

# Present and historical perspectives on the Catalan *go*-past

Bart Jacobs (München)

## ■ 0 Introduction

In the languages of the world, the verb ‘to go (to)’ is typically selected for grammaticalization as a future tense auxiliary (Bybee et al., 1994: 267; Heine / Kuteva, 2002: 3, 331).<sup>1</sup> One obvious reason for this is that “[t]he semantics of ‘movement toward’ constructions implies movement in time as well as space, making the transition to future easier” (Bybee et al., 1994: 268). Accordingly, most Romance languages use an auxiliary derived from the verb ‘to go’ to encode future tense, as in French *je vais chanter* I-go.1s-sing ‘I am going to sing’. This is where Catalan contrasts remarkably with its sister Romance languages. In Catalan, counter to what one might expect, the verb ‘to go’ has developed into a preterit auxiliary and the periphrasis *go* + infinitive renders a past reading, as in (*jo*) *vaig cantar* I-go.1s-sing ‘I sang’.

For being a “highly anomalous” (Pérez Saldanya / Hualde, 2003: 47) case of grammaticalization, this feature – known in the literature as *perfet perifràstic*, but (for reasons outlined in section 1.1) referred to in this paper as ‘*go*-past’ – has received a considerable amount of attention from scholars from different disciplines in a time span of over a century.<sup>2</sup> Drawing on

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1 Also in a good number of creoles – languages that often reflect universal paths of grammaticalization – a reflex of the verb ‘to go’ became the principle future marker (Holm, 1988: 164, 165).

2 References to the *go*-past start appearing in grammars roughly from the late 19th century onwards (see Steinkrüger, 2004: 154, 155). Still in 1968, however, Mendeloff (1968: 319) complains that the *go*-past “has been given only short shrift in historical grammars, and has been the subject of only two brief studies in the past fifty years”. He thereby refers to the pilot studies of Montoliu (1916) and Colon (1959), but overlooks other important contributions to the study of the *go*-past such as Meyer-Lübke (e.g. 1925), Gougenheim (1971 [1929]), Kuen (1950), Siebenschein (1953), Marquèze-Pouey (1955), Rohlf’s (1955), and Henrichsen (1966). Be that as it may, Mendeloff’s appeal found a response: the body of scholarship on the Catalan *go*-past has multiplied rapidly since.

this wide body of scholarship, the present paper provides both synchronic and diachronic perspectives on the *go*-past. The paper is divided into four sections: section 1 discusses the use and distribution of the *go*-past in contemporary Catalan; section 2 assesses the diffusion of the *go*-past in other Romance languages; section 3 deals with the historical development of the feature in question, offering a concise overview of the process of grammaticalization that is thought to have occasioned the emergence of the *go*-past. Finally, section 4 provides a new perspective on the origin of *go*-past by arguing that the feature developed first in Old Occitan, only to subsequently diffuse into (Old) Catalan.

## ■ 1 On the use and distribution of the *go*-past in contemporary Catalan

### ■ 1.1 General remarks

Before advancing, a terminological remark is in order. The feature that is central in this paper is generally referred to in the literature as the *perfet perifràstic*. This term is somewhat confusing, since a perfect typically “denotes an action as having begun in the past, but extending up to the present (...) or some result of which is relevant to the present” (Bussmann, 2006: 876). This definition does not apply to the Catalan *perfet perifràstic*. Rather, the functions of the *perfet perifràstic*, which typically denotes actions completed prior to the moment of speech (i.e. without present relevance), coincide with what is generally defined as a preterit or, more precisely, a perfective past (e.g. Squartini, 1998; others, e.g. Detges, 2004, use the term ‘aoristic past’). In the remainder of this paper, for the sake of clarity, I will use the more neutral term ‘*go*-past’ (following e.g. Juge, 2006) instead of *perfet perifràstic*.

An example of the Catalan *go*-past is provided in (1):

- (1) El seu discurs va causar un gran impacte en l’auditori  
 ‘His talk produced a great effect on the audience’  
 (Example and translation from Detges, 2004: 211)

The example illustrates, among others, that the *go*-auxiliary is void of semantic content: the idea of physical movement originally expressed by the lexical verb *anar* ‘to go’ has faded in the transition from lexical to auxiliary verb (cf. e.g. Heine / Kuteva, 2005:15 on desemanticization). One

consequence of this bleaching is a loss of semantic restrictions on the type of complement verb that can follow the *go*-auxiliary. Obviously, for being a perfective past marker, the *go*-auxiliary is bound to govern dynamic predicates mostly. However, similar to Spanish and Portuguese, Catalan verbs generally considered to be stative (e.g. *saber* ‘to know’) can be marked for perfective past and thereby obtain a more dynamic value: e.g. Catalan *va saber* ‘he/she found out’ (cf. Spanish *supo*).

■ 1.2 The paradigm of the *go*-auxiliary

The degree of grammaticalization of the Catalan *go*-auxiliary can be illustrated further by taking a closer look at its inflectional paradigm. Table 1 (adapted from Juge, 2006: 314) contrasts the paradigm of the *go*-auxiliary with that of the lexical verb from which it derives:

	go-AUXILIARY		LEXICAL VERB	
	indicative	subjunctive	indicative	subjunctive
1s	<i>vaig</i> ( <i>vàreig</i> )	<i>vagi</i>	<i>vaig</i>	<i>vagi</i>
2s	<i>vas</i> ( <i>wares</i> )	<i>vagis</i>	<i>vas</i>	<i>vagis</i>
3s	<i>va</i>	<i>vagi</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>vagi</i>
1pl	<i>vam</i> ( <i>vàrem</i> / <i>vem</i> )	<i>vàgim</i>	<i>anem</i>	<i>anem</i>
2pl	<i>vau</i> ( <i>vàreu</i> / <i>veu</i> )	<i>vàgiu</i>	<i>aneu</i>	<i>aneu</i>
3pl	<i>van</i> ( <i>varen</i> )	<i>vagin</i>	<i>van</i>	<i>vagin</i>

Table 1. Conjugation of *anar* as *go*-auxiliary and lexical verb.

Note, first, that unlike the lexical verb, the inflectional paradigm of the *go*-auxiliary is defective in that it cannot be conjugated for past tense. To express a pluperfect (or *pretèrit anterior*), Catalan takes recourse either to the periphrasis *go*<sub>aux</sub> + *haver* plus a past participle (PP) (e.g. *vaig haver perdut* ‘I had lost’), to the preterit forms of *haver* + PP (e.g. *haguí perdut* ‘I had lost’) (Lüdtke, 1984: 87) or to the durative past form of *haver* + PP: *havia perdut* ‘I had lost’.

Secondly, as Table 1 shows, the 1st and 2nd plural forms of the *go*-auxiliary have been regularized in analogy with the remainder of the paradigm, and thus contrast with the suppletive 1st and 2nd plural forms of the lexical verb. This again confirms that, synchronically, the *go*-auxiliary is semantically unrelated to its lexical source. A similar case of paradigm alignment is found in Rumanian, where the verb ‘to want’ has suppletive forms when

used as a lexical verb, but coalescent (i.e. non-suppletive) forms when used as a future auxiliary (Lamuela, 2005: 6).<sup>3</sup>

Taken together, the defectiveness and coalescence of the inflectional paradigm of the *go*-auxiliary *vis-à-vis* the paradigm of the lexical verb exemplify the decategorialization (i.e. “the loss in morphosyntactic properties characteristic of lexical (...) forms” [Heine / Kuteva, 2005: 15]) that has affected the verb *anar* in its evolution from lexical to auxiliary verb.

Note, finally, that, when used as a future auxiliary in [*anar* + *a* + infinitive] clauses, the conjugation of *anar* equals that of the lexical verb.<sup>4</sup> Thus, *vam cantar* means ‘we sang’ and *anem a cantar* means ‘we will sing’, etc. (cf. Steinkrüger, 2004: 152).<sup>5</sup>

### ■ 1.3 Distribution of the *go*-past vis-à-vis the simple past

In the domain of non-durative past, the Catalan verbal system disposes of two perfective pasts – the periphrastic *go*-past (e.g. *vaig cantar* ‘I sang’) and the synthetic simple past (e.g. *cantí* ‘I sang’). As shown below, these contrast with the compound perfect *haver* + past participle (PP) (e.g. *he cantat* ‘I have sung’), but also differ subtly from one another, both semantically and, particularly, stylistically.

#### ■ 1.3.1 Stylistic distribution

In contemporary Catalan, the *go*-past predominates in conceptual spoken discourse, whereas the simple past is still frequently favored in conceptual written discourse (e.g. Pérez Saldanya / Hualde, 2003: 58; Squartini, 1998: 189; Gulsoy, 2001: 12). This stylistic distribution – *go*-past [+spoken], simple past [+written] – is, though not identical, reminiscent of the situation

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3 In fact, similar processes of paradigmatic simplification/reduction have affected all members of the Balkan *Sprachbund*, all of which have a grammaticalized *want*-future (Heine / Kuteva, 2005: 189).

4 Radatz (2003) deals with the emergence of the *go*-future in Catalan. While the Catalan *go*-future has often been dismissed as a ‘non-genuine calque from Spanish’, Radatz (2003: 61) argues that “Catalan is merely following the same grammaticalization path as many other languages and that its emerging *go*-future can be shown to be internally motivated” (my translation from the original).

5 With a proper context missing, ambiguity may arise in spoken Catalan between a future and a past interpretation when the conjugated form of the auxiliary ends in /a/. The audible difference between, say, *Joan va cantar* ‘John sang’ and *Joan va a cantar* ‘John is going to sing’ is negligible.

in French – here, the *passé simple* survives only in narrative discourse, while the *passé composé* predominates in all other registers (cf. García Martín, 2001: 90fn) – as well as in central and northern Italian dialects, where the *passato remoto* is no longer found but in conceptual written discourse (cf. Squartini / Bertinotto, 2000 on the simple vs. compound past in Romance languages).

On the basis of the distribution of the *go*-past in Catalan diaries and memoirs from 1500 to 1800, Steinkrüger (2004: 170) confirms that the *go*-past originally pertained primarily to conceptual spoken discourse: first, “Je distanzsprachlicher der Text verfaßt ist, umso seltener ist das Vorkommen des *perifràstic*”; secondly, “Der Gebrauch des *perifràstic* hängt mit dem Bildungsgrad der Autoren zusammen (...). Mit steigendem Bildungsgrad nimmt die Verwendung des *perfet perifràstic* ab”. Note, however, that in Modern Catalan, the *go*-past is increasingly penetrating in conceptual written discourse: “sa présence dans la langue écrite est de plus en plus courante quel que soit le genre de texte” (Fàbregas, 2001: 39; cf. López García, 1979: 129).

### ■ 1.3.2 Semantic distribution

Disregarding some subtle differences (to which I will return later), the two Catalan perfective pasts are freely interchangeable, as the equation in (2) suggests.

- (2) *go*-past: L'any passat varen tenir un fill =  
 simple past: L'any passat tingueren un fill  
 ‘Last year they had a son’  
 (Wheeler / Yates / Dols, 1999: 343)

The two perfective pasts illustrated in (2) contrast aspectually with the compound perfect *haver* + PP: the former are generally used for actions with no present (or current) relevance, whereas the latter is used to encode actions *with* present relevance (e.g. Curell, 2003: 36, 39; Juge, 2006: 315). This contrast is illustrated, for instance, by the fact that replacing *L'any passat* ‘last year’ in (2) by e.g. *Enguany* ‘This year’ leads to the ungrammaticality of (2): \**Enguany varen tenir / tingueren un fill*. Thus, to say ‘This year they had a son’, only the compound perfect can be employed, as in (3). Vice versa, it is unacceptable to exchange *Enguany* in (3) for *L'any passat* (cf. Curell, 2003: 39, 40):

- (3) Enguany (\*L'any passat) han tingut un fill  
 'This year they had a son' (Wheeler / Yates / Dols, 1999: 343)

In addition, the *go*-past differs from the compound [*haver* + PP] perfect in terms of the temporal remoteness of the actions described: the *go*-past is pre-hodiernal, meaning that it refers to actions that occurred *before* the day of the utterance, as in (4); the [*haver* + PP] perfect, on the other hand, is hodiernal, referring only to actions that occurred *on* the day of the utterance,<sup>6</sup> as in (5) (cf. Steinkrüger, 2004: 172; Juge, 2006: 315; Curell, 2003: 36–38):<sup>7</sup>

- (4) No vares veure el teu germà ahir / \*avui de matí?  
 'Didn't you see your brother yesterday / \*this morning?'  
 (5) No has vist el teu germà avui de matí / \*ahir?  
 'Didn't you see your brother this morning / \*yesterday?'  
 (Wheeler / Yates / Dols, 1999: 343; cf. examples in Curell, 2003: 37)

Though in many cases there is a conceivable overlap between hodiernal actions and present relevance, the examples (4) and (5) suggest that the temporal [ $\pm$ hodiernal] distinction has priority over the aspectual [ $\pm$ present relevance] distinction.<sup>8</sup>

With the pre-hodiernal character of the *go*-past in mind, it is interesting to return to the semantic distribution of the *go*-past as opposed to the simple past. In the literature, these are quite commonly assumed to be freely interchangeable: "the periphrasis can substitute for the simple form in any

6 For details on the hodiernal – pre-hodiernal distinction see Bybee et al. (1994: 98).

7 Indeed, Juge (2006: 315) states that the *haver* + PP perfect is used "for situations within the last twenty-four hours, regardless of present relevance".

8 According to Curell (2003: 36), by having a [ $\pm$ hodiernal] contrast, Catalan differs from French, Italian and the majority of Spanish dialects. It is interesting to note, however, that, similar to the situation described above for Modern Catalan, when the *passé composé* developed in French, it first acquired the functions of a hodiernal past, "leaving the older *Passé Simple* as a pre-hodiernal past" (Bybee et al., 1994: 101, drawing on Lancelot / Arnauld, 1660). In Modern French, the *passé composé* is no longer limited to hodiernal events but instead "has generalized to perfective in the spoken language, completely replacing the older inflectional perfective, the *Passé Simple*" (Bybee et al., 1994: 85). In modern mainstream Spanish, as far as I am aware, the [ $\pm$ hodiernal] distinction does not apply (but see Bybee et al., 1994: 102). It is interesting to note, however, that in the Castilian dialect of Alicante, a rather strict hodiernal (*perfecto compuesto*) – pre-hodiernal (*pretérito indefinido*) distinction appears to be emerging (Bybee et al., 1994: 87, drawing on Schwenter, 1993), a development that might be motivated by contact with Catalan.

context” (Squartini, 1998: 189; cf. Lüdtke, 1984: 153; Wheeler / Yates / Dols, 1999: 343). Steinkrüger (2004: 154), however, argues against this assumption: “Das *perfet perifràstic* kann und konnte ausschließlich für Handlungen verwendet werden, die spätestens am Vortag des Referenzpunktes (also des Sprechaktes) stattgefunden haben. Das trifft für das synthetische Perfekt nicht zu”. In addition, Steinkrüger (2004: 154) points at some intriguing differences – Steinkrüger (*idem*) speaks of “Nicht-Identität” – between the *go*-past and the simple past concerning the subjunctive mood.<sup>9</sup>

In sum, there is both a temporal and aspectual contrast between the two perfective pasts (*go*-past / simple past) on the one hand, and the compound perfect (*haver* + PP) on the other. In addition, the two perfective pasts differ subtly from one another, both on a semantic and, more drastically, a stylistic level.<sup>10</sup>

### ■ 1.3.3 Geographic distribution

The success of the *go*-past is vast: as previously mentioned, the *go*-past has replaced the older simple past in most parts of the Catalan dialect cluster.<sup>11</sup> Schlieben-Lange (1971: 124) describes the replacement of the simple past as “so vollständig, daß heute die Periphrase fast völlig das historische Präteritum ersetzt hat”. In that same vein, Juge (2006: 335) speaks of “the virtual elimination of the simple forms from colloquial use”. These affirmations, however, need to be nuanced, as there are some Catalan-speaking areas where the simple past is still firmly rooted in daily speech.

To be more precise, Moll (2006 [1952]: 293) found that the simple past was prevalent in the county of Valencia as well as in the Balearic dialects of Ibiza and Formentera (*eivissenc*), and, to a lesser extent, Mallorca. It might well be, however, that the synthetic past has continued to loose ground

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9 Steinkrüger (2004: 154) cites Fabra (1988): “Es pot substituir *va dir* per *digué*, *digué* per *va dir* i *vagi dir* per *digués*, però no sempre es pot substituir *digués* per *vagi dir*; per exemple, aquesta substitució no podria fer-se en *ell volia que li ho digués*. *vagi dir* és un pretèrit perfet de subjuntiu, *digués* és un imperfet, que també s’usa amb valor de perfet de subjuntiu”. Mariner Bigorra (1992) discusses this issue in detail.

10 García Martín (2001: 90, fn) chooses the term “tricotomía” to describe “la contraposición entre el pretérito y el perfecto, a saber, *cantí* / *vagi cantar* / *he cantat*”.

11 The replacement of the simple past in most parts of the Catalan language area is remarkable in comparison to Spanish, Portuguese and Occitan, where the simple past is quite vital in both spoken and written discourse. On the other hand, it should be noted that the replacement of a synthetic form by a periphrastic is quite typical in the history of Romance (cf. Squartini / Bertinetto, 2000, for a cross-Romance overview).

after Moll's 1952 assessment. For instance, some 25 years later, Colon (1978: 163) only mentions "algunes regions de València i (...) la ruralia de Mallorca" as areas where the simple past predominates. More recently, moreover, Pérez Saldanya / Hualde (2003: 58) find that the simple past is confined to "a small central area of the Valencian region around the capital and, in a residual manner, also in the south of the Valencian territory and on the island of Eivissa (Ibiza, Iviza)".<sup>12</sup>

Note, furthermore, that on the Balearics, the simple past survives only "among old and rural people" (Squartini, 1998: 321, fn12, drawing on López García, 1979), which allows for the prediction that the simple past will soon become obsolete in that area. Thus, it seems that the *go*-past is further gaining ground at the expense of the simple past. Significantly, as noted in section 1.3.1, this tendency is not confined to spoken Catalan but also affects the written language.

In order to estimate the chances of survival of the simple past in Catalan, it is interesting to zoom in on the situation in the county of Valencia. It requires an explanation why the process of substitution of the simple past by the *go*-past is delayed in that area compared to Central/Eastern Catalan. As a possible explanation, Steinkrüger (2004: 157) observes that in (some parts of) Valencia the simple past has become a linguistic identity marker *vis-à-vis* Central/Eastern Catalan: "[D]er Valencianer [möchte] gegenüber dem Zentralkatalanischen seine Valencianität beweisen bzw. sich der Prestigeform der Stadt València anpassen". At the same time, however, the use of the *go*-past appears to be on the increase in Valencian media (Steinkrüger, 2004: 157). The future of the simple past in Valencia is thus uncertain.

One variety where the Catalan simple past is in no danger of disappearing is the archaic Catalan dialect of the Sardinian harbor of Alghero.<sup>13</sup> Although Moll (2006 [1952]: 207) affirms that the *go*-past replaced the simple past in Algherese, this view is not shared by other scholars: Schlie-

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12 With particular respect to the county of Valencia, Sancho (1995, cited in Steinkrüger, 2004: 156) specifies: "[E]l valencià col·loquial de Canals només usa el perfect perifràstic (...), essent totalment el simple, propi de l'Horta de València i d'alguns llocs aïllats d'Alacant". Cf. also López García (1979: 133, fn15).

13 Alghero was conquered and settled by the Catalan-Aragonese Crown in 1354, but was carried over to the Castilian Crown in the late 15th century. Alghero was originally baptized 'small Barcelona' (or *Barceloneta*), which reflects the fact that most of the early settlers originated from Barcelona (Blasco-Ferrer, 1984: 4). In the 16th century, contact between Alghero and Catalan-speaking parts of Spain ceased, but today the port still harbors a sizeable minority of some 10.000 speakers of Catalan/Algherese (Simon, 2010).



ben-Lange (1971: 124, fn62) and, quite recently, Simon (2010: 4) explicitly state that Algherese has no *go*-past. The lack of a *go*-past is also suggested by Blasco-Ferrer (1984: 157, 158) and Pais (1976: 128), who make no mention of a *go*-past in their descriptions of Algherese.

For possible future research into the diffusion of the *go*-past in Modern Catalan, we may mention the work of Perea (1999),<sup>14</sup> who presents and analyzes the fieldwork data collected in the early 20th century by the Catalan dialectologist Antoni M. Alcover. For each speech community, it is reported whether the simple past was still in use or not, and if so, to what extent. The additional comments found in Perea (1999) are remarkably specific. For instance, about the Valencian village of Pego we learn: “És notable que (...) just se conservi la 3a persona singular del pretèrit simple” (Perea, 1999: 63). In the nearby village of Patró “[s]’ha perdut el pretèrit perfet simple”. However, “se conserva el del verb *deure* quan regeix un infinitiu, per denotar probabilitat” (idem).<sup>15</sup>

## ■ 2 The *go*-past and related phenomena in other Romance languages<sup>16</sup>

As noted in the introduction, the *go*-past is thought to set Catalan apart from its sister Romance languages. Though this is largely true, the affirmation that “aquest tret idiomàtic del català (...) no té equivalent en la resta de les llengües romàniques” (Fàbregas i Alegret, 2010) is untenable: it is quite well-known that the feature also survived in the Gascon dialect of Occitan.<sup>17</sup> The presence of the *go*-past in Gascon, as well as the obvious similarities with the Catalan *go*-past, have been remarked upon in some detail in

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14 Unfortunately, a recent article by Perea (2003) on the extension of the simple past in Catalan at the start of the 21st century was not at my disposal by the time of this writing.

15 Future attempts to investigate the distribution of the *go*-past *vis-à-vis* the simple past might also benefit from the dialectal data gathered in the Catalan *Corpus Oral Dialectal* (COD; <<http://www.ub.edu/lincat/>>).

16 In the Appendix to this paper, a brief overview of phenomena related to the Catalan *go*-past in languages outside of Europe is provided.

17 The classification of Catalan (Ibero-Romance, Gallo-Romance, or somewhere in between?) continues to provoke controversy (López García, 1979: 132). Nonetheless, scholars agree that within Romance, Occitan (particularly the Gascon variety) is closest to Catalan. According to Meyer-Lübke (1925: 25), Catalan is a descendent of Old Occitan brought to Spain in the 8th century. As to Gascon, because of its relative distance to standard Occitan, some scholars favor its classification as a separate language (Bossong, 2008: 129). Rohlfs (1955) pointed out striking similarities between Gascon and Catalan (including the *go*-past).

the works of, for instance, Marquèze-Pouey (1955), Henrichsen (1966), Berchem (1968), Steinkrüger (2004) and particularly Schlieben-Lange (1971). Note also that Bourciez (1925) had already mentioned the feature in his brief grammatical sketch of Gascon (cf. also Gougenheim, 1971 [1929]: 94).

Regarding the Occitan *go*-past, Schlieben-Lange (1971: 165) affirms that “in einzelnen bearnesischen Mundarten” as well as in Guardia Piemontese, a grammaticalized *go*-past is fully productive “und entspricht somit der katalanischen Lage”<sup>18</sup> (cf. Squartini 1998: 322; Berchem 1973: 34). Section 4.2 will provide a detailed discussion of the *go*-past in Guardia Piemontese, but note already that the paradigm of the *go*-auxiliary in this dialect is non-suppletive, just as in Catalan (cf. Table 1, section 1.2).

Detges (2004: 213) affirms that present-tensed *go* + inf. predicates with past reference were used in the Middle Ages “throughout a dialect continuum which stretched from Anglo-Norman French in the North to the Languedoc in the South East and Catalonia in the South West”. Indeed, examples of *go*-periphrases with past reference – typically used as a storytelling technique to foreground so-called ‘turning point’ events (Detges, 2004: 218) – have been documented plentifully not only in Old Catalan, but also in Old Occitan (6), Old French (7) and, to a lesser extent, Old Spanish (8) (see particularly Colon, 1976).

- (6) Old Occitan: *d'aqui s'en van tantost partir*  
*davant Josep s'en van venir;*  
*mot dossamen lo saluderon.*  
*Josep lor va dir que queron.*  
*Los draps geteron del pairol*  
*et meron los en mieg del sol,*  
*volgron los a Josep mostrar*  
*e. l tenbeire va regardar*  
*et estet fort miravillbos*  
*cant vit los draps d'aitals colors*  
*que re del mont non sofranbia*

(Infancy Gospel from 1374,  
 in Meyer-Lübke, 1925: 106)

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18 With respect to the *go*-past in Gascon, Schlieben-Lange (1971: 165, fn31) details: “Die Gebiete, in denen diese vollständige Grammatikalisierung vorliegt, sind ziemlich eng begrenzt. Meist liegt auch noch eine Beschränkung auf wenige Verben vor, deren Paradigma dann mit *anar* gebildet wird”.

- (7) Old French: *En mi le camp amdui s'entr'encuntrentent;*  
*Si se vunt ferir, granz colps s'entredunerent*  
 (*Chanson de Roland*, verses 3567/3568;  
 in Gougenheim, 1971[1929]: 93)
- (8) Old Spanish: *El Çid a doña Ximena ívala abraçar;*  
*doña Ximena al Çid la manol va besar*  
 (*El Cid*, verses 368/369;  
 in Meyer-Lübke, 1925: 104)<sup>19</sup>

The *go*-past became obsolete in Occitan (with the before-mentioned exceptions of Gascon and Guardia Piemontese) and French in the 16th and 17th centuries (Meyer-Lübke, 1925: 106; Gougenheim, 1971 [1929]: 95–96; Pérez Saldanya / Hualde 2003: 56, 57). Note, however, that narrative *go*-pasts are still sporadically found in French narratives and texts with a biographic character (Steinkrüger, 1999: 231, 2004: 162, 163):

- (9) French:  
*Cette utilisation du terme de phonème en linguistique historique va entraîner de façon assez conséquente son emploi dans l'étude des alternances morphologiques, qui susciterent l'intérêt de l'École de Kazan qu'illustrèrent les noms de Jan Baudouin de Courtenay et Mikolay Kruszenski.* (Duchet, 1992 in Steinkrüger, 2004: 163)

In a similar vein, Nicolas Quint<sup>20</sup> (personal communication) points out the sporadic use of narrative *go*-pasts in the late 19th, early 20th century works of Mistral:

- (10) Occitan:  
*A Mount-Brun pensas-vous qu'entre intra au cabaret, anan veire pèr sòu un mouloun de poulardo, de poulet, de dindoun, de couniéu...* (Mistral, 1906: 307)

Interestingly, Squartini (1998: 196) also draws on Mistral (1906) to exemplify his affirmation that “the ancient usage [of narrative *go*-pasts; BJ] can still appear in some cases, with a stylistic effect of sudden action”. He provides the following example:

19 Berchem (1973: 5) refers to a dozen or more verses which contain present-tensed *go* + inf. periphrases with a past reference in *El Cid*.

20 Nicolas Quint is a native speaker and specialist of Occitan (cf. Quint, 2007).

(11) Occitan:

*Comme passave i bourgado, vau entrevèire uno bandiero que dessus i'èro escri: ...*

(Mistral, 1906, Squartini, 1998: 196)

The examples (10) and (11) also show, however, that suppletive forms of the lexical verb *anar* are used, rather than the grammaticalized non-suppletive forms found in Catalan and Guardia Piemontese Occitan. In other words, Mistral's examples merely reflect the use of *go* + infinitive as a narrative tool and do not constitute any signs of heavy grammaticalization.

However, section 4.2 will discuss evidence that a fully grammaticalized *go*-past was once widely used in Old Occitan. Moreover, it will be claimed that this Old Occitan *go*-past subsequently diffused into Old Catalan.

### ■ 3 Historical development of the *go*-past: from *anar* to past auxiliary

Much of the scholarship on the Catalan *go*-past has centered on the question of how the movement verb 'to go' – cross-linguistically predestined to become a future marker – managed to grammaticalize as a past auxiliary in Catalan. The *go*-past, thus, poses a challenge to more traditional models of grammaticalization (see Detges, 2004). Nonetheless, a considerable degree of consensus seems to have been reached as to which historical, (socio-)linguistic, and cognitive factors were at play in the grammaticalization of *anar* as a *go*-auxiliary. This consensus is summarized below.

Drawing primarily on Detges' (2004)<sup>21</sup> comprehensive account, the development of *anar* from a movement verb to a narrative past marker and, finally, a past auxiliary can be summarized as follows:

- Step 1 entails the cross-linguistically common phenomenon that verbs of movement followed by an infinitive can be used "to express inchoative meaning" (Detges, 2004: 214): *go* + Vinf > 'to start V-ing';
- Since inchoative structures are generally "perceived as more dynamic" than aspectually unspecified structures (Detges, 2004: 215), inchoative *go* + infinitive-predicates become popular in narratives as a rhetorical foregrounding technique, typically expressing 'turning-point' events and thereby achieving a certain suspense effect (Detges, 2004: 217, 218);<sup>22</sup>

21 Other recent accounts of the grammaticalization process underlying the Catalan *go*-past include Gulsoy (2001), Pérez Saldanya / Hualde (2003) and Juge (2006).

22 Detges (2004: 219) draws an interesting parallel with the use of Dutch *gaan* + Vinf constructions in jokes told by Turkish and Moroccan immigrant children. Similar narrative

- In these incipient stages of grammaticalization, the instances of *go* + infinitive-predicates are very much confined to telic and other punctual events.<sup>23</sup> But as these predicates gain in frequency, the *go*-auxiliary loses semantic content and starts combining with a wider range of verbs;<sup>24</sup>
- Moreover, at first, past-tensed and present-tensed *go* + infinitive-predicates occur side by side, but present-tensed variants soon gain the upper hand, as these yield the desired narrative actuality-effect in ways very similar to the well-known historical present (Detges, 2004: 218);
- At the closing stages of the grammaticalization process, the narrative foregrounding technique based on *go* + infinitive-predicates starts to be used inflationary, which leads to its extension over non-telic verbs (Detges, 2004: 221). Overall, “the construction’s frequency will be seen to rise dramatically (...). In doing so, it will turn into an unmarked default item” (Detges, 2004: 222).<sup>25</sup>

In addition to these steps, several authors have drawn attention to morphological factors that may have accelerated the process described above. Juge (2006: 320), for instance, points at the homophony between

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techniques can also be identified in contemporary Spanish and English (and probably various other languages for that matter), where phrases of the type *va y* ‘he goes (and)’ fulfill the role of “an emphatic past in narrative contexts” (Pérez Saldanya / Hualde, 2003: 48). Examples include: Spanish: *Le dije que se callara y entonces él va y me dice: cállate tío*, which can be translated as ‘I told him to shut up and then he goes and tells me: you shut up’, or Spanish: *Estaban discutiendo y va el tío y saca una navaja* ‘They were having an argument and then the guy goes and takes out a knife’ (Pérez Saldanya / Hualde, 2003: 48).

- 23 At this stage, an interesting parallel can be drawn with various African languages as well as most Afro-Portuguese creoles. In these varieties, unmarked [+punctual, +dynamic] verbs yield a perfective past interpretation, while unmarked [–punctual, +stative] verbs yield a present reading. As pointed out by Holm (2000: 177), “when people talk about an action, it is simply more likely to have already occurred (and thus to correspond to English past tense) than is a state, which by the very nature of its meaning is more likely to be open-ended and extend into the present”. This universal semantic quality of punctual/dynamic verbs seems to have played a role in the early stages of the development of the Catalan *go*-past, allowing for present-tensed *go* + infinitive-predicates to receive a past interpretation.
- 24 Steinkrüger (1999, 2004) makes an interesting case that the *go*-past started out in Catalan as an evidential, which would explain its frequent combining with perceptual verbs, particularly ‘to see’, in [+intimate] Catalan texts (e.g. diaries and memoirs) from 1500–1800 (cf. also examples (10) and (11) from Mistral, section 2).
- 25 Detges (2004: 224) concludes that “the grammatical function of the *perfet perifràstic* in modern Catalan is the unintended by-product of discourse techniques which aimed at rhetorical efficiency”.

the 1pl present and preterit of *anar* in Old Catalan (both *anam*), which he believes may have lead to a reinterpretation of past-tensed *anam* + inf. predicates as present-tensed predicates (Juge, 2006: 320). Furthermore, Pérez Saldanya / Hualde (2003: 57) discuss “the serious problems of morphological naturalness that the simple past presented in medieval Catalan”, which could explain at least in part why the *go*-past would gradually be preferred over the simple past.

Moreover, several scholars have argued that socio-linguistic factors may have facilitated the rise of the *go*-past in Catalan: “Starting in the 16th century, Catalan literature experiences a rapid decline and in the absence of a norm, the colloquial and dialectal tendencies that were already present are able to spread unrestrained” (Pérez Saldanya / Hualde, 2003: 56; cf. Colon, 1976).

Meanwhile, in the literature consulted for the present paper, it is tacitly and uncritically assumed that the Catalan *go*-past is a product of language-internal grammaticalization processes, such as outlined above. The fact that the *go*-past continues to exist not only in Catalan but also in remote areas of Gascony and in Guardia Piemontese has thereby received only scant attention. As far as I can tell, the existence of the *go*-past in three such remote places has never been accounted for in any proper way. Below, then, I argue that the Catalan *go*-past is not the product of a language-internal development, but rather results from contact with Old Occitan.

#### ■ 4 Origin of the *go*-past: arguing for a case of diffusion from (Old) Occitan to (Old) Catalan

López García (1979: 129) calls the question of finding out when and where the Romance *go*-past started its history “una cuestión oscura”. While scholars “tienden a considerar *vado* + inf. como fenómeno específicamente galorrománico”, López García (1979) counters that the presence of the feature in Old Spanish texts has often been overlooked, making a Gallo-Romance origin unlikely. Indeed, as noted in section 2, *El Cid* (late 12th, early 13th century) contains several examples of narrative *go*-pasts. However, the *go*-pasts in Old Spanish seem to be pretty much limited to *El Cid*. Moreover, the feature is not attested in Old Portuguese literature.<sup>26</sup> I therefore line up

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26 On the other hand, Leite de Vasconcellos (cited in Meyer-Lübke 1925:105, fn1) observed that in Old Portuguese texts “é muito frequente exprimir emphaticamente o

with Henrichsen (1966: 362), who does believe that the *go*-past is an originally Gallo-Romance feature:

L'aire de ce phénomène syntaxique couvre donc tout le Midi de la France et la Catalogne, tandis que l'espagnol, à part quelques passages du Cid, d'une interprétation plus ou moins douteuse, et le portugais ne prennent pas part à cette évolution. Ceci fournit un appui à ceux qui sont enclins à considérer le catalan comme une langue gallo-romane plutôt qu'ibéro-romane.

Thus, following Henrichsen's argumentation, we can exclude Old Spanish and instead focus on Old Catalan, Old Occitan and Old French in search of the origin of the *go*-past. However, there are no indications that a *go*-past ever developed in spoken French; moreover, in those Old French classics (e.g. *Chanson de Roland*) where the *go*-past is pregnant, a direct influence from the Old Occitan troubadour movement can be hypothesized. Consequently, it seems legitimate to further narrow down the scope to Old Catalan and Old Occitan. Below, then, I will provide arguments in favor of the hypothesis that the *go*-past first emerged in Old Occitan literature and speech, only to subsequently diffuse into (Old) Catalan.

#### ■ 4.1 Emergence of the *go*-past in Old Occitan and Old Catalan literature

The *go*-past is explicitly mentioned and condemned in the *Torsimany* (1415, *Lluís d'Averçò*) and the *Regles de esquivar vocables grossers o pagesívols* (1487), the latter being “a sort of Catalan *Appendix Probi*” (Pérez Saldanya / Hualde, 2003: 56). For Old Occitan, the *go*-past is explicitly remarked upon in Guilhem Moninier's *Ley's d'Amors* dated in the mid-14th century (Fàbregas, 2001: 40), i.e. a good 75 years prior to the *Torsimany*. From these data, Fàbregas (2001: 40) draws this conclusion: “Avant que le prétérit parfait périphrastique ne soit condamné dans les ouvrages de langue catalane, on le trouve déjà proscrit dans les traités médiévaux adressés aux aspirants troubadours”.

Indeed, a closer look at the earliest attestations of the narrative *go*-past confirms that the feature first emerged in Old Occitan literature and only

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passado com o preterito de *ir* seguido de um infinitivo”. He provides examples in which the verb ‘to go’ had clearly lost much of its lexical meaning such as *foi amar* instead of *amor*: “Em todos estes casos o verbo *ir* perdeu muito da sua significação” (idem).

later in Old Catalan. In Catalan, according to Gulsoy (2001: 14), “els exemples de *va + inf.* (passat) apareixen en els texts narratius de finals del s. XIII”. However, he also stresses the fact that in these early texts the simple past is still predominant. For Old Occitan, the picture is quite different: the earliest attestations date from the early 12th century (e.g. in the *Girart de Rousillon*, Colon, 1976: 114),<sup>27</sup> which is more than 150 years before the earliest attestations in Catalan. What is more, narrative usage of the *go*-past in Occitan increases rapidly from that point onwards and becomes the predominant past in narrative sequences. For instance, the Old Occitan *Gesta Caroli Magni*, which date from 1200, contain “des centaines d'exemples d'*anar + infinitif*” (Henrichsen, 1966: 359, 360).<sup>28</sup>

In fact, the high frequency with which the *go*-past occurs in Old Occitan literature is quite compelling. Colon (1976: 117), who did exhaustive comparative research into the late medieval emergence of the *go*-past in Old Spanish, Old French, Old Catalan and Old Occitan, is particularly impressed by the high frequency and naturalness with which the *go*-past occurs in Old Occitan prose and poetry: “En *Guilhem de la Barra* la perífrasi apareix a cada frase i amb una freqüència tal que és inútil d'acumular-ne les referències (...). Allà on *vado + infinitiu* sembla haver atès el nivell més alt de l'abundància és en *Blandin de Cornoalba*. A cada pas trobem la construcció perifràstica”. The same abundant use of *go*-pasts is visible in Old Occitan *chansons de geste* such as the *Daurel* (late 12th, early 13th century; Colon, 1976: 114), the *Canso de la Crosada* (early 13th century; Colon, 1976: 115) or

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27 Interesting to mention are, furthermore, two instances of *anar + infinitive* found in *La Chanson de sainte Foy* from the mid-11th century. These are discussed by Hoepffner (1926: 176), who believes they are futures: “Quant à *anar* avec l'infinitif, il exprime également dans *q'el an sa ost mandar* 507 comme dans *q'annun Mansella peciar* 517 une action intentionnelle, donc future”. However, at least one example appears to fulfill the criteria of a *go*-past, namely that the *go*-auxiliary be present tensed, and that the predicate be surrounded by simple pasts: *Fex Maximin, son fill, armar; Diss li q'el an sa ost mandar* (verses 506/507 in Hoepffner, 1926: 325).

28 An interesting detail is that the Old Occitan *Gesta Caroli Magni* have been preserved in two different handwritings (P and B) that can be compared with the Latin original. Whenever handwriting P (from 1200) takes recourse to the *go*-past, this corresponds to a simple past in handwriting B and in the Latin original (Henrichsen, 1966: 360). This revealing fact is also remarked upon by Berchem (1973: 10): “Während nun anfänglich B und P ziemlich übereinstimmen (...), hat sich der Schreiber von P mit fortschreitendem Text mehr und mehr Freiheiten erlaubt (...) und sich vor allem mit zunehmender Vorliebe des *vado*-Perfekts bedient”. One of many examples provided by Berchem is: Latin *tantus splendor corruit in eos* = Handwriting B *tan gran resplendor venç sobre'ls sieus* = Handwriting P *aytantost va venir tan gran resplendor* (Berchem, 1973: 10).



the *Ronsasvals* (14th century; Colon, 1976: 116), as well as in the poems of the Old Occitan troubadour Jaufré Rudel (mid-12th century; Colon, 1976: 113). Moreover, not only in Old Occitan poetry is the use abundant, “[t]ambé la prosa es fecunda en perífrasis” (Colon, 1976: 118).

Not only Colon has drawn attention to the productivity of *go*-pasts in Old Occitan. Meyer-Lübke (1925: 105), for instance, observed: “[I]m Provenzalischen ist *anar cantar* seit dem 13. Jahrh. recht üblich in Prosa und Dichtung, wird von den *Lays d’Amors* (...) erwähnt als ‘pedas’, aber außer in der Lyrik, zugelassen, weil es sehr üblich sei”.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, in the 15th to 17th centuries, the *go*-past is still attested throughout Occitania, “und zwar in einem solchen Maß, daß Lanusse direkten Einfluß aufs französische Schrifttum am Hof der Bourbonen annimmt” (Schlieben-Lange, 1971: 164).

In sum, the documentary evidence at hand suggests that the *go*-past was fully productive in Occitan by the turn of the 13th century, whereas for Catalan, evidence of a grammaticalized *go*-past is not available prior to the turn of the 14th century, and even then the use is still marginal compared to Occitan.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the use of the *go*-past in the Old Occitan literature not only predates, but also significantly outnumbers the use of the *go*-past in Old Catalan literature.

So far, then, the data presented suit the hypothesis that the Catalano-Occitan *go*-past has its origin in Old Occitan, and from there spread to Old Catalan. Of course, if this hypothesis is correct, we would furthermore expect the Occitan *go*-past to have emerged prior to the Catalan *go*-past not only in prose and poetry, but also in natively spoken Old Occitan. Below, I adduce dialectal data to argue that this was indeed the case.

#### ■ 4.2 The *go*-past in spoken Old Occitan

As outlined in section 2, synchronically, the Occitan *go*-past is attested only in remote varieties of Gascon (particularly Bearnese) as well as in the archaic dialect of Guardia Piemontese. However, and even though *go*-past-constructions are not included in Anglade’s (1921) grammar of Old Occitan, it is plausible to assume that the *go*-past was once wide-spread “im ganzen okzitanischen Sprachgebiet” (Schlieben-Lange, 1971: 164). Arguments in favor of that view are readily available.

29 The original passage from Guilhem Monnier’s *Lays d’Amors* (mid-14th century) can be found, e.g., in Fàbregas (2001: 40).

30 See Rohlf’s (1955), Lafont (1968), Henrichsen (1966) and Colon (1976) for more comparative data, the sum of which clearly confirms this global impression.

A first indication is of course the abundance of *go*-pasts in the above-mentioned Old Occitan texts: if the feature was so productive and unmarked in Old Occitan prose and poetry – genres which, indeed, depended on oral transmission –, it is quite likely to have been productive and unmarked in colloquial spoken Old Occitan as well.

An arguably more compelling argument in favor of this view is the previously-mentioned presence of the *go*-past in the archaic Occitan dialect of Guardia Piemontese, an isolated village in Calabria settled in the 13th and 14th centuries by Waldensian refugees from the Piemonte region in north-western Italy, where Occitan is still a minority language (Bossong, 2008: 130). Berchem (1973: 34) explains why the *go*-past in Guardia Piemontese is likely to have been part of the daily speech of the very first Waldensian settlers:

Das *vado*-Perfekt überrascht zunächst auf italienischem Boden. Es ist heute in der Mundart von Guardia Piemontese die einzige Form des Perfekts und ohne allen Zweifel provenzalischen Ursprungs. Man darf wohl ohne Einschränkungen postulieren, daß die Kolonisten dieses Perfekt mitgebracht haben und daß zum Zeitpunkt ihrer Niederlassung in Guardia Piemontese die Konstruktion bereits grammatikalisiert war oder aber zumindest der Prozeß der Grammatikalisierung schon recht fortgeschritten war. (...) Die umgebenden süditalienischen Mundarten nämlich kennen die Umschreibung mit *andare* nicht in der hier behandelten Funktion, und es wäre kaum anzunehmen, daß eine einzige Mundart trotz entgegengesetzter Einflüsse der Nachbardialekte eine so markante und ungewöhnliche Neuerung durchgeführt hätte. (Berchem, 1973: 34)<sup>31</sup>

In other words, although synchronically the *go*-past has little value in the Occitan language area other than in parts of Gascony, the evidence from Guardia Piemontese and from Old Occitan literature combined suggests that the *go*-past was once wide-spread in Occitania.

### ■ 4.3 Implications of the absence of the *go*-past in Algherese

If the analyses presented thus far are correct, it is relevant to recall the absence of the *go*-past in the isolated Catalan dialect of Algherese. As noted in section 1.3.3 (footnote 13), the port of Alghero was settled by Old Catalan-speaking settlers mainly from Barcelona in the period between the

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31 More recently, Kunert (e.g. 1994) has paid renewed attention to the dialect of Guardia Piemontese. In keeping with Berchem (1973), Kunert (1994: 223) notes: “L’occitan de Guardia Piemontese d’aujourd’hui peut donc servir de témoignage de l’occitan parlé dans les Alpes au X<sup>IV</sup>e et X<sup>V</sup>e siècle”.

mid-14th and mid-16th century. A plausible inference from this piece of data is that in the speech of these early Barcelonese settlers the *go*-past was, if at all present, too weak to compete with the simple past.

Thus, while the *go*-past seems to have been deeply rooted in colloquial spoken Old Occitan, it apparently had not yet developed significantly in colloquial spoken Old Catalan by the time Alghero was settled.

#### ■ 4.4 More arguments in favor of an Occitan origin of the Catalan *go*-past

Thus far, then, the data presented allow for a scenario in which the *go*-past diffuses from Occitania to Catalonia in the Late Middle Ages. In order to further strengthen this hypothesis, it is relevant to briefly address – and refute – three alternative scenarios, which, theoretically, could account for the occurrence of the *go*-past in both (Old) Catalan and (Old) Occitan.

First, one could perhaps argue that the *go*-past had already developed in the variety of Vulgar Latin which was at the source of both Old Catalan and Old Occitan. However, such a hypothesis fails to explain why the *go*-past in Old Occitan is at its peak in the 13th–15th centuries, and in Catalan even later. Moreover, as far as I can tell, *go*-pasts have never been described for Vulgar Latin (cf. e.g. Löfstedt, 1970 [1911]).

A second, and similarly unlikely, hypothesis might be that the *go*-past emerged first in Old Catalan, to subsequently diffuse into Old Occitan. Not only is this hypothesis inconsistent with the previously-outlined chronology of the emergence of the *go*-past in the Old Catalano-Occitan literature, it also begs the question as to how the feature would end up in the isolated areas in Gascony as well as in the far-off settlement of Guardia Piemontese. It is quite unlikely that the feature spread from Catalan to those remote places, simply because, as far as I can tell, migration from Catalonia to those areas has never been documented.

Thirdly, I guess it is possible, though again not very plausible, to imagine that the feature developed independently in Old Catalan and Old Occitan. Although such a scenario cannot be disproven (given that chance can per definition not be excluded), it would be surprising to find an idiosyncratic feature such as the *go*-past developing in two places independently and in roughly the same period. What is relevant to add here, is that the paradigm of the *go*-auxiliary in Guardia Piemontese shows the very same paradigmatic regularization as the Catalan *go*-auxiliary (Table 1, section 1.2): just as in Catalan, the 1st and 2nd plural forms are non-supple-

tive, *van* and *va* (“proklitisch, nur im *vado*-Perfekt” [Berchem, 1973: 37]), and contrast with the suppletive 1st and 2nd plural forms *anén* and *ané* of the lexical verb.<sup>32</sup> Although, as noted, a chance correspondence cannot be excluded, the similarities with the Catalan *go*-auxiliary suggest a common origin. Note, now, that the non-suppletive forms of the Catalan *go*-auxiliary are documented as early as in the 15th century (cf. Berchem, 1973: 13),<sup>33</sup> that is, basically at the same time as the *go*-past is thought to have integrated in spoken Catalan. This fact is unsurprising if the non-suppletive paradigm did indeed diffuse into Catalan via Old Occitan.

What appears most plausible, then, is the hypothesis that the *go*-past developed independently in Old Occitan and was subsequently introduced into Old Catalan. It goes without saying that, in order for this hypothesis to stand its ground, it must still be shown that there was sufficient contact between speakers of Old Occitan and speakers of Old Catalan in the relevant period, that is, in the period in which the *go*-past seems to have emerged in (spoken) Old Catalan, which is what the final section of this paper aims at showing.

#### ■ 4.5 Historical-demographic framework

The hypothesis that the *go*-past diffused from spoken Old Occitan into spoken Old Catalan of course presupposes that there was intensive contact between speakers of both languages. And in fact, such contact existed:

Eine wenig beachtete Tatsache in den Sprachgeschichten des Katalanischen ist der hohe Anteil okzitanischsprachiger Immigranten in den Katalanischen Ländern während der gesamten Frühen Neuzeit, besonders im Principat. (...) Zum Beispiel waren zwischen 1539 und 1540 50% der Betten [des Hospital de la Santa Creu in Barcelona] von *gavatsos* belegt. (Steinkrüger, 2004: 29, 30)

It happens to be exactly in the Early Modern Period that the *go*-past seems to have advanced seriously in spoken Catalan. “In der Frühen Neuzeit schließlich gewinnt die Form *va* + INF (...) Terrain” (Steinkrüger,

32 Unfortunately, I did not come across the paradigm of the *go*-auxiliary in Gascon.

33 The non-suppletive 1pl. *vam anar* (rather than *\*anem anar*) is found in the before-mentioned *Regles de esquinar*, which dates from the late 15th century (Pérez Saldanya / Hualde, 2003: 56). Interestingly, the entire non-suppletive paradigm is listed also in a 16th century Catalan *poétique*: “Tenim nosaltres un pedas molt comu y es *va, vas, varem, vareu axi com va venir, vas dexar pendre*, en lloc del qual se dira millor *vingue, dexas pendre*; pero si altre no’s pot fer, tindra excusa” (cited in Berchem, 1973: 9).

2004: 152). Note, however, that first waves of migration from Occitan areas to Catalonia are likely to have predated the Early Modern Period: “Vom Mittelalter bis zur ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts [waren] das Okzitanische und die Okzitanen ja immer in Katalonien präsent” (Steinkrüger, 2004: 30).

As noted previously, the only Occitan dialect besides Guardia Piemontese that has preserved the *go*-past is Gascon. This can be taken to suggest that the *go*-past was particularly strong in Gascony in the Middle Ages. Consequently, it may not be a coincidence that the majority of Occitans who migrated to Catalonia originated from Gascon-speaking regions (Steinkrüger, 2004: 30). In fact, family names reminiscent of Gascony such as *Guasch*, *Gascó*, *Biarnès* or *Foix* are quite common in Catalonia (Steinkrüger, 2004: 30). What is more, the only Occitan-speaking settlement in modern-day Catalonia is the Gascon-speaking<sup>34</sup> community of Val d’Aran (Wheeler / Yates / Dols, 1999: preface). Of course, also from a strictly geographic point of view, migration patterns from Gascony to Catalonia are all but surprising.

However, migration to Catalonia from Occitan areas situated more northwards was not uncommon either. In fact, it was so common, that in the 16th century, the term *llemosina parla* surfaces as an alternative glossonym for Catalan. Although by that time the *go*-past had probably already integrated into spoken Catalan, this glossonym can be seen “als Indiz der Kontinuität eines gemeinsamen Sprachbewußtseins zusammen mit dem Okzitanischen” (Steinkrüger, 2004: 30).

If the *go*-past was introduced into Catalan through Occitan immigrants, this may be part of the explanation why, as noted previously, the feature was so vehemently condemned by Catalan grammarians:

[B]esonders seit der protestantenfeindlichen Politik Philipps II. und durch den Einfluß der Inquisition [war] die allgemeine Stimmung in der Bevölkerung eher anti-okzitanisch bzw. anti-französisch angeheizt worden (...). [E]in gewisser *anti-gavatxisme* [war seit dem 15. Jahrhundert] in Katalonien sehr verbreitet. (Steinkrüger, 2004: 30)

In addition to the migration patterns illustrated above, a related but less transparent aspect of the ties between Occitania and Catalonia in the (late) Middle Ages deserves attention: the Occitan troubadour movement. Though a detailed assessment of the role of the troubadours by far surpasses the space of this paper, we can at least speculate that they played a

34 The variety of Gascon spoken in Val d’Aran is better known in the literature as Aranese.

vital role in the transfer and diffusion of linguistic features, such as the *go*-past, from Occitan to Catalan. It is well-known that their plays and literature enjoyed significant popularity in the late medieval Catalan courtly realm (e.g. Fàbregas, 2001: 40) and that much of the early Catalan literary production can in one way or the other be related to the Troubadour movement. With respect to the early 14th century chronicles of Muntaner, for instance, Viera (1988: 44) notes: “Throughout the chronicle Muntaner used certain rhetorical devices or formulas (...) which have their origin in troubadour expressions and give the author closer rapport with his audience”. Compare also, e.g., Baret’s (1867: 85–161) chapter on *L’école provençale en Catalogne*.

In short, two sources can be identified as possibly having facilitated the diffusion of the *go*-past from Old Occitan into Old Catalan: first, the settlement of significant numbers of Occitans in Catalan-speaking areas from the (late) Middle Ages up to the (Early) Modern Period; secondly, the influence of the prestigious Occitan troubadour movement on the Old Catalan literature, plays and *chansons de geste*. How these two spheres of influence correlated remains to be further investigated, but together, they provided the historical conditions necessary for the diffusion of Occitan linguistic features, such as the *go*-past, into Catalan to take place.

## ■ 5 Final remarks and conclusions

This paper has dealt with both synchronic and diachronic aspects of the Catalan *go*-past, a feature that sets Catalan apart from its sister Romance languages, with the notable exception of some Occitan dialects. Section 1 provided details on the contemporary use of this feature in Catalan as well as its dialectal distribution *vis-à-vis* the simple past. Section 2 globally evaluated the presence of the *go*-past in Romance languages other than Catalan from both a synchronic and diachronic point of view and, thus, provided the stage for the discussion, in section 3 and 4, of the historical development and origin of this feature. In section 4, the hypothesis was postulated that the Catalan *go*-past is a contact-phenomenon or, more specifically, that it was diffused into Catalan via the migration to Catalan-speaking areas of speakers of (Old) Occitan. This hypothesis accounts for several inter-related facts, such as (a) the synchronic presence of the *go*-past not only in Catalan but also in isolated Gascon varieties and in Guardia Piemontese, (b) the closely related non-suppletive paradigms of the *go*-auxiliary in Catalan and Guardia Piemontese, (c) the relatively late emergence of the *go*-past

in Old Catalan compared to the abundance of this feature in Old Occitan texts, and (d) the absence of the feature in Alghero versus its presence in Guardia Piemontese. In addition, it was shown that the historical-demographic conditions were met for linguistic transfer from Old Occitan to Old Catalan.

It should be noted that several scholars have hypothesized about linguistic influence from Occitan on Catalan. Steinkrüger (2004: 29), for instance, after having pointed out the demographic weight of Occitans in the Catalan language area in the Early Modern Period, speculates: “[D]eshalb ist dort die hohe Anzahl von Okzitanismen (auch im Bereich der Grammatikalisierung von Auxiliaren!) nicht weiter verwunderlich”.<sup>35</sup> And Sales (1989, cited in Steinkrüger, 2004: 30), aware of the migration patterns outlined above, concludes: “El balanç de l’eventual aportació lingüística de l’immigrant procedent de França d’Oc està per fer”. Although future research is necessary to confirm the claims made in this paper, the *go*-past might well represent a prime example of this Languedocien linguistic contribution to Catalan.<sup>36</sup> ■

### ■ Appendix: The *go*-past and related phenomena: a cross-linguistic outlook

If we expand our view to areas outside of Europe, we find *go*-auxiliaries yielding some past interpretation not only in Romance languages. Pérez Saldanya / Hualde (2003: 48), for instance, mention Cuna (part of the Chibchan branch), Chadic (Niger-Congo), Swahili (Bantu) and Tucano (Amazonian) as having “[c]onstructions with ‘to go’ [with] a value close to a narrative past”. In Bybee et al. (1994: 58), in addition to Tucano, Maithili is listed as having a completive with a *go*-auxiliary. To these cases, Steinkrüger (1999: 231) adds Cocama (Tupian), Alyawarra (Arandic), Kera (probably what Pérez Saldanya / Hualde [2003: 48] referred to as Chadic) and Tibetan.

Important to note, however, is that the use of *go*-pasts in the above-mentioned languages is often “textsortenbedingt” (Steinkrüger, 1999: 231).

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35 Note, however, that Steinkrüger does not further develop any hypothesis of transfer or diffusion in the corresponding section on the *go*-past (2004: 150–171).

36 I am grateful to Ulrich Detges and Nicolas Quint for valuable comments on earlier versions of this article.

This certainly does not apply to Modern Catalan, where the *go*-past is fully productive in all registers of the spoken language. It is doubtful whether the *go*-constructions found in the above-mentioned languages have achieved this level of acceptance in daily speech.

Another peculiarity of the Catalan *go*-past is the fact that the *go*-auxiliary is always present-tensed; it is unlikely that this is the case in most of the languages mentioned above. For instance, Bybee et al. (1994: 57) note that the *go*-past found in Tucano in fact is a rather unmarked type of completive, “parallel to the English ‘went and did it’ construction: *He went and told her the whole story*”. In that same vein, Steinkrüger (2004: 162) comments that the *go*-construction in Alyawarra resembles “etwa der narrativen Wendung im Englischen ‘he went and...’”.

Note, on the other hand, that the Catalan *go*-past may have started out as a completive marker similar to those found in the languages mentioned above, only to subsequently develop into a perfective. Squartini indeed argues that the Catalan *go*-past in its “initial stages of grammaticalization (...) can be considered an occurrence of [a] completive”, while Bybee et al. (1994: 105) affirm that completives can later develop into perfectives.

In sum, although *go*-constructions with past reference are not uncommon in the languages of the world, the Catalan *go*-past seems to stand out for its particular formal, semantic and syntactic characteristics as well as for its remarkably high degree of grammaticalization. Thus, while being a surprisingly *unmarked* feature within the Catalan grammar, the *go*-past appears to be a rather *marked* case of grammaticalization cross-linguistically.

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- Bart Jacobs, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Linguistisches Internationales Promotions-Programm (LIPP), Schellingstraße 10, D-80799 München, <[bikkerserland@hotmail.com](mailto:bikkerserland@hotmail.com)>.

Zusammenfassung: Die vorliegende Arbeit leistet einen Beitrag zur synchronen und diachronen Beschreibung und Analyse der präteritalen Periphrase mit *geben* im Katalanischen, die in der Forschungsliteratur als *perfet perifràstic* bekannt ist. Das erste Kapitel beinhaltet eine Übersicht über den Gebrauch und die Distribution der Konstruktion im gegenwärtigen Katalanischen. Die Präsenz der Konstruktion in anderen romanischen Sprachen (insbesondere im Okzitanischen) wird in Kapitel 2 diskutiert. Kapitel 3 fasst den Forschungsstand bezüglich des Grammatikalisierungsprozesses zusammen, der der Konstruktion zugrunde liegt. Anschließend wird die Hypothese, dass sich die Konstruktion vom Okzitanischen zum Katalanischen hin verbreitet hat, postuliert und sowohl historisch als auch linguistisch belegt. ■

Summary: This paper provides a range of both synchronic and diachronic perspectives on the Catalan *go*-past, known in the literature as the *perfet perifràstic*. The first chapter presents an overview of the use and distribution of the feature in contemporary Catalan; the second chapter discusses the diachronic and synchronic attestation of the fea-

ture in other Romance languages, Occitan in particular. In chapter 3, the paper summarizes the state of the research on the grammaticalization process that underlies the *go*-past. In chapter 4, finally, the hypothesis that the feature diffused from (Old) Occitan into (Old) Catalan is postulated and underpinned with both historical and linguistic data. [Keywords: (Old) Catalan; *perfet perifràstic* / *go*-past; (Old) Occitan; grammaticalization; diffusion] ■