

1. Introduction¹

Geoffrey Haig and Geoffrey Khan

1. Aims and scope of the volume

This volume contains a series of descriptions of around 20 languages (or language groups), spoken across a region that includes most of eastern Turkey, western Iran and northern Iraq (see Fig. 1 for the locations), together with overview articles of sub-regions, and an appendix with selected lexical items from these languages. The region that we refer to here loosely as “Western Asia” is not clearly demarcated, either politically or topographically, and requires a few words of explanation. Essentially it is linked to an ancient cultural core, namely the northern part of Mesopotamia, the upper catchment regions of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The book’s coverage goes beyond Mesopotamia in the narrower sense to include the surrounding mountainous regions of the Zagros in the southeast, and the elevated regions northwards and eastwards across the Anatolian plateau into the outliers of the Caucasus. These areas were all involved, at least economically and strategically, in the succession of empires that arose in and around ancient Mesopotamia, beginning with the Sumerians in the third millennium BCE and continuing down to the Ottoman Empire into the dawn of the twentieth century. The sense of a common *Kulturraum*, while difficult to delineate precisely, is reflected by the growing recognition of linguistic parallels shared among the region’s languages, some of which we take up below.

We have further divided the region into five sub-areas, each of which is treated in a section of the volume, with its own overview chapter. The individual language chapters are quite varied in composition, some focussing on a single language spoken in a geographically narrow location (e. g. Kumzari, chapter 4.7) while others cover geographically dispersed and internally diverse groups (e. g. Armenian, chapter 2.2, or Iran-Turkic, chapter 4.2). For this reason, it has not been possible to impose a single format on the presentations, but we have ensured that linguistic examples are glossed according to standard practice, that all contributions include a map, and where possible, a glossed text sample of natural language. In addition, an Appendix contains comparative lists of lexical items from a selection of the languages, plus some additional languages that were not treated in the main body of the book. The approximate locations of the languages and language groups covered in the volume is shown in Fig. 1, whereby the symbols are only intended

¹ We are very grateful to Christina van der Wal Anonby, Erik Anonby, René Lacroix and Ludwig Paul for comments and corrections on an earlier version of this introduction. We of course bear the responsibility for the remaining shortcomings.

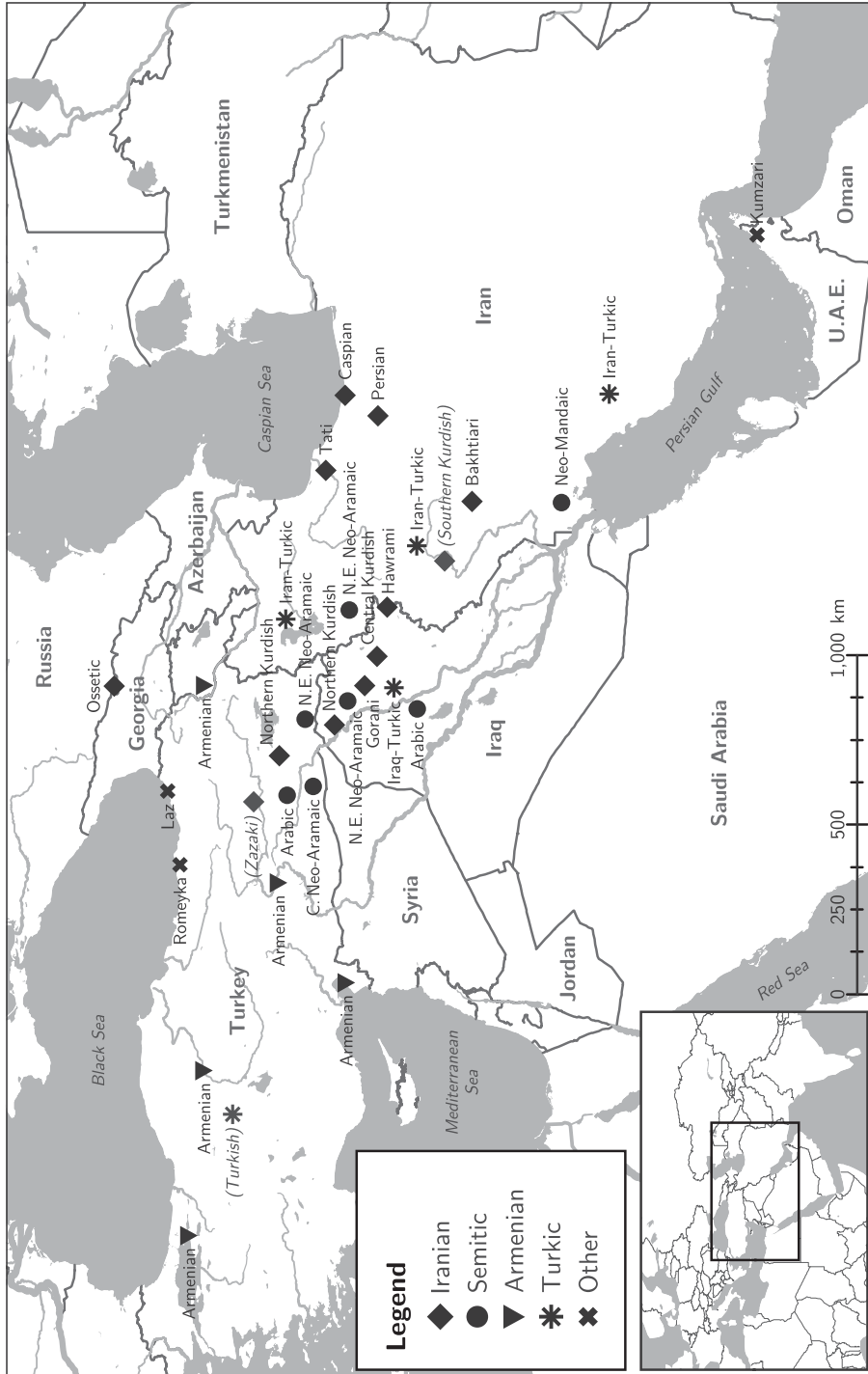


Figure 1: Approximate locations of main languages and language groups covered in this volume

to indicate the approximate centre of the respective language variety. Language names in brackets indicate important languages of the region, but which do not have a dedicated chapter in this volume.

The focus of the volume is on the minority languages of the region, for the most part under-described and endangered, while the respective state languages are generally outside the purview of the volume. This perspective is motivated by the recognition that taken together, the minority languages yield a much richer picture of the region's long-standing multilingual tapestry than the handful of currently dominant official languages (Arabic, Persian, Turkish). The latter have all been described exhaustively elsewhere, and have only achieved their current dominance very recently, hence give at best a distorted picture of the historical processes that engendered the region's linguistic composition (we have nevertheless included an overview chapter of Persian, chapter 4.6, because of its unique status as a hegemonial language across much of the region over at least two millennia).

The volume's scope is also restricted by practical considerations. For example, the Caucasus is largely excluded because it is treated within a companion volume in the same series. *Zazaki*, an Iranian language of Central Anatolia, is not included because there is already an extensive overview chapter on *Zazaki* in Windfuhr (2009). In other cases, gaps have arisen simply due to the unavailability of appropriate material or suitably qualified authors at the right time, or through considerations of space, or through various organisational setbacks that we faced over the six years of compilation. A particularly unfortunate omission is *Domari*, the language of the Doms of the Middle East (see Herin 2012 on *Domari* of Aleppo, and Matras 2012 for *Domari* of Jerusalem). Similarly, Southern Kurdish has not been treated in any depth (see Fattah 2000, and Belleli 2016). We can only trust that anyone familiar with the task of compiling a volume of this scope will appreciate that comprehensive coverage is an ideal that is seldom achieved. And while we are very much aware of the gaps in the current compilation, we are confident that the present volume provides the first reasonably representative survey of the linguistic diversity of the region.

We turn now to the major thematic focus of the volume, the areal perspective. By this we mean that the volume's structure reflects broad areal divisions, rather than genetic groupings of the languages concerned. In keeping with the general approach, we have eschewed in-depth historical treatment of the language families; all the major families and branches have been dealt with extensively in recent handbooks (see for example Windfuhr 2009 on Iranian, Johanson and Csató 2006 on Turkic, and Weninger et al. 2011 on Semitic). With regard to the ancient language contacts of the region, we refer to Butts (2015) on Semitic, and Hasselbach-Andee (in prep.).² The individual chapters of the present volume primarily

² We are grateful to Ilya Yakubovich for drawing our attention to this latter volume in preparation.

focus on a synchronic description of the respective language or language group, but with explicit reference to contact issues. In the overview chapters to each sub-region, we provide a short synopsis of the most striking contact phenomena. Interest in areal contact across the region has steadily increased in the last years (see for example the joint Frankfurt/Cambridge initiative on language contact and language change in Western Asia,³ and the recent study on relative clauses from an areal perspective by Gandon 2016). Because the present volume combines expertise from diverse philological traditions, it will hopefully become a valuable one-stop resource for future research in this rapidly growing field.

2. Western Asia from an areal typological perspective

Within language typology, the relevance of large-scale areal units in shaping the global distribution of typological features is increasingly emphasized. The region under consideration here has not, however, generally been recognized to date. Dryer's (1992) proposal has been influential, and recognizes the following six macro-areas (see Hammarström and Donohue 2014 for critical discussion):

- Africa
- Australia-New Guinea
- Eurasia
- North America
- Southeast Asia and Oceania
- South America

On this coarse-grained view, our “Western Asia” would be assigned to “Eurasia”, which also includes e. g. Mongolian, or Mandarin. However, it is evident that the Semitic languages represented in Western Asia (e. g. Neo-Aramaic) are the north-easterly outliers of the Afro-Asiatic language family, and are thus historically rooted in Africa (see in this respect Güldemann's notion of “Afrabia”, Güldemann, 2018.). More recently, Bickel et al. (2017) propose a finer-grained division, which recognizes a macro-area “Greater Mesopotamia”. This more closely corresponds to our Western Asia, though in Bickel et al. (2017), it also includes the entire Arabian peninsula. But ignoring for a moment the issue of the precise boundaries,⁴ there are in fact reasons to consider Western Asia a special kind of linguistic area, which has hitherto not been afforded much attention.

³ See e. g. <http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/click/fourthAct.html>.

⁴ It is worth pointing out that many of the regions traditionally considered to be linguistic areas (or *Sprachbünde*) lack clearly identifiable borders (e. g. “the Balkans”), and are defined in different ways by different scholars.

The linguistic diversity of the region is, within the broader Eurasian context, relatively high: four distinct language families⁵ are represented (Turkic, Semitic, Indo-European, Kartvelian), and within Indo-European, four branches (Armenian, Iranian, Indic, and Hellenic). But with the exception of Armenian, none of these groupings are indigenous to the region: all the languages represent outliers of larger groups, and have close relatives outside the immediate region. The high level of linguistic diversity has thus arisen secondarily, as it were, through the region's location at the intersection of several large genetic groupings. This is in stark contrast to, for example, the linguistic diversity of the Caucasus (Nichols' 1992 canonical example of a "residual zone"), stemming from three indigenous language families, all of which lack (proven) relatives outside the region itself. In a number of publications Stilo (e. g. 2005, 2012) looks at the region centred on the catchment of the Araxes river, considering it to be an "intersection zone". Among the most striking phenomena is the areal distribution of adpositional typologies, which shift from Turkic-type postpositional, across Iranian mixed typologies, to Semitic prepositional. Haig (2001, 2017) considers eastern Anatolia as a "transition zone", with gradual areal shifts across a number of morphosyntactic features, but also its own set of defining features. Among them is the common Anatolian OVX word order pattern (where "X" refers to various kinds of non-direct object arguments, in particular goals, addressees, and recipients, see §3.4.3 below). Like the mixed adpositional typologies of Iranian, the OVX word order can be considered a compromise strategy between OV and VO word orders. These kinds of typologically unusual patterns illustrate that a transition zone is not merely the sum of the participant language families, but may develop its own profile with typologically rare structures – rare simply because transition zones themselves emerge only under very specific, hence globally very rarely occurring, conditions. If large-scale macro-areas are relevant to understanding the distribution of structural features, then we suggest that the transitional zones that lie between them also merit close scrutiny, precisely because they involve the comparatively rare areal contiguity of different language types, yielding configurations that are unlikely to arise elsewhere.

3. Areal patterns in phonology and morphosyntax across Western Asia

This section discusses a selection of features from phonology and morphosyntax that we consider are evidence for the role of language contact in shaping the structures of the languages of the region. In some cases, the phenomena are regionally quite restricted, while others span a large cross-section. Though the language

⁵ We are ignoring some of the more recent arrivals to the region, such as communities of Chechen speakers in Anatolia.

sample we draw on is by no means comprehensive, it is nevertheless possible to draw a few more general conclusions regarding the range and constraints of contact-induced change in the languages of the region.

3.1. Language contact: general considerations

Two or more languages spoken in the same region may exhibit structural similarities through (i) mere chance, (ii) inheritance from a common ancestor, (iii) contact influence, or (iv) a combination of (i)–(iii). We are primarily interested in (iii), but assigning similarities to contact influence requires caution, and should only be undertaken after due consideration of other possible causes. First, we need to bear in mind the histories of related languages spoken outside the region (to the extent that they are known) in order to formulate a benchmark of comparison against which the developments in the languages under consideration can be assessed.

As an example of how the facts from related languages can be brought to bear in assessing contact influence, let us consider the example of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) and Central Neo-Aramaic (CNA) in the region (Khan, this volume, chapters 2.5, 3.4, and 4.4). These languages have developed ergative (or split-intransitive) alignments with their perfective verb forms, matching a broadly similar alignment profile in the neighbouring varieties of Kurdish. Alignment systems have often been considered relatively immune to areal influence (Nichols 1992: 181), so in principle, the similarities between Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish could have occurred independently, and we need solid arguments to make a case for contact influence. In this case, evidence from the related languages, but outside the immediate contact region, is extremely relevant. With regard to Semitic, the Neo-Aramaic development of ergativity is unique within the Semitic language family as a whole. It is absent in Western Neo-Aramaic in Syria, a close relative of NENA and CNA outside of the area. This fact greatly strengthens the argument in favour of assuming contact influence: if it were a solely language-internal development, we might have expected traces of it within related languages outside the geographical contact zone, but this does not seem to be the case. Furthermore, contact between Kurdish and the Neo-Aramaic speech communities of the region has been intense and continuous for many centuries, and there is widespread evidence of borrowing in other parts of the grammar (Khan 2007), lending further credence to the assumption of structural convergence. Considering the histories of the respective language families is also important in order to establish the direction of influence. We know that some kind of tense-sensitive ergativity is widely attested in Iranian languages spoken beyond the contact zone with Neo-Aramaic (e. g. Pashto, or eastern varieties of Balochi, or Tatic, Haig 2008). Thus the simplest assumption is that ergativity developed in Kurdish through inheritance from its Iranian ancestors, while its occurrence in Neo-Aramaic is (at least in part)

due to influence from an Iranian contact language, e. g. precursors of Kurdish, or Gorani.

A second factor to consider in assessing contact influence is typological probability. Consider for example the fact that most of the languages of the region have pre-verbal negation in simple clauses, with the exception of Turkic, and Kumzari (van der Wal Anonby, this volume, chapter 4.7). In Turkic, negation is via a verbal suffix, and Turkish is generally suffixal, so post-verbal negation is structurally pre-figured in the language. We might then be inclined to ignore Turkic, and consider the otherwise prevalent pre-verbal negation to be an areal trait. But in fact, pre-verbal negation is the most widespread kind of negation across the world's languages (Dryer 1988), so the case for areal influence in Western Asia is weak, and would need to be reinforced through, e. g., evidence of non-random similarities in the forms involved, if it were to be maintained. The presence of post-verbal negation in Kumzari, on the other hand, obviously requires additional assumptions: it does not conform to the typologically more frequent pattern, and is distinct from Kumzari's Iranian relatives, which have consistent pre-verbal negation. Thus contact influence from neighbouring South Arabian languages appears to be a very plausible causal factor in the emergence of post-verbal placement of negation markers in Kumzari, as noted in van der Wal Anonby (chapter 4.7, §7).

Several suggestions have been made for the relative ease of "borrowability" among different categories of morphosyntax (see Matras 2007 on hierarchies of borrowability, and see below for a proposal in this direction regarding syntax). While it is often stated that, e. g. derivation is more easily borrowed than inflection, or clitics are more easily borrowed than affixes, it is useful to identify the more general principles at work (Haig 2014a). In general, ease of borrowability is characteristic for items that (i) are perceptually salient (e. g. syllabic, as opposed to segmental, concatenative as opposed to non-concatenative); (ii) exhibit predictable and transparent form-meaning correspondences, with tangible semantics; (iii) have a greater degree of positional freedom (e. g. are phonologically independent items, with some versatility in positioning, as opposed to affixes locked into morphological templates).

From these it follows fairly naturally that words are more likely to be borrowed than clitics, and clitics more likely than affixes. The least borrowable items are irregular, non-concatenative exponents of an abstract grammatical category, such as the suppletive forms for the comparative grade of the adjectives *good* and *bad*, or irregular past-tense formations involving Ablaut (*give, gave* etc.) in English. Particularly striking evidence for the difficulty of borrowing non-concatenative (i) and unpredictable (iii) morphology can be seen in the fact that Semitic root-and-pattern morphology (e. g. broken plurals, or verb stem alternations in Arabic) is very rarely transferred to native lexical items in contact languages (but see van der Wal Anonby, this volume, chapter 4.7 on the incorporation of Arabic morphology into Kumzari and Paul, this volume, chapter 4.6, §4.4, for examples of

broken Arabic plurals borrowed from Arabic). At the other end of the spectrum, a derivational suffix such as Turkic *-çi* (with various vowel-harmonic variants), meaning ‘occupation associated with the base’ (e. g. *saat-çi* ‘watchmaker’) turns out to be readily borrowable, and occurs in most of the languages in the region (e. g. in the Muş dialect of Northern Kurdish *mesî-çi* ‘fisherman’, from Kurdish *masî* ‘fish’, example from Songül Gündoğdu p.c.). The suffix *-çi* is perceptually salient, affixal, and regular in form and meaning.

Finally, a useful distinction is drawn by Matras (2007) between **matter** borrowing, and **pattern** borrowing. The former involves the borrowing (or copying) of items together with the phonological substance of the donor language. A clear case of matter borrowing is found in Turkic varieties spoken in northern Iraq, which have borrowed a comparative suffix *-tär* from neighbouring Iranian languages (Bulut, chapter 4.2, §2.3.1.4). Pattern borrowing involves the borrowing of, e. g. the structural organization of paradigms, or the relative ordering of morphemes in a word, or specific principles of form-meaning correspondence, but without borrowing of actual phonological material. An example of pattern borrowing is *m*-initial reduplication, where a word is reduplicated, but the initial segment replaced by [m]: Turkish *para mara* ‘money and stuff’, Laz *dadzi madzi* ‘thorns and stuff’ (Lacroix, chapter 6.2, §3.4). This is widespread across the region (see e. g. Khan 2016, vol. 2: 99 for NENA, Haig 2001 for other languages of Anatolia). Of course matter and pattern borrowing are not mutually exclusively. Often, pattern borrowing is accompanied by phonological similarity of the items concerned, as in the *m*-segment in the reduplication example just mentioned.

3.2. Phonology

A number of languages of the region have increased their consonantal inventory by acquiring consonants from other languages by areal diffusion. A particularly clear case of this is the spread of glottalized consonants, realized as unaspirated stops or ejectives, across the northern sector of the region, including Armenian dialects, Northern Kurdish dialects of eastern Anatolia and northwestern Iran, the Neo-Aramaic dialects belonging to the NENA group spoken in this Northern Kurdish area, and some languages of the Caucasian rim, such as Laz and Ossetic. In Laz glottalization is a feature inherited from Kartvelian. In Armenian it has considerable historical depth, as shown by the fact that it occurs in Classical Armenian, and is possibly an inheritance from earlier Indo-European (Martirosyan, chapter 2.2, §4.1), but it may well have been reinforced by the fact that it is an areal feature. In Kurdish, Neo-Aramaic and Ossetic it is not an inherited feature and has entered these languages by areal diffusion. This is clearly demonstrable in the case of Kurdish and Neo-Aramaic, since dialects of these languages spoken further south in northern Iraq and western Iran do not have glottalized consonants. The area of glottalized consonants extends further north into the Caucasus region, where it is

found in Nakh-Daghestanian languages (e. g. Archi, Lak), Northwestern Caucasian languages (e. g. Kabardian) and South Caucasian languages such as Georgian, which are not covered by this volume (see Grawunder 2017 on the areal distribution of phonological features in the Caucasus). The nature of glottalization varies across the area with regard to its degree of strength. In the languages of the Caucasus it is generally realized as glottal ejection. In languages on the Caucasus rim and in Armenian, Kurdish and Neo-Aramaic, which are described in this volume, the glottalization is weaker and is typically realized as the lack of aspiration without clear ejection. It is noteworthy, however, that dialects of Armenian and Neo-Aramaic that are spoken by migrant communities in Georgia pronounce glottalized consonants as ejectives (Chirikba 2008: 44–45; Khan 2016, vol. 1: 93–95), which is a further demonstration of the areal nature of the feature. This also shows that intensity of contact in the apparent epicentre of the areal feature in the Caucasus can bring about greater degrees of areal convergence.

The fact that languages and dialects outside of the Caucasus typically realize the glottalized consonants as unaspirated stops rather than ejectives gives some insight into how these consonants were diffused. An insightful case study in this respect is the development of the unaspirated stop phonemes in the Neo-Aramaic dialects. In Neo-Aramaic dialects that have glottalized consonants fully established in their sound inventories, such as the Christian NENA dialect of Urmi, these consonants occur predominantly in native Aramaic words. In fact it is difficult to identify any loanword in the Christian Urmi dialect that has a glottalized consonant in the source language. The glottalized phonemes have rather developed by internal processes. One such process is the reanalysis of the deaspirated allophones of stops in fricative–stop clusters as unaspirated phonemes, e. g. /xp/ [x̠p̠] > /x̠p̠/.⁶ Another is the reanalysis of the sequence of an aspirated stop and laryngeal stop as an unaspirated phoneme, e. g. /t/ + /ʔ/ > /t̠/. A further process arises from the fact that in Christian Urmi Neo-Aramaic and neighbouring dialects, the original pharyngealization of pharyngealized consonant segments has developed into a suprasegmental feature that takes a whole word as its domain. In such dialects an original pharyngealized stop *t* [t̠] becomes reanalyzed as an unaspirated stop segment /t̠/ within the suprasegmental domain of pharyngealization (for details see Khan 2016, vol. 1: 92–131). The new glottalized phonemes formed by these internal processes have then spread to other contexts and serve various functional purposes, such as diminutive sound symbolism, e. g. *ʔəlpə* ‘eyelash’ (< **təlpə*) (Khan 2016, vol. 1: 180). The basic process, then, is that of phonemicization of already existing sound patterns within Neo-Aramaic that match or approximate to those of a contact language. This would have taken place by the perception of an equivalence between these matching or similar sounds and the glottalized phonemes of the contact language. Such innovative unaspirated stop phonemes

⁶ In the transcription unaspirated stops are distinguished by diacritics thus: *p̠*, *t̠*, *k̠*.

could then undergo further phonetic change by converging with the phonetic features of ejectives in languages with such ejective glottalized consonants by a “perceptual magnet effect”, as Blevins (2017) puts it. As mentioned, dialects of Northern Kurdish (Kurmanjî) spoken in close proximity to Armenian also possess unaspirated voiceless stops (in some dialects with ejective characteristics) in their native lexicon. These elements are not directly inherited from Iranian, but likewise cannot be easily explained in terms of a spread from loanwords; the number of clearly identifiable Armenian loans in the everyday lexicon of Kurmanjî is very small. We see, then, that the presence of perceptually salient segments in a contact language may act as attractors in guiding the direction of internal changes.

Conversely, languages that have inherited glottalized consonants may undergo weakening or reduction of this feature, if they are geographically isolated from languages with it. This is the case in Laz (Kartvelian), where the inherited glottalized consonants are weakened in comparison to related Georgian (Lacroix, chapter 6.2, §6.1), presumably due to the isolation of Laz from its Kartvelian relatives, and the influence of neighbouring Turkish. Nevertheless, Lacroix still posits glottalized consonants for Laz. Full loss of glottalization is apparently a rare phenomenon in the Western Asian context. Glottalized consonants appear to be thus (a) fairly resistant to loss, and (b) prone to spread in contact situations.

Pharyngeal and pharyngealized consonants, which are an inherited feature of the sound inventories of Semitic languages, have spread by diffusion to some non-Semitic languages of the region. The process of areal diffusion is not so clear-cut as that of glottalized consonants. Several non-Semitic languages exhibit pharyngeals in loanwords from Arabic. Some Iranian languages, such as Kurdish and the languages of Kordestan and Kermanshah provinces, have developed innovative pharyngeals in native lexical items, in particular the unvoiced pharyngeal, which, for example, is commonly found in these languages in the numeral ‘seven’ (Northern Kurdish, Hawrami *ħaft*, Central Kurdish *ħawt*). The Semitic inherited pharyngeals, unvoiced [ħ] and voiced [ʕ], are found in the Arabic dialects of the region and in the Central Neo-Aramaic dialects of southeastern Turkey. In the NENA dialect group situated to the east of the Tigris, however, the inherited pharyngeals have been mostly lost, especially in many of the dialects in the eastern sector of the NENA area in the Hakkari mountains of Turkey and northwestern Iran. The preservation of pharyngeals in Central Neo-Aramaic and their partial preservation in some NENA dialects is likely to be conditioned by extensive contact with Arabic. This would, therefore, be a case of language contact preserving sound patterns. When pharyngeals occur in the aforementioned subgroup of NENA dialects these are predominantly inherited pharyngeals in the environment of pharyngealized consonants, e. g. Qaraqosh *ta ʕən* [tʕa:ʕən] ‘he bears’, pharyngeals arising from the debuccalization of pharyngealized consonants, e. g. Jewish Sanandaj *ʔahra* < *ʕaʔrʕaʕ < *ʔtrā ‘town’, or innovative pharyngeals resulting from strengthening of laryngeals for functional purposes. The latter category includes cases

of the strengthening of laryngeals to preserve morphological distinctions, e. g. Qaraqosh 3ms possessive suffix $-\partial h < *-\partial h$ to prevent the loss of final $-h$, which would have rendered the suffix homophonous with the noun plural suffix $-\partial$, e. g. *tor-∂h* ($< *tor-\partial h$ OX-POSS.3MS) ‘his ox’ vs. *tor-∂* (OX-PL) ‘oxen’. The emergence of pharyngeals in some Iranian languages possibly also has the functional motivation of strengthening distinctions in paradigms, e. g. Northern Kurdish, Dohuk: *ħaft* ($< *ħaft$) ‘seven’ to distinguish it clearly from the similar sounding numeral *ħašt* ‘eight’.⁷

Glottalized consonants and pharyngeals are cross-linguistically relatively rare consonants (Maddieson 2013a, 2013b) and their diffusion has resulted in the enrichment of the consonantal inventories of the languages of the region. A factor that may have facilitated their “magnet” effect is their salience (Blevins 2017). This would have conditioned not only their tendency to spread but also their resistance to loss. It is relevant in this respect that the unvoiced pharyngeal [ħ] diffused more readily than the voiced pharyngeal [ʕ], no doubt because the unvoiced member of the pair is the more salient due to its higher pitch.

Contact has resulted in loss of consonants of a number of languages of the area. A clear case of this is the loss of inherited interdental consonants of some Arabic and Neo-Aramaic dialects. This has brought the phoneme inventories of these dialects closer to those of the non-Semitic contact languages, all of which lack interdentals. The most common process involves merger of the interdentals with other consonants that have a direct match in the inventories of the contact languages. These are typically stops or sibilants. In many cases this merger is symmetrical, e. g. all the interdentals merge with stops (Arabic $\theta, \delta, \delta > t, d, d$, NENA $\theta, \delta > t, d$) or sibilants (Arabic $\theta, \delta, \delta > s, z, z$, NENA $\theta, \delta > s, z$). Sometimes, however, there is asymmetry. This is found in a number of NENA dialects. In such cases the outcome results in the reflex of the unvoiced interdental being weaker than that of the voiced interdental. In some dialects the unvoiced interdental is preserved while the voiced one shifts to a stop, e. g. Christian Ankawa *xaθa* ‘sister’, *ida* ($< *i\delta a$) ‘hand’, the unvoiced becomes a sibilant, while the voiced becomes stop, e. g. Jewish Nerwa *xasa* ($< *xa\theta a$) ‘sister’, *ida* ($< *i\delta a$) ‘hand’, or the unvoiced undergoes debuccalization while the voiced becomes a stop, e. g. Jilu *⁺xa* ‘sister’ ($< *xa\theta a$),⁸ *ida* ($< *i\delta a$) ‘hand’. Some unusual outcomes include the shift of the Arabic interdentals θ, δ, δ to labio-dental fricatives f, v, γ in some Arabic dialects (Procházka, chapter 2.4, §1.1) and the shift in some Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialects of both the interdentals θ and δ to the lateral l (Khan, chapter 2.5, §5.1, chapter 3.4, §5.1, chapter 4.4, §5.1.1). The Neo-Aramaic dialects that have this latter outcome were spoken in areas where in neighbouring Iranian and Turkic languages a $/d/$

⁷ Data from Matras, Yaron et al. 2016. *The Dialects of Kurdish*. Web resource, University of Manchester. <http://kurdish.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/> (accessed 17 March 2018).

⁸ The superscribed symbol ⁺ denotes suprasegmental pharyngealization.

following a vowel or sonorant undergoes lenition, known as “Zagros *d*”, resulting in it being realized as an approximant or as sonorant (Haig, chapter 3.3, §3.1.1; Mahmoudveysi and Bailey, chapter 4.5, §3.1; Anonby and Taheri-Ardali, chapter 4.3, §2.1). There is evidence that in the Neo-Aramaic dialects concerned the two interdental fricatives first shifted to the voiced stop **d* before finally becoming a lateral sonorant *l*/. The sonorant *l*/ can then be regarded as lenition of the **d*. Such lenition, therefore, is likely to be due to the “perceptual magnet effect” of the weakened Zagros *d*, whereby Neo-Aramaic speakers match this perceptually with the sonorant *l*/ in their existing sound inventory. We may conclude that interdental fricatives are prone to loss and do not spread by contact. This can be correlated with their lack of salience (Maddieson 2013b).

Shifts in the realization of consonants without necessary loss to consonantal inventories also result from areal diffusion. A case of this is the palatalization of the dorsal stops */k/* and */g/*, which has occurred in many languages of the region. This is found, for example, in several Turkic varieties, in particular in the Turkic spoken in the north of the region in the Azerbaijanian exclave Nakhichevan, in some regions of Georgia, around Tabriz and Urmi in Iran, and in northern Iraq (Bulut, chapter 4.2, §2.1.2.4). Similar palatalization of these consonants is found in some NENA dialects in Iraq and northwestern Iran (Khan, chapter 3.4, §5.1, Khan, chapter 3.5, §5.1), in many Iranian languages, including those of the Caspian region (Stilo, chapter 5, §3.1), various Kurdish dialects of Anatolia, Iraq and northwestern Iran (chapter 2.1, §1.5, Haig, chapter 3.3, §3.1.1), Ossetic (Erschler, chapter 6.3, §2.1) and Bakhtiari (Anonby and Taheri-Ardali, chapter 4.3, §2.1). It is also found in Romeyka (Schreiber, chapter 4.4, §2.1.2). The degrees of palatalization vary, ranging from stops with palatal offglides to a shift to the affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ]. In some languages the palatalization is conditioned by adjacent high vowels (e. g. in Ossetic and some languages in the Caspian region), whereas in others it is not conditioned by the environment. Palatalization appears to have been diffused as an areal feature. This is shown, for example, by the fact that NENA dialects in Iraq and Iran only exhibit this process in areas where it is found in the contact languages Turkic and Kurdish (chapter 3.1, §2). The varying degrees of palatalization can be correlated in some cases with different degrees of intensity of contact. This is shown, for example, by the case of the NENA dialect spoken by Christians in the plain of Urmi in northwestern Iran. In varieties of this dialect spoken in the southern areas of the plain palatalization results in affrication whereas in the varieties spoken in the north of the plain the dorsal stops are not fully affricated. This can be correlated with the fact that in the south the NENA speakers frequently code-switched between NENA and Azeri Turkic, whereas this was rare in the north. Azeri Turkic exhibits affrication of dorsals. Moreover, the Mukri Kurdish dialect spoken in the south of the Urmi plain has affrication of dorsals, but this is not found in the Kurdish spoken in the north of the plain. All this means that the speakers of NENA in the south had greater contact with affrica-

tion of dorsals in the contact languages than speakers in the north (for details see Khan 2016: 111).

In the vowel systems of the languages of the region a clear case of areal diffusion is the fronting of the high back vowel [u:] to [y:] (transcribed *ū* below). Front rounded vowels are generally considered marked in comparison to back rounded vowels. The only languages of the region to have historically inherited front rounded vowels are the Turkic languages. Interestingly, among the languages treated in this volume which have undergone heavy contact influence from Turkic, none are analysed as having front rounded vowels in their vowel system. These languages include Romeyka (Schreiber, chapter 6.4), Anatolian dialects of Arabic (Procházka, chapter 2.4, see also Jastrow 2011), Laz (Lacroix, chapter 6.2), Northern Kurdish of Anatolia (Haig, chapter 2.3). This is particularly noteworthy for the Arabic dialects of Siirt, Kozluk and Sason, discussed in Jastrow (2011). Although the vowel systems (and some parts of morphosyntax) have been extensively restructured under Turkish influence, they apparently do not include front rounded vowels.

Front rounded vowels are found in the Kurdish dialects in southeastern Anatolia (Şemzînan) and northwestern Iran, and in the Bahdini Kurdish dialect of northern Iraq. This results in a pull-chain effect whereby [o:] is raised to [u:] to fill the gap left by the fronting of original [u:] (Haig, chapter 3.3, §4.1.2). The same processes are found in NENA dialects that were in contact with these specific Kurdish dialects, e. g. *Mawana: *xabūša* < **ħabbūšā* ‘apple’, *ruqe* < **rōqē* ‘spittle’. The emergence of this areal feature appears to have come about through processes of fronting rather than under the influence of Turkic. This can result in partial fronting outcomes. In the Christian Urmi dialect of NENA, for example, long *ū* is not fully fronted but shifts to a diphthong with a palatal offglide: *xabuyša* ‘apple’ (Khan, chapter 2.5, §5.5.2). In this latter case the perceptual magnet of the Kurdish front rounded vowel has resulted in only a partial convergence. In the Christian NENA dialect of Salamas the offglide is pushed up rather than forward, and is realized as a velar fricative *x*, e. g. *xibuxša* < **ħabbūša* ‘apple’ (Khan, chapter 2.5, §5.5.2). This may be a strategy to create a sound pattern that is more saliently distinct from *u* than *uy*, suggesting that it was a later internal development in this Neo-Aramaic after a diphthong *uy* had arisen by contact with the Kurdish fronted rounded vowel. Fronting may be conditioned by assimilation processes at morpheme boundaries, as in Gorani dialects of western Iran: [ø] occurs in some verb forms, e. g. [møinim] ([<mæ-wîn-im < *mæ-bin-im], ‘I see’, Mahmoudveysi et al. 2012: 11). An exceptional case of the emergence of front rounded vowels by diffusion from Turkish is Asia Minor Greek of Cappadocia (not treated in this volume, see Dawkins 1916), which is frequently cited as a language exhibiting exceptionally high levels of influence from Turkish. Turkic languages that have been heavily influenced by Iranian languages, on the other hand, have often lost at least some of their front rounded vowels. The most extensive loss is found in Turkic varieties in

Iran and the southernmost varieties of Iraq Turkic, Mandali and Khanaqin. Bulut (chapter 3.5, §2.1.2.3, chapter 4.2, §2.1.2.1) gives examples of the shift of the front rounded vowels /ü/ and /ö/ to their unrounded counterparts /i/ and /e/ (or [i̯e]), such as /sit/ < *süt* ‘milk’, and [i̯e:z] < *öz* ‘self, own’, or [dek-] < *dök-* ‘to pour’.

The backing of the vowel *a* is a feature that has diffused across several languages in the Anatolian region. In Central Neo-Aramaic spoken in the area of Ṭūr ‘Abdīn all historical long *a* vowels have the quality of *o*, e. g. Ṭuroyo: *ḥmoro* ‘ass’ (< **ḥmārā*). This is a feature also of modern Western Aramaic dialects spoken in Syria (Arnold 2011) and can be traced to a considerable time depth in Aramaic in the Levant and other ancient Semitic languages of this region, such as Phoenician and Hebrew. It is likely to have diffused to Central Neo-Aramaic dialects of Turkey from the Levant at an early period. NENA dialects that were spoken in Turkey adjacent to Central Neo-Aramaic exhibit some degree of convergence with this vowel typology. In some NENA dialects of the Bohtan area long *a* in stressed syllables shifts to *o*, e. g. Ruma *xmóra* ‘ass’ (< **ḥmārā*). This may be explained as the perceptual coupling of long *ā* in NENA with long *ō* in Central Neo-Aramaic in salient stressed syllables but not in non-salient syllables. In other NENA dialects of the Bohtan cluster, such as Hertevin, a long *a* is realized as a back [ɑ:], i. e. with a lesser degree of convergence with *ō*. In Armenian dialects an *a* shifts to *ɔ* in stressed syllables in the area of Cilicia and even to the high vowel *u* in Svedia (Martirosyan, chapter 2.2, §6.1). In Kurdish dialects of the area of Mardin a low central unrounded [a:] of Standard Kurdish is retracted to [ɑ:] and, in dialects further west, has the quality of [ɔ:] (Haig, chapter 2.3, §3.1.2).

Although the diffusion of the backing and rounding of *ā* is not a general feature of the sound systems of NENA dialects, it can be identified in the paradigm of the possessive suffixes in all dialects, where it has been exploited as a strategy of distinguishing otherwise homophonous suffixes. The 2fs suffix is *-ax*. The historical form of the 2ms suffix is **-āx* and by the normal process of historical phonology the reflex of this in the modern NENA dialects should have been *-ax*, i. e. a homophone of the 2fs suffix. In order to resolve this homophony the long **ā* of the historical 2ms form **-āx* shifts to /o/, which results in the maintenance of the distinction between the 2ms *-ox* and 2fs *-ax* in the paradigm. This shift of **ā* > /o/ in the 2ms suffix *-ox*, which, as remarked, is not a general feature of all NENA dialects, can be identified as a convergence with the phonology of neighbouring languages that is motivated by the needs of the morphological system.⁹ In such cases the areal feature is activated beyond the area of general diffusion to enrich the possibilities of making distinctions between linguistic forms. Another example of this phenomenon can possibly be identified in the limited diffusion of pharyngeals in Kurdish, where its sporadic use in native words in some cases appears

⁹ Cf. the work of Malkiel (1968, 1976) on the morphological motivations for “irregular” sound changes in Romance.

to have a similar function of making clear distinctions in a paradigm, e. g. *haft* ‘seven’, *hašt* ‘eight’ (see above).

The provisional conclusion we draw from the Western Asian findings is that in contact situations marked phonological segments differ in their ease of borrowability, and in the degree to which they are retained in languages that have them originally. It seems that glottalized consonants can quite readily cross language boundaries and be incorporated into the native lexicon of the recipient language. Furthermore, these segments seem to be retained in the donor languages. Interdental consonants, on the other hand, are not borrowed, and are frequently lost in languages that originally had them. Vowel shifts such as the fronting of rounded vowels and the backing and rounding of *ā* diffuse in different degrees. Salience of sounds is a factor that is conducive to diffusion. Finally, language-internal factors, such as the need to make paradigmatic distinctions, may also bring about a convergence in specific morphological or lexical items.

3.3. Morphosyntax

3.3.1. The marking of definiteness

A case of areal diffusion of morphology is the spread of the Iranian definite marking nominal suffix *-aka*, native to Central and Southern Kurdish and Gorani, to unrelated languages of the region. This exhibits various degrees of integration in the recipient languages. In the Turkic dialects of the region (Bulut, chapter 3.5, §2.4.4.1, chapter 4.2, §2.4.2.2) it is added, as in Kurdish and Hawrami, directly after the stem, before case and plural suffixes, e. g. *šār-ākā-sı-nı* (poem-DEF-POSS.3SG-ACC) ‘this certain/aforementioned poem of his’ (Sonqorî). Compare for example Hawrami, where it is followed by number and gender inflection (Mahmoudveysi and Bailey, chapter 4.5, §4.1.1), e. g. *warg-aka* (wolf-DEF.M) ‘the wolf’, *adā-kē* (mother-DEF.F) ‘the mother’, *palawar-akē* (bird-DEF.PL) ‘the birds.’ In NENA dialects, however, it has the fixed form *-āke*, which corresponds to the oblique inflection of the Kurdish particle (*-akay*) rather than the nominative form (*-aka*), e. g. Jewish Sanandaj *bela* ‘house’, *belāke* ‘the house’; Christian Sanandaj *besa* ‘house’, *besāke* ‘the house’ (Khan, chapter 3.4, §6.1, chapter 4.4, §6.3.1). Moreover in NENA it is attached to the right periphery of the noun after plural suffixes, e. g. Jewish Sulemaniyya *barux-awal-āke* (friend-PL-DEF) ‘the friends’, contrast Kurdish *dost-ak-ān* (friend-DEF-PL) ‘the friends’ (Khan 2007: 201–202). The stress patterns in the NENA dialects reflect the fact that this definite particle has the prosodic status of an affix rather than a clitic.

Another language that has developed a novel marker of definiteness is the Iranian language Kumzari (van der Wal Anonby, chapter 4.7), spoken in the extreme south of the region. The marker is a suffix with the form *-ō* (*qišr* ‘palace’, *qišr-ō* ‘the palace’, van der Wal Anonby, chapter 4.7, §4). The origin of the marker

itself is obscure, but it seems likely that the development of systematic marking of definiteness, otherwise rare in Iranian, was influenced by contact with Arabic, which generally employs definiteness marking. The languages to the north of the region lack definiteness markers (Ossetic, Iranian languages of the Caspian, Laz, NENA dialects in the area of Northern Kurdish). Romeyka, Armenian and Central Neo-Aramaic, however, have inherited morphological markers of definiteness. A ‘definiteness isogloss’ across the region as a whole thus cannot be drawn, but a general tendency is that the languages to the southeast of the region are more likely to mark definiteness than those northward of Lake Van.

3.3.2. Commonalities in pronominal and case morphology

In various Anatolian Arabic dialects, plural pronouns and pronominal inflections of common gender contain a *n* element. In such forms one would expect *m*, which is a feature of the masculine plural pronouns in other Arabic dialects and Old Arabic, e. g. Mardin *hanne* (3_{CPL} independent pronoun), *-han* (3_{CPL} pronominal suffix), *'əntən* (2_{CPL} independent pronoun), *-kən* (2_{CPL} pronominal suffix). It is likely that these were influenced by the form of the corresponding pronouns in the Neo-Aramaic dialects of the area, which contain *n*, e. g. Turoyo (Mardin area) *hanne* (3_{CPL} independent pronoun), NENA Hertevin (Bohtan area) *'ahniton* (2_{CPL} independent pronoun), *-əhon* (2_{CPL} pronominal suffix) (Khan, chapter 2.5, §6.1).

Some NENA dialects spoken in the region of Northern Kurdish have developed a series of demonstrative pronouns from inherited morphology that resembles very closely the shape of corresponding demonstratives in Kurdish, e. g. NENA Barwar (Khan chapter 3.4, §6.1) *'awwa* ‘this’, *'aw* ‘that’ (anaphoric), *'awaha* ‘that over there’, compared with Kurdish of Amedia (MacKenzie 1961: 82, 174): *awa* ‘this’, *aw* ‘that (anaphoric), *awēhē* ‘that over there’. In some NENA dialects in contact with Turkic the masculine singular far deixis demonstrative pronoun has developed the form *'o* ‘that’ by a process of contraction from **'aw* and, moreover, it has supplanted the feminine singular form, with the result that *'o* is now of common gender. This resembles the form and distribution of its demonstrative counterpart *o* in Turkic, which, as in general in Turkic, is genderless (Bulut, chapter 4.2, §2.3.2).

The configuration of demonstrative systems and their syntax converge in various areas of the region. Several languages in the region of Anatolia and northern Iraq, for example, have a three-way configuration of the demonstrative system including (i) near deixis, (ii) anaphoric and (iii) far deixis. This is found in Northern Kurdish and neighbouring NENA dialects (examples from Kurdish of Amedia and NENA of Barwar are given above). This three-way distinction of demonstratives is found in Eastern Armenian (Dum-Tragut 2009: 129–130). In other areas of the region a two-way demonstrative system predominates consisting of near deixis and far deixis forms.

A case of the convergence of the syntactic patterns of demonstratives is as follows. In the Northern Kurdish dialects demonstrative constructions typically consist of a demonstrative pronoun before a noun and a postposed deictic clitic, e. g. *ew-defter=e* ‘that book’, *ev-defter=e* ‘this book’ (Haig, chapter 2.3, §2.2.3). This pattern has been replicated by Central Neo-Aramaic, in which demonstrative constructions consist of a preposed definite article (originally an anaphoric pronoun) and a postposed deictic suffix, e. g. *’u-malk-ano* ‘this king’ (Khan, chapter 2.5, §6.1).

The patterns of genitive constructions converge across various languages (Khan, chapter 2.1, §2.2.1). In genitive constructions in noun phrases in the NENA dialects, for example, the genitive particle is typically suffixed to the head noun, whereas historically it was attached to the front of the dependent noun, e. g.

- (1) Christian Urmi
bet-ət malca
 house-GEN king
 ‘the house of the king’

This is likely to be a convergence with the pattern of the Northern Kurdish attribute marking *ezafe*, which is suffixed to the head noun, e. g.

- (2) a. *xani-yê mirov-î*
 house-EZ.M man-OBL.M
 ‘the man’s house’
 b. *xani-yê wî mirov-î*
 house-EZ.M that.OBL.M man-OBL.M
 ‘that man’s house’

In NENA there is even a replication of the oblique case morphology of Kurdish. As seen in (2) dependent nouns, pronouns, and demonstratives in Northern Kurdish have oblique case morphology. In Neo-Aramaic the oblique morphology of the demonstratives has been replicated by the development of an innovative oblique pronoun through the bonding of the genitive particle with the stem of the demonstrative resulting in an unitary morphological form, e. g. ms. *do* < **d-* (GEN) + *o* (DEM). This is used together with a genitive particle suffixed to the head noun, thus replicating the Kurdish pattern head noun-*ezafe* + oblique pronoun:¹⁰

- (3) C. Urmi
bet-ət do malca
 house-GEN that.OBL king
 ‘the house of that king’

¹⁰ For a detailed treatment of this process see Gutman (2018).

3.3.3. Clitic pronouns indexing verbal objects

One of the most salient features of Iranian languages of western Iran is the high frequency of clitic pronouns, used in several different functions including adnominal possession, prepositional complement, and various kinds of objects (see e. g. Haig, chapter 3.2 for Central Kurdish, Mahmoudveysi and Bailey, chapter 4.5, for Hawrami, Paul, chapter 4.6, §4.9.1 for Persian). When indexing objects, they commonly cliticize to the finite verb. A number of non-Iranian languages have converged with this pattern of object marking. Some incipient cases of this can be identified in Turkic varieties in Iran, in which the use of possessive suffixes on nouns has been extended to the expression of benefactive and dative pronominal arguments on predicative constructions, e. g. *lazım-mız* (necessary-POSS.1PL (is)) ‘we need’, *ertebât var-ı* (relation existent-POSS.3SG), literally ‘his contact (is) existent’, that is: ‘he has contact’ under the influence of Iranian languages (Bulut, chapter 4.2, §2.4.2.3). In the Neo-Aramaic dialects of western Iran there has been an extension of the use of possessive suffixes to express pronominal direct objects in various parts of verbal paradigms (Khan, chapter 4.4, §7.1, §7.2). In some Armenian dialects in contact with West Iranian languages, possessive suffixes are likewise used on verbs, e. g. Urmi dialect: *me ci p̄n̄enk ‘-t* (one horse let’s. catch-2SG) ‘let’s catch a horse for you’ (Martiryosyan, chapter 2.2, §6.6). Similarly, in Iraq Turkic and Iran Turkic, the actual Iranian pronominal clitics (matter borrowing) are used to index benefactives, and direct objects on the Turkish verb, as in *yâyipti=şan* (eat.PF.3SG=3PL) ‘he ate **them**’ (Bulut, chapter 3.5, §2.4.4.2).

3.4. Constituent order

3.4.1. Position of copular elements

For clauses in the present indicative with non-verbal predicates, all languages of the region have an overt, clause-final, obligatory copula element (often clitic in nature), either as one variant, or as the sole option. The general pattern for such clauses is schematically provided in (4a) and (4b):

- (4) a. house large=is ‘the house is large’
 b. this my.son=is ‘this is my son’

For the Iranian languages, an obligatory clause-final copular is an inherited feature which characterizes most (perhaps all) of contemporary West Iranian, including Iranian languages outside of the region under consideration. Example (5) from Gilaki (Caspian region, see Stilo, chapter 5) is illustrative of contemporary Iranian languages, and is basically matched by all the Iranian languages of the region (see chapters 2.3, 3.3, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 5 for further illustration of Iranian copular constructions).

- (5) Gilaki, Lāhijāni (Stilo, chapter 5, ex. 01)

i ti pəsér=ə
 this your son=COP.3SG
 ‘Is this your son?’

Examples from other language groups are as follows:

- (6) Armenian (Hamšen dialect, Martirosyan, chapter 2.2, ex. 8)

im ɔnun-s Ašot ä
 I.GEN name-my PN(MASC) COP.3SG
 ‘My name is Ašot.’

- (7) Arabic of northern Iraq, dialects east of the Tigris (Procházka, chapter 3.2, ex. 1)

báyt-a-hu
 house-3SG.F-COP.3SG.M
 ‘It is her house.’

- (8) Turkic of Iran (Khalaj of Bayâdestân, Bulut, chapter 4.2, ex. 10)

her biri älli metir=dir
 every one.POSS.3SG 50 meter=COP.3SG
 ‘[...] each one of them is fifty meters (long)’

- (9) NENA of Iran, Jewish dialect of Sanandaj (Khan, chapter 4.4, ex. 13)

tat-óx tajâr=ye?^l mam-i tajâr=ye^l lá
 father-your merchant-COP.3MS uncle-my merchant-COP.3MS NEG
tat-i.^l
 father-my
 ‘Is your father a merchant?’ ‘My *uncle* is a merchant, not my father.’

- (10) Neo-Mandaic of Khorramshahr, Iran (Khan, chapter 4.4, ex. 18)

man=ye?
 who=COP.3S
 ‘Who is he?’

- (11) Laz (Lacroix, chapter 6.2, ex. 45)

uškuri tšk’om-eri t’u
 apple eat-PART be.IMPFT.13SG
 ‘The apples were eaten.’ (state)

Note that Laz has an inflected copular verb. Positionally, however, it matches the clitic copular elements of the other languages considered here.

(12) Romeyka (Schreiber, chapter 6.4, ex. 8)

Ato to kitap temo en.
 3SG.N DEF.ART.N book 1SG.POSS be.3SG
 ‘This book is mine.’

The clause-final copula thus appears to be a good candidate for a syntactic trait that has diffused across the entire region. As mentioned, for the Iranian languages, a clause-final copula going back to the Old Iranian defective verb ‘be’ is widespread across the family, and its presence in all Iranian languages of the region is thus a matter of historical inheritance. For the other languages, the obligatory clause-final copula has emerged through quite varied means. Across Turkic generally, a zero-copula is widespread for the third person present indicative, but an overt copula is available as a pragmatically marked option (e. g. in Standard Turkish *dir*; going back to a verb *dur-* ‘stand’). In the varieties of Turkic investigated here, this marked option has become regularized, so that most present indicative third person copular clauses have an overt copula. Thus for Turkic, the (near obligatory) copula has arisen through relaxing the pragmatic conditions on the old overt copula, so that its frequency of occurrence increases. As Bulut (chapter 4.2, §2.3.3.1) notes, the frequent “usage of the copula of the 3rd person may point to the influence of Iranian languages, where an overt marking is obligatory.” For Semitic languages, the presence of an overt, clause-final copula has required quite extensive restructuring. The morpheme generally identified as the copula in these languages is mostly of pronominal origin, e. g. Anatolian varieties of Arabic (Procházka, chapter 2.4, §2.4.1) and Neo-Aramaic (Khan, chapters 3.4, and 4.4 for NENA, and 2.4 for Central Neo-Aramaic and NENA). Among other things, Khan discusses different degrees of grammaticalization of the innovated copula in NENA. In dialects such as Christian Barwar of northern Iraq, the default position of the copula is clause final, but it may occur on a clause-internal constituent that is in “narrow focus” (Khan, chapter 3.4, §8.1). In other dialects, however, such as Jewish Sanandaj of Iran, the copula element is positionally fixed in clause-final position, and is thus impervious to pragmatic considerations (Khan, chapter 4.4, §8.1.1). The fixed clause-final position matches that of the main contact languages (different varieties of Kurdish), and it is noteworthy that the NENA dialects with fixed clause-final copulas are generally those that have undergone the heaviest contact influence. For Romeyka (Schreiber, chapter 6.4), an overt obligatory copula is part of the Indo-European heritage, but its clause-final position can be presumably attributed to contact influence from Turkish.

In sum, the obligatory clause-final copula in the present indicative is a common template across the region. The different languages have converged on this pattern via varying processes, ranging from major restructuring (re-analysis of pronouns) in the case of Semitic, or relaxation of pragmatic conditions on existing structures (Turkic). Although the processes themselves differ, they nevertheless converge on a common outcome. In this case, the target model has been provided by the

Iranian languages of the region. We may surmise that copular constructions are particularly prone to contact influence due to their omnipresence in everyday communication (e. g. in utterances such as ‘what’s this?’, or ‘that’s mine’, ‘he’s at home’ etc.), and are presumably among the earliest utterance types to be acquired in multi-lingual settings.

3.4.2. The relative ordering of direct object and verb

The relative order of direct object and verb remains one of the most intensely researched features in language typology, and is of correspondingly high interest in areal linguistics. The languages of the region exhibit historically both options: Semitic is historically VO, while Turkic and Iranian are OV across all historically attested stages. For the remaining languages, the issue is more controversial: Greek and Armenian might be considered VO for the earliest records, while old Kartvelian has been characterized as “free SOV/SVO” (Testelec 1998: 236).

In general, the historically attested (or reconstructed) order remains stable in the modern languages of the region. Thus change is the exception, rather than the rule. Contemporary Armenian (Martirosyan, chapter 2.2) and Romeyka (Schreiber, chapter 6.4) are difficult to classify, evidently permitting both orders, and thus seem to continue the somewhat contentious nature of word order in their historical ancestors; clarifying the issues here would raise complications beyond the scope of this introduction. The Kartvelian language Laz (Lacroix, chapter 6.2) has shifted from the apparently free word order of early Kartvelian noted above to a consistent OV order, presumably under Turkic influence. But the most radical examples of change documented in this volume are found in NENA dialects, in particular the trans-Zab Jewish dialects of northern Iraq and northwestern and western Iran. Here the inherited Semitic VO order has completely switched to OV. An example from the Jewish Sanandaj dialect of NENA (Khan, chapter 4.4, ex. 44) is the following:

- (13) *hāmər-Ø ke ’ay-brona həl-day brata gb-e.*
 say.IRR-D.3MS COMP that-boy OBJ-DEM.OBL girl love.PRS-D.3MS
 ‘[in order that] he say that the boy loves **the girl**’

In Neo-Mandaic, both VO and OV are possible, with the choice apparently dependent on the definiteness and specificity of the object. The contrast is shown in (14), with an indefinite specific object pre-verbally, and (15) with a definite object post-verbally (both from Neo-Mandaic of Khorramshahr):

- (14) *jisr-i tum əbad-yon*
 bridge-INDF again do.PST-3PL
 ‘They built another bridge.’ (Khan, chapter 4.4, ex. 28, citing Häberl 2009)

- (15) *čāre abđ-etton ... qam tā jisər*
 remedy do.IPFV-2PL to that bridge
 ‘You will fix that bridge.’ (Khan, chapter 4.4, ex. 31, citing Häberl 2009)

A contact-induced change from VO to OV is thus clearly documented in NENA, and partially for Neo-Mandaic. A change in the opposite direction, however, is not found in the material covered in this volume. Even Kumzari, an (arguably) Iranian language heavily influenced by neighbouring varieties of Arabic, has largely retained the Iranian OV word order. However, OV order only obtains with lexical objects, while pronominal objects are generally post-verbal, evidently replicating the syntax of Southern Arabian languages. Thus we find that pronominal syntax is apparently more susceptible to contact-induced change than the syntax of lexical noun phrases. Typical examples illustrating pre-verbal lexical objects are given in (16) and (17):¹¹

- (16) Kumzari (van der Wal Anonby, chapter 4.7, ex. 14)
dar-ō twākš-um na.
 door-the open.IMPF-1S NEG
 ‘I will not open **the door**.’
- (17) Kumzari (van der Wal Anonby, chapter 4.7, ex. 46)
širx dō-um ba yē.
 gold give.IMPF-1S to 3s
 I will give her **gold**.’

In sum, the relative ordering of direct object and verb is a comparatively stable syntactic feature. The only changes attested in the region involve a shift towards OV, rather than in the other direction. This is a particularly interesting finding in view of the widespread opinion that changes from OV to VO (as in Germanic) are in some sense the more natural and frequent kind of word-order change than the

¹¹ The position of pronominal objects in Kumzari is noteworthy because it violates Greenberg’s Universal number 25, according to which if pronominal objects follow the verb, then nominal objects likewise do. A possible account might run as follows: the pronominal objects of Kumzari basically appear in the position of the clitic object pronouns of many West Iranian languages, including Persian, namely immediately following the verb, or the light verb complement if the verb is a complex predicate, cf. examples (4) and (5) in van der Wal Anonby (chapter 4.7). Furthermore, the object pronouns of Kumzari show obvious phonological similarities to the clitic pronouns of other West Iranian languages. What appears to have happened is that the erstwhile object clitic pronouns have developed into free pronouns, but have retained their position to the right of their former hosts. Such a development (clitic pronoun > free pronoun) is obviously unusual, but given that Greenberg’s Universal 25 is a fairly robust generalization, violations presumably require exceptional circumstances such as very heavy contact influence.

opposite direction (see Gell-Mann and Ruhlen 2011 for a recent statement to this effect).

3.4.3. OVG (direct object – verb – goal) word order in the region

While word-order typology has focussed on the position of direct objects relative to the verb, the position of other verbal arguments relative to the verb has received much less attention (see Hawkins 2008 for discussion). The implicit assumption is that generally, all objects will occur on the same side of the verb, thus in VO languages we can expect indirect objects etc. to be post-verbal, and in OV languages we expect them to be pre-verbal. Languages that violate this expectation are quite rare, and interestingly, generally appear to be OV languages (Hawkins 2008). A relatively well-known example is Mande (generally classified as Niger-Congo, West Africa), where adpositional arguments follow, while direct objects precede the verb (Nikitina 2011).

In the Western Asian context, a similar phenomenon occurs in the majority of OV languages: constituents expressing goals of verbs of movement, or of caused movement ('put', 'place' etc.) overwhelmingly follow the verb, yielding a characteristic OVG (G=Goal) order across much of the region (Haig 2014b, 2017, to appear). The generalization that can be drawn is the following:

- (18) Phrases expressing goals of verbs of motion and caused motion are post-verbal, irrespective of the position of the direct object in the language concerned.

For the VO languages of the region, e. g. the Arabic dialects west of the Tigris (Procházka, chapter 2.4), this yields an unremarkable and harmonic word order, in which all manner of verbal complements follow the verb. The following example from Mosul Arabic illustrates the post-verbal position of a goal ('to.house'), and of an indirect object ('some apples'):

- (19) *qabəl-mā* *y-ǧōḥ* *ʕa-l-bēt* *ʔštaǧa* *təffāḥ*
 before-PRTCL 3SG.M-go.IPFV to-DEF-house buy.PFV.3SG.M apples.COLL
 'Before he went **home** he bought **some apples**.' (Procházka, chapter 2.4, ex. 29)

In OV languages, however, (18) leads to a disharmonic order, with direct objects preceding, but goals following the verb. This is illustrated in (20), from the Jewish Sanandaj dialect of NENA. The direct object 'one cow' of 'buy' precedes the verb, while the goal of 'bring' follows the verb:

- (20) [...] *xa-dána tórta šăqəl-Ø-wa-la.*¹
 [...] one-single cow buy.PRS.-D.3MS-PST-L.3FS
*k-m-e-wa-l-ó ga-béla nòš-ef.*¹
 IND-bring-D.3MS-PST-L.3FS-PVP in-house self-POSS.3MS
 ‘(each family went and) bought a **cow**. They would bring it **to their home**.’ (Khan, chapter 4.4, taken from ex. 58)

The OVG word order illustrated in (20) is found in all the varieties of Neo-Aramaic that have shifted to OV, and in all the Iranian languages of the region. Example (21) shows post-verbal position of a recipient, coupled with preverbal order of the direct object, in Kumzari:

- (21) Kumzari (van der Wal Anonby, chapter 4.7, ex. 3)
mīṭ dō`a ba dirīṭn-an.
 fish give.3S.IMP to fisher-PL
 ‘He gives **fish to the fishers**.’

Turkic varieties of the region likewise show a strong tendency to place goals after the verb, thus disturbing the otherwise consistently verb-final syntax (see Bulut, chapter 3.5, §2.4.5.1 for Turkic in northern Iraq, and chapter 4.2, §7.2.4 for Turkic in Iran). The data from Armenian do not permit a firm conclusion on the order of goals. Laz and Ossetic, on the other hand, both seem to be outside of the region where (18) holds. Example (22) from Laz shows that the goal of the verb of caused motion is preverbal, while (23) shows preverbal goals of motion verbs in Ossetic:

- (22) Laz (Lacroix, chapter 6.2, ex. 32)
Xalili-k ufkui dzebi-s dol-i-by-am-s
 Halil-ERG apple pocket-DAT PV-MID-tip-TH-13SG
 ‘Halil tips the apples **in his pocket**.’
- (23) Ossetic (Erschler, chapter 6.3, ex. 27b)
dərævš-mæ səw-æg išči gošt-mæ akumulator
 Darghavs-ALL go-NMZ someone Gosht-ALL accumulator
a-laš-zæn
 PRV-carry-FUT.3SG
 ‘Someone who is going **to Darghavs** will take the accumulator **to Gosht**.’

The areal epicentre for OVG word order appears to be northern Iraq and neighbouring regions of western Iran. In Behdinī Kurdish of northern Iraq, post-verbal positioning of goals and recipients is a grammatical rule (Haig, to appear), while in other languages, for example colloquial Persian, or Iran Turkic, it is a statistically preferred option (see Frommer 1981 and Haig 2017 on spoken Persian). Languages also differ in the type of argument that is treated as ‘goal’. Thus in Behdinī dialects of Northern Kurdish goals, recipients, addressees of ‘tell’ (*gotin*), and final states of change-of-state predicates (‘become, turn into’ etc.) are placed

after the verb (Haig, to appear), but dialects of Northern Kurdish further north put addressees of ‘tell’ in front of the verb (cf. Haig, chapter 2.3, Fig. 5). Stilo (2010) notes for a dialect of Vafsi (Tati, see also Stilo, this volume, chapter 5) that recipients of ‘give’ are overwhelmingly post-verbal, while addressees of ‘say, tell’ are overwhelmingly pre-verbal.

Although we lack detailed syntactic analysis for many of the languages in this volume, it is nevertheless possible to formulate some provisional conclusions with regard to post-verbal constituents. Firstly, they are predominant in the region of northern Iraq, western Iran, and southeastern Anatolia. The extent and frequency of post-verbal constituents fades out as one progresses northward and eastward. In Ossetic and Laz, the phenomenon is only marginal. In spoken Persian they are very common, but not grammatically obligatory (Haig 2017), and further eastward (e. g. the easternmost dialects of Balochi, or in East Iranian languages, for example the Wakhi texts in Obrtelová 2017), they are scarce. Second, there appears to be a hierarchy of post-possibility, approximately as follows:

- (24) HIERARCHY OF POST-POSABILITY IN OV LANGUAGES OF WESTERN ASIA
(THOSE TO THE LEFT ARE MOST FREQUENTLY POST-POSED)
goals of (caused) motion > recipients of ‘give’ > addressees of ‘tell’ >
other

More generally, the wide distribution of OVG order (in Iranian, some of Neo-Aramaic, and Turkic) suggests that goal arguments are comparatively susceptible to “synchronization” with a contact language, leading to a common ordering, while the linear placement of direct objects is more resistant to change (see Haig 2014b).

3.5. Other issues in contact-induced syntactic change

Another area where areal distribution is evidently relevant is adpositions. In general, the Semitic languages have all retained their inherited prepositions, regardless of heavy contact influence. The Turkic languages have likewise largely retained their postpositions. Iranian languages of the region, however, exhibit all possible kinds of adpositions, which approximately correspond to a north-south cline. While Southern and Central Kurdish, Kumzari, Hawrami, and Bakhtiari (and Persian) are overwhelmingly prepositional, the dialects of Northern Kurdish exhibit a mix of pre-, post- and circumpositions. The Caspian and most Tatic languages (Stilo, Chapter 5, §5.7), on the other hand, have a “predominance of postpositions”, as does Ossetic (see Stilo 2005, and Haig, chapter 2.3). Laz and Armenian are likewise predominantly postpositional. Adpositional type is generally slow to change, so the evident variability across Iranian is presumably the result of long-standing convergence with languages of different types.

Relative clauses and subordination generally are also domains known to reflect contact influence (see Gandon 2016). Most of the languages of the region have

post-verbal relative clauses, and this is even found in Iran Turkic, where generally patterns of subordination have moved closer to the Iranian type (see Khan, chapters 2.1 and 4.1 for an overview of subordination). Ossetic has the most complex patterns of subordination, and has also pre-verbal participial relative-like constructions (see the nominalized verb ‘go’ in the Ossetic relative clause in (23) above), perhaps reflecting a shift from the original post-verbal Iranian type towards the pre-verbal pattern in the Caucasus. Laz is generally head-final in this respect, again reflecting the overall trend for the languages to the north of the region to adhere more closely to a consistent head-final type.

3.6. Provisional remarks on ease of syntactic borrowing in the Western Asian context

The data we have considered above, though not a comprehensive survey, do allow provisional conclusions regarding the ease with which the linear ordering of clause constituents can adapt to, or align with, that of a contact language (we have not included patterns of clause linkage and subordination in this hierarchy, but it seems evident that they would rank highly, see Haig 2001, Matras 2002 for discussion). These are summed up in the following hierarchy:

- (25) PROVISIONAL HIERARCHY OF EASE OF CONTACT-INDUCED CHANGE IN
 CLAUSE-INTERNAL SYNTAX
- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| copular constructions | HIGHEST |
| order of goal and verb | ↑ |
| order of direct object and verb | ↓ |
| adpositional order | LOWEST |

Support for the hierarchy in (25) comes from the blanket distribution of the shared copular construction, the almost complete spread of post-verbal goals (excepting Laz and Ossetic), the small number of unambiguous cases of object/verb ordering changes (e. g. the Trans-Zab Jewish dialects of NENA). But even the languages most heavily affected by contact, such as the aforementioned varieties of NENA, have not abandoned their inherited adpositional type (though of course some of the contact languages are also predominantly prepositional). It may in fact turn out that the relative position of object-verb, and adpositional order in (25) will need to be reconsidered; this remains a task for future research.

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