Present and historical perspectives on
the Catalan go-past

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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). 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 perifrastic, 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.\(^1\) 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), Sichenschein (1953), Marquèze-Poucey (1955), Rohlf (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 perifrèstic. 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 perifrèstic. Rather, the functions of the perfet perifrèstic, 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 perifrèstic.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>go-AUXILIARY</th>
<th>LEXICAL VERB</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s</td>
<td>vaig (vàreig)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s</td>
<td>vas (vares)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3s</td>
<td>va</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl</td>
<td>vam (vàrem/vem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl</td>
<td>vau (vàreu/veu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>van (varen)</td>
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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 goaux + haver plus a past participle (PP) (e.g. vaig haver perdut ‘I had lost’), to the preterit forms of haver + PP (e.g. bagut 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).3

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.4 Thus, *vam cantar* means ‘we sang’ and *anem a cantar* means ‘we will sing’, etc. (cf. Steinkrüger, 2004: 152).5

#### 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 *vant*-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 / Bertinetto, 2000 on the simple vs. compound past in Romance languages).

On the basis of the distribution of the *go-past* in Catalan diaries and mémoires from 1500 to 1800, Steinkrüger (2004: 170) confirms that the *go-past* originally pertained primarily to conceptual spoken discourse: first, “Je distanssprachlicher der Text verfaßt ist, umso seltener ist das Vorkommen des *perifrastisch*”; secondly, “Der Gebrauch des *perifrastisch* hängt mit dem Bildungsgrad der Autoren zusammen (...). Mit steigendem Bildungsgrad nimmt die Verwendung des *perfet perifrastisch* 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’an passat varen tenir un fill =
  *simple past:* L’an 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’an 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’an 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, as in (5) (cf. Steinkrüger, 2004: 172; Juge, 2006: 315; Curell, 2003: 36–38):

(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 [±hodiernal] distinction has priority over the aspectual [±present relevance] distinction.

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

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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 [±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 [±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 perifrastìc 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.\(^9\)

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.\(^10\)

\**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.\(^11\) 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, diguí per va dir i vaig dir per digués, però no sempre es pot substituir digués per vaig dir; per exemple, aquesta substitució no podria fer-se en ell volia que li ho digués. vaig dir és un pretèrit perfect 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 / vaig 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)”.

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 ge-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 ge-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 ge-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. Although Moll (2006 [1952]: 207) affirms that the ge-past replaced the simple past in Algherese, this view is not shared by other scholars: Schlie-
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), 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).15

2 The go-past and related phenomena in other Romance languages

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 idiomatic 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.17 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

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/linecat/>).
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). Rohlf's (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”18 (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 saludieron. Josep lor va dir que queron. Los draps geteron del pairol et meron los en mieg del sol, volgon los a Josep mostrar e. l tenheire va regardar et estet fort miravilhos cant vit los draps d’aitals colors que re del mont non sofranhia

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

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”.
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(7) Old French:  
*En mi le camp amdui s’entr’encuntrerent;*  
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)*

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 suscitèrent l’interêt de l’École de Kazan qu’illustrèrent les noms de Jan Baudouin de Courtenay et Mikolay Kruszewski.*  

In a similar vein, Nicolas Quint20 (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 vèire 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:

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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:

_**Conme passave i bourgado, van 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) 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);^22^

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^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. But as these predicates gain in frequency, the go-auxiliary loses semantic content and starts combining with a wider range of verbs.

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).

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

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 tú, 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 él 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).

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.

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).

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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 galorromanico”, 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.26 I therefore line up

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
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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’Averçó) 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 Leys 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

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 amou: “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 Roussillon*, Colon, 1976: 114),27 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).28

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 Cornalba. A cada pas trobem la construcció perífrastica”. 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 Crusada* (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’un 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: *Fray 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 (Henrichen, 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 resplandor van sobrels evins* = Handwriting P *aytantost va venir tan gran resplandor* (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,

Not only Colon has drawn attention to the productivity of go-pasts in
Old Occitan. Meyer-Lübke (1925: 105), for instance, observed: “[I]m Pro-
venzalischen ist _anar cantar_ seit dem 13. Jahrh. recht üblich in Prosa und
Dichtung, wird von den _Leys d’Amors_ (...) erwähnt als ‘pedas’, aber außer in
der Lyrik, zugelassen, weil es sehr üblich sei”. 29 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. 30 In other words, the use of the go-past in the Old Occitan lit-
erature 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 Oci-
tan, it is plausible to assume that the go-past was once wide-spread “im
ganzen okzitanischen Sprachgebiet” (Schlieben-Lange, 1971: 164). Argu-
ments in favor of that view are readily available.

29 The original passage from Guilhem Moninier’s _Leys d’Amors_ (mid-14th century) can be
found, e.g., in Fabregas (2001: 40).
30 See Rohlfs (1955), Lafont (1966), Henrichsen (1966) and Colon (1976) for more com-
parative 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 un-marked in Old Occitan prose and poetry – genres which, indeed, depended on oral transmission –, it is quite likely to have been productive and un-marked in colloquial spoken Old Occitan as well.

An arguably more compelling argument in favor of this view is the previously-mentioned presence of the ge-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 northwestern Italy, where Occitan is still a minority language (Bossong, 2008: 130). Berchem (1973: 34) explains why the ge-past in Guardia Piemontese is likely to have been part of the daily speech of the very first Waldensian settlers:

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 ge-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

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 XIVe et XVe siècle.”
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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-
and contrast with the suppletive 1st and 2nd plural forms anén and ané of the lexical verb. 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), 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:


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, 2004: 30).
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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 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:


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 \textit{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 \textit{L’
école provençale en Catalogne}.

In short, two sources can be identified as possibly having facilitated the diffusion of the \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{go}-past, into Catalan to take place.

\section{Final remarks and conclusions}

This paper has dealt with both synchronic and diachronic aspects of the Catalan \textit{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 \textit{vis-à-vis} the simple past. Section 2 globally evaluated the presence of the \textit{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 \textit{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 interrelated facts, such as (a) the synchronic presence of the \textit{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 \textit{go}-auxiliary in Catalan and Guardia Piemontese, (c) the relatively late emergence of the \textit{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 Grammatikalisiierung von Auxiliaren!) nicht weiter verwunderlich”.35 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.36

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, Stein-kräger (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” (Steinkräger, 1999: 231).

35 Note, however, that Steinkräger 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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Online sources:
*Corpus Oral Dialectal (COD)*: <http://www.ub.edu/lincat/>


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]