

THE FORERUNNERS TO EASTERN MIDDLE IRANIAN DEFINITE ARTICLE

ABSTRACT.ⁱ As is known, a definite article surprisingly occur in Sogdian, Bactrian and Khwarezmian among Iranian languages (Wendtland 2011; Gholami 2014: 73-98; Durkin-Meisterernst 2009: 358-359):

- (1) rti-ši 𐭪𐭥𐭭 buti māθ frāmāy
and-him ART.M.SG Buddha thus ordered

‘The Buddha thus spoke to him’ (Peillot Sogdien 5, 27-31)

- (2) 𐭪𐭥𐭭𐭥𐭭 𐭪 𐭪𐭥𐭭𐭥𐭭𐭥𐭭 𐭪 𐭪𐭥𐭭𐭥𐭭𐭥𐭭
Kushan ART.M.SG righteous ART.M.SG just

‘The Kushan, the righteous one’ (Dasht-e Nāwūr, 4-5)

- (3) 𐭪 bār yā uδrya
ART.M.SG load ART.F.SG belly

‘The load of the belly (= foetus)’ (QR 106.7)

The emergence of the article in Eastern Middle Iranian can be reliably traced back to Old Iranian. As a matter of fact, both in Avestan (4a) and Old Persian (4b) there is a strong tendency for relative clauses (= RCs) not only to occur without an overt copula but also to display case agreement between the relative pronoun and the pivot (Seiler 1960; Haider & Zwanziger 1984):

- (4) a yim yiməm xšaētəm huuāθβəm
REL(M).ACC.SG Yima(M).ACC.SG splendid.M.ACC.SG of_good_herds.M.ACC.SG
‘Splendid Yima of good herds’ (Yt 19.31)

- b. avam kārām t^ayam hamiçiyam
that.M.ACC.SG army(M).ACC.SG REL(M).ACC.SG rebellious.M.ACC.SG
‘That rebellious army’ (DB 2.25–26)

In these instances, the relative pronoun seemingly acts as a ‘quasi-article’ (West 2011: 82). From this perspective, the forerunners to the definite article arguably are to be sought in Old Iranian verbless RCs. This is particularly true for Bactrian and Khwarezmian, whose article is likely to be etymologically connected with the Old Iranian relative pronoun *ya- (Sims-Williams 2007: 214b; 2009: 261; Durkin-Meisterernst 2009: 343). This paper aims to provide a syntactical account for the emergence of the article in Eastern Middle Iranian from the Old Iranian relative pronoun. Ultimately, it will be noted that the use of the article in Eastern Middle Iranian share similar patterns with the relative pronoun in Old Iranian.

References

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SIMONE GENTILE

Roma Tre University – Sapienza University of Rome

¹ I wish my paper to take the form of a talk.