The Neo-Aramaic dialects are modern vernacular forms of Aramaic, which has a documented history in the Middle East of over 3,000 years. Due to upheavals in the Middle East over the last one hundred years, thousands of speakers of Neo-Aramaic dialects have been forced to migrate from their homes or have perished in massacres. As a result, the dialects are now highly endangered. The dialects exhibit a remarkable diversity of structures. Moreover, the considerable depth of attestation of Aramaic from earlier periods provides evidence for the pathways of change. For these reasons the research of Neo-Aramaic is of importance for more general fields of linguistics, in particular language typology and historical linguistics. The papers in this volume represent the full range of research that is currently being carried out on Neo-Aramaic dialects. They advance the field in numerous ways. In order to allow linguists who are not specialists in Neo-Aramaic to benefit from the papers, the examples are fully glossed.

As with all Open Book publications, this entire book is available to read for free on the publisher's website. Printed and digital editions, together with supplementary digital material, can also be found here: www.openbookpublishers.com
THE MORPHOSYNTACTIC
CONSERVATISM OF WESTERN
NEO-ARAMAIC DESPITE CONTACT WITH
SYRIAN ARABIC

Ivri Bunis

1. Introduction

This paper is a historical-comparative study of basic tense, aspect and mood (TAM) distinctions in two closely related languages: Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic. It compares their shared cognate verbal paradigms, shows the overlap and differences in their grammatical functions and discusses the independent parallel developments such as the innovation of new verbal constructions. It will demonstrate that the Western Neo-Aramaic conservatism and resilience to contact-induced change in its verbal system is striking in light of its prolonged and close contact with Syrian Arabic and the morphological similarities between the Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic verbal paradigms—factors which have been found to facilitate contact-induced change in other bilingual situations.

Two of the four cases of divergence that are presented in this article also stand out in that they involve embedded structures, specifically, modal and phasal complement clauses and conditional protases. Western Neo-Aramaic preserves more complex patterns of subordination with these structures than is found in Syrian Arabic, which is the dominant language in the Western Neo-Aramaic speech region. This appears to go against Matras’s suggestion (2009, 244 and see also ibid., 248–50) that such embedded structures are prone to contact-induced
convergence with the linguistic patterns of the model or donor language.

Of the two branches of Aramaic that are known to us from the Late Aramaic stage (3rd–6th centuries CE), namely Western and Eastern Aramaic, the sole surviving heirs to the varieties that were part of the western branch are the three Neo-Aramaic dialects spoken in the Qalamun mountains in Syria, around 60 kilometres North-East of Damascus. Unlike the majority of the eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects, which have been in contact mostly with non-Semitic languages, possessing very different morphologies from their own, Western Neo-Aramaic has developed in contact with Arabic. Both Aramaic and Arabic belong to Central Semitic. The genetic relation between the two language groups entails a large degree of morphological similarity. Western Neo-Aramaic especially stands out in the extreme closeness of its verbal morphology to that of Syrian Arabic. The morphological affinity between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic in general, particularly in their verbal morphology, provides an opportunity to examine a case of prolonged contact between closely related languages, in this instance likely spanning over a millennium.

Syrian Arabic is the dominant language in the Western Neo-Aramaic speech region and all Western Neo-Aramaic speakers have been bilingual for several generations at the very least (Correll 1978, 136). Evidence for the long history of contact between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic is found in the extensive influence of Syrian Arabic on Western Neo-Aramaic in the areas of lexicon (Arnold and Behnstedt 1991, 61) and morphology and syntax (Correll 1978, 135–53).

One central feature of the verbal morphology of the Western Neo-Aramaic dialects that brings it very close to Syrian Arabic verbal morphology is the retention of both of the earlier Central Semitic finite verbal paradigms, namely the suffix conjugation (i.e. qtal) and the prefix conjugation (i.e. yiqtol). These conjugations exist alongside the imperative and the two participial paradigms, i.e. the so-called active participle and the so-called passive or resultative participle. Western Neo-Aramaic contrasts in this feature with nearly all of the eastern varieties of Neo-Aramaic,
in which the two finite paradigms have fallen out of use and the verbal system is based on the historical active and resultative participles. Only Neo-Mandaic has preserved one of the finite paradigms, namely the qtal conjugation (Häberl 2009, 178ff.).

The participial forms of Western Neo-Aramaic have undergone some development. Notably, they have acquired prefixal person inflection (Arnold 1990b, 75, 77), which parallels suffixal person marking in eastern varieties of Neo-Aramaic. However, apart from this development, which has also affected adjectives, and some other changes to inflectional morphemes expressing person, number and gender, Western Neo-Aramaic verbs preserve the morphology of Late Western Aramaic, which in turn constitutes the general verbal morphology of Central Semitic.

The retention of the two finite verbal paradigms has special significance for the issue of language contact between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic. Syrian Arabic too has suffix and prefix conjugations, an active participle, a passive/resultative participle and an imperative paradigm. The morphology of the Western Neo-Aramaic suffix and prefix conjugations and the active participle very closely parallels that of Syrian Arabic.

For the discussion of language contact, I adopt here the terms ‘matter replication’ and ‘pattern replication’ employed by Matras (2009, 234–35) to refer respectively to borrowings of concrete forms of words or morphs as opposed to the replication of more abstract patterns. Matras (ibid., 240–43) presents a model for pattern replication based on ‘pivot-matching’, whereby speakers identify pivotal features of a pattern in the model language, and match them ‘to the inventory of context-appropriate forms’ and ‘their formation and combination rules’ (ibid., 243). The result is the replication of the model pattern using inherited linguistic material.

Much of the study of language contact is devoted to understanding which elements of language tend to be replicated as borrowed linguistic matter, as linguistic patterns or the combination of both. Various hierarchies have been suggested concerning the propensity of various elements to be taken over
in the replica language through matter or pattern replication (Matras 2009, 153–65, 243–45).

Since the focus of the present article is the function of verbal paradigms of Western Neo-Aramaic, in relation to cognate Syrian Arabic verbal paradigms, the most relevant type of linguistic change in this context would be pattern replication. The occurrence of pattern replication is explained in various ways, with a prominent role given to bilingualism. As noted, Aramaic/Syrian Arabic bilingualism has existed among Western Neo-Aramaic speakers for an extended period of time. In this context, a suggested motivation for pattern replication is to maximise the efficiency of speech production in a bilingual situation, by allowing patterns to converge (Matras 2009, 235). Furthermore, prolonged bilingualism is believed to result in the levelling of structures through ‘orientation toward a prestigious outsider language’, which may be accompanied in the case of diglossia by ‘a considerable influx of loanwords’ (ibid., 237). Loss of categories through language contact has also been reported (ibid., 258). The dominance of Syrian Arabic in the Western Neo-Aramaic speech-region is very much reflected in such an influx of Arabic loanwords and the replacement of many original Aramaic lexemes. On the other hand, as this article aims to show, the morphosyntax of the expression of TAM reflects a large measure of stability, in that the levelling of structures and loss of categories has not occurred.

Studies of language contact that specifically touch on morphology suggest that the morphological similarities between the Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic verbal systems could have had the potential to facilitate the replication of the Syrian Arabic patterns by cognate, similar-sounding forms in Western Neo-Aramaic. Firstly, replication involving derivational and even inflectional morphology is attested even between languages with very different morphologies (Matras 2009, 258–65). Noorlander (2014) has applied Matras’s model to the eastern varieties of Neo-Aramaic. He has found many examples of morphosyntactic replication among varieties of Eastern Neo-Aramaic that were induced by their contact with Kurdish, an Indo-European
language, despite its very different morphology. Khan (2020) has drawn attention to the fact that contact between North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects and Iranian languages can result in partial convergence based on the matching of particular details between the languages without replicating full grammatical systems. Moreover, the morphological and phonological similarities that exist between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic cognate verbal forms are known from other contact situations to have served as pivotal features facilitating pattern replication (Matras 2009, 245–46).

The potential for pattern replication and its lack of realisation in the case of Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic is the main concern of this article, to which I apply Matras’s model. In this case, the close similarities in sound and morphology between cognate Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic verbal forms would be the potential pivotal features that could have facilitated pattern replication.

When compared with many of the contact situations that have been studied by contact linguists, the degree of sound-similarity between the cognate verbal forms of Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic, which I address later on in this article, stands out. An important additional factor is that some of the cognate and similar-sounding forms already had parallel functions in both languages as a result of parallel development in both languages or shared retention. Lastly, I aim to show that speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic have recognised the morphological closeness between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic verbal forms.

We would have expected that these factors, coupled with the prolonged contact between the two languages, and the dominance of Syrian Arabic, would have facilitated and prompted the replication of Syrian Arabic morphosyntactic patterns within Western Neo-Aramaic.

Correll (1978, 142–53) has devoted attention to the question of the Syrian Arabic influence on Western Neo-Aramaic verbal syntax, on the basis of the texts that he had at his disposal. Correll generally finds much Syrian Arabic influence on the function of the Western Neo-Aramaic verb, though he often
qualifies this influence, noting somewhat obscurely that ‘with all of the recognised impact of the donor language [i.e. Arabic], it is hardly possible to speak of explicit Arabisation’ (Correll 1978, 148). Notably, Correll (ibid., 153) proposes that the contact with Arabic might have been a conservative force, responsible for the preservation of the two finite verbal paradigms in Western Neo-Aramaic. Arabic, Correll suggests, hindered the inherent tendencies of the precursors of Western Neo-Aramaic, which might have led to the loss of the earlier finite verbal paradigms as happened in the eastern varieties of Aramaic. In the relevant sections of the present article, some of Correll’s remarks will be considered in greater detail.

The opinions Correll expresses on this issue seem to be somewhat contradictory (1978, 142–45). With respect to the qtal and yiqtol paradigms in Western Neo-Aramaic, he states that their functions are very close to those of the cognate Syrian Arabic forms, making Syrian Arabic influence on their function likely. And yet, he reasons, their functions are too close to those found in older Aramaic to establish Syrian Arabic influence with certainty. Nevertheless, Correll strongly believes that the Western Neo-Aramaic active participle has converged in its functions with Syrian Arabic b- + yiqtol, stating in this regard

> There can be no doubt that this is a case of direct and meticulous replication of the circumstances in Arabic (Correll 1978, 144–45).

Arnold (2007, 189) notes that qtal and yiqtol in Western Neo-Aramaic ‘are used to express preterite tense and subjunctive exactly as in the Arabic dialects of Syria’.

The present article aims to show that despite the factors of prolonged contact of Western Neo-Aramaic with Syrian Arabic

---

1 ‘... von ausdrücklicher Arabisierung kann also, bei aller zugestandenen Einwirkung von seiten der Adstratsprache, schwerlich gesprochen werden’ (my translation).

2 ‘Es kann wohl nicht der geringste Zweifel daran bestehen, daß man es hier mit einer geradezu minuziösen Nachbildung der Gegebenheiten im Arabischen zu tun hat’ (my translation), and see also Correll’s comment, p. 144, n. 272.
and the close morphological affinity between the two languages, Western Neo-Aramaic preserves a significant degree of difference from Syrian Arabic in its verbal morphosyntax.

The examination presented here is contrastive. In order to appreciate the significance of the functional divergences presented in Section 4, between cognate and similar-sounding verb forms in Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic, these divergences are contrasted with other contexts in which Syrian Arabic influence on Western Neo-Aramaic is significant (Sections 2–3), and Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic show parallel functions of their cognate verbal forms (Section 3). It is within this wider context, which, I suggest, includes a recognition on the part of the speakers of the correspondences between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic, that the existence of such divergences is striking.

The investigation offered in this article consists of three sections. In Section 2, I illustrate the close and extensive contact that has existed between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic by reviewing facets of lexical, morphological and syntactic influences of Syrian Arabic outside of the verbal system. In Section 3, I present shared features of the Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic verbal forms, due to independent development, shared retention or convergence. This section serves as a background, against which, the functional divergences, presented in Section 4, between the cognate Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic verbal paradigms, can be fully understood.

2. Syrian Arabic Influence on Western Neo-Aramaic: Loanwords and Multiword Expressions, and their Syntactic Context

To appreciate the divergences that are the focus of this paper, the duration of the contact between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic and the ways that this contact has impacted on Western Neo-Aramaic need to be understood.
Throughout this article, the linguistic examples are transcribed as they appear in the respective publications.

With regard to the duration of contact, Arnold (2002, 6–7) has pointed out two phonological features of Syrian Arabic loanwords that reflect prolonged contact between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic.

Some Arabic loanwords in Western Neo-Aramaic, such as \( \text{rk} \) ‘return’ in the fourth stem, contain the consonant /k/ where contemporary Syrian Arabic has /\( \text{g} \)/ or /\( \text{zh} \)/ (cf. \( \text{rzh} \) ‘return’). In words of Aramaic stock, /k/ most often originates from the voiced velar stop *\( \text{g} \), e.g. \( \text{felka} < *\text{pelgā} \) ‘half’ (Spitaler 1938, 17).

Other Arabic loanwords in Western Neo-Aramaic reflect spirantisation of \( \text{bgdkpt} \) consonants, e.g. \( \text{xōf} < \text{Arabic kāfī} \) ‘enough’.

Arnold convincingly suggests that the first category of loanwords was borrowed into the precursors of Western Neo-Aramaic before the voiced velar stop /\( \text{g} \)/ in Syrian Arabic shifted to /\( \text{g} \)/ and subsequently in many of the Syrian Arabic dialects to /\( \text{zh} \)/. Later borrowings from Syrian Arabic contain /\( \text{zh} \)/, e.g. \( \text{čōžra} \) ‘merchant’ < Syrian Arabic \( \text{tāžer} \). Following Spitaler (1938, 21), Arnold suggests that the second category goes back to the time when the twofold pronunciation of the \( \text{bgdkpt} \) consonants in Aramaic, as either stops or fricatives, was still allophonic. The two realisations are no longer allophonic in contemporary Western Neo-Aramaic, but have developed into discrete phonemes. Thus [\( \text{k} \)] and [\( \text{x} \)], which were originally allophones of /k/ constitute minimal pairs in \( \text{xafna} \) ‘hunger’ versus \( \text{kafna} \) ‘burial shroud’ < Arabic \( \text{kafan} \) (Arnold 1990b, 14). The initial /k/ in the Arabic loanword \( \text{kafna} \) in contrast to the initial /\( \text{x} \)/ in \( \text{xōf} < \text{Arabic kāfī} \) also presumably signifies that the former was borrowed into Western Neo-Aramaic at a later period than \( \text{kāfī} \).

The influence of contact with Syrian Arabic on the lexicon of all three Western Neo-Aramaic dialects is massive. It includes the replacement of many Aramaic lexemes with Arabic lexemes (1).
(1) Maʿlūla

\[ \text{ahḥāḍ ifqer w-ahḥāḍ ighn} \]

‘one poor man and one rich man’ (Arnold 1991, 12:1)

Most Syrian Arabic loanwords, including the forms ifqer < Arabic faqīr and ighn < Arabic ḏanī in example (1), reflect integration into Western Neo-Aramaic morphology, which is also an indication of the long duration of contact.

Material replication of Syrian Arabic lexicon is not limited in Western Neo-Aramaic to content words but includes many function words as well. Just to illustrate, these include adverbs such as bahar ‘much, very’ < Arabic bahar ‘sea’, bnawb ‘completely’ < Syrian Arabic bnawb with the same meaning, subordinators such as ḥetta ‘in order that’ and the reciprocal pronoun baʿḏ < Arabic baʿd. In Matras’s view, since contact-induced linguistic change originates in the discourse of bilingual speakers, discourse markers are particularly prone to be materially replicated (Matras 2009, 98–100, 144–45). A significant portion of the replicated Syrian Arabic function words in Western Neo-Aramaic includes discourse markers, such as ṭayyeb ‘OK, good’, bass ‘but’, yaʿni ‘I mean’. All of these originate in identical Syrian Arabic forms with the same meanings.

The ordinal numbers in Western Neo-Aramaic have been completely replaced by Syrian Arabic forms: awwal, 3 ṭēn(i), tēlet, etc. (Arnold 1990b, 403). In this regard, Western Neo-Aramaic is extreme. There is much documentation in the world’s languages for the borrowing of ‘first’ and ‘second’ but not of higher ordinals (Matras 2009, 202–03), which may point to a special propensity of lower ordinals to undergo contact-induced material replication. This holds for a number of Aramaic dialects as well. The Arabic form ‘awwal ‘first’ was taken over by varieties of Palestinian Aramaic already in the Middle Ages (Fassberg 2010,

3 Following Arnold’s practice, an initial glottal stop is not indicated in the transcription of Western Neo-Aramaic.
92, n. 102). A number of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects have borrowed either ʾawwal\(^3\) by itself (Garbell 1965, 56–7; Khan 2008, 186–87; Fassberg 2010, 92), or together with forms for ‘second’ (Khan 1999, 181; Khan 2004, 206; Khan 2009, 213). Likewise in some dialects of Ṭūrōyo, ‘first’ and ‘second’ have been replaced by Arabic forms and the Arabic ordinal for ‘third’ (tēləṯ) is occasionally used alongside a native Aramaic form (Ritter 1990, 47). In the Midin dialect of this group ‘second’ and ‘third’ are borrowed from Arabic, whereas qamoyo, the older Aramaic form for ‘first’ is preserved and used adjectivally (Jastrow 1985, 245). By contrast Western Neo-Aramaic has replaced all ordinals from ‘one’ to ‘ten’ with Arabic forms. Aramaic cardinal numbers, though, have been retained in Western Neo-Aramaic. In Trans-Zab Jewish varieties of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic, we find a combination of matter and pattern replication with all ordinal numbers. In these varieties, ordinals are formed on the basis of native Aramaic cardinal numbers, which are suffixed with -mīn. The suffix -mīn has been materially replicated from Kurdish, and Kurdish is also the model for the pattern CARDINAL + suffix (Noorlander 2014, 215).

The influence of Syrian Arabic is not limited to the material replication of lexical items, but includes replication of derivational morphemes and pattern replication. Two clear examples of this are the Arabic elative pattern aqtal, and the seventh and eighth Arabic verbal stems. For Matras (2009, 209–10), a requirement for recognising morphological borrowing is ‘backwards diffusion’, i.e., ‘replication of borrowed morphs in connection with pre-existing, inherited lexicon’. The elative aqtal pattern is used not only with Arabic loanwords, such as aqwə ‘stronger’, from the Arabic root qw\(_y\), but with Aramaic roots as well, as in awrab ‘greater, older’ from rbb\(^4\).

Syntactic influence of Syrian Arabic is evident with the ordinal numbers and the elative, on top of the lexical and morphological influence that those two categories reflect. When these categories

\(^4\) The seventh and eighth Arabic derived stems are discussed in Section 3 below (see further Correll 1978, 25–6, 141).
function as modifiers, Western Neo-Aramaic (2a-c) replicates the syntactic pattern in which they appear in Syrian Arabic (3a-c). The pattern consists of a noun phrase structure in which the modifier, in an uninflected masculine singular form, precedes the head noun, an unusual word order elsewhere in Western Neo-Aramaic, but one that is well known in Arabic (Grotzfeld 1965, 71, 93–4).

(2) Western Neo-Aramaic (Maʿlūla)

a. awwal yōma
   ‘first day’ (Arnold 1991, 72:23)

b. tēn lēlya
   ‘second night’ (Arnold 1991, 34:178)

c. awwarab aḥḥad
   ‘oldest one’, literally ‘greater one’ (Arnold 1991, 136:2)

(3) Syrian Arabic (ʿAyn et-Tīne)

a. awwal xarūf
   ‘first ram’ (Behnstedt 2000, 360:14)

b. tēni lēle
   ‘second night’ (Behnstedt 2000, 364:44)

c. aktar šī
   ‘mostly’, literally ‘most thing’ (Arnold 1987, 1:1)

Multiword expressions constitute a category with which matter replication also inherently involves syntactic structures, which fall into the category of patterns (Matras 2009, 240–43).
Numerous Syrian Arabic expressions such as (4) have been borrowed into Western Neo-Aramaic. I adduce this example to illustrate how the structural affinity between the two languages has enabled such expressions to be adopted almost as they appear in the model language. In (4), the dimension of syntax also indicates how speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic are able to match forms in Syrian Arabic with non-cognate forms with parallel function in Western Neo-Aramaic.

In (4), the Arabic expression $qat'a^\cdot \emptyset \, \overset{\text{def}}{\overset{\text{imp}}{\overset{\text{ms}}{\text{t}}} \, \overset{\text{no}}{\overset{\text{am}}{\text{amal}}}}$ ‘[he] lost hope’ (4a), literally ‘[he] cut the hope’ is mirrored by a very close expression in Western Neo-Aramaic (4b). The noun ‘$amal$ ‘hope’ has been borrowed and integrated into Western Neo-Aramaic morphology in the form $aml-a$, whereby it has acquired the Western Neo-Aramaic nominal suffix -$a$. The root $qt^\cdot$ ‘cut’ is found historically both in Arabic and in Aramaic, but its use in Western Neo-Aramaic in this phrase in collocation with $aml-a$ doubtless originates in the Syrian Arabic expression.

(4)

a. Syrian Arabic

\[
\text{\textit{lā }\textit{ta-qat'a^\cdot \emptyset \, \overset{\text{def}}{\overset{\text{imp}}{\overset{\text{ms}}{\text{t}}} \, \overset{\text{no}}{\overset{\text{am}}{\text{amal}}}}}}
\]
\text{not } \text{2-cut.IMP-MS} \quad \text{DEF-hope}

‘Don’t give up hope.’ (Stowasser 1964, 118b)

b. Neo-Aramaic (Ma’lūla)

\[
\text{\textit{qat'ul-l }\overset{\text{def}}{\overset{\text{imp}}{\overset{\text{ms}}{\text{t}}} \, \overset{\text{npsfx}}{\text{am}} \overset{\text{mpl}}{\overset{\text{dom}}{\text{l}}}}}
\]
\text{cut.QTL-3MPL-DOM} \quad \text{hope-NPSFX}

‘They lost hope.’ (Arnold 1991, 14:39)

Thus, beyond the borrowing of the Syrian Arabic lexical item ‘$amal$ and its morphological integration into Western Neo-Aramaic, the replica phrase exemplifies how Western Neo-Aramaic makes use of its own morphosyntax to replicate the
pattern of the model expression in the donor language. In Syrian Arabic, the noun ʾamal appears in the phrase in its definite form, marked as such by the definite article ʾal-, a nominal prefix. No fully analogous definite article in the form of a nominal prefix is found in Western Neo-Aramaic, though other means are found for marking noun phrases as definite, one of which is the verbal suffix -l, which differentially marks the definite direct object nominal. In (4b) this morpheme appears in the replicated pattern with the verbal form qaṭʿ-ul-l, marking its direct object aml-a as definite.

The Western Neo-Aramaic pattern in (4b) fully corresponds to the Syrian Arabic pattern, even in the definiteness of the noun aml-a. Western Neo-Aramaic, however, has not replicated the matter that is used to express the noun’s definiteness in the model language, but uses a native component belonging to a different category to replicate the Syrian Arabic pattern. Pivot-matching on the basis of phonological similarity might have played a role in the replication of the Syrian Arabic definite article ʾal- by means the Western Neo-Aramaic verbal suffix -l.

3. Shared Features of the Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic Verbal Systems due to Shared Retention, Convergence or Parallel Development

To appreciate the significance of the divergences between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic that are the focus of this paper, Section 2 above serves as a general background. Its purpose is to illustrate that Western Neo-Aramaic has extensively borrowed Syrian Arabic lexicon and morphology, and has replicated Syrian Arabic morphosyntactic patterns associated with those borrowings, either by means of the borrowed forms themselves, or through its own linguistic matter.

The divergences in the verbal system, which are presented in section 4 below, are striking not only against this general background of extensive impact of Syrian Arabic, but especially
in light of similarities both in matter and in pattern, or in form and in function, between the verbal systems of the two language groups.

The scope of the present article does not permit a close examination of all of the functions of the Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic verbal paradigms, but I present here a comparison of some major functions of the shared cognate paradigms (i) qatal (Syrian Arabic) and qta (Western Neo-Aramaic), (ii) yiqtol, (iii) qātel (Syrian Arabic) and qōtel (Western Neo-Aramaic) and (iv) of the Western Neo-Aramaic qtīl/qattīl paradigm of the resultative participle.

3.1 Background to the Divergences in the Verbal System: Cognate Inflectional Morphology

As noted in the introduction, due to the shared origins of the two languages, the inherited verbal morphology of Western Neo-Aramaic very closely parallels that of Syrian Arabic. Table 1 outlines the parallel Tense–Aspect–Mood (TAM) inflectional paradigms of the Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic verbal systems, as they are reflected in the first or basic stem.

| Paradigm | Arabic (ktb ‘write’) | Aramaic (ftḥ ‘open’, ḏmx ‘sleep’) |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| qatal/qtal | katab | ifṭāḥ (< earlier Aramaic *pṯaḥ) |
| yiqtol | yǝktob | yiftuḥ |
| imperative | ktōb | ftōḥ |
| qātel/qōtel⁵ | kāteb | ḏōmex (< earlier Aramaic *dāmex) |
| resultative | maktūb | iḏmex (< earlier Aramaic *dmīx (i.e. *qtīl)) |
| participle | šamme‘ < *šammi‘ (*qattīl, Arnold 1990b, 76) |

Adapted from Arnold and Behnstedt (1993, 12, 55) and Grotfeldt (1965, 108).

⁵ Historically, the active participle.
One of the central features of the Western Neo-Aramaic verbal morphology is the retention of the suffix and prefix conjugations unlike other Neo-Aramaic dialects. Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic share these two paradigms, to which I shall refer as qatal (Syrian Arabic) or qtal (Western Neo-Aramaic) and yiqtol respectively. They also share the qātel (Syrian Arabic) or qōtel (Western Neo-Aramaic) paradigm, which goes back historically to the active participle, as well as the imperative paradigm. Thus, in the morphology of the TAM paradigms, the two languages reflect complete parallelism. The exception is the resultative participles: these show divergent forms.

The Person–Number–Gender (PNG) inflectional morphology of the verbal system, too, is largely parallel, but not completely identical, in the two languages, as exemplified in Table 2 (taken from Arnold and Behnstedt 1993, 55) with respect to the qatal/qtal paradigm of the verb ḏḥk ‘laugh’ in the first stem, which has been borrowed into Western Neo-Aramaic from Syrian Arabic. The Western Neo-Aramaic column contains the forms that are found in the dialect of Ma‘lūla.

Table 2: Verbal Inflection of the Qatal/Qtal Paradigm, First Stem

| Arabic | Aramaic (Ma‘lūla) |
|--------|-------------------|
| 3MS: ḏḥak-∅ | ʿidḥek-∅ |
| 3FS: ḏḥak-it | ʿiḥk-aṭ |
| 3PL: ḏḥak-u | ʿiḥk-∅ |
| 2MS: ḏḥak-t | ʿiḥk-ič |
| 2FS: ḏḥak-ti | ʿiḥk-iš |
| 2MPL: ḏḥak-tu | ʿiḥk-ičxun |
| 2FPL: ḏḥak-tu | ʿiḥk-ičxen |
| 1S: ḏḥak-t | ʿiḥk-it |
| 1PL: ḏḥak-na | ʿiḥk-innah |

ḏḥk ‘laugh’
As Table 2 indicates, the two language groups share the same general inflectional scheme, which in the case of the *qatal/qtal* paradigm consists of verbal suffixes. Through their verbal inflection, the two languages express the same categories of PNG, with the exception of three significant differences. In the Neo-Aramaic dialects of Maʿlūla and Ǧubbʿadīn, gender distinction is preserved between the 2mpl. and 2fpl. forms, whereas in Syrian Arabic this distinction has been levelled out. Syrian Arabic also does not formally distinguish between 1s. and 2ms., whereas these are distinct in Western Neo-Aramaic. Conversely, Syrian Arabic maintains number distinction between 3ms. and 3pl., whereas these are expressed by identical forms in Western Neo-Aramaic.

The cross-linguistically rare case of the replication of inflectional morphology from Syrian Arabic has not been found in Western Neo-Aramaic. A possible example, though, of pattern replication with respect to Syrian Arabic inflectional paradigms occurs in the Western Neo-Aramaic dialect of Baxʿa. In this dialect, as in Syrian Arabic, gender distinction has been lost in plural verb forms through the generalisation of historical mpl. forms. Thus, in the *qtal* conjugation of the dialect of Baxʿa, the 2pl. suffix for both genders is *-ičxun*, whereas the other two Western Neo-Aramaic dialects maintain separate forms (see Table 2). Arnold and Behnstedt (1993, 56) plausibly attribute the development in the Western Neo-Aramaic dialect of Baxʿa to the influence of the Syrian Arabic of the nearby villages.

3.2. Background to the Divergences in the Verbal System: Borrowing of Verbal Derivational Morphology

One area in which there is clear influence of Syrian Arabic on the Western Neo-Aramaic verbal system is in the replication of Arabic derivational morphology, i.e. of derived stems which are not found in earlier Aramaic. Replication of verbal derivational morphology is apparently quite uncommon cross-linguistically (Matras 2009, 211). The forms of these stems have been borrowed extensively into Western Neo-Aramaic, notwithstanding the
typical Western Neo-Aramaic sound changes, as shown in Table 3, which contains the 3ms forms of the qatal/qtal conjugation (Arnold and Behnstedt 1993, 58).

Table 3: The Syrian Arabic Derived Stems in Western Neo-Aramaic

| Arabic stem | Arabic form | Aramaic form | Gloss |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| III         | šārat       | šōreṭ        | ‘bet’ |
| VI          | trāfaq      | črōfeq       | ‘join’|
| VII         | nfaġar      | inťfžar      | ‘explode’ |
| VIII        | ftaham      | ifʾčham      | ‘be understood’ |
| X           | staqbal     | sčaqbel      | ‘accept’ |

Matter and pattern replication coincide in the borrowing of the derived stems.

Firstly, the borrowing of the Syrian Arabic derived stems is not merely part of the lexical influence of Syrian Arabic on Western Neo-Aramaic, but clearly constitutes morphological borrowing. The borrowed derived stems show ‘backwards diffusion’, namely, the ‘replication of borrowed morphs in connection with pre-existing, inherited lexicon’ (Matras 2009, 209–10). In other words, the borrowed Arabic stems are widely used with existing Aramaic roots.

Secondly, the Syrian Arabic VII and VIII passive stems, i.e. nfaʿal and ftaʿal, borrowed into Western Neo-Aramaic as inťfʿal and ifʾčʿal respectively, additionally reflect pattern replication (Arnold and Behnstedt 1993, 58–9). These borrowed stems have replaced the older Aramaic ʾeṯpʿel passive stem, which has been retained in Western Neo-Aramaic through one verbal lexeme (see Arnold 1990b, 62, 126–28). Active verbs of the first stem, whether Arabic or Aramaic in origin, are passivised through Arabic stem VII: ifṭah ‘[he] opened’ > inťftah ‘[he] was opened’, unless their first radical is /n/, in which case they are passivised through the Arabic eighth stem, as with inxas ‘[he] slaughtered’ > inʾčxas ‘[he] was slaughtered’, from the originally Aramaic root
The same morphophonemic rule operates in Syrian Arabic. Thus, the Syrian Arabic pattern has been replicated in Western Neo-Aramaic both with respect to the use of Arabic stems VII and VIII as the passive counterparts of stem I, as well as in terms of the morphophonemic rule that governs the selection of each of these stems.

Coghill (2015, 83–107) has compared the borrowing of Arabic derived stems in Western Neo-Aramaic and in dialects of Eastern Neo-Aramaic. She has found that of all of the Neo-Aramaic dialects, Western Neo-Aramaic has borrowed the largest number of Arabic stems. Likewise, Western Neo-Aramaic shows the greatest degree of integration of derived stems; of all of the Neo-Aramaic dialects that she examined, only the replicated Arabic seventh and eighth stems in Western Neo-Aramaic show use with native Aramaic verbal roots. As factors in the acceptance of Arabic derived stems, she suggests duration and intensity of contact and the specific repertoire of inherited derived stems. I would suggest, in addition to those factors, that the close morphological similarities that existed between Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic, but not other Neo-Aramaic dialects, in the inflection of the TAM paradigms (Table 1) as well as in the inflection for PNG (Table 2) facilitated the borrowing and integration of Syrian Arabic derived stems in Western Neo-Aramaic.

As we have seen, the clear formal parallelism that is reflected in the verbal morphologies of Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic correlates with Syrian Arabic influence on both Western Neo-Aramaic verbal inflection and derivational morphology, in the form of pattern replication as well as matter replication, especially in the case of the seventh and eighth Arabic stems. This would suggest a recognition of the parallelism between the morphologies of the Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic verbs at some level on the part of the speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic.
3.3. Background to the Divergences in the Verbal System: Shared Functions and Morphosyntactic Contexts of Cognate Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic Verbal Paradigms

Table 1 presents the cognate TAM paradigms of Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic. Pattern replication appears to be common in many languages with respect to TAM (Matras 2009, 236, 248–49), yet in this category significant divergences are found between the two languages, as shown in Section 4 below.

The divergences in the uses of the verb forms are striking in light of the functions and morphosyntactic patterns in which the Western Neo-Aramaic qtal and yiqtol conjugations parallel cognate and similar-sounding qatal and yiqtol conjugations of Syrian Arabic. These are covered in this section. In the examples below I use the following glosses for the verbal paradigms: QTL: qtal (Western Neo-Aramaic)/qatal (Syrian Arabic), YQTL: yiqtol (Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic), QĀTL: qātel (Syrian Arabic historical active participle), QŌTL: qōtel (Western Neo-Aramaic historical active participle), and QTIL: qtīl/qattīl (Western Neo-Aramaic historical resultative participle).

The shared functions of Western Neo-Aramaic qtal and yiqtol and cognate qatal and yiqtol of Syrian Arabic are likely to be the outcome of independent development in each language or possibly shared retention in the case of qatal/qtal, and not language contact.

To these shared functions, however, contact between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic has added very extensive matter replication of Syrian Arabic content and function words, and multiword expressions (§2). This has resulted in numerous contexts in which Western Neo-Aramaic corresponds to Syrian Arabic at two levels: (i) At the level of the verbal form, its qtal and yiqtol forms match cognate qatal and yiqtol of Syrian Arabic in both function and sound; (ii) At the level of the construction, replicated elements, such as lexical items loaned from Arabic, match forms in Syrian Arabic, in meaning (in the case of calques), or in both meaning and sound (in the case of materially replicated lexical borrowings).
These contexts created a potential for bilingual speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic to match Syrian Arabic forms with cognate, similar-sounding Western Neo-Aramaic forms (i.e. pivot-matching), by way of analogy, in other contexts where these cognate forms did not function as in Syrian Arabic. This type of contact-induced analogical levelling is known cross-linguistically (Matras 2009, 237). In Section 4, we shall see that despite this potential, such analogical pattern replication did not occur.

The qatal conjugation (Syrian Arabic) and qtal conjugation (Western Neo-Aramaic) express the general past tense in both languages. This shared function exists in Late Aramaic and Classical Arabic, and is either a parallel innovation or even a feature of Central Semitic to which both languages belong. In example (5a), taken from the Syrian Arabic dialect of ʿAyn et-Tīne, an Arabic-speaking village situated about three and a half kilometres to the south of Maʿlūla, the qatal form žāb ‘he brought’ is past relative to the moment of speaking reflected in the initial clause beginning with badd-i ‘I wish’. Similarly in (5b) from the Western Neo-Aramaic dialect of Baxʿa, the qtal form čĉaffq-it ‘I agreed’ is past relative to the moment of speaking, which is reflected in the preceding verb amar-∅ ‘he said’ and the direct speech that follows it.
The Morphosyntactic Conservatism of Western Neo-Aramaic

(5)

a. Syrian Arabic (ʿAyn et-Tīne)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{badd-} & \quad \emptyset -\text{ḥki-}l-\text{kun} & \quad \text{ʾiṣṣa} \\
\text{desire-1s} & \quad 1\text{s-tell.YQTLO-2PL} & \quad \text{story} \\
\text{ʿan} & \quad \text{Žiḥi…} & \quad \text{marra} \\
\text{about} & \quad \text{Žiḥi…} & \quad \text{once} \\
\text{žāb-} \emptyset & \quad \text{ʾrūn} & \quad \text{horn.PL} \\
\text{bring.YQTLO-3MS} & \quad \text{horn.PL}
\end{align*}
\]

‘I wish to tell you a story about Žiḥi … once he brought horns.’ (Behnstedt 2000, 360:1, 3)

b. Neo-Aramaic (Baxʿa)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{amar-} & \quad \emptyset \quad \text{ōṯ} & \quad \text{aḥḥaḍ} & \quad \text{sʿūḍay-} \emptyset \\
\text{say.YQTLO-3} & \quad \text{EXIST} & \quad \text{one} & \quad \text{saudi-M} \\
\text{ććaffq-} \emptyset & \quad \text{‘emm-i} & \quad \text{‘emm-i} \\
\text{agree.YQTLO-1S} & \quad \text{with-3MS}
\end{align*}
\]

‘He said: “… there is a Saudi with whom I agreed…”’ (Arnold 1989, 198:16)

The yiqtol conjugation is found in both languages in many parallel contexts. In main clauses it functions as a modal form, expressing irrealis (i.e. non-indicative) moods. This modal function is a parallel innovation in both languages. Yiqtol already developed into an irrealis mood in the documented Late Western Aramaic dialects. As in many other dialects of Spoken Arabic, though, in Syrian Arabic yiqtol can also appear with a number of preverbal particles that express TAM categories such as indicative and progressive (see §4.1.). Therefore, bare yiqtol is transcribed in the examples as \(\emptyset\text{-yiqtol}\), and glossed as MOD, i.e. modal.
A context shared by both languages in which *yiqtol* expresses deontic modality is formulas of blessings (6a, c) and curses (6b, d). This modal function of *yiqtol* already appears in Late Aramaic. In Middle Arabic as well, *yiqtol* is commonly found in this use, in contrast to Classical Arabic, which mostly employs the suffix conjugation *qatala*, the precursor of later Arabic *qatal*, in such formulas (Blau 2002, 45).

(6)

a. Syrian Arabic (‘Ayn et-Tīne)

\[
\text{ālā} \quad \text{∅-y-xallī-∅-l-ak} \quad \text{abū-k}
\]

God MOD-3M-leave.YQTL-S-for-you.MS father.CST-2MS

‘May God preserve your father.’ (Arnold 1987, 368:80)

b. Syrian Arabic (‘Ayn et-Tīne)

\[
\text{ʾal-ū-l-u} \quad \text{∅-yi-xrib-∅} \quad \text{bēt-ak}
\]

say.QTL-3PL-to-him MOD-3M-destroy.YQTL-S house.CST-2MS

‘They said to him: “May [God] destroy your house.”’ (Behnstedt 2000, 368:101)

c. Neo-Aramaic (Maʿlūla)

\[
y-ṭawwlel-∅-l \quad \text{ʿomr-ax} \quad \text{Alō}
\]

3M-lengthen.YQTL-S-DOM life.CST-2MS God

‘May God lengthen your life.’ (Arnold 1991, 24:47)
d. Neo-Aramaic (Baxʿa)

\textit{amr-il-l-un} \hspace{1cm} \textit{alō} \hspace{1cm} \textit{y-hurpel-∅-l}

say.QTL-1s-to-them \hspace{1cm} come.IMP-2FS \hspace{1cm} eat.IMP-2S

\textit{payt-ay-xun}

house-PL.CST-2PL

‘I said to them: “May God destroy your houses.”’

(Arnold 1989, 204:83)

Many of the blessing and curse formulas in Western Neo-Aramaic, including (6c, d) replicate multiword expressions in Syrian Arabic, similarly to example (4b) above. This is detailed in the following paragraphs. As with (4b), the replication is mostly at the level of the lexicon and lexical semantics, whereas the morphosyntax is that of Western Neo-Aramaic. For instance, in both (6c) and (6d) the definiteness of the direct object nominal is expressed through the verbal suffix \textit{-l}. Nonetheless, these replicated expressions largely match the model Syrian Arabic expressions in sound and function, both at the level of the replicated lexical elements and of the cognate \textit{yiqtol} forms.

In (6c) from Maʿlūla, both the verbal lexeme \textit{ṭwl} (stem II) ‘lengthen’ and the noun ‘\textit{ʿomr}-a ‘life’ are material replications of Syrian Arabic \textit{ṭwl} (stem II) ‘lengthen’ and the noun ‘\textit{ʿomr} ‘life’.

The curse in Neo-Aramaic example (6d) is noteworthy in that, unlike (6c) or (4b), it does not materially replicate the parallel Syrian Arabic expression, which appears in (6b), but matches it with cognate, similar-sounding forms. Most conspicuous is the matching of the Syrian Arabic verbal root \textit{xrb} (6b) in the first stem with the cognate Western Neo-Aramaic verbal root \textit{ḥrb} ‘destroy’, also in the first stem. The first radical of the Aramaic root /ḥ/, matches /x/ in Syrian Arabic, even though /ḥ/ and /x/ are discrete phonemes in Western Neo-Aramaic. The expression itself is not necessarily a replication of Arabic. At the very least, the root \textit{ḥrb} ‘destroy’, as well as the collocation \textit{ḥrb} + \textit{byt} ‘house’ occur in a variety of earlier Aramaic dialects, such as Christian
Palestinian Aramaic, a dialect of Late Western Aramaic: šbyq l-kwn byt-kn ḥrb ‘your house is left to you desolate’ (Matthew 23:38).

In the Neo-Aramaic story in which (6d) appears, the curse formula appears in direct speech, in a conversation between a Neo-Aramaic speaker and a group of Syrian Arabs, which no doubt took place in Syrian Arabic. This would indicate that for the narrator, the curse in (6d) actually represents the common Syrian Arabic curse in (6b). The use of a very similarly sounding formula, however, in which Arabic xrb is matched with Aramaic ḥrb, again points to the recognition on the part of bilingual speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic and Arabic of the parallelisms in sound and structure between the two languages. A similar case of matching of similar-sounding, though not identical, cognate verbal roots between Aramaic and Arabic occurs below, example (10).

The overlapping use of the yiqtol conjugation in the two languages is also very obvious in specific constructions, shared by both languages, in which yiqtol consistently appears in embedded clauses. Here too, Western Neo-Aramaic is matched with Syrian Arabic at two levels. The cognate yiqtol forms match in sound and modal function, and the constructions more generally overlap in their functions, lexical components and morphosyntax.

For example, in both languages, yiqtol is the embedded verb form in the modal complement of verbs of ability. Also this use is found in earlier varieties of Aramaic and Arabic. It is likely to be an independent innovation in both languages and not the direct result of contact between Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic. On the other hand, ability is expressed in both languages by the same matrix verbal lexeme, which Western Neo-Aramaic has replicated from Syrian Arabic. In Syrian Arabic, the verb qdr and its variant ġdr ‘be able’ is the most common matrix verb of ability, as seen in (7a), from the village of Ġrēǧir, located around thirty kilometres North-East of Maʿlūla. This lexeme has been borrowed into Western Neo-Aramaic as qtr, in the forth stem aqtar ‘be able’ and is also widely used (7b).
The Morphosyntactic Conservatism of Western Neo-Aramaic

(7)

a. Syrian Arabic (Ǧrēǧir)

\[ ma \quad \text{gidr-u} \quad \emptyset -\text{y-saww-u} \quad f-i \quad \text{sī} \]
not able.QLT-3PL MOD-3M-do.QLT-PL in-him thing

‘They were not able to do anything with him.’
(Behnstedt 2000, 354:13, and see also Cowell 1964, 348 [17])

b. Neo-Aramaic (Maʿlūla)

\[ lōfaš \quad \emptyset -\text{maqāṭr-a} \quad ġ-ideʿ \]
not 3-able.QLT-FS 3FS-know.QLT

‘She is not able to know.’ (Arnold 1991, 8:7)

Other specific constructions that are shared by both languages make use of the Arabic pseudo-verb \textit{badd} ‘desire’, which has been replicated in the Western Neo-Aramaic dialects of Maʿlūla and Baxʿa as \textit{batt}. In both languages, these forms appear with pronominal suffixes and a modal complement. The basic function of Syrian Arabic \textit{badd}- (8a) and the replicated form \textit{batt}- (8b) is to express volition. The Western Neo-Aramaic dialect of Ǧubbʿadīn uses the native Aramaic form \textit{bēl}- (8c) in place of \textit{badd-}/\textit{batt}-.

Like \textit{badd}-, \textit{bēl}- appears with possessive suffixes and a modal complement and expresses volition. Correll (1978, 219) posits that the form \textit{bēl}- developed from \textit{bʾē}, the resultative participle of \textit{bʾy} ‘desire’ + the preposition \textit{l-} ‘to’.
(8)

a. Syrian Arabic (‘Ayn et-Tine)

\[ \text{badd-i} \quad \emptyset - \emptyset - \text{ḥki-l-kun} \quad \overset{2}{\text{iṣṣa}} \]

\text{desire-1s MOD-1s-tell.VQL-to-you.PL story}

‘I wish to tell you a story.’ (Behnstedt 2000, 360:1)

b. Neo-Aramaic (Baxʿa)

\[ \text{amr-laḥ-l-i} \quad \text{batt-ḥ} \quad \text{n-zē-h} \]

\text{say.VQL-1pl-to-him desire-1pl 1-go.VQL-1pl}

‘a

\text{sʿudōyṭa}

to \text{Saudi. Arabia}

‘We said to him: “We wish to go to Saudi Arabia.”’ (Arnold 1989, 198:6)

c. Neo-Aramaic (Ǧubbʿadīn)

\[ \text{b-ḥ} \quad \text{n-aḥač} \quad \text{ext} \]

\text{desire-1pl 1-tell.VQL how}

\[ \emptyset - \text{ṭōqn-an} \quad \text{ḥaml-ōṭa} \]

\text{3-become.VQL-FPL flood-FPL}

‘We wish to tell [you] how floods occur.’

(Arnold 1989, 198:6)

The same construction of pseudo-verb with pronominal suffix and modal complement in \text{yiqtol} has been expanded to express purpose. Again, this shared function is expressed in Syrian Arabic through \text{badd-} (9a), in the Western Neo-Aramaic dialects of Maʿlūla and Baxʿa through the Arabic loanword \text{batt-} (9b), and in the dialect of Ġubbʿadīn, by means of the native Aramaic \text{bēl-} (9c). Such purpose clauses are often embedded by motion verbs.
The Morphosyntactic Conservatism of Western Neo-Aramaic

(9)

a. Syrian Arabic (ʿAyn et-Tīne)

\[ \text{iž-u} \quad \text{hadōli} \quad \text{badd-un} \]

\text{come.QTL-3PL} \quad \text{these} \quad \text{desire-3MPL}

\[ Ø-\text{yi-ʔøtл-ū} \]

\text{MOD-3M-beat.YQTL-PL.him}

‘These [men] came \text{in order to beat him.}’ (Behnstedt 2000, 362:25)

b. Neo-Aramaic (Maʿlula)

\[ ṯō-l-un \quad \text{batt-ayy} \quad y-xuṭb-un-na \]

\text{come.QTL-to-3MPL} \quad \text{desire-3MPL} \quad \text{3M-betroth.YQTL-PL-her}

‘They came in order to betroth her.’ (Arnold 1991, 26:74)

c. Neo-Aramaic (Ǧubbʿadin)

\[ Ø-qōym-a \quad Ø-ty-ō-l-a \quad hō \]

\text{3-rise.QØTL-FS} \quad \text{3-come.QØTL-FS-to-her} \quad \text{this.FS}

\[ ḥarīmča… \quad bēl-a \quad ě-latšta‘en-ne \]

\text{woman…} \quad \text{desire-3FS} \quad \text{3FS-form.YQTL-it}

‘The woman comes … in order to form it.’ (Arnold, 1990a, 22, 3:5)

A precursor to \text{bēl-}, based on the resultative participle of \text{bʿy}, is not found in Late Western Aramaic as a matrix predicate taking a volitional clause. Rather, Late Western Aramaic employs active forms, including the active participle of \text{bʿy} for this purpose. Considering this, as well as the similarity between of the morphosyntax of \text{bēl-} and Arabic \text{badd-}, it is not unlikely that \text{bēl-} replicates the morphosyntactic pattern of Arabic \text{badd-}.
4. The Divergences between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic Cognate Verb Forms

The previous sections provide the background to this section, which is the main focus of the article. This section shows how despite the potential for Syrian Arabic verbal forms to be functionally matched with cognate Western Neo-Aramaic verbal forms, with respect to the expression of TAM, Western Neo-Aramaic preserves the independent functions of its verbal forms.

It was shown in the previous sections that a combination of factors created the potential for matching: (i) Similarity in morphology and sound between cognate verbal forms; (ii) Functions of the suffix conjugation (Arabic qatal and Aramaic qtal), and prefix conjugation (Aramaic and Arabic yiqtol) that were already shared between the two languages as a result of independent parallel development; (iii) the fact that Western Neo-Aramaic reflects a very large degree of material replication of Syrian Arabic lexicon, pattern replication of Syrian Arabic words and multiword expressions (calques) and the combination of both. As a result numerous contexts arose in which Syrian Arabic is matched with Western Neo-Aramaic, both at the level of the verbal form and at the level of the syntactic construction or multiword expressions.

4.1. Parallel Functions Performed by Non-cognate Forms

This sub-section presents the first type of divergence between Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic verbal morphosyntax. Here, Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic share a verbal function but do not mark it with a shared historically cognate verbal paradigm. Western Neo-Aramaic employs a different verbal paradigm, even though it has inherited a paradigm that is cognate and similarly-sounding to the Syrian Arabic paradigm. This contrasts with examples (5–9), in which the shared historical descent and the sound-similarity of the qatal/qtal and yiqtol paradigms correlates with parallel functions in the two languages.
The first example is the non-past indicative. Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic each possess such a form, with parallel usages, one of which is to express the general or simple present. The form is $b$-$yiqtol$ (10a) in Syrian Arabic, consisting of the preverb $b$- and the $yiqtol$ paradigm. The $∅$-$yiqtol$ paradigm, i.e. the form without the preverb, is used in the irrealis mood and modal complements (examples [6–9]). In the glosses, I mark this preverbal particle $b$- as IND. In Western Neo-Aramaic, however, the same function of non-past indicative is expressed by the $qōtel$ paradigm, which is cognate with the Syrian Arabic $qātel$ paradigm. Both are historically the active participle.

(10)

a. Syrian Arabic (ʿAyn et-Tīne)

\begin{verbatim}
lǝ-ḥʾūl ʿan-na b-i-samm-ū-ha
\end{verbatim}

DEF-field.pl at-us IND-3-call.yqtl-pl-her

mithl ʿal-ḥwekīr

like DEF-ḥwekīr

ˇThey call our fields “ḥwekīr” = our fields are called “ḥwekīr.” (Arnold 1987, 1:7)

b. Neo-Aramaic (Maʿlūla)

\begin{verbatim}
šuʒžōtča ∅-mšammy-il-l-a
šuʒžōtča 3-call.qōtl-mp-to-her
\end{verbatim}

ˇThey call it “šuʒžōtča” = it is called “šuʒžōtča.” (Arnold 1991, 264:40)

Examples (10a) and (10b) are very similar to examples (6–9) in that Western Neo-Aramaic (10b) parallels a Syrian Arabic construction (10a). But whereas in (6–9) both languages employ $yiqtol$ within the parallel constructions, here Western Neo-Aramaic employs $qōtel$ where where Arabic employs $b$-$yiqtol$. 
The Aramaic expression in (10b) relates to the Arabic expression in (10a) very similarly to the way Aramaic (6d) relates to Arabic (6a) above. There the Syrian Arabic verbal root *xrb* is matched in Western Neo-Aramaic with cognate *ḥrb* within a shared expression, both appearing in the first stem. Here, Syrian Arabic *smy* ‘call’ (10a) is paralleled by the cognate Aramaic root *šmy* ‘call’ (10b), both in the second stem, also within a shared expression. Both verbs appear in the 3mpl form, which constitutes a shared impersonal construction. In both languages the verbal root is derived from the noun for ‘name’, which is *ʾism* in Arabic and *ušm-a* in Western Neo-Aramaic. As with *ḥrb* in (6d), the derived verbal root *šmy* ‘call’ in (10b) is documented in earlier Aramaic, as is its use in the second stem as in (10b). Therefore, this parallel derivation of *smy* and *šmy* from the respective nouns *ʾism* and *ušm-a* ‘name’ in both languages is not likely to be the result of language contact. Still, the selection of this expression or preference for it in Western Neo-Aramaic might well have been influenced by the existence of a similar expression in Syrian Arabic. This adds to the general impression that bilingual speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic recognise the parallelisms between the two languages.

It should be noted that Western Neo-Aramaic shares a preverbal particle ‘*am(mal)*- with Syrian Arabic, which marks progressive, continuous and habitual aspects (Correll 1978, 61–2; Grotzfeld 1965, 84, 87). The specific uses of this shared particle in both languages are beyond the scope of this article, and warrant a separate study, which I aim to undertake in a future publication. Nonetheless, in Syrian Arabic this preverbal particle appears with either the *∅*-yiqtol or *b*-yiqtol paradigms. In the Syrian Arabic texts published by Arnold (1987) and Behnstedt (2000) from the Qalamun region, where Western Neo-Aramaic is spoken, ‘*am(mal)*- is most commonly found with *∅*-yiqtol. In Western Neo-Aramaic it appears with the qōtel paradigm and not with the yiqtol paradigm.

Another verbal function where the two languages diverge is the expression of perfect aspect. The perfect is an innovation in both Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic but the two languages use
distinct verbal forms. The paradigm that expresses perfect aspect in Syrian Arabic, illustrated in (11a, b) is qātel, an innovation that is widespread in Spoken Arabic, also outside of the Levant (Brustad 2000, 182–84). This is historically the active participle of which the reflexes in Western Neo-Aramaic, namely qōtel, express the general present. In Western Neo-Aramaic, however, the perfect is not expressed by cognate qōtel, but by means of the qtil/qattīl paradigm, the Aramaic resultative participle. Judging from the testimony of documented forms of Late Aramaic, this innovation crystalised in Western Neo-Aramaic after the Late Aramaic period. The morphological patterns qtil/qattīl, which are used in the first stem, have been inherited from earlier Aramaic. In (11c), the pattern qtil is reflected in the historically transparent form tmir- of the first stem. In the other stems, the older Aramaic forms of the resultative participles with initial m- such as *mqattal, *maqtal for the second and fourth stems respectively, have not been preserved, in contrast to some of the Eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects (e.g. Khan 1999, 94; Fassberg 2010, 96). They have been replaced with innovative forms, created by analogy with the pattern qtil of the first stem. In (11d) this is exemplified by the form hirreb-, reflecting the innovative pattern qittīl of the second stem. Two features have been expanded from qtil of the first stem to the rest of the stems, namely, the lack of initial m-, and the vowel ī, which in hirreb- is realised as e (see Spitaler 1938, 211, §187l; Arnold 1990b, 82, 252).

(11)

a. Syrian Arabic (‘Ayn et-Tīne)

\[t̚aʾaž̚aḫ̚-u\quad haḍ̚ōli\quad ź̚ayy-īn\]

wonder.QTL-PL those come.QāTL-MPL

\[yi-ʾaṭ̚l-u\quad ź̚iḥi\]

3-beat.YQTL-PL Žiḥi

‘Those who had come to beat Žiḥi wondered.’

(Behnstedt 2000, 362:31)
b. Syrian Arabic (ʿAyn et-Tīne)

\[\begin{align*}
\text{.say.QTL-to-3FS} & \quad \text{come.QTL-3FS} & \quad \text{DEF-rabbit.FS} \\
\al-ha & \quad i\daggeri-t & \quad \text{il-} \text{`armbi} \\
\text{REL} & \quad \text{REL} & \quad \text{REL} \\
\text{ma} & \quad \text{mwa} \text{ṣṣi-} & \quad \text{`abəl} \\
\text{yōm} & \quad \text{ask.QĀTL-MS-her} & \quad \text{before} \\
\end{align*}\]

‘He said to her [=his wife]: “Did the rabbit come?” [in other words,] what he had asked of her [=his wife] the day before.’ (Behnstedt 2000, 368:79)

c. Neo-Aramaic (Maʿlūla)

\[\begin{align*}
\text{wife-CS} & \quad \text{king} & \quad \text{forget.QTL-3FS-DOM} \\
\text{wife-CS} & \quad \text{REL} & \quad \text{REL} \\
\text{box} & \quad \text{REL} & \quad \text{REL} \\
\text{husband-her} & \quad \text{husband-her} & \quad \text{husband-her} \\
\end{align*}\]

‘The wife of the king forgot the box that her husband had buried for her.’ (Arnold 1991, 20:12)
Examples (10–11) reflect two TAM functions that are shared between Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic, namely, the expression of the general present and the expression of the perfect aspect. In (10) the Syrian Arabic expression even appears to be matched in Western Neo-Aramaic by elements such as a cognate verbal root and stem, and identical impersonal construction. What is noteworthy here, however, is that there is no matching between Arabic and Aramaic morphological forms, as was the case with qatal/qtal and with yiqtol, whose patterns of use and morphological forms were matched in the two languages (see §3.3.).

In the construction in (10) there would have been a potential to match in the same way the element yiqtol in Syrian Arabic b-yiqtol with the cognate and similar-sounding form yiqtol in Western Neo-Aramaic. On the basis of the many shared contexts where cognate and similar-sounding yiqtol forms in Aramaic and Arabic are matched in their function (§3.3.), the bilingual speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic could have reanalised Aramaic yiqtol as ∅-yiqtol, replicating the Syrian Arabic pattern of verbal morphology that characterises its yiqtol paradigm. Subsequently, preverbal prefixes could have been replicated in Aramaic, such as the Syrian Arabic preverbal particle b, to express...
the indicative. We have seen that matter replication of an Arabic preverbal particle is already attested in Western Neo-Aramaic with ‘\textit{am}(\textit{mal})-. Despite this potential, however, Western Neo-Aramaic uses a non-matching morphological form for expressing the general present.

Similar potential would have existed to match Syrian Arabic \textit{qātel} with the cognate and similar-sounding Western Neo-Aramaic Neo-Aramaic \textit{qōtel} to express the perfect. Nonetheless, a non-matching morphological form is used in Western Neo-Aramaic.

4.2. Divergences in Verbal Function in which Western Neo-Aramaic Marks Distinctions Absent from Syrian Arabic

In this section I present the most striking category of divergences between the Western Neo-Aramaic verbal paradigms and those of Syrian Arabic with respect to the expression of TAM, when we consider the general background presented in Sections 2–3, especially 3.3. The two divergences are revealed by examining two syntactic constructions in Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic and comparing the verbal forms used in them in each language.

The constructions in question are both embedded clauses, namely, phasal complements of the matrix verb ‘begin’ and protases of counterfactual conditions. We shall see that Western Neo-Aramaic preserves a more complex pattern of embedding than Syrian Arabic with respect to these constructions. This fact is in itself noteworthy. As pointed out in the introduction, the preservation of independent morphosyntactic patterns with these constructions appears to go against Matras’s suggestion (2009, 244 and see also ibid., 248–50) that such embedded constructions are typically among the first in the replica language to converge with the patterns of the model language.

The special significance of these divergences, however, is that in these two respective constructions Syrian Arabic \textit{yiqtol} is matched in Western Neo-Aramaic by \textit{qōtel}, and Syrian Arabic \textit{qatal} is matched by Western Neo-Aramaic \textit{yiqtol}. By contrast, in
Section 3.3. we saw various other contexts in which Syrian Arabic qatal and yiqtol are matched in their function with cognate and similar-sounding Western Neo-Aramaic qtal and yiqtol. Those contexts where cognate qatal/qtal and cognate yiqtol have the same function in both languages would have created a potential for the levelling of the Western Neo-Aramaic grammatical distinction by analogy with Syrian Arabic. Despite this potential, levelling has not occurred.

The first syntactic construction is that of phasal complements of the matrix verb ‘begin’. In Syrian Arabic, the morphosyntax of modal and phasal complements are similar. The complement is in the Ø-yiqtol form (Grotfeldt 1965, 90, §e1). By contrast, Western Neo-Aramaic clearly differentiates between modal (e.g. denoting ability and volition) and phasal complements. Like Syrian Arabic, modal complements follow the matrix verb in yiqtol form, but unlike Syrian Arabic, phasal complements take qōtel forms.

This is striking given that the Aramaic matrix verbs of phasal complements are likely to be calques of those found in Syrian Arabic. One such verb that takes phasal complements in Western Neo-Aramaic is ṣqn, which Arnold and Behnstedt (1993, 64) identify as a calque of Syrian Arabic ṣār. In Syrian Arabic, ṣār ‘become’ is a very common inchoative verbal lexeme, which most commonly takes complements in Ø-yiqtol (12a, b). The verb ṣqn in Western Neo-Aramaic likewise signifies ‘become’ and is used in the sense of ‘begin’ with a complement clause. In contrast to Syrian Arabic ṣār, Aramaic ṣqn takes a complement in qōtel (12c, d).

(12)

a. Syrian Arabic (Ǧrēģir)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{w-ṣōr-Ø} & \quad \text{Ø-y-karkir-Ø} & \quad \text{hal-mayy} \\
\text{and-become,QTL-3MS} & \quad \text{MOD-3M-trickle,YQTL-S} & \quad \text{the-water} \\
\text{min} & \quad \text{ǧism-u} \\
\text{from} & \quad \text{body-his}
\end{align*}
\]

‘And the water began to flow from his body.’

(Behnstedt 2000, 356:36)
Two other very similar verbal lexemes that are used in the two languages as matrix verbs of phasal complements are Syrian Arabic qʿd and Western Neo-Aramaic qʿy in the first stem, both meaning ‘sit’. Again despite their close semantics, as in the case of šār and ṭqn, Syrian Arabic qʿd embeds a ∅-yiqtol form (13a), whereas Western Neo-Aramaic qʿy embeds a qōtel form (13b).

(13)

a. Syrian Arabic (ʿAyn et-Tine)

\[ \text{iž-u \quad ∅-y-daʿws-u \quad l-ē} \]

\text{come.QTL-3PL \ mod-3-trample.YQTL-PL \ on-him}

‘They began to trample upon it [= the grave].’ (Behnstedt 2000, 370:133)

c. Neo-Aramaic (Maʿlūla)

\[ \text{ṭiqn-at \quad ∅-marqy-a} \]

\text{become.QTL-3FS \ 3-harass.QQTL-FS}

‘She began to harass.’ (Arnold 1991, 60:73)

d. Neo-Aramaic (Baxʿa)

\[ \text{ṭiqn-it \quad ni-mqalleb-∅ \quad b-ā} \]

\text{become.QTL-1S \ 1-turn.QQTL-MS \ in-her}

‘I began to turn it.’ (Arnold 1989, 202:55)
The Western Neo-Aramaic morphosyntax reflected in the phasal complements in (12–13), although divergent from that of the parallel Syrian Arabic constructions, is identical to that found in Late Western Aramaic. All three Late Western Aramaic dialects, Samaritan, Christian Palestinian and Jewish Palestinian reflect a parallel distinction to that found in Western Neo-Aramaic between matrix verbs of volition and ability, which commonly embed modal complement clauses with yiqtol, and the matrix verb šry ‘begin’ of the second stem, which embeds an active participle (Bunis, forthcoming). This morphosyntactic distinction appears to have been preserved in Western Neo-Aramaic.

The final example that will be presented here is the use of divergent verb forms in Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic, in verbal protases of counterfactual conditionals. In this example, Syrian Arabic employs qatal or b-yiqtol, whereas Western Neo-Aramaic employs yiqtol or qtīl/qattīl forms. This contrasts with many other contexts (examples [5–9]) in which the two Syrian Arabic finite paradigms qatal and yiqtol are functionally matched with cognate and similar-sounding Western Neo-Aramaic qtal and yiqtol and Western Neo-Aramaic qtīl/qattīl (the resultative participle) functionally corresponds to Syrian Arabic qātel (historically the active participle).

Both Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic distinguish between predictive conditions, and those that are highly hypothetical or counterfactual. With regard to the structure of the protasis, however, this distinction is expressed somewhat differently in Syrian Arabic and in Western Neo-Aramaic.

In Syrian Arabic, the distinction between predictive conditions and hypothetical conditions is expressed by the
conditional conjunction that introduces the protasis. Predictive protases follow the conjunction ʾiza, ʾiḏa (14a, b) whereas highly hypothetical or counterfactual protases are introduced either by law, lu or law la, lu la (14c) (see Cowell 1964, 331–7; Grotzfeld 1965, 106–7). In both types of conditionals, and in all time references, qatal is commonly used, as can be seen in (14a, c). According to Grotzfeld (1965, 106), qatal freely interchanges with b-yiqtol in conditionals, with all time references. Bruweleit (2015, 161–3), on the other hand, reports that in the closely related Lebanese Arabic dialect of Beirut, qatal is used in the protasis in all time references, whereas b-yiqtol is only used in conditionals with present or future time reference.

I adduce here examples (14a, b) from the dialect of ʿAyn et-Tīne, which show the interchange of qatal and b-yiqtol in predictive protases with future time reference introduced by ʾiḏa. Example (14c) of a counterfactual condition is taken from a text included in Grotzfeld’s grammar of Damascene Arabic. According to the textual context, its time reference is past. The main point here is that neither ∅-yiqtol nor qātel forms are used in any type of protasis in Syrian Arabic, whether predictive, hypothetical or counterfactual. This contradicts Correll’s comment that Syrian Arabic is ‘not limited, in the protasis of hypothetical sentences, to any specific form, and can also employ the y-imperfect [i.e., the ∅-yiqtol form] here’ (1978, 144).6

6 ‘…in der Protasis hypothetischer Sätze ja an keine bestimmte Form gebunden ist und unter anderem hier auch das y-Imperfekt zur Anwendung bringen darf’ (my translation). Correll (1978, 144, note 267) bases this statement on Bloch (1965, 20–21), but in my view Bloch’s examples there are not relevant for Correll’s claim.
(14) Syrian Arabic

a. ‘Ayn et-Tīne

\[\begin{align*}
\text{if} & \quad \text{come.QTL-3PL} & \text{IND-2-send.YQTL-FS-MPL} \\
\text{to-1s} & \quad \text{to-DEF-field}
\end{align*}\]

‘If they come, you will send them to me, to the field.’ (Behnstedt 2000, 366:68)

b. ‘Ayn et-Tīne

\[\begin{align*}
\text{if} & \quad \text{IND-2-go.down.YQTL-MS} \\
\text{to-irrigated.fields} & \quad \text{IND-2-find.YQTL-MS-her} \\
\text{like} & \quad \text{gardens}
\end{align*}\]

‘If you go down to the irrigated fields you will find that they are like gardens.’ (Arnold 1987, 1:5)
c. **Damascene**

|       | ma       | rakad-ti     |
|-------|----------|--------------|
|       | not      | run.QTL-2FS  |

\[\text{\textit{w \ 3\text{\textdagger}l-ti-li \ mama}}\]

\[\text{\textit{and \ say.QTL-2FS-to.me \ mama}}\]

\[\text{\textit{ma \ b-a\text{\textdagger}rf-ek \ 3\text{\textdagger}\text{\textdagger}nno}}\]

\[\text{\textit{not \ IND-1S-know.YQTL-2FS \ that}}\]

\[\text{\textit{3\text{\textdagger}nti \ b\text{\textdagger}nt-i \ daughter-my}}\]

‘If you had not run and said to me “Mama”, I wouldn’t have known that you are my daughter.’ (Grotzfeld 1965, 107)\(^7\)

It should be noted with regard to the verbal forms in the protases in examples (14a, b), that in the published texts the forms are transcribed as $\varnothing$-\textit{yiqtol} forms, i.e. \textit{tib\text{"a}thun} (14a) and \textit{tinzil}, \textit{tla\text{"a}ha} (14b). I have listened, however, to the recordings of the texts on the Semitisches Tonarchiv website of the University of Heidelberg and have been able clearly to discern the preverb \textit{b-} with all three forms, as I have transcribed in the examples.\(^8\)

In Western Neo-Aramaic, the distinction between predictive and hypothetical or counterfactual conditions is manifested in

---

\(^7\) For the full context see Grotzfeld (1965, 131), third paragraph from the top of the page. In the text on page 131, the conjunction is \textit{lu la}, which I have copied in (14c), whereas the form that appears in the analysis on page 107 is \textit{lu}.

\(^8\) The recordings are found respectively at https://heidicon.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/eas/partitions/3/0/316000/316723/ce062ce58090716df9e7b3b019b76a1eae1a2090/audio/mpeg/behnstedt_sprachatlas_s360.mp3 and https://heidicon.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/eas/partitions/3/0/316000/316712/eadd2e3bc00501a076568a3b7a0bbe5bab5018f28/audio/mpeg/arnold_aynittine_01.mp3 (both accessed 23 April 2020).
the structure of the protasis in an additional way. Besides the use of different conditional conjunctions, as in Syrian Arabic, to introduce protases of the two conditional sub-types, the distinction between predictive and hypothetical or counterfactual conditions is also expressed through the use of different verb forms within the protasis.

In the most recent texts of Western Neo-Aramaic, namely, those recorded by Arnold, the conjunctions lōb (15b), the Arabic loanword iḏa (15a) and lab are used in the dialects of Maʿlūla, Baxʿa and Ǧubbʿadīn respectively for predictive conditions, while yīb, yīb, ib/lib are used respectively in the three dialects for hypothetical and counterfactual conditions (Arnold 1990b, 398–9). Arnold notes in addition, that the Arabic loanword law is also used with the latter type of conditions. Another form is found in his texts but not presented in his grammar, namely, lōla (15c, d). With respect to the verb form within verbal protases, either qtal or qōtel is employed with predictive conditionals (15a, b respectively), but with hypothetical or counterfactual conditionals, either yiqtol or the resultative participle qtil/qattil is used (15c, d respectively).

(15) Neo-Aramaic

a. Baxʿa

\begin{verbatim}
ida aḥǝk-∅ mett
if say.QTL-3MS something

n-qaṭel-∅-l-i
1-beat.PART-MS-to-3MS

‘If he says anything I will kill him.’ (Arnold 1989, 206–208:134)
\end{verbatim}
b. Maʿlūla

\[\text{If you do not bring the answer ... I will cut off your head.} \] (Arnold 1991, 142:29)

This distribution of verbal forms was also found in the earlier texts analysed by Correll. The divergence from the Syrian Arabic pattern prompted Correll to suggest that the occurrence of qtal
forms, in conformity with Arabic, solely in protases of predictive conditions, and their absence from protases of counterfactual conditions was due to insufficient examples of the latter type (Correll 1978, 123–5). Arnold’s texts show that this suggestion is not correct. They clearly demonstrate that counterfactual protases in Western Neo-Aramaic consistently differ in their verbal forms from the forms in the corresponding Syrian Arabic constructions.

It is unknown when yiqtol and qtil/qattil began to be used in counterfactual protases in the precursor to Western Neo-Aramaic. This use, however, might well have developed after the Late Aramaic stage (i.e. after the 6th century CE). In Late Western Aramaic, the morphosyntax of counterfactual protases actually resembles that of modern Syrian Arabic and not Western Neo-Aramaic. Counterfactual protases with past time reference contain qtal and not yiqtol forms. The development of qtil/qattil into a perfect aspect is also not yet documented in Late Western Aramaic.

On the other hand, the use of qtal in Western Neo-Aramaic predictive protases is likely to be an inheritance from older Aramaic, as it is documented in Late Aramaic. This use of qtal is another morphosyntactic context, in addition to expressing the general past tense ([5] above), where Syrian Arabic qatal is paralleled by cognate and similar-sounding Western Neo-Aramaic qtal. Despite these contexts, which could have facilitated the levelling of the Western Neo-Aramaic distinction between predictive protases with qtal (or qōtel) and counterfactual protases with yiqtol and qtil/qattil by analogy to Syrian Arabic, this levelling has not occurred.

5. Summary and Discussion

This comparative study has demonstrated that despite the prolonged and extensive language contact between two closely related Semitic languages, Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic diverge in the way their cognate verbal constructions express TAM. Contact with Arabic has resulted in considerable matter and pattern replication in many Western Neo-Aramaic
constructions. In the verbal system, however, contact has not lead to change.

First of all, both languages share features of morphology and phonology due to their common origins, and perhaps relatively conservative nature. Western Neo-Aramaic, which is the most conservative among the Neo-Aramaic dialects, is particularly close to Syrian Arabic in its verbal morphology. The two language groups share four cognate verbal paradigms, namely, *qatal/qtal* (suffix conjugation), *yiqtol* (prefix conjugation) and *qātel/qōtel* (active participle) and the imperative. The PNG inflection in each of these paradigms strongly parallel each other in the two language groups.

Whereas the verbal paradigms of both languages are very close in morphology, they show important differences in their functions. Despite prolonged and close contact with Arabic, Western Neo-Aramaic has not replicated the functions of the cognate Syrian Arabic verbal forms, but has preserved the independent functions of its verbal forms. Such conservatism is significant given their use alongside Syrian Arabic in a largely bilingual setting.

The divergent functions in themselves require no explanation. Arabic and Aramaic innovated independently, whereby their historically cognate paradigms took on different functions. Indeed, many of the distinct functions of the Western Neo-Aramaic verbal forms are already documented in Late Western Aramaic and are likely to have existed in the precursor of Western Neo-Aramaic before it came into intensive contact with Arabic.

The lack of convergence, however, is highly significant, given that there would have been potential for contact-induced change. Specifically, with Western Neo-Aramaic being a minority language, spoken within a largely Arabic-speaking population, we might have expected that the Western Neo-Aramaic verbal paradigms would replicate the patterns of use of the cognate Syrian Arabic paradigms, and take on their functions, but this did not take place.

The phonological and morphological similarities in verbal morphology did facilitate the borrowing of Syrian Arabic derived stems into Western Neo-Aramaic. Such correspondences could
potentially have facilitated full convergence in pattern but they did not. Table 4 presents a summary of the comparison of the uses of the Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic verbal paradigms for marking TAM, discussed in this article. The constructions that diverge are in bold.

Table 4: Correspondences in the Functions of Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic Verbal Paradigms within Parallel Morphosyntactic Contexts

| Functional Context          | Arabic | Aramaic |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|
| General past time           | qatal  | qatal   |
| Predictive protases         |        | qtal    |
| Past time counterfactual protases |     | qtīl/qattīl (yiqtol) |
| Perfect aspect              | qātel  |         |
| Irrealis mood (main clause) | yiqtol | yiqtol  |
| Modal complements           |        |         |
| Complement of 'begin'       |        |         |
| General present             | b-yiqtol | qōtel |
| Predictive protases         |        |         |

Table 4 indicates four different functional contexts that are shared by Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic (in bold), in which the two languages employ non-cognate and non-similar-sounding verbal forms. The significance of these divergences is illuminated by the wider context in which the verbal forms occur in the two languages.

The two most striking contexts of divergent verbal function are phasal complements and counterfactual protases with past time reference. The preservation of these two distinctions in Western Neo-Aramaic through its verbal paradigms is significant in that modal and phasal complement clauses and conditional protases are both embedded structures, which goes against the expectations of Matras’s functional-communicative model. The fact that Western Neo-Aramaic preserves more complex patterns
of subordination with these structures than is found in Syrian Arabic goes against Matras’s suggestion that

The pressure to converge the inventory of constructions in the repertoire [might be expected] to begin with those that organise complex propositions. We would expect the structure of complement clauses, adverbial clauses, and relative clauses and embeddings as well as the structure of coordination to be targeted first in the process of convergence (Matras 2009, 244 and see also ibid., 248–50).

Western Neo-Aramaic distinguishes between phasal complements in qōtel and modal complements, which use yiqtol. This distinction has been inherited from Late Western Aramaic. Its preservation, however, is significant in light of the fact that Syrian Arabic uses yiqtol for both functions and also given that both languages use yiqtol for deontic modality in main clauses. Thus, various morphosyntactic contexts existed, as detailed in Subsection 3.3. and summarised in Table 4, in which both Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic employed cognate and similar-sounding yiqtol, without a connection to language contact. Language contact, however, added to the similarities in that within these contexts, Western Neo-Aramaic borrowed much Syrian Arabic lexicon (matter replication), or replicated its lexical semantics (pattern replication). This is exemplified in this article with the matter replication of ability verbs qdr (Syrian Arabic) as qtr (Western Neo-Aramaic), the volitional pseudo-verbs badd- (Syrian Arabic) as batt- (Western Neo-Aramaic) ‘desire’, and in various formulas of blessings and curses. The numerous contexts where Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic were matched both at the level of the verbal paradigm, i.e. in their use of cognate yiqtol, and more widely at the levels of morphosyntax and lexicosyntax would have created the potential for Western Neo-Aramaic to level the inherited distinction between phasal and modal complements, by analogy with Syrian Arabic and use yiqtol for both functions. Despite this potential, Western Neo-Aramaic preserves this distinction.

With respect to conditional clauses, similarly, Western Neo-Aramaic distinguishes by means of the embedded verbal
paradigm between counterfactual protases with past time reference and predictive protases. The former employs *yiqtol or qtīl/qattīl whereas predictive protases use qtal or qōtel. This distinction is due to independent innovation in Western Neo-Aramaic, but again, its preservation is significant in light of contact with Syrian Arabic. In Syrian Arabic these two types of conditional protases are not distinguished by means of the verbal paradigm in the same way. Qatal is used in both. B-yiqtol is also used in predictive protases for present and future time references. Thus, here too, when considering the wider context of contact between Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic, there were constructions in which both languages use cognate and similar-sounding forms, that could have facilitated analogical levelling in Western Neo-Aramaic. Both languages employ qatal/qtal in predictive protases, and to express the general past tense. As discussed in the previous paragraph, the *yiqtol form used in counterfactual protases in Western Neo-Aramaic is matched with Syrian Arabic *yiqtol in numerous other shared constructions. These numerous contexts could have created the potential for bilingual speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic to level the Western Neo-Aramaic grammatical distinction between predictive and counterfactual protases, by analogy with Syrian Arabic. Nonetheless, Western Neo-Aramaic preserves this distinction.

Two other cases of divergence concern the expression of the general present and the perfect aspect. The two languages share both of these TAM categories, yet each language expresses it by means of a distinct verbal construction. To express the general present, Syrian Arabic uses b-yiqtol. Aramaic, on the other hand, employs qōtel (< *qātel), historically the active participle, and cognate with Syrian Arabic qātel. The use of the active participle *qātel- to express the general present is a common Aramaic innovation, inherited from pre-modern Aramaic. Nonetheless, the wide range of contexts in which Western Neo-Aramaic *yiqtol parallels Syrian Arabic *yiqtol, as outlined in the previous paragraphs, could have facilitated analogical replication of Syrian Arabic b-yiqtol, on the basis of the cognate *yiqtol paradigm
of Western Neo-Aramaic. The material replication of a Syrian Arabic preverbal particle (such as b-) is already documented in Western Neo-Aramaic for ‘am(mal)-, which, together with qōtel, expresses continuous and progressive aspects.

Lastly, the two languages innovated independently in the expression of the perfect aspect. Syrian Arabic expresses the perfect aspect by means of qātel (the active participle cognate with Aramaic qōtel) but Western Neo-Aramaic by means of qīl/qattīl (the historically resultative participle).

To conclude, the data we examined reflect a recurrent theme: Western Neo-Aramaic preserves the independent morphosyntax of its TAM system despite factors that could have facilitated analogical levelling and reanalysis of its paradigms in conformity with the cognate paradigms of Syrian Arabic. These factors include:

(i) close morphological and phonetic similarity between the Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic verbal systems;

(ii) shared inheritance and/or parallel development of the TAM functions of the qatal/qtal and yiqtol paradigms in the two languages;

(iii) a large degree of replication of Syrian Arabic lexical matter and lexical semantics, which created numerous contexts of shared constructions in which both languages employ common Central Semitic qatal/qtal or yiqtol;

(iv) indications that bilingual speakers of Western Neo-Aramaic and Syrian Arabic have recognised the structural parallelism between the two languages.
Glossing Abbreviations not in the Leipzig Glossing List

IND Syrian Arabic preverbal particle b-
DM Discourse marker.
MOD Modal.
QĀTL Syrian Arabic qātel paradigm (historical active participle).
QŪTL Western Neo-Aramaic qōtel paradigm (historical active participle).
QṬIL Western Neo-Aramaic historical resultative participle.
QTL qatal and qtal suffix conjugations in Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic respectively.
YQTL yiqtol prefix conjugation in Syrian Arabic and Western Neo-Aramaic

References

Arnold, Werner. 1987. ‘Text I aus ʿĒn iṯ-Ṭīne: Aus der Landwirtschaft’. Text and translation published on the website of the Semitisches Tonarchiv (http://semarch.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/).

———. 1989. Das Neuwestaramäische. Vol. 1, Texte aus Bax‘a. Semitica Viva 4/I. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

———. 1990a. Das Neuwestaramäische. Vol. 2, Texte aus Ǧubb‘adîn. Semitica Viva 4/II. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

———. 1990b. Das Neuwestaramäische. Vol. 5, Grammatik. Semitica Viva 4/V. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

———. 1991. Das Neuwestaramäische. Vol. 4, Orale Literatur aus Ma‘lūla. Semitica Viva 4/IV. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

———. 2002. ‘Zur Geschichte der arabischen Lehnwörter im Neuwestaramäischen’. In Neue Beiträge zur Semitistik: erstes Arbeitsstreffen der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Semitistik in der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft vom 11. bis 13. September 2000 an der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, edited by Norbert Nebes, 5–11. Jenaer Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
———. 2007. ‘Arabic grammatical borrowing in Western Neo-Aramaic’. In *Grammatical Borrowing in Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, edited by Yaron Matras and Jeanette Sakel. 185–95. Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 38. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Arnold, Werner and Peter Behnstedt. 1993. *Arabisch-Aramäische Sprachbeziehungen im Qalamūn (Syrien)*. Semitica Viva 8. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Behnstedt, Peter. 2000. *Sprachatlas von Syrien*. Vol. 2, Volkskundliche Texte. Semitica Viva 17/II. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Blau, Joshua. 2002. *A Handbook of Early Middle Arabic*. The Max Schloessinger Memorial Series: Monographs 6. Jerusalem: The Max Schloessinger Memorial Foundation.

Bloch, Ariel. 1965. *Die Hypotaxe im Damaszenisch-Arabischen: Mit Vergleich zur Hypotaxe im Klassisch-Arabischen*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XXXV, 4. Wiesbaden: Steiner.

Bruweleit, Stefan. 2015. *Aspect, Tense and Action in the Arabic Dialect of Beirut*. Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 79. Leiden: Brill.

Brustad, Kristen E. 2000. *The Syntax of Spoken Arabic: A Comparative Study of Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, and Kuwaiti Dialects*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Coghill, Eleanor. 2015. ‘Borrowing of Verbal Derivational Morphology between Semitic Languages: the Case of Arabic Verb Derivations in Neo-Aramaic’. In *Borrowed Morphology*, edited by Francesco Gardani, Peter Arkadiev and Nino Amiridze, 83–107. Language Contact and Bilingualism 8. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Correll, Christoph. 1978. *Untersuchungen zur Syntax der neuwestaramäischen Dialekte des Antilibanon (Ma‘lūla, Baḥʿa, Gubb ‘Adīn) mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Auswirkungen arabischen Adstrateinfusses*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XLIV, 4. Wiesbaden: Steiner.

Cowell, Mark W. 1964. *A Reference Grammar of Syrian Arabic (Based on the Dialect of Damascus)*. Arabic Series: Number 7. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press.

Fassberg, Steven E. 2010. *The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Challa*. Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 54. Leiden: Brill.
Garbell, Irene. 1965. The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Persian Azerbaijan: Linguistic Analysis and Folkloric Texts. Janua Linguarum Studia Memoriae Nicolai Van Wijk Dedicata: Series Practica III. London: Mouton.

Grotzfeld, Heinz. 1965. Syrisch-Arabische Grammatik (Dialekt von Damaskus). Porta Linguarum Orientalium: Neue Serie VIII. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Häberl, Charles. 2009. The Neo-Mandaic Dialect of Khorramshahr. PhD Diss., Rutgers.

Jastrow, Otto. 1985. Laut- und Formenlehre des neuaramäischen Dialekts von Midin im Ṭūr ‘Abdīn. 3rd Expanded Edition. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Khan, Geoffrey. 1999. A Grammar of Neo-Aramaic: The Dialect of the Jews of Arbel. Handbook of Oriental Studies 47. Leiden: Brill.

——— 2004. The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Sulemaniyya and Ḥalabja. Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics XLIV. Leiden: Brill.

——— 2008. The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Urmī. Gorgias Neo-Aramaic Studies 2. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias.

——— 2009. The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Sanandaj. Gorgias Neo-Aramaic Studies 10. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias.

———. 2020. ‘Contact and Change in Neo-Aramaic Dialects’. In Historical Linguistics 2017, edited by Bridget Drinka, 391–411. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Matras, Yaron. 2009. Language Contact. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Noorlander, Paul M. 2014. ‘Diversity in Convergence: Kurdish and Aramaic Variation Entangled’. Journal of Kurdish Studies 2 (2): 201–224.

Ritter, Helmut. 1990. Ṭūrōyo: Die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Ṭūr ‘Abdīn. Vol. C, Grammatik. Schriften der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft an der Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main: Geisteswissenschaftliche Reihe; Nr. 6. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.

Spitaler, Anton. 1938. Grammatik des neuaramäischen Dialekts von Ma’lūla (Antilibanon). Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XXIII, 1. Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft.

Stowasser, Karl and Moukhtar Ani. 1964. A Dictionary of Syrian Arabic: English-Arabic. Arabic Series: Number 5. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
