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# On the Syntax of the Persian Classical Narrative Poetry: Constructions with a Past Participle in the *Shāhnāme*

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**Abstract.** This paper aims to describe a little studied syntactic construction of Early and Classical New Persian which involves dependent phrases or clauses with a verb in the form of a past participle. The examples are mainly taken from Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāme* and texts of early poetry, where the construction is well-attested, but examples from early prose texts have also been given. This shows that the construction was not restricted to poetry. In the *Shāhnāme* and early texts, participial constructions are usually placed after a clause with a finite verb in the past tense. They are endowed with a series of syntactic and semantic functions, such as that of adnominal or adverbial modification through phrases or clauses, or predicative complement. Of these, only constructions with an adverbial value, mainly expressing time, but also manner, cause, and other relations, continue up to the present, though in a more rigid form: they are placed before the main clause, and have the value of a subordinate adverbial clause indicating anteriority to the action of the main clause (e.g. *be khāne* ***rafte***, *shām khwordam* 'when I went home, I had dinner'). At the end of the article, a hypothesis aimed at explaining the development of the construction from Early and Classical to Modern New Persian is put forward.

**Keywords**: *Shāhnāme*; Early and Classical New Persian; participial constructions; past participle; absolute constructions; predicative usages; adverbial clauses

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## Introduction

***To Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh***
in deep admiration and gratitude
for his invaluable contribution
to Persian studies

## 1. Introduction[1]

Narrative poetry often shows a syntactic complexity unknown to lyric poetry. Along with simple syntactic constructions, in which each line, or each half-line, represents a syntactic unit, in the *Shāhnāme* by Ferdowsi (composed between the last decades of the tenth and the early eleventh century) more complex passages stretching over two or more lines are found. These include dependent clauses and parenthetical expressions whose structure is not always easy to understand. We do not know how written texts of early epochs were read or recited. Thus, linguistic features such as intonation and pauses, truly important for a correct understanding of the syntactic structure and the meaning of the text, have been lost.

This paper aims to analyse dependent syntactic constructions with a past participle (past stem + *-e*) in texts of New Persian early poetry.[2] This topic has received only limited attention by scholars (see below). For pre-modern stages of New Persian, these constructions pose a problem of identification and linguistic interpretation. The present study has a mainly descriptive character: participial constructions are analysed through examples from the *Shāhnāme* and other early texts. The question of the origin of the Early and Classical New Persian participial constructions, a type of construction widely

[1] I would like to thank Agnès Lenepveu-Hotz, who read a first draft of this article, and Giacomo Brotto, who supplied a couple of examples from the *Shāhnāme*. The transcription of Early and Classical texts is given according to the modern pronunciation of New Persian and, for poetry texts, reflects the metrical spelling of the lines; e.g. *sov=i* (as a sequence of a short and a long syllable, in example [1]), instead of *su=yi* 'side=ART.INDF'. To contextualize the examples from the *Shāhnāme* it is often necessary to provide narrative context.

[2] In New Persian (henceforth, if not otherwise specified, simply Persian) the past participle is formed from the past stem of verbs (Middle Persian past participle) followed by the suffix *-e* (Middle Persian adjectival suffix *-ag*). Persian has no nominal inflection (apart from plural marking) and no distinction of grammatical gender. Past participles, as all adjectives, do not agree in number. Past participles from transitive verbs can have an active, intransitive/stative, or passive value according to their syntactic function, and sometimes according to the semantics of each individual verb (see below, fn. 25). An analysis of constructions with present participles, which have a more limited usage, has not been provided in this study.

attested in ancient Indo-European languages (see, among others, Holland 1986), is left for future research.

Constructions with a verb in the past participle are a type of syntactic construction known to Modern New Persian, though perceived as literary or obsolete today: *be khāne* ***rafte***, *shām khordam* 'having gone home/ when I went home/ after I went home, I had dinner'. In this kind of construction, the syntactic unit with a verb in the past participle is a subordinate adverbial clause mainly expressing a circumstance of time. It precedes the main clause and indicates anteriority to the action of the main clause. A comparison with participle clauses with a perfect participle in English (e.g. *Having won the match, Susan jumped for joy*) may be useful. With set expressions, the dependent adverbial clause may have a different subject from that of the main clause, as in *do sāʿat be ghorub mānde be Eṣfahān residim* 'we arrived in Isfahan two hours before sunset (lit. two hours having remained to sunset)'.

As will be shown below, in Early and Classical New Persian texts dependent constructions with a past participle are much more frequent than in the contemporary language, and are endowed with a wider range of meanings and functions. Unlike the modern language, they normally follow a clause with a finite verb, which is generally in the past tense. Moreover, in Early and Classical New Persian texts, participial constructions with a subject differing from that of the superordinate clause are of normal usage.

For the modern language, this kind of construction has been especially described by Hans Jensen (1931: 250-251), Gilbert Lazard (2006: 155-156, 189-191, 204), Jurij A. Rubinčik (2001: 276). Suggestions on historical development are to be found in the works by Parviz Nātel Khānlari (1986: vol. 3, pp. 456-457 §§ 9.5 and 9.6), Khosrow Farshidvard (1999: 324-327, 401-408), Ḥasan Aḥmadi Givi (2001: vol. 1, pp. 728-761), and in Alessandro Bausani's recently published thesis (tesi di laurea) from 1943 featuring a historical linguistic perspective (see Bausani 2023: 83, 85-86, 92-93 [=39, 41-42, 48-49]). Brief remarks on the use of participial expressions in Early and Classical New Persian are also given by Moḥammad-Taqi Bahār (1958: vol. 2, pp. 76, 256, and *passim*), and by Gernot Windfuhr (1979: 75). Agnès Lenepveu-Hotz, in her important work on the history of the New Persian verbal system, only hints at them (2014: 168 example 4). The usage of past participles in these constructions is not described by Gilbert Lazard (1963) in his invaluable description of the linguistic characters of literary Early New Persian prose texts. For a general discussion of the studies on participial constructions see Orsatti (2023: 114-121 [=12-19]).

The participle in participial constructions should not be confused with the participle of perfect forms with an implicit or dropped auxiliary, either coordinated with a form with auxiliary, or, mainly in the 3rd person singular,

used alone (for the latter usage cf. Lenepveu-Hotz 2014: 167-168). The omission of an auxiliary in coordinated compound verbal forms falls within the important stylistic character of Persian prose referred to as *ḥadhf-e afʿāl be qarine[-ye afʿāl-e digar]* 'omission of verbs on the basis of the context' (see Bahār 1958: vol. 2, pp. 73-74 and *passim*; Khānlari 1986: vol. 2, p. 392; vol. 3, p. 471). For example, in *sharāb dar-u asar* ***karde bud*** *va ʿeshq dar-u ʿamal* ***nemude*** 'the wine had begun to affect him and love to stir within him'[3] the participle *nemude* is understood to be accompanied by the implicit auxiliary *bud* 'was' in the pluperfect tense.[4] In contrast, in the syntactic constructions analysed here the past participle may stand as the verb of a nominalized relative clause (with no relative pronoun and no auxiliary), or, more often, as a converb.[5] In reference to the converb-like function of past participles, the terms *feʿl-e vaṣfi* 'descriptive verb', *vajh-e vaṣfi* 'descriptive mood', or *sighe-ye vaṣfi* 'descriptive form' are used in the Persian grammatical tradition.[6]

The frequent occurrence of participial constructions in narrative poetry, especially in descriptive passages that unfold over several lines, responds to the need of providing the reader or hearer with a lively yet compact description. As will be shown, similar constructions are attested in coeval prose texts too. This seems to indicate that a construction that existed in the common language, but was possibly somewhat rare, was exploited by the poets, in narrative poems, as a mainly stylistic tool.

## 2. Examples from Ferdowsi's Shāhnāme

Syntactic constructions (clauses, phrases) with a verb in the form of a past participle are frequent in the *Shāhnāme*.[7] As already stated, they generally

[3] Neẓāmi ʿArużi, *Chahār maqāle*, ed. Moḥammad Qazvini: 34; transl. by Edward G. Browne: 56.

[4] In Persian the auxiliary of perfect forms is *budan* 'to be'.

[5] For a definition of 'converb', i.e. verbal adverb, a non-finite verb form that expresses adverbial subordination, see Haspelmath 1995. On the reasons for the choice of such a neologism in reference to a form variously referred to as 'gerund' in Italian and some Romance languages, 'gérondif' in French, 'adverbial participle' in some studies, etc., see Haspelmath 1995: 45-46 ('gerund' in English denotes a verbal noun, as in '*Eating* ice cream on a hot day is refreshing'). In Persian, the term *feʿl-e vaṣfi* is used (see the following footnote).

[6] Farshidvard (1999: 401) considers the past participle in this function as a grammatical mood, besides the indicative, subjunctive, imperative, and infinitive, and explains: "The *vajh-e vaṣfi* or *feʿl e vaṣfi* is a past participle (*esm-e mafʿul*) that plays the role of a verb". I translate *vaṣfi* as 'descriptive', though *vaṣfi* can also be translated as 'qualificative', or 'adjectival'.

[7] Single lines with past participles in the function of *feʿl-e vaṣfi* from the *Shāhnāme* are quoted by Shafiʿi (1964: 234-235) and by Farshidvard (1999: 324-326).

follow the clause with a verb of finite form in the past. As for their function, they seem comparable to the modern adverbial clauses with a past participle in the function of a converb (see above, fn. 5), or, more rarely, to a relative clause with an implicit relative pronoun and an implicit auxiliary verb. Very often, past participles in the *Shāhnāme* are part of predicative expressions.

In the following passage, after the *farrah* ('divine charisma') of Jamshid became dark, Ferdowsi says:[8]

**[1]**

170 پدید آمد از هر سوی خسروی  یکی نامجویی به هر پهلوی

171 سپه **کرده** و جنگ را **ساخته**  دل از مهر جمشید **پرداخته**.[9]

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 170A | *padid* | *āmad* | *az* | *har* | *sov=i* |
| | in.sight | come.PST[3SG] | from | every | side=ART.INDF |
| | *khosrov=i* | | | | |
| | king[SBJ]=ART.INDF | | | | |

From all sides a king came forward,

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 170B | *yek=i* | *nāmjuy=i* | *be* | *har* |
| | one=ART.INDF | intrepid.man=ART.INDF | to | every |
| | *pahlov=i* | | | |
| | side=ART.INDF | | | |

– an intrepid man on every side –

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 171A | *sepah* | ***kard-e*** | *vo* | *jang=rā* | ***sākht-e*** |
| | army[OBJ] | do.PST-PTCP | and | war=PURP | prepare.PST-PTCP |

[who had] **raised** an army and [was] **ready** for war

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 171B | *del* | *az* | *mehr=e* | *Jamshid* | ***pardākht-e*** |
| | heart[OBJ] | from | love=of | Jamshid | free.PST-PTCP |

[who had] **freed** his heart from loyalty to Jamshid.

In line 171, the past participles *karde* and *pardākhte*, from transitive verbs, have an active meaning, and indicate an action accomplished in an earlier time by the same subject as that of the verb of finite form (a king came forward, line 170A). They can be explained and rephrased as pluperfect forms (*karde [bud]*, *pardākhte [bud]*) of relative clauses modifying the subject in the

[8] For the *eżāfe* particle in the function of linking a substantive to its adjectival determinant, the label EZF has been introduced in the glosses.

[9] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 1, pp. 51 (*Jamshid*, lines 170–1).

finite clause: from everywhere a king, '**who had** raised (*karde*) an army' and '**who had** freed (*pardākhte*) his heart from loyalty', came forward (*padid āmad* 'lit. appeared').[10] But the two participles in the above example can also function as adverbial modifiers of the predicate in the finite clause. They refer to a circumstance of time related to the action expressed by the latter: from everywhere a pretender to the throne of Iran came forward, '**after** having raised an army' and '**after** having abandoned the covenant of loyalty to Jamshid'. Indeed, a distinction between the adnominal and adverbial functions of a past participle is not always clear-cut.

In contrast, in the combination *jang-rā sākhte* (171A) the past participle *sākhte* 'prepared, ready, disposed to', also from a transitive (and reflexive) verb, expresses a state, possibly resulting from a past action (the king **had prepared** for war, and therefore **was ready**), and has an intransitive value.[11] It is employed as an adjective taking a complement, that predicatively ascribes a quality or a manner of being to the subject of the finite verb form: from everywhere a pretender to the throne came forward, [who was/ being] ready for war.

In line 171 the participles used in what appears to be two distinct functions are coordinated, as if their different grammatical functions (as a verbal transitive active form, or as a lexicalized adjective denoting a state or a quality) were felt to be equivalent. Indeed, all three expressions with a participle show a greater or lesser degree of nominalization, and have a more general predicative function: they complete the meaning of the finite verb (*padid āmad* '[a king] appeared, came forward'), and 'predicate' a series of qualities and states referred to, or referentially controlled by, the subject of the finite verb (see also example [2] below and fn. 14).

In example [1] one could be led to suppose that the adnominal relativizing function possibly ascribed to the participles *karde* and *pardākhte* depends on the word order in line 170, with the subject, 'a king', immediately followed (after the parenthetical and elliptic sentence 'an intrepid man all around'), by the participial constructions, and functioning as the head noun of a relative clause.[12] The following example (example [2]), however, shows that the adnominal or adverbial function that can be ascribed to a past participle depends on an interplay of syntactic as well as semantic-contextual factors. In example [2] Khosrow Parviz entrusts a letter to an

[10] On participial relative clauses see Shagal 2019, in particular pp. 21-30. The objects governed by the two participles, *sepah* 'army' and *del* 'heart' respectively, are generic and therefore grammatically unmarked.

[11] The past participle *sākhte* is lexicalized as an adjective meaning 'ready' (cf. Anvari, *Farhang*, vol. 5, pp. 3965-3966: "5. *mohayyā, āmāde* 'ready, prepared'").

[12] In Standard New Persian the normal word order is considered to be SOV, with, however, a remarkable freedom, especially in Early New Persian prose texts and, of course, in poetry.

envoy (*navand*), to be delivered to his general-in-chief. But the envoy is caught and brought in front of the Qeyṣar, the Byzantine emperor:

**[2]**

3878 برون آمد از پیش خسرو نوند به بازو مر آن نامه را **کرده بند**

3879 بیامد چو نزدیک قیصر رسید یکی کارجویش به ره بر بدید

3880 سوی قیصرش برد سر پر ز گرد دو رخ زرد و لبها **شده لاژورد**.[13]

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3878A | *berun* | *āmad* | *az* | *pish=e* | *Khosrow* |
| | out | come.PST[3SG] | from | in.front=of | Khosrow |

*navand*
envoy[SBJ]

The envoy took his leave from Khosrow

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3878B | *be* | *bāzu* | *mar* | *ān* | *nāme=rā* | ***kard-e*** |
| | to | arm | OBJ | that | letter=OBJ | do.PST-PTCP |

*band*
bond

[after having] **tied** that letter to his arm.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3879A | *biy-āmad* | *cho* | *nazdik=e* | *Qeyṣar* |
| | out-come.PST[3SG] | when | near=of | the.Qeyṣar |

*rasid*
arrive.PST[3SG]

He left. When he arrived in the vicinity of the Byzantine emperor,

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3879B | *yek=i* | *kārjuy=ash* | *be* | *rah* |
| | one[SBJ]=ART.INDF | agent[SBJ]=him[OBJ] | in | road |

| | |
|---|---|
| *bar* | *be-did* |
| on | PFV-see.PST[3SG] |

one agent [of the Byzantine emperor] saw him on the way.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3880A | *su=ye* | *Qeyṣar=ash* | *bord* | *sar* |
| | direction=of | the.Qeyṣar=him[OBJ] | take.PST[3SG] | head |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *por* | *ze* | *gard* |
| full | of | dust |

[The agent] took him to the Byzantine emperor, [his] head covered in dust,

[13] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 8, pp. 301-302 (*Khosrow Parviz*, lines 3878–3880).

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3880B | *do* | *rokh* | *zard* | *o* | *lab-hā* | ***shod-e*** |
| | two | cheek | yellow | and | lip-PL | become.PST-PTCP |
| | *lāzhvard* | | | | | |
| | blue | | | | | |

[his] cheeks yellow, and [his] lips [having] **turned** blue.

The participial construction in line 3878B (*be bāzu mar ān name-rā karde band* 'tied that letter to [his] arm') immediately follows the subject (*navand* 'the envoy', 3878A) of the finite clause, which is postponed to the finite verb (*berun āmad* 'took leave'), as in example [1]. However, the semantic context suggests that an adverbial (temporal) rather than adnominal (relative) function should be attributed to the participle: the envoy took leave from the king **after** having tied the letter to his harm. The participle, from a transitive verb (*band kardan* 'to tie'), governs a specific, and therefore marked, direct object: *mar ān nāme-rā* 'that letter'. The subject of the participle is Khosrow's envoy, as in the main clause. The participle is a *participium conjunctum*, as opposed to a *participium absolutum*, i.e. a participle having its own subject, different from the subject of the main clause (see below for examples).

In line 3880 Khosrow's envoy is described by a series of predicative expressions indicating a state or a manner of being of the person referred to. The envoy, the accusative experiencer in the finite clause (*-ash*, 3880A), was taken to the Qaysar:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. *sar por ze gard* | [having] a head covered in dust, |
| 2. *do rokh zard* | [being] yellow on cheeks/ [with] yellow cheeks, |
| 3. *labhā* ***shode*** *lāzhvard* | [his] lips [having] **turned** blue. |

The three noun phrases above are formally free from any bond with the rest of the sentence. The participle in 3, from a linking verb (*shodan* 'to become'), modifies the envoy's lips that had become, or, as an actual state resulting from a past action, **were** blue. If it were not for the meter, *shode* 'become' could have been omitted, without the meaning of the phrase being altered. Conversely, the past participle *shode* can be implied in the first two phrases as well: 1. *sar por ze gard* ***shode*** 'his head [having] **become** [i.e. being] covered in dust', and 2. *do rokh zard* ***shode*** 'his cheeks [having] **become** yellow', each having a subject differing from that of the verb of the finite clause.

The three predicative expressions above share with the converb-like construction in line 3878 a common general function. They 'predicate' a manner of acting or being of the envoy, who is the subject (the envoy took leave of Khosrow) in the first construction, and the object in line 3880 ([the agent] took **him** [i.e. the envoy] to the Qeyṣar). The finite verbs *berun āmad* '[he] took leave' and *bord* '[he] took' are not linking verbs. Even though they retain their ordinary full meaning, they can be modified by a predicative or *copredicative* expression. This is an expression that, together with the predicate, describes the manner an action is accomplished by the subject (or object).[14] The converb-like use of participles (as in 3878) is not too different, then, from the copredicative use of adjectives and adjective phrases, and of nouns and noun phrases (as in 3880), as the above example shows.[15]

The different value of a past participle as a predicative adjective (example [3]) and as a converb (example [4]) is illustrated by the following two examples, taken from the saga of the hero Rostam. When Rostam prepares a bed for himself and gets ready to sleep in a reed thicket infested with ferocious lions, a lion approaches and sees him asleep:

**[3]**

برِ نی یکی پیلتن **خفته** دید  به پیشش یکی شیر **آشفته** دید.[16]

| *bar=e* | *ney* | *yek=i* | *pil-tan* |
|---|---|---|---|
| side=of | reed | one[OBJ]=ART.INDF | elephant-bodied[OBJ] |

| ***khoft-e*** | *dīd* |
|---|---|
| fall.asleep.PST-PTCP | see.PST[3SG] |

Next to the reeds, [the lion] saw one with an elephant's body [i.e. Rostam] **asleep**,

[14] All adjectives, including participles in their basic function as verbal adjectives, can be used predicatively (on the predicative, or copredicative use of participles, see Haspelmath 1995: 17-20). Examples of copredicative adjectives are the following: *Zhangsan came home* ***drunk***, and *Shanti drinks the milk* ***warm*** **(**Haspelmath 1995:18). Cf. also the example *She returned* ***a full-grown woman*** given by Jespersen (1933: 124 §13.2.1), who terms such expressions as 'quasi-predicatives' in as much as they can be rephrased by means of 'to be' and a predicative.

[15] As underlined by Haspelmath (1995), copredicative adjective phrases and noun phrases share several common features with converbal constructions, the most important of which – for the present study – is that "syntactically they depend on the predicate rather than on the controller of their implicit subject" (pp. 18-19).

[16] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 2, p. 22 (*Key Kāus*, line 289).

| *be* | *pish=ash* | *yek=i* | *shir* | ***āshoft-e*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in | front.of=him | one[OBJ]=ART.INDF | lion[OBJ] | agitate.PST-PTCP |

| *did* |
|---|
| see.PST[3SG] |

in front of him he [the lion] saw a lion [Rostam] **restless** [in his sleep].

In this example, the past participles *khofte* 'asleep' from *khoftan* 'to sleep, to fall asleep', and *āshofte* 'troubled, agitated' from *āshoftan* 'to agitate; to disturb, be disturbed', are adjectives in a predicative function. They are co-referential with the object, Rostam, of the verb *didan* 'to see' and explain the way Rostam appeared to the anthropomorphized lion.

When Rostam finds the White Demon hidden in a pit:

**[4]**

به تاریکی اندر یکی کوه دید  سراسر **شده** چاه ازو ناپدید.[17]

| *be* | *tāriki* | *andar* | *yek=i* | *kuh* | *did* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| in | darkness | inside | one[OBJ]=ART.INDF | mountain[OBJ] | see.PST[3SG] |

In the darkness he [Rostam] saw a mountain [i.e. the Demon]

| *sar-ā-sar* | ***shod=e*** | *chāh* | *az* | *u* | *nā-padid* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| end-to-end | become.PST-PTCP | pit[SBJ] | from | him | NEG-in.sight |

the pit [having] **become** entirely indistinguishable from him [the Demon].

The past participle (*nāpadid*) *shode*, from *nāpadid shodan* 'to be, become invisible, disappear', functions as the converb of an absolute construction with 'the pit' as subject.

The following example, from the description of the beginning of Jamshid's reign, offers some clear examples of absolute participial constructions, i.e. constructions each having their own subject, differing from the subject of the verb of finite form:

**[5]**

4 بر آمد بر آن تختِ فرخ پدر  به رسم کیان بر سرش تاج زر
5 کمر **بسته** با فرّ شاهنشهی  جهان **گشته** سرتاسر او را رهی
6 زمانه **بر آسوده** از داوری  به فرمان او دیو و مرغ و پری

[17] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 2, p. 42 (*Key Kāus*, line 568).

7 جهان را **فزوده** بدو آبروی فروزان **شده** تخت شاهی بدوی.[18]

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4A | *bar* | *āmad* | *bar* | *ān* | *takht=e* | *farrokh* | *pedar* |
| | up | come.PST[3SG] | on | that | throne=of | glorious | father |

He [Jamshid] ascended the throne of his glorious father [Tahmurat],

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4B | *be* | *rasm=e* | *key-ān* | *bar* | *sar=ash* | *tāj=e* | *zar* |
| | in | rule=of | king-PL | on | head=POSS.3SG | crown[SBJ]=of | gold |

according to the rule of kings [with] a golden crown on his head,

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5A | *kamar* | ***bast-e*** | *bā* | *farr=e* | *shāhanshahi* |
| | belt[OBJ] | fasten.PST-PTCP | with | glory=EZF | royal |

[having] got ready for action [lit. having **fastened** the belt] with royal glory,

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5B | *jahān* | ***gasht-e*** | *sar-tā-sar* | *u=rā* | *rahi* |
| | world[SBJ] | become.PST-PTCP | end-to-end | him=BEN | servant |

the world [having] **become** his servant from end to end,

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6A | *zamāne* | *bar* | ***āsud-e*** | *az* | *dāvari* |
| | time[SBJ] | up | rest.PST-PTCP | from | contention |

time [having] **found rest** from [all] contention,

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6B | *be* | *farmān=e* | *u* | *div* | *o* | *morgh* | *o* |
| | at | order=of | him | demon[SBJ] | and | winged.being[SBJ] | and |

| |
|---|
| *pari* |
| fairy[SBJ] |

[being] at his orders the demons, the winged beings and the fairies,

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7A | *jahān=rā* | ***fozud-e*** | *bed-u* | *ābruy* |
| | world=BEN | increase.PST-PTCP | thanks.to-him | honour[SBJ] |

the honour of the world [having] **increased** thanks to him,

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7B | *foruz-ān* | ***shod-e*** | *takht=e* | *shāhi* | *bed-u* |
| | shine.PRS-PTCP | become.PST-PTCP | throne=EZF | royal | thanks.to-him |

the royal throne [having] **become** resplendent because of him.

[18] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 1, p. 41 (*Jamshid*, lines 4-7).

The translation tries to render the structure of the four lines in question, which represent a single sentence. Each half-line is a syntactic unit with a verb in the past participle or without an explicit verb.

The syntactic connection between the finite clause (He [Jamshid] ascended the throne) in the first half-line, and the following syntactic units, as well as the connection of the latter units with each other, is very loose. All syntactic units have a subject differing from the subject of the finite clause, with the exception of line 5A, in which the subject of *baste* is 'Jamshid', as in the finite clause.[19] The two nominal sentences 4B (*bar sar-ash tāj-e zar* 'on his head [there being] a golden crown'), and 6B (*be farmān-e u div o morgh o pari* '[being] at his orders the demons, the winged beings and the fairies') are coordinated with the participial constructions and some form of 'to be' is probably implied.

One could be led to interpret the passage in example [5] as composed of a series of sentences asyndetically coordinated to the clause with a finite verb placed at the beginning. However, the form of the past participle in the syntactic units that follow the clause with a finite verb seems to prove that a different syntactic function is involved.[20] The formal difference between the past finite form (*bar āmad* 'he went up') in the clause placed at the beginning, and the participial forms (*baste*, *gashte*, etc.) in the following syntactic units, suggests that the syntactic units with a participle are not coordinated with the finite clause.[21] However, though the participles signal a relation of dependency, the syntactic units that follow the finite clause cannot be really considered as subordinated either: they are asyndetically juxtaposed, without coordinating or subordinating conjunctions, to the finite clause, with alternation of same-subject and different-subject participles. In Persian literature, the construction described above is mainly used for stylistic

[19] *Kamar baste* has been considered here as a past participle from the periphrastic verb *kamar bastan* 'to get ready for action', lit. 'fasten the belt', rather than as a lexicalized compound adjective: *kamar-baste* 'prepared, ready for action; obedient to orders' (for which see Anvari, *Farhang*, vol. 6, p. 5929). Both readings, however, are possible.

[20] The meter in line 7 confirms the reading *fozude* and *shode* (past participles), instead of *fozud* and *shod* (preterit, 3rd sg), as the ending *-e* of the past participle in the above forms counts as a long syllable. Consequently, the other coordinated verbal forms, too, must be past participles. Cf. the remarks by Khaleghi Motlagh, 2001-2009, vol. 1, part 1, p. 49.

[21] Cf. the notion of 'deranking' as formulated by Shagal (2019: 38-41) about non-finite, or deranked, forms such as participles: "[I]n deranked constructions the predicate of the subordinate clause exhibits structural differences from the main clause predicate" (Shagal 2019: 38). Accordingly, the author defines participles as "deranked verb forms that can be employed for adnominal modification" (Shagal 2019: 1, 52).

purposes in descriptive passages in narrative poetry. In prose, constructions with some similarities with the constructions attested in the *Shāhnāme* are not infrequent (see in particular example [15] below, from a prose historical text), which shows that such participial constructions may have belonged to the ordinary language as well.

Cases in which the participial construction precedes the finite verb are occasionally found in the *Shāhnāme*:

**[6]**

همه دست **بر داشته** باسمان  همی خواندندش به نیکی گمان.[22]

| *hame* | *dast* | ***bar*** | ***dāsht-e*** | *b-āsmān* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| everyone | hand[OBJ] | up | keep.pst-ptcp | to-sky |

Everybody, raising his hands to the sky,

| *hami* | *khʷānd-and=ash* | *be* | *niki-gomān* |
|---|---|---|---|
| dur | acclaim.PST-3PL=him | as | well-wisher |

was acclaiming him as a well-wisher.

Here the participial construction *dast bar dāshte b-āsmān* (=*be āsmān*) 'raising/ having raised [their] hands to the sky', co-referential with the subject of the main clause (*hame* 'everyone'), is embedded between the subject and the finite verb form, which is in the past continuous tense (*hami* + past tense). In this case, the participial construction shows a clearer subordinate syntactic behaviour (on extraposition and embedding as characteristic of subordinate clauses see Weisser 2015: 11-14. See also example [14] below).

## 3. Examples from earlier poetry texts

According to Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh, constructions with a past participle (*vajh-e vaṣfi*) – particularly frequent in the section of the *Shāhnāme* that Ferdowsi wrote in his youth – are already frequent in the nearly thousand lines by Daqiqi (second half of the tenth century) incorporated into the text of Ferdowsi's poem.[23] In fact, instances of such past participles from Daqiqi's

[22] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 1, p. 91 (*Feridun* line 38).

[23] Cf. Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh, 2001-2009, vol. 1, part 1, p. 49. In Khaleghi Motlagh's edition, the incorporated lines by Daqiqi are the following: Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 5, pp. 76-174 (*Goshtāsp*, lines 14-1028). A thorough study of

verses are numerous. For example, when King Goshtāsp dismisses the ambassadors sent by Arjāsp and sends back with them a threatening letter that Zarir, Goshtāsp's brother, had written for Arjāsp, Daqiqi recounts:

**[7]**

231 فرستادگان سپهدار چین  زِ پیشِ جهاندار شاهِ زمین،
232 برفتند هر دو **شده** خاکسار  جهاندارشان **رانده** و **کرده** خوار [...]
234 چو از دور دیدند ایوانِ شاه  **زده** بر سر او درفش سیاه،
235 فرود آمدند از چمنده ستور  شکسته‌دل و چشم‌ها **گشته** کور
236 پیاده برفتند تا پیشِ اوی  سیه پاکشان جامه و زرد روی
237 بدادندش آن نامه ی شهریار  به پاسخ **نبشته** زریرِ سُوار.[24]

231A *ferestādeg-ān=e* *sepahdār=e* *Chin*
envoy-PL=of general=of China

The envoys of the general of China [Arjāsp],

231B *ze* *pish=e* *jahān-dār* *shāh=e* *zamin*
from in.front=of world-keeper king=of earth

from the presence of the king keeper of the world [Goshtāsp]

232A *be-raft-and* *har* *do* ***shod-e***
PFV-go.PST-3PL every two become.PST-PTCP

*khāksār*
covered.with.dust

departed, both [being/ having been] **humiliated**,

232B *jahān-dār=eshān* ***rānd-e*** *vo*
world-keeper[SBJ]=them[OBJ] expel.PST-PTCP and

***kard-e*** *khār […]*
do.PST-PTCP base […]

the king [having] **cast** them **out** and **abased** them[…].

234A *cho* *az* *dur* *did-and* *eyvān=e* *shāh*
when from afar see.PST-3PL palace[OBJ]=of king

When they saw the king's [i.e. Arjāsp's] palace in the distance,

Daqiqi's incorporated lines, from a stylistic and lexical perspective, is offered by Khāleqi-Motlaq 2002. From the historical-literary point of view see Dahlén 2011.

[24] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 5, p. 98 (*Goshtāsp*, lines 231-232, 234-237).

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 234B | ***zad-e*** | *bar* | *sar=e* | *u* | *derafsh=e* | *siyāh* |
| | place.PST-PTCP | on | top=of | it | banner=EZF | black |

– a black banner [having been] **placed** on its top –

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 235A | *forud* | *āmad-and* | *az* | *cham-ande* |
| | down | come.PST-3PL | from | walk.gracefully.PRS-PTCP |

*sotur*
horse

they dismounted from the steeds,

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 235B | *shekaste-del* | *o* | *chashm-hā* | ***gasht-e*** |
| | broken-hearted | and | eye-PL[SBJ] | become.PST-PTCP |

*kur*
blind

[with] an afflicted heart, their eyes **turned** blind.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 236A | *piyāde* | *be-raft-and* | *pish=e* | *uy* |
| | on.foot | PFV-go.PST-3PL | in.front=of | him |

On foot they presented themselves before the king,

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 236B | *siyah* | *pāk=eshān* | *jāme* | *o* | *zard* | *ruy* |
| | black | pure=POSS.3PL | robe[SBJ] | and | yellow | face[SBJ] |

their pure robes [turned] black, and their faces [turned] yellow.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 237A | *be-dād-and=sh* | *ān* | *nāme=ye* | *shahriyār* |
| | PFV-give.PST-3PL=them | that | letter[OBJ]=of | king |

They handed him the king's [i.e. Goshtāsp's] letter,

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 237B | *be* | *pāsokh* | ***nebesht-e*** | *Zarir=e* | *sovār* |
| | in | response | write.PST-PTCP | Zarir=the | knight |

[which] Zarir the knight [had] **written** in response.

In this passage from Daqiqi's text, each of the four finite verbs is followed by one or more syntactic units with a verb in the past participle (see below, Units 1-4). The subject of the finite verbs is the same in all cases, i.e. the two envoys sent by Arjāsp. In one case, the clause with a finite verb is preceded by a time clause: *cho az dur didand eyvān-e shāh* 'When they saw the king's [Arjāsp's] palace in the distance' (234A). The latter is followed by a 'parenthetical' absolute participial construction (234B), referring to the king's palace: 'on its top a black banner [had been/was] placed (*zade*)'.[25] After which

[25] *Zade* '[having been] placed' is used in a passive meaning, without an agent expressed. This must be linked to the semantics of the verb *zadan* 'to strike'. In

the narration is resumed: *forud āmadand az chamande sotur* 'they dismounted from the steeds' (235A):

**Unit 1**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | *beraftand* | [The two envoys] departed |
| 1.a. | *har do* ***shode*** *khāksār* | both [having been] humiliated |
| 1.b. | *jahāndār-eshān* ***rānde*** *vo* ***karde*** *khār* | the king [having] driven them out and abased them. |

**Unit 2**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2. | *forud āmadand* | They dismounted [from the steeds] |
| 2.a. | *shekaste-del*[26] *o chashmhā* ***gashte*** *kur* | with an afflicted heart, their eyes [having] turned blind. |

**Unit 3**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3. | *piyāde beraftand pish-e uy* | On foot they went before him, |
| 3.a. | *siyah pāk-eshān jāme o zard ruy* | their pure robes [turned] black, and their faces yellow. |

**Unit 4**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4. | *bedādand-sh ān nāme-ye shahriyār* | They handed him the king's [i.e. Goshtāsp's] letter |
| 4a. | *be pāsokh* ***nebeshte*** *Zarir-e sovār* | [which] Zarir the knight [had] written in response. |

Absolute participles and participles having the same subject as that of the governing verb alternate in this as in the above examples. Indeed, the participles in Units 1.b and 2.a have a subject differing from that of the

compound adjectives formed with a past participle, *zade* often has a passive meaning: *shegeft-zade* 'stricken by astonishment', *āfat-zade* 'stricken by misfortune', etc.

[26] *Shekaste-del* 'broken-hearted' is a lexicalized compound adjective in which the past participle *shekaste* 'broken', from *shekastan* 'to break', has a passive or resultative value: '[someone] whose heart has been/ is broken'. See Anvari, *Farhang,* vol. 5, p. 4539.

governing finite verb, as the referent of the subject no longer is the two envoys, but in 1.b it is the king of the world (i.e. Goshtāsp), and in 2.a the envoys' eyes. In Unit 4, the clause with a finite verb, *bedādand-sh (=ash) ān nāme-ye shahriyār* 'They handed him the king's letter', is followed by a relative participial construction, '[which] Zarir the knight [had] written (*nebeshte*) in response', that modifies the object (the king's letter) of the finite clause (line 237). However, the past participle *nebeshte* 'written' from *nebeshtan* 'to write', can also be interpreted as endowed with a passive value. In this case, 'Zarir' would be the unmarked agent: '[the letter] written in response [**by**] Zarir the knight'.

The usage of participial constructions, already attested in the verses by Daqiqi incorporated into the *Shāhnāme*, is therefore ancient. In an attempt to go back to the very first attestations of this syntactic construction in Persian literary poetry, I examined the first 50 pages of Gilbert Lazard's edition of the most ancient fragments of Persian poetry. In these nearly 300 lines, despite the fragmentary form in which they have reached us, some constructions with a past participle can be identified.[27] Among them there is a line by Firuz Mashreqi (d. 283/896, a contemporary of the Saffarid ʿAmr-e Leyth):

**[8]**

نوحه گر کرده زبان چنگ حزین از غم گل  موی **بگشاده** و بر روی زنان ناخونا.[28]

| *nowhegar* | *kard-e* | *zabān* | *chang=e* | *ḥazin* | *az* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| mourner | do.PST-PTCP | tongue[OBJ] | harp[SBJ]=EZF | afflicted | from |

| *gham=e* | *gol* |
|---|---|
| pain=of | rose |

The harp, suffering from pain for the rose, has made its tongue a professional mourner,

[27] Sure examples of participial constructions can be found in Lazard 1964: vol. 2, p. 19 (Firuz Mashreqi, lines 2, 4); vol. 2, pp. 29-31, 34 (Shahid Balkhi, lines 41, 46, 55, 79).

[28] Lazard 1964 vol. 2, p. 19. Lazard more freely translates: "La harpe attristée par la rose élève une voix gémissante; – la chevelure éparse, elle lacère de ses ongles son visage" (1964: vol. 1, p. 60). For images referring to the complaint of musical instruments, see Beelaert 2000: 181-198.

| *muy* | ***be-gshād-e*** | *vo* | *bar* | *ruy* | *zan-ān* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| hair[OBJ] | PFV-untie.PST-PTCP | and | on | face | hit.PRS-PTCP |

*nākhun=ā*
fingernail[OBJ]=INTERJECTION

[having] **untied** its hair, and scratching its face with its fingernails.

In the absence of a context, it is possible that in this line, which is the first of a two-line fragment, the past participle *karde* is a perfect with an implied *ast* (see above, § 1), and has been translated as such. In contrast, *muy* ***begshāde*** (=*begoshāde)* '[having] untied its hair' is to be considered a participial construction endowed with adverbial value, expressing the manner of the action: the harp was complaining '[having] untied [its] hair/ [with] untied hair'. The coordinated (*vo=va* 'and') clause which follows, *bar ruy* ***zanān*** *nākhun* 'hitting with its nails on its face', with a present participle, also functions adverbially.

## 4. Examples from early prose texts

Constructions with a past participle in the same functions as the ones described above are to be found in early prose texts too, as the following examples show:

**[9]**

و مردی از در اندر آمد چوبی بدست **گرفته**.[29]

| *va* | *mard=i* | *az* | *dar* | *andar* | *āmad* | *chub=i* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | man=ART.INDF | from | door | in | come.PST[3SG] | club=ART.INDF |

| *be* | *dast* | ***gereft-e*** |
|---|---|---|
| in | hand | take.PST-PTCP |

A man came in [after having] **taken** a club in his hand/ A man [who had] **taken** a club in his hand came in.

In this example, from the History of Balʿami (second half of the tenth century), the past participle *gerefte* '[having] taken', with a converb-like, or possibly with a relativizing function, is referentially controlled by the subject

[29] Balʿami, *Tārikh*, ed. M.-T. Bahār and M. Parvin-Gonābādi, vol. 2, p. 1094.

of the superordinate clause (a man). It has an active transitive value and governs an indefinite non-marked object (a club). It follows the clause with a finite verb ('a man came in'), like in the poetry examples discussed above.

**[10]**

و[ابو علی سینا] با تنی دو در رفت و کاردی به دست **گرفنه** گفت...[30]

| *va* | *[Abu ʿAli Sinā]* | *bā* | *tan=i* | *do* | *dar* | *raft* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | [Avicenna] | with | people=ART.INDF | two | inside | go.PST[3SG] |

| *va* | *kārd=i* | *be* | *dast* | ***gereft-e*** | *goft…* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | knife=ART.INDF | in | hand | take.PST-PTCP | say.PST[3SG] |

[Avicenna] with a couple of people came in and, [after having] **taken** a knife in his hand, said…

In this example, from a later text (mid-twelfth century), the same participial construction ('having taken [something] in [his/her] hand') precedes the finite verb ([Avicenna] said) and has a more marked subordinate adverbial function.

**[11]**

بهرام بفرمود تا ... همچنان کمان بزه **کشیده** بر پشت اسپ و آن گور و شیر و تیر اندر زمین همچنان صورت کردند.[31]

| *Bahrām* | *be-farmud* | *tā […]* | *hamchonān* | *kamān* | *be* | *zeh* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bahrām | PFV-order.PST[3SG] | that […] | still | bow | to | string |

| ***kashid-e*** | *bar* | *posht=e* | *asp* | *va* | *ān* | *gur* | *o* | *shir* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| drow.PST-PTCP | on | back=of | horse | and | that | onager | and | lion |

| *o* | *tir* | *andar* | *zamin* | *hamchonān* | *ṣurat* | *kard-and* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | arrow | into | ground | just.that.way | portrait | do.PST-3PL(generic) |

Bahrām ordered that […] they make his portrait just that way, while he was still drawing his bow on horseback, and that onager, the lion, and the arrow [with which he had hit them in a single shot] on the ground.

In this example, taken, like example [9] above, from the History of Balʿami, *kashide* 'drawn' can be interpreted as an active transitive past participle governing a non-marked object (the bow), employed in a converb-like function. It is co-referential with the implicit object (King Bahrām) in the

[30] Neẓāmi ʿArużi, *Chahār maqāle*, ed. M. Qazvini, p. 83. Edward G. Browne's translation of the passage is: "Taking a knife in his hand, he entered with two attendants, saying…" (*Four Discourses*, p. 127).

[31] Balʿami, *Tārikh*, ed. M.-T. Bahār and M. Parvin-Gonābādi, vol. 2, pp. 930-931.

superordinate purpose clause: Bahrām ordered [them] to depict [**him**] while he was drawing his bow on horseback, exactly the way his famous hunting deed was accomplished. However, the possibility of interpreting *kashide* as endowed with a passive meaning, and the participial construction *kamān be zeh kashide* as an absolute construction is also possible. In this case *kamān* 'bow' would be the subject of the participle (the bow having been drawn).

**[12]**

دزدان از سه جانب بر خاستند و سوی کاروان در آمدند شمشیرها **کشیده**.[32]

| *dozd-ān* | *az* | *se* | *jāneb* | *bar* | *khāst-and* | *va* | *su=ye* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| robber-PL | from | three | side | up | rise.PST-3PL | and | direction=of |

| *kārvān* | *dar* | *āmad-and* | *shamshir-hā* | ***kashid-e*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| caravan | out | come.PST-3PL | sword-PL | drow.PST-PTCP |

The robbers rose up on three sides and ran towards the caravan with drawn swords.[33]

As in the just discussed example [11], in this example too, from the *Siyar al-Moluk* (end of the eleventh century), the past participle *kashide* '[having] drawn' has the function of a converb. It has been interpreted as an active transitive participle referentially controlled by the subject of the superordinate clause (the robbers), and governing a generic non-marked object (the swords): the robbers had drawn their swords. Otherwise, it can be interpreted as part of an absolute construction, whose subject would be *shamshirhā* 'the swords': the robbers rose up, the swords [having been, being] drawn (see example [11] above).[34] As in the *Shāhnāme* examples, the participial construction follows the finite clause.

**[13]**

چون بکاروان رسیدند همهٔ صحرا مردم **مرده** دیدند و سپر و شمشیر و زوبین و تیر کمان **بیفگنده**.[35]

[32] Neẓām al-Molk, *Siyar al-moluk*, ed. H. Darke, p. 93.

[33] Neẓām al-Molk, *The Book of Government,* transl. by H. Darke, p. 69.

[34] The past participle *kashide* is lexicalized as an adjective with a passive meaning: 'unsheathed'. See Anvari, *Farhang,* vol. 6, p. 5841: "nr. 8 (adj., archaic) 'taken out of the sheath'".

[35] Neẓām al-Molk, *Siyar al-moluk*, ed. H. Darke, p. 94.

| *chun* | *be* | *kārvān* | *rasid-and* | *hame=ye* | *ṣaḥrā* | *mardom* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| when | to | caravan | arrive.PST-3PL | all=of | plain | people[OBJ] |

| ***mord-e*** | *did-and* | *va* | *separ* | *o* | *shamshir* | *o* | *zubin* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| die.PST-PTCP | see.PST-3PL | and | sheld | and | sword | and | javelin |

| *o* | *tir* | *<o>* | *kamān* | ***biy-afgand-e*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | arrow | <and> | bow | PFV-strew.PST-PTCP |

When [the emir and his men] reached the caravan, [across] the entire plain they saw people **dead**, and shields, swords, javelins, bows and arrows **strewn** around.

In this example, likewise from the *Siyar al-moluk*, the participle *morde* 'dead' is referentially controlled by the object ('people', i.e. the robbers) of the verb *didand* 'they saw'. It is employed in a predicative function: the emir and his men saw the robbers **dead**. The second participle, *biyafgande* 'strewn', from the transitive verb *afgandan* 'to throw, strew', is likewise interpretable as a copredicative adjective, endowed with a passive-resultative meaning ('fallen, strewn'): they saw the shields and weapons **strewn** around.[36] But the past participle *biyafgande* can be also interpreted as endowed with an active verbal function: the emir and his men saw the dead people who [before dying] had abandoned their shields and weapons across the plain.[37]

**[14]**

ای فلان چرا نان نیم **خورده** از خوان ما بر خواستی.[38]

| *ey* | *felān* | *cherā* | *nān* | *nim* | ***khword-e*** | *az* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INTERJECTION | So-and-so | why | meal | half | eat.PST-PTCP | from |

| *khwān=e* | *mā* | *bar* | *khāst-i* |
|---|---|---|---|
| table=of | us | up | rise.PST-2SG |

Hey you, why, with the meal only half **eaten**, did you leave our table?[39]

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[36] Herbert Darke's translation of the passage corresponds to this interpretation: "When they reached the caravan they saw the plain strewn with corpses, shields, swords, clubs, bows and arrows" (Neẓām al-Molk, *The Book of Government*, p. 70). For the past participle *afkande* in the intransitive meaning of 'fallen, strewn', see Anvari, *Farhang,* vol. 1, p. 499.

[37] The latter is the interpretation reflected in the Italian translation by M. Pistoso: "… videro l'intera pianura disseminata di morti **che** avevano abbandonati scudi, spade, archi e frecce e giavellotti" (Neẓām al-Molk, *L'arte della politica*, p. 132).

[38] *Qābus-nāme*, ed. Gh.-Ḥ. Yusofi, p. 65.

[39] Translation adapted from Key Kāʾus b. Eskandar, *A mirror for princes*, transl. by Reuben Levy, p. 56.

The past participle *khworde* 'eaten' in the participial construction *nān nim khworde* '[having] eaten half [your] meal' functions as a converb, co-referential with the subject of the superordinate clause (you). It has an active transitive meaning and governs a generic, non marked object (*nān*, 'bread, meal'). In this case, too, it is possible to interpret instead the participial construction as an absolute construction having *nān* 'bread, meal' as its subject, differing from the subject (you) of the superordinate clause (the meal [having been] half eaten). In any case, in this example the participial construction – unlike the examples from the *Shāhnāme* and other early poetry and prose texts – is embedded into the main clause, and has a clear subordinate value (see also example [6] above).

**[15]**

و ما درین هفته از اینجا حرکت خواهیم کرد همه مرادها حاصل **گشته** و جهانی در هوا و طاعت ما **بیارامیده**.[40]

| *va* | *mā* | *dar* | *in* | *hafte* | *az* | *injā* | *ḥarakat* | *khwāh-im* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | we | in | this | week | from | here | move | want.PRS-1PL |

| *kard* | *hame* | *morād-hā* | *ḥāṣel* | ***gasht-e*** | *va* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| do.INF | all | intention-PL[SBJ] | achieved | become.PST-PTCP | and |

| *jahān=i* | *dar* | *havā* | *va* | *ṭāʿat=e* | *mā* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| world[SBJ]=ART.INDF | in | love | and | obedience=of | us |

***biy-ārāmid-e***
PFV-rest.PST-PTCP

During this week we intend to leave from here, all our intentions [having been] **achieved** and an [entire] world [being] **pacified** under our desire and command.[41]

Unlike examples [11-14] above, the two participial constructions in this passage, with past participles from intransitive verbs, can only be interpreted as absolute constructions, each having its own subject (*morādhā* 'intentions', *jahān-i* 'an [entire] world'), differing from the subject of the superordinate clause (we). The two absolute constructions follow the clause with a finite verb and recall the constructions in example [5] above.

[40] Abo'l- Fażl Beyhaqi, *Tārikh-e Beyhaqi*, ed. Ghani and Fayyāż, p. 83

[41] In Abo'l- Fażl Beyhaqi, *The History of Beyhaqi* (transl. by C.E. Bosworth and M. Ashtiany, vol. 1, p. 165) the translation is as follows: "We ourselves in the course of this week intend to make a move from here, having achieved all our desires and with the people secure and content under our rule and command".

Predicative constructions, with (or without) a past participle, governed by verbs of sense (e.g. *didan* 'to see', or *yāftan* 'to find, see as'; see examples [3-4] and [13]) are destined to great fortune in New Persian poetry and prose especially in descriptions, as the following example from the *Tadhkerat al-ʿOwliyā* by ʿAṭṭār (end of the eleventh–beginning of the twelfth century) shows:

**[16]**

مردی دیدم زرد روی نحیف **شده** چشم در مغاک **افتاده**.[42]

| *mard=i* | *did-am* | *zard-ruy* | *naḥif* | ***shod-e*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| man[OBJ]=ART.INDF | see.PST-1SG | yellow-faced | weak | become.PST-PTCP |

| *chashm* | *dar* | *maghāk* | ***oftād-e*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| eye[SBJ] | in | socket | sink.PST-PTCP |

I saw a man yellow on cheeks, emaciated, his eyes **sunken** into his sockets.

In Neẓāmi's poem *Khosrow and Shirin*, from the second half of the twelfth century, the description of Shirin bathing in the spring, as seen by Khusraw's passionate eyes, can offer a further example of the use of past participles in descriptions. In this example, different semantic and functional nuances of past participles are represented, from the Arabic participle *mohayyā* 'ready, prepared' and of *neshaste* 'sitting', both employed as adjectives in a predicative function, to the adverbial or relativizing function of *baste* '[after] having tied/ [who had] tied':

**[17]**

عروسی دید چون ماهی مهیا […]

در آب نیلگون چون گل **نشسته** پرندی نیلگون تا ناف **بسته**.[43]

| *ʿarus=i* | *did* | *chun* | *māh=i* | *mohayyā* […] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| bride[OBJ]=ART.INDF | see.PST[3SG] | like | moon=ART.INDF | prepared […] |

He saw a bride prepared as a moon […]

| *dar* | *āb=e* | *nilgun* | *chun* | *gol* | ***neshast-e*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| in | water=EZF | blue | like | flower | sit.PST-PTCP |

**lying** on the blue water like a flower,

[42] Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *The Tadhkiratu ʾl-Awliyá*, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson, Part I, p. 117.

[43] Neẓāmi, *Xosrow va Shirin,* ed. B. Tharvatiyān, pp. 190-191, ch. 24, lines 42A and 44.

| *parand=i* | *nilgun* | *tā* | *nāf* | ***bast-e*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| cloth[OBJ]=ART.INDF | blue | up.to | navel | tie.PST-PTCP |

[having/ who had] **tied** a blue cloth up to the navel.

## 5. The negative form

In the negative form the participle is generally preceded, at least in early texts, by the negative particle *nā-*. An example from the *Shāhnāme* is found in an episode narrating an embassy from the Qeyṣar, the Byzantine emperor, to Khosrow Anushervān. The Qeyṣar challenges the sages of Khosrow Anushervān's court, saying:

**[18]**

که با شاهِ گنداوران و ردان  فراوان بود پاک دل موبدان

بدین درج و این قفل **نابرده دست**  نهفته بگویند چیری که هست.[44]

| *ke* | *bā* | *shāh=e* | *gondāvar-ān* | *o* | *rad-ān* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| that | to | king=of | brave.man-PL | and | learned-PL |

"The King of the brave and the wise

| *farāvān* | *bov-ad* | *pākdel* | *mowbad-ān* |
|---|---|---|---|
| many | be.PRS-3SG | pure.hearted | priest-PL |

has many priests with a pure heart.

| *bed-in* | *dorj* | *o* | *in* | *qofl* | ***nā-bord-e*** | *dast* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| in-this | casket | and | this | lock | NEG-take.PST-PTCP | hand |

Without touching this locked casket,

| *nehoft-e* | *be-guy-and* | *chiz=i* | *ke* | *hast* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| hide.PST-PTCP | SBJV-say-3pl | thing=DET | REL | be.PRS[3SG] |

let them say what is hidden in there".

In the following example, after Fereydun defeats and tightly ties up Żaḥḥāk, it is recounted:

[44] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 7, p. 371 (*Nushin Ravān*, lines 3603-3604).

**[19]**

دُمادُم برون رفت لشکر ز شهر  وُزان شاه **نایافته** شهر بهر.[45]

| *dom-ā-dom* | *berun* | *raft* | *lashkar* | *ze* | *shahr* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| one.after.another | out | go.PST[3SG] | army[SBJ] | from | city |

In an orderly line the army left the city,

| *vo-z* | *ān* | *shāh* | ***nā-yāft-e*** | *shahr* | *bahr* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and-from | that | king | NEG-find.PST-PTCP | city[SBJ] | advantage[OBJ] |

without the city having been able to take advantage of that king.

Other examples of participles in the negative form are the following, from early prose texts:

**[20]**

و هر که بدین مقام **نارسیده** قدم آنجا نهد زندیق و اباحتی و کشتنی بود.[46]

| *va* | *har-ke* | *bed-in* | *maqām* | ***nā-rasid-e*** | *qadam* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and | everyone-who | to-this | state | NEG-arrive.PST-PTCP | footstep |

| *ānjā* | *neh-ad* | *zendiq* | *va* | *ebāḥati* | *va* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| there | put.PRS-3SG | disbeliever | and | ungodly | and |

| *koshtani* | *bov-ad* |
|---|---|
| destined.for.slaughter | be.PRS-3SG |

Anyone who ventures there without having attained that level is a disbeliever and ungodly and deserves death.

[45] Ferdowsi, *The Shahnameh*, vol. 1, p. 84 (*Żaḥḥāk*, line 471). At the beginning of the second half-line (471B) the conjunction *va* maintains its full value, with a concessive nuance (on the so-called *vāv-e ḥāliye* see Shafiʿi 1964: 353; Farshidvard 1999: 323-324): 'and [=though] the city having not been able to take advantage of that king', i.e. the people of the city had had only a little time to watch Fereydun defeating and tightly tying Żaḥḥāk (for this interpretation cf. Khaleghi Motlagh 2001-2009, vol. 1, part 1, p. 105). For line 471B different readings are given by manuscripts. The same line is quoted by Farshidvard (1999: 325) according to what seems to be a *lectio facilior*: *vo-z-ān shahr nā-yāfte hich bahr* 'without [the army] having taken any advantage of [the pillaging of] the city'.

[46] Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *The Tadhkiratu ʾl-Awliyá*, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson, Part I, 122-123.

**[21]**

هرگز کسی به جهل خویش اقرار نکند مگر آن کس که چون دیگری در سخن باشد [همچنان] تمام **ناگفته**، سخن آغاز کند.[47]

| *hargez* | *kas=i* | *be* | *jahl=e khwish* | *eqrār* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ever | person=ART.INDF | to | ignorance=POSS.REFL | attestation |

| *na-kon-ad* | *magar* | *ān* | *kas* | *ke* | *chun* | *digar=i* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NEG-do.PRS-3SG | except | that | person | REL | when | other=ART.INDF |

| *dar* | *sokhan* | *bāsh-ad* | *[hamchonān]* | *tamām* | ***nā-goft-e*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| in | discourse | be.PRS-3SG | [yet] | entirely | NEG-talk.PST-PTCP |

| *sokhan* | *āghāz* | *kon-ad* |
|---|---|---|
| discourse | beginning | do.PRS-3SG |

No one ever reveals his ignorance except the one who, when another is talking, starts talking without waiting for him to finish.

As *nā-* is a prefix used for the negative form of nouns and adjectives (participles included), its usage before past participles in the examples above is a further proof that in the syntactic constructions in question the past participle does not represent a perfect form with an implied auxiliary, because – in such case – the negative prefix would have been *na-* (Lazard 1963: 442-3 §§ 730-731).

## 6. Conclusions

The present study describes participial constructions from an early narrative poem, the *Shāhnāme*, compared with more or less coeval prose texts. They are generally placed after a clause with a verb of finite form in the past and have a general 'descriptive' value, in as much as they, roughly speaking, correspond to a qualifying, an adverbial or a predicative expression. Indeed, in the analyzed examples, past participles are used in three strictly related and often indistinguishable syntactic and semantic functions:

1. as an adnominal (relatiziving) modifier, or as the verb of a relative clause lacking a relative pronoun and an auxiliary;
2. as an adverbial modifier, or as the verb of an adverbial clause;
3. as an adjective – or as part of an adjective-, noun-, or prepositional phrase – employed in a predicative function.

[47] Saʿdi, *Golestān*, ed. Gh.-Ḥ. Yusofi, 130 (Ch. 4, *hekāyat* 7).

The position of participial constructions after the finite verb may correspond to the word order generally attested for Early and Classical New Persian. Indeed, in Early and Classical New Persian, nominal expressions employed in a qualifying, predicative, or adverbial function were preferably placed after the verb, as in *maqām-i did del-goshā* 'he saw a pleasant place', lit. 'a place he saw [that was] pleasant' (see Bausani 2023: 56-59, 70-73 [12-15, 26-29], with other examples).[48] The comparison with the word order characteristic of (literary) Early New Persian prose could reinforce the interpretation of participial constructions as (mainly) nominal syntactic units. However, any attempt to separate too rigidly the nominal from the verbal value of past participles in early constructions is doomed to failure. This said, from the analysis above a few remarks can be made.

Functions 1 and 2 are mainly distinguishable on the basis of the semantic context. In these functions, past participles indicate a time relationship of anteriority in comparison with the action expressed by the finite verb. Past participles from transitive verbs generally have an active meaning and may govern either a generic or a specific object. They can be co-referential with either the subject or the object of the finite clause verb. If the subject of the past participle is the same as that of the finite clause (same-subject reference), the subject of the participle is normally left implicit. Otherwise, the subject of the past participle is a (necessarily expressed) different subject. The latter case represents what is called an 'absolute construction'. Given the fact that Persian does not possess a nominal inflection (apart from plural marking), and that subject and unmarked object are morphologically indistinguishable, both interpretations are possible in the case of past participles from transitive verbs also endowed with a lexicalized intransitive meaning (*kashide*, *afgande*, etc.). In these cases, the past participle can have an active transitive meaning, governing an unmarked object, or an intransitive resultative meaning, with the noun or noun phrase functioning as the subject of the absolute construction (see examples above, in particular [11-14]).

In functions 2 and 3 past participles syntactically depend on the verb of the main clause. As for their reference, they can be co-referential with either the subject or the object of the main clause. In function 3, they describe a state or a quality ascribed to the subject or the object of the finite verb, and have the value of a predicative expression. Just like participles in function 2, they often function much like converbs. In this regard, note that

[48] Bausani (2023: 72 [=28]) considers such post-verbal determinants as the issue of Middle Persian relative clauses with dropping of the relative pronoun/ezafe particle *ī*, as in *pus-ē ast ī pad frahang ud aswārīh frahixtag* 'he is a boy who [is] educated in knowledge and in riding', in an example from the *Kārnāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābakān*. On determinative participial constructons in Middle Persian see Asatrian 1989: 28.

in predicative expressions without a past participle, some form of 'to be' or other linking verbs employed in a converb-like function can be implied.

In the *Shāhnāme*, absolute participial constructions, also known from early prose texts, have a characteristic development in narratives, as a means to produce a lively and stylistically swift description. Often they form long clause chains conveying a sequence of events, in which the past participle signals a relation of dependency from the clause of finite form.

In the history of the Persian language only the adverbial function of participial constructions survives up to the present. In the other functions, either relative clauses are used, such as **mard-i-rā didam* ***ke zard-ruy va naḥif bud*** 'I saw a man who was yellow on cheeks and emaciated' (cf. example [16] above), or nominal groups without a participle (very often, noun + prepositional phrase), as in ***dast be sine*** *kenār istād* 'a hand on [his] chest he stood aside' (for these expressions see Lazard 2006: 190 § 189). The development of a clearly subordinated participial construction with an exclusively adverbial value may have occurred as a consequence of the new syntactic position of participial constructions, which over time became fixed before the finite clause. It is the position normally occupied in Persian by adverbial clauses of time, cause, manner, condition.

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