi* ‘last night’ in (2) make evident that the verbs *fakkara* and *šaribnā* do not have perfect meaning here.

In contrast to Beeston, Danecki explains the use of *qad* as stressing the past meaning, i.e. that an action occurred in the past and has no relation whatsoever to the present³ (1994: 154). This version of temporal approach highlights the absence of a link between the past event and the present. Such an explanation, however, does not account, for instance, for the occurrence of *la-qad* in (3):

- (3) – *išrab ayya šay’in.*
drink any thing
– *la-qad šaribtu qahwat-ī* [MZ29]
LA-QAD I.drunk coffee-my
‘– Have a drink.
– I’ve had my coffee.’

In (3), the fact that the speaker has had his coffee influences his present lack of interest in having another one. Consequently, there is a direct link between the past event and the present.

3. Aspectual hypothesis

Some approaches to *qad* (and *la-qad*) highlight its alleged aspectual functions and terms such as “perfective”, “termination”, “complete” etc are employed in them. For instance, Badawi and al. speak of “marked perfect” with [*wa*]-*qad*, [*fa*]-*qad* and *la-qad*, which denotes “a specifically past and complete event”. “In other words, *qad* reinforces the perfective aspect of this verb form” (2004: 366). According to Wehr, *qad* “[...] indicates the termination of an action; sometimes corresponding to English ‘already’” (1974: 744). In Corriente’s view, *qad* may reinforce the “aspectual connotation” (“connotación aspectual”) by increasing the “stress” of the past verb as regards a situation (“aumenta su incidencia sobre la situación”). He adds that *māta*, as opposed to *qad māta*, is “indifferent” (“anodino”) (2002: 149). His translations, however, reflect perfect meaning (*ha muerto* ‘he has died’ for *la-qad māta*) and its absence (*murió* ‘he died’ for *māta*) rather than any difference in aspect. Leaving aside the problem of defining what aspect really is, examples can be found which indicate that *la-qad* precedes verbs denoting events that are not viewed by the speaker as perfective/complete/terminated:

³ “[...] podkreśla znaczenie przeszłe, czyli to, że dana czynność miała miejsce w przeszłości i nie ma nic wspólnego z terażniejszością [...]” (1994: 154).

(4) *la-qad ḥasabtu l-ayyāma sā'atan fa-sā'atan* [NM19]

LA-QAD I.counted def-days hour and-hour

'I kept counting days hour after hour.'

(5) *la-qad tāba'tu awwalan bi-awwali t-tazāhurāti wa-mā nādat bi-hi...* [HM2]

LA-QAD I.followed one by-one def-demonstrations and-what demanded prep-it

'I have been following the demonstrations and their demands one by one...'

The speaker of (4) does not intend to say that he has counted the days so that he now knows their number. He rather says that he kept counting them (a translation into an aspectual language such as Polish would use an imperfective verb: *liczyłem*). It is the process of counting that matters here, not its outcome. In (5), the speaker says that he has been following the events, not that he has somehow completed the process of following them, resulting, for instance, in creating a complete image of them of any kind. It is impossible to speak of a telic completion of these actions.

4. Informational hypotheses

Two hypotheses will be presented here which are labelled “informational” as they involve ideas of (i) introducing information that is “in conflict” with other information or (ii) introducing information that provides “background” for other information.

The first of these hypotheses has been proposed by Moutaouakil (1989), according to whom *la-qad* (along with *qad*, *inna* and *innamā*) is used in sentences which “convey information that is in conflict with the information possessed by the addressee” (1989: 28). Such sentences, he writes, “cannot, for example, constitute possible answers to questions of the type *mā l-ḥabaru*” [‘What’s up?’] (p. 29). This explanation, however, can be disproved by any of the examples adduced in the present paper (and many others can easily be found in real usage), which often do not even involve more than one speaker. Perhaps example (3) might be closest to somehow confirming Moutaouakil’s claim, but even in it there is no conflict between the information about having already had a cup of coffee and the information possessed by the addressee (i.e. the person offering a coffee), but rather an offer and its rejection.

Another ‘informational’ hypothesis has been put forth by El-Ayoubi et al. (2010). They analyze *la-qad* as a unit introducing background information for a context that is to follow: events which temporally precede others (“Vorzeitigkeit der Handlung”) are introduced by *la-qad* “als Hintergrundinformation zum nachfolgenden Kontext” (2010: 78). Indeed, in the examples adduced by them the clauses following the *la-qad*-clauses give information that is somehow based on what is supplied by the *la-qad*-clauses. However, in my view, the reason for

using *la-qad* cannot be explained only in terms of “background information” – which seems to be a fairly general expression – because *la-qad* also occurs in sentences conveying no particular background information, which is illustrated above in (1), (2) and (3). In addition, the examples adduced by El-Ayoubi et al. open with *la-qad*, consequently it cannot be known what was said before them, while the use of *la-qad* there might as well have been triggered by something else which precedes the *la-qad*-clause. In section 7, an attempt will be made to explain the use of *la-qad* in the second example adduced by El-Ayoubi et al., coinciding with my example (10) in terms of indicating a topic shift or disruption of narration flow.

5. Emphatic hypothesis

According to “emphatic hypothesis”, the particle *qad* and its cognates are used to “add emphasis and stress the occurrence of the action” (Bahloul 2008: 76). Thus, for instance, according to Ryding, “the past tense with *qad* may be equivalent either to the simple past or to the past perfect. The use of *qad* here serves to confirm the meaning of the past tense by emphasizing that the action did indeed happen” (2005: 451). Baalbaki too explains the use of *qad* as *li-t-tahqīq* ‘for emphasis, reinforcement’ (1995: 581), although he translates it as ‘already’, which, obviously, is not the same. The emphasis approach is also adopted by Bahloul as he discusses the functions of *la-qad*. He notes that the use of *la-qad* in his examples is optional (2008: 93f). “In other words, there do not seem to be any structural or semantico-pragmatic constraints which render its use obligatory” (p. 94). However, as he remarks, “the interpretation of each one of the above [i.e. his – MM] examples is in sharp contrast with their counterparts without both *LA* and *QAD*, that is, the unmarked interpretation with no additional assertion of the very occurrence of the event” (p. 94). Elsewhere, he says that “the importance of the reported event within the entire discourse seems to play a major role in the choice of *QAD*” (p. 97). Thus, in his opinion, *qad* (i) indicates assertion of the occurrence of the event and (ii) “highlights the relevance” of this event for the speaker. (It seems, although he does not state this explicitly, that these two different concepts, which should be carefully distinguished, tend to co-occur). Thus, *qad* can be combined with other indicators of “emphasis”, such as *inna* and *la-*, which “[...] express a certain degree of the authors’ commitment to the truth and certainty of the events involved. These contexts constitute a powerful trigger for the appearance of *QAD*” (p. 98), which is to be taken as part of the modal system of “assertive modality” (p. 98). The emphatic hypothesis is confirmed by numerous examples, such as the following, in which emphasis is visible in possible English translations:

- (6) *sawfa naktubu-hā ġamī'an idā mā waġadta lī 'am-man naktubu.*
 will we.write-them all if you.find for.me about-whom we.write
la-qad kutiba kullu šay'in 'an kulli šay'in [MZ34]
 LA-QAD was.written every thing about every thing
 'We will write them all if you find for me anyone to write about. Indeed, everything has been written about everything.'

- (7) *lā šakka anna-hu yaṭruḍu ḍubābatan, la-qad kaṭura ḍ-ḍubābu*
 no doubt that-he chases fly LA-QAD multiplied def-flies
hāḍihi l-ayyāma wa-lam ya'ud yanfa'u ma'a-hu ayyu dawā'in [MZ30]
 these def-days and-not return helps with-them any remedy
 'He must be chasing away a fly. There are so many flies these days and there is no remedy for them any more.'

Although the emphatic hypothesis accounts for many occurrences of *la-qad*, numerous examples of sentences opening with *la-qad* still remain which this approach is incapable of explaining. These will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

6. Multifunctional hypotheses

Some scholars have rightly judged that *la-qad* carries out more than one function. The first group of such analyses comprises those concerning Classical Arabic. Thus, according to al-Ġalāyīnī, who treats *qad* as one of *aḥruf at-tawkiḍ* ('particles of corroboration'), *qad* with past forms indicates (i) *taḥqīq* ("emphasis"), (ii) *tawaqqu'* ("expectation") – used to denote an expected event, even though it has not happened yet⁴ – (iii) and *taqrīb* (recent past). Similarly, rules that can be found in the classicizing dictionary *Al-Munğid* say that the use of *qad* with past forms indicates: *taḥqīq* and *taqrīb*, whereas *tawaqqu'* occurs only with present forms (*Al-Munğid* 2002: 610). Reckendorf (1921) says that *qad* combines perfect/resultative meaning ("resultatives Perf.[ekt]") and emphasis ("Bestätigung"): *qad* is a "Partikel der Annäherung" (*ḥarf at-taqrīb*) because "es

⁴ This meaning is illustrated by al-Ġalāyīnī with the sentence *qad qāmat iṣ-ṣalātu*, literally: 'The prayer has been performed' and explained as follows: "because the people expect it to be performed soon" (*li-anna l-ġamā'ata yatawaqqa'ūna qiyāma-hā qarīban*) (2002: 591). *Tawaqqu'* is understood in a different way by Grande, who describes *qad* as capable of functioning as *ḥarf at-tawaqqu'* "častica ožidanija" ('particle of expectation'), which is used "pri oboznačenii nastuplenija ožidavšegosja dejstvija" ("to indicate the occurrence of an expected event"). He illustrates it with the sentence: *qad ġā'a Zaydun* 'Zejd uže prišel (kak vy ožidali)' ('Zayd has already come [as you had expected]') (1963: 567). *Qad* functioning as an indicator of the real realization of an expected event ("um zu betonen, daß eine erwartete Handlung eingetreten ist") is also mentioned by El-Ayoubi et al., who add that in this function *qad* is usually combined with *la-* (2010: 77).

nähert die Vergangenheit dem (augenblicklichen) Zustand” and “es hat immer den Sinn einer Bestätigung” (1921: 300-301). He also observes that the past verb after *qad* has always resultative meaning, never historical (p. 301). The second group of multifunctional analyses concerns Modern Arabic. Here, Cantarino says that *qad* “emphasizes the verbal action in its past value, as having been completed at the moment of speaking or just prior to the introduction of a new situation; [...]”, it “can also be used to emphasize the action in the certainty of its having taken place” (Cantarino 1974: 68) and greater emphasis may be achieved by adding *la-* (p. 69). According to Buckley, *qad* “is used to indicate an earlier past time when the context already refers to the past. It gives the meaning of the English past perfect/pluperfect” [...], “may correspond to the present perfect” [...], but occasionally “is used simply to stress that the action expressed by the past verb has occurred. It is often best left untranslated, but may sometimes be rendered as “certainly”, “indeed” etc.” (2004: 551). All of these approaches identifying more than one function of *qad/la-qad*, concerning both Classical and Modern Arabic, are still unable to account for the use of *la-qad* in many examples encountered in the corpus and will not be discussed here further.

An important multifunctional, actually bifunctional, hypothesis has been formulated by Sarig (1995) who has analyzed *la-qad* as a discourse marker. This is an important innovation in the study of this unit, as it shifts the analysis of its function to another level, viz. discourse analysis. Unfortunately, the results of her paper are not taken into consideration in other studies (for instance, *la-qad* goes unmentioned in Badawi et al.’s section on “Hypersentence and discourse”, 2004:723-739; Sarig’s paper is not referred to in the analysis by Bahloul 2008). The two functions of *la-qad* distinguished by Sarig are: indicating “the speaker’s wish to highlight the sentence” and indicating “a topic shift” (Sarig 1995: 8). The first function, consisting in pointing out “the speaker’s wish to highlight the proposition, either due to its importance, or else because of the speaker’s emotional stand on the topic of discourse” (p. 14) coincides with the above-discussed “emphatic hypothesis” and need not be elaborated upon.⁵ I will instead be concerned with its second function: indicating a topic shift. In my opinion, Sarig has identified this function correctly and this is also confirmed by the

⁵ Moutaouakil’s approach discussed above could be classified as multifunctional, viz. combining the informational hypothesis with the emphatic, because, firstly, he observes that „The Arabic rhetoricians characterize such sentences [i.e. conveying “information that is in conflict with the information possessed by the addressee”, including sentences opening with *la-qad* – MM], with reference to their formal properties, as sentences *reinforced* by the use of certain reinforcing morphemes” (1989: 28) and secondly, he translates *La-qad allaḥa Ḥālidun kitāban*, being his example of the use of *la-qad*, as ‘I assure you that Ḥālid has written a book’ (p. 29), where ‘I assure you’ is reinforcing and emphatic. However, the emphatic aspect is rather secondary in his approach, being only a side effect of the postulated conflict of information.

analysis of my corpus. However, her findings need to be supplemented in some respects, which will be done in the following sections.

7. *La-qad* as an indicator of a topic shift

Thanks to Sarig's hypothesis that *la-qad* indicates a topic shift it is possible to explain its use in many sentences in which emphasis may be argued to be absent. Sarig herself does not elucidate how she understands "topic shift". It seems, however, that it can be understood in terms of a disruption of narration flow. Let us consider the following sentences⁶:

- (8) *wa-tasā'ala a-yatruku-hu yamurru bi-salāmin? ma'āda llāh,*
 and-he.wondered if-he.leaves-him he.passes with-peace God forbid!
la-qad alifa dā'iya l-ḥurriyyati [NM8]
 LA-QAD he.become.accustomed.to call def-freedom
 'And he wondered whether he should let him pass freely. God forbid! He has already become accustomed to the call of freedom.'

- (9) *wa-'taraḍa sabīla-humā, wa-madda yada-hu bi-sur'ati l-barqi,*
 and-he.blocked way-their and-stretched.out hand-his with-speed def-lightning
wa-qaraṣa! āh la-qad inhālat 'alay-hi l-laṭamātu wa-l-lakamātu [NM9]
 and-he.pinchd oh LA-QAD fell on-him def-blows and-def-kicks
 'He blocked their way, stretched out his hand with lightning speed – and pinched! Oh, blows and kicks fell on him.'

- (10) *qabla usbū'ayni kuntu fī Zaytā... a-ta'rifu Zaytā? la-qad waqaftu amāma*
 before two.weeks I.was in Zaytā part-you.know Zaytā LA-QAD I.stood in.front.of
l-aslāki š-šā'ikati, fa-qtaraba min-nī ṭiflun saḡīrun wa-qāla... [ĜK32]
 def-wires def-barbed and-he.approached to-me child small and-said
 'Two weeks ago I was in Zayta. Do you know Zayta? I was standing in front of a barbed wire fence. A small child approached me and said...'

In these sentences, the occurrence of *la-qad* can be explained as follows. It is used in a context where the narration flow is disrupted by exclamations *ma'āda llāh* and *āh* and the question *a-ta'rifu Zaytā?* It can also be noted that in (9), there is, additionally, an element of suddenness. Without *la-qad*, these sentences would be lacking an element connecting – or re-connecting – the narration flow or at least indicating disruption. It should be noticed that in each sentence a possible translation of *la-qad* may be different. In (8) it could be a causative conjunction, because the clause preceded by *la-qad* conveys some meaning of justification

⁶ These examples are taken from literary texts, unlike Sarig's, who investigated journalistic texts. Her way of understanding the "topic shift" may therefore differ in details from my concept of disruption of narration flow. It seems, however, that the general idea remains the same.

(and thus itself disrupts the narration). In (9), the translation equivalent could be: *all of a sudden* or *then*, in (10), for instance: *well*. All these possible translation equivalents might suggest that the use of *la-qad* is required in the contexts of disruption of the narration flow⁷.

8. *La-qad* as a gap-filler

There are, however, still sentences opening with *la-qad* in which no emphasis and no disruption of narration flow (topic shift) are involved. In what follows, two examples are given:

- (11) *hal bi-ka ġū'un, yā walīd-ī? la-qad ṭabaḥtu 'adsan*
 particle with-you hunger oh son-my LA-QAD I.cooked lentils
ma'a laḥmi ra'si l-'iġli [MZ8]
 with meat head def-calf
 'Are you hungry, my son? I have cooked lentils with a calf's head.'

- (12) – *a-turīdu an tusāfira ilā l-kuwayti?*
 particle-you.want conj go to def-Kuwait
 – *kayfa 'arafta?*
 how you.knew
 – *la-qad kuntu wāqifan ilā ġānibi bābi tilka d-dukkāni, wa-šahidtu-ka tadḥulu*
 LA-QAD I.was standing at side door that def-shop and-I.saw-you come.in
tumma šahidtu-ka taḥruġu [ĠK37]
 then I.saw-you go.out
 '– Do you want to go to Kuwait?
 – How did you know?
 – I was standing at the shop door and saw you come in and then go out.'

No emphasis can be postulated in (11) and (12) because the speakers simply do not need to emphasize their utterances: nobody questions, or would question, their statements, the content of which is not so strange as to need special stress. Admittedly, anyone can emphasize whatever he or she wishes to, yet in these contexts it would be unjustified, even ridiculous, to emphasize the fact that one has cooked lentils or was standing at the door of a shop. The use of *la-qad* cannot be accounted for by a topic shift here neither since the utterances are contained within the same topic area: the flow of narration is not disrupted

⁷ One can also observe that when translating these sentences into Polish, particle *oto/i oto* or *otóż* could be used in each case: (14): *Przenigdy! Otóż zdążył już przywyknąć do zewu wolności.* / (15): *Uszczypnął – i oto posypały się nań razy i kopniaki!* / (16): *Dwa tygodnie temu byłem w Zajcie. Zna pan Zajtę? Otóż stanąłem przy drucie kolczastym...*

in (11), while (12) is a coherent dialogue with no topic shift involved, since one person answers another person's question quite to the point. The solution must be looked for somewhere else.

In the above sentences, as well as in (1)-(5), *la-qad* is, in my view, a mere gap-filler. This hypothesis may be supported by the fact that in all these examples *la-qad* can be freely removed, in other words, it is optional. Its removal does not deprive these sentences of any emphasis; it might even be asked which version is more emphatic, the one with *la-qad* or without, the latter being more concise. It seems that the function of *la-qad* in (1)-(5) and (11)-(12) is to fill an empty slot – empty, i.e. not occupied by, for instance, a temporal or clausal circumstantial or a personal pronoun – so that the sentence does not have to open with a bare verb, noun or pronoun, which for some reasons appears unattractive to some speakers or writers. If *la-qad* is not used, the slot may remain empty or be occupied by, for instance, a circumstantial or a pronoun. Cf. the *la-qad*-less sentences, equivalent to (1) and (11):

- (1^a) *fakkara fī d-dahābi ilā urūbbā lākinna-hu lam yastaṭi' il-ḥuṣula*
 (11^a) *hal bi-ka ḡū 'un, yā walīd-ī? ṭabaḥtu 'adsan ma 'a laḥmi ra 'si l- 'iḡli*

These sentences are perfectly correct and might replace the sentences introduced by *la-qad* in (1) and (11).

9. *La-qad* and *inna*

For the purpose of further investigating the gap-filling function of *la-qad*, I will make use of some of Bahloul's findings. Of special relevance is his remark that *qad* is closely linked to *inna* and *la-* (2008: 87). It seems that in many cases *inna* carries out the same gap-filling function as *la-qad*. While *la-qad* opens sentences with fronted verbs, *inna* opens those with fronted nouns or pronouns. Moreover, *inna* can co-occur with both *qad* + past form and with *la-* + present form, but cannot with *la-qad* + past form. Therefore, it may be said that, syntactically, *la-qad* is in complementary distribution with *inna*. It can also be observed that both *la-qad* and *inna* are exclusively sentence initial (*inna* introducing object clauses after *qāla* 'he said' etc is a different issue which does not concern us here). The use of the gap-filling *la-qad* with past verbs has been shown above. The use of the gap-filling *inna* with present forms is exemplified in what follows:

- (13) *inna-hu yufakkiru l-āna fī kitābati naṣṣin qiṣaṣiyyin 'an...* [MZ5]
 INNA-he thinks now of writing text narrative about
 'He is now thinking of writing a narrative text about...'

- (14) – *mā smu-ka?*
 what name-your
 – *marwān. wa-anta?*
 Marwān and-you
 – *inna-hum yunādūna-nī abū l-ḥayzurān* [ĠK37]
 INNA-they call-me Abū l-Ḥayzurān
 ‘– What is your name?
 – Marwān, and yours?
 – They call me Abū l-Ḥayzurān.’

In (15), *inna* opening an equative sentence is exemplified:

- (15) *inna ṭ-ṭa ‘āma ḡāhizun, yā walīd-ī* [MZ10]
 INNA def-meal ready oh son-my
 ‘The meal is ready, my son.’

Inna used as gap-filler can be dropped in just the same way as the gap-filling *la-qad* can without changing the meaning of the sentence. The following *inna*-less sentences are equivalent to and substitutable for (13)-(15):

- (13^a) *yufakkiru l-āna fī kitābati naṣṣin qiṣaṣiyyin* ‘an...
 (14^a) *yunādūna-nī abū l-ḥayzurān*
 (15^a) *aṭ-ṭa ‘āmu ḡāhizun, yā walīd-ī*

If *inna* is dropped and there is no noun functioning as subject, a personal pronoun may be employed in verbal sentences (and has to in equative sentences)⁸.

⁸ It should be kept in mind that *inna* may also convey emphatic meaning, which seems to corroborate the assumption of a link between it and *la-qad*. Consider the following examples:

- (i) – *kayfa bi-wus ‘i-ka an tanāma fī dālīka l-funduqi?*
 how in-power-your conj you.sleep in that def-hotel
 – *inna-hu raḥīṣun* [ĠK33]
 INNA-it cheap
 ‘– How can you sleep in that hotel?
 – It is really cheap.’
- (ii) *inna-ki yā sayyidat-ī āyatun fī d-ḡakā ‘i* [NM15]
 INNA-you oh madam-my prodigy in def-intelligence
 ‘You are really a prodigy of intelligence, madam.’

The function of *inna* here seems to be indicating emphasis, visible in possible translations with *really*.

As for syntactic differences between *la-qad* and *inna*, one of them is that *la-qad* combines only with past forms, whereas *inna* generally combines with present forms (it seems that the future particle *sawfa* normally does not combine with *inna*). The use of *inna*, rather than of *la-qad*, with past verbs seems to be much less frequent:

- (16) *inna-hu kāna ḥakīman fa-lam yusāri*‘ [NM15]
 INNA-he was wise and-not rush
 ‘He was wise and did not rush.’⁹

Another difference between *la-qad* and *inna* is that while *la-qad* is used only in assertive, i.e. not negated sentences, *inna* combines with negation as well, for instance:

- (17) *inna-nī lā uġbiru-ka ‘alā hādā* [ĠK22]
 INNA-I not force-you to this
 ‘I don’t force you to do this.’

10. Individual factors

There is yet another facet of the problem that should be touched upon here. After a comparison of the texts written by various authors with regard to the use of *la-qad* and *inna*, it turned out that some use them more, some less, and some do not use them at all. The corpus has been large enough to show that there is a correlation between the use of *la-qad* and the use of *inna*. Both *la-qad* and *inna* abound in Ḥ. Mubārak’s speeches and are quite frequent in the novels by M.

⁹ In the following example, *inna* is used with a past verb *akkadtu* because it is difficult for *la-qad* to occur due to the length of the noun phrase introduced by *ka-ra ‘īsin...*:

- (iii) *inna-nī ka-ra ‘īsin li-l-gumhūriyya bi-muqtaḍā ṣ-ṣalāḥiyyāti llatī ḥawwala-hā*
 INNA-I as-president of-def-republic by-virtue def-competences which granted-them
lī d-dustūr, ka-ḥakamin bayna s-suluṭāt akkadtu mirāran
 to.me def-constitution as-arbiter between def-powers I.stressed many.times
wa-sawfa aẓall anna s-siyādata.. [ḤM2]
 and-will continue that def-sovereignty...

‘As president of the republic, by virtue of the competences granted to me by the constitution, as arbiter between the powers, I have stressed many times – and will stress it – that sovereignty...’

This sentence could not have the form: **la-qad akkadtu mirāran wa-sawfa aẓall – ka-ra ‘īsin li-l-gumhūriyya, bi-muqtaḍā ṣ-ṣalāḥiyyāti llatī ḥawwala-hā lī d-dustūr, ka-ḥakamin bayna s-suluṭāti – anna s-siyādata...* because the linkage between the transitive verb *akkadtu* and its object, i.e. the subordinate clause *anna s-siyādata...*, would be disrupted by the long phrase *ka-ra ‘īsin... s-suluṭāti*. For this reason, it was necessary to front the noun phrase (‘I’) and to use *inna*.

Zafzāf and Ġ. Kanafānī as well as in the short stories by N. Maḥfūz. It is from these texts that all the examples adduced in this paper are taken from. In contrast, *la-qad* and *inna* are totally absent in the short stories and the novel by B. Ṭāhir. Ṭāhir avoids using the expressions *la-qad* and *inna* in his language, although he does use *qad*, *wa-qad* and *fa-qad* and, obviously, *inna* introducing object clauses after *qāla* ‘he said’ etc and in the set phrase *tumma inna* ‘moreover’, ‘furthermore’, (cf. Buckley 2004: 858). This means that this author, as a rule, opens his sentences directly with verbs, nouns, and personal pronouns. It is not improbable that in some cases – for instance in the sentences: *anā aqra’u l-‘arabiyyata wa-lākinn-ī lā a’rifu luġata l-farā’inati* ‘I can read Arabic but I don’t know the language of the pharaohs’ [BṬ2 168] and *sāmiḥī-nī yā kāṭrīn. anā kuntu amzaḥu bi-ṭ-ṭab’i* ‘Forgive me, Katherine. I was kidding, of course’ [BṬ2 293] – the other authors would use *inna* and *la-qad* and say: *inn-ī aqra’u...* and *la-qad kuntu amzaḥu*. This makes Ṭāhir’s writing different in style from Zafzāf’s, Maḥfūz’s and Kanafānī’s. His texts read different as far as the form of sentences is concerned.

If speaking of authors using *la-qad* and *inna* and those avoiding them is justified, Mubārak with his speeches would be at the opposite extreme to Ṭāhir. In both of his speeches analyzed for the needs of this paper, almost all sentences with fronted verb begin with *la-qad* (the use of *inna* in sentences with fronted noun phrases is equally abundant there). Examples of the use of *la-qad* include: *la-qad hazza hādā l-‘amalu l-irhābiyy...* ‘This terrorist act has shaken...’, *la-qad ṭālat yadu l-irhābi laylata ams...* ‘The hand of terrorism has struck yesterday...’, *fa-la-qad akkada min gadīd anna-nā gamī’an fī ḥandaqin wāḥid* ‘and he [God] has proved again that we are all in one trench.’ [HM1], *la-qad iltazamat il-ḥukūmatu bi-tanfīḍi hādīhi t-ta’līmāt...* ‘The government has been conscientiously observing these instructions...’, *la-qad gā’at hādīhi t-tazāhurāt li-tu’abbira* ‘an... ‘These manifestations have taken place to express...’, *la-qad ṭalabtu min al-ḥukūma t-taqaddum bi-stiqālati-hā...* ‘I have ordered the government to resign...’ [HM2]. In this context, the question might be asked about to what extent the use of *la-qad* is genre-specific and whether authors who normally do not use *la-qad*, such as Ṭāhir, would also avoid using it when delivering a public speech.

11. Conclusion

Reaching a full understanding of the functions of the particle *la-qad* is not an easy task due to many factors, two of which will be highlighted here. First, it is evident that *la-qad* carries out more than one function. It results from the above considerations that these are: indicating emphasis, indicating a topic shift or narrative disruption and some authors use it as a gap-filler in sentences with fronted verbs. This list is not necessarily exhaustive as it is probable that other functions will be identified in further analyses. It may be observed that

describing the functions of *la-qad* is fraught with difficulties related to describing units that are multifunctional or act as fillers – especially particles – in any other language.

Second, the use of *la-qad* varies in texts of various authors, some of whom use it liberally, others avoid it. It should also be borne in mind that *la-qad*, a unit of Modern Standard Arabic, does not exist and does not seem to have any equivalent in the Arabic dialects spoken by the authors whose texts have been analyzed here. These dialects differ from Modern Standard Arabic as far as the verbal system is concerned, both in terms of verbal forms, auxiliaries and particles. For all these reasons, considerable variation may take place in terms of how an author understands and employs this expression. The genre of a given text may also be relevant in this respect. All this suggests that more empirical studies are needed which would help us to understand how *la-qad*, and related particles and compounds, are used in real texts.

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Summary

The functions of the compound particle *la-qad* in Modern Standard Arabic have not been described appropriately in grammars of this language although various hypotheses have been put forth. Some more successful attempts to study it have showed that its functions include indicating emphasis and topic shift and highlighted its relations with the particle *inna*. However, examples of *la-qad* can still be found in texts which cannot be explained in light of these findings. The analysis of sentences containing *la-qad* excerpted from a corpus of texts shows that in some circumstances *la-qad* can also function as a gap-filler. The use of *la-qad* seems to depend on a writer's style: some authors use it liberally, others avoid it.