

Begun on the 229th since the sun and 51st since the moon

1. Introduction

Casia is a conlang that I made for personal use in 2019. It is intended to be a creative exercise. This document is intended to record all the grammatical features of Casia and will serve as a complete reference for the language. I will begin with an overview of the language and then the phonology: the sounds used in Casia and how they interact with each other. The document will then move on to describing the morphology of words. In the syntax section, the order of words in sentences and formation of clauses is described. Finally, the derivation processes and some explanation of semantics and syntax are given.

Casia is designed to be somewhat naturalistic, but is not based on any single existing language, with a few irregularities and “arbitrary” complexities. Casia is an ongoing project and I plan on continually adding to it and adapting it to suit my tastes. This document presents the language in its most up-to-date state. It could best be classified as a “heartlang”. This is not a guide for learners, but sets out the structure of Casia in a thematic order.

I have used technical linguistic terms in this document to make it more precise. However, this is not an exact, formal analysis of Casia. In this document, two kinds of special notation will be used: IPA and glossing. IPA stands for “International Phonetic Alphabet” and is the conventional way of transcribing speech sounds. There are two varieties of IPA: phonetic and phonemic. Phonemic notation is less precise than phonetic notation, which is exact. Phonetic notation is shown in square brackets, while phonemic notation is shown with slashes. Glossing is used to label parts of words to indicate various properties.

2. Morphological Overview

There are three parts of speech in Casia: the noun, particle and verb. The noun and verb are the two open classes: particles are a closed class. Noun roots can often be used to create stative verbs.

zla

“death OR to be dead”

Verb roots can also be used as nouns.

aiar

“to swim OR swimming”

3. Consonants

Casia has a relatively large consonant system that does not have a voicing contrast in fricatives or plosives, but has some allophonic changes. There are an unusual number of palatal consonants.

Consonants	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Lateral	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasals	m		n				
Stops	p		t		c	k	
Sib. Fricative			s		ɕ		
Sib. Affricate			ts		tɕ		
Non. Sib. Fricative	f	θ		ɬ	ç	x	h
Non. Sib. Affricate				tɬ	cç		
Trill			r				
Approximant	ɥ			l	j	w	

Consonants are divided into three “colours” based on place of articulation. These have a role in morphology as well as the vowel mutations described in the next chapter. The light consonants are labial and dental. Grey consonants are those in the alveolar places of articulation. The rest of the consonants are pronounced further back in the mouth and are dark.

The obstruent series is comprised of four plosives, eight fricatives and four affricates. While all of the obstruents are given here as unvoiced, they become voiced in certain situations: between vowels or approximants. The phonemes that cause this change are: /e a o l j ɥ w/ This table shows this process:

Consonant	Voiced
p	b
t	d
c	ɟ
k	g
f	v
s	z
ɬ	ɮ
ç	ʝ
x	ɣ
h	ɦ

ts	dz
tʃ	dʒ
cç	tʃ
θ	ð
tʃ	dʒ
ç	ʒ

The sonorant series comprises two nasals, a trill and four approximants. They are all voiced and, as shown above, can affect the voicing of obstruents. /n/ and /r/ become /ŋ/ and /ʀ/ respectively before the vowel /o/ (see 6.). Some sonorants can also be palatalised before the vowel /e/. /l/ and /n/ become /ʎ/ and /ɲ/ respectively.

4. Vowels

There are only three phonemic vowel sounds. However, this very small inventory goes through many mutations depending on neighbouring consonants to produce a rather large inventory of vowel allophones.

	Front	Central	Back
Mid	e		o
Open		a	

Vowels go through extensive allophonological changes called mutations, depending on the type of consonant that precedes and follows them. When a vowel only comes into after with a single consonant, it mutates in the pattern of that consonant type followed by it. A dark consonant and a vowel will mutate according to the dark-dark pattern. The order of the consonants does not matter. Here is a table showing this change:

	Light-Light	Light-Grey	Light-Dark	Grey-Grey	Grey-Dark	Dark-Dark
a	æ	ɨ	ɥ	a	ɑ	ɒ
e	i	y	œ	e	ɛ	ø
o	ɯ	u	ɤ	o	ɔ	ʌ

There are also many diphthongs, which are not subject to vowel mutations. They are /ae ao ea eo oa oe/.

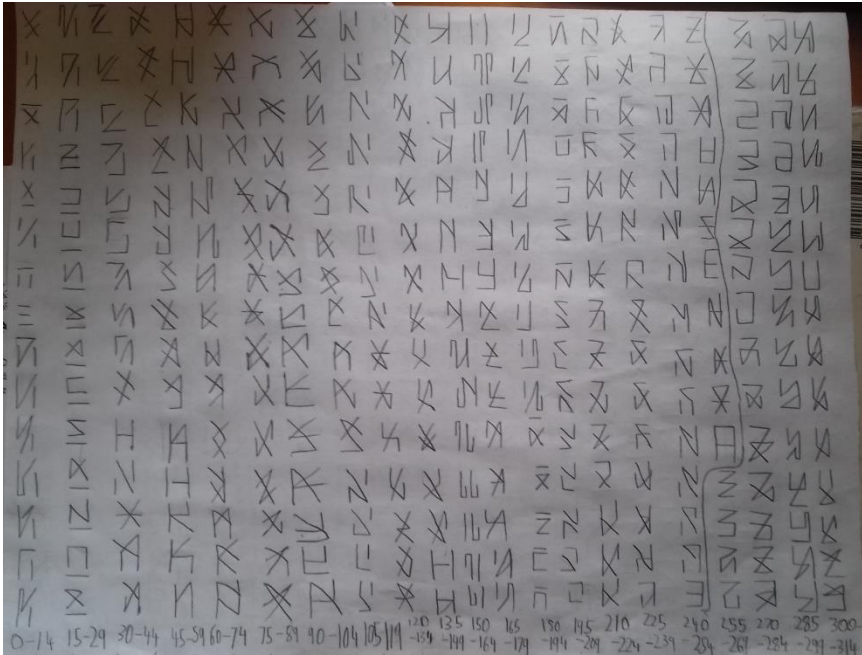
5. Orthography

Allophonic changes such as vowel mutation and voicing are not shown in orthography, but changes that occur as part of coalescence and morphologically

productive changes such as syncope are shown. The Romanised orthography is shown below:

Phoneme	Orthography
m	m
p	p
f	f
n	n
t	t
s	s
ts	d
r	r
l	l
ʈ	z
tʈ	v
c	c
j	i
ç	q
cç	g
θ	b
tɕ	w
ɕ	y
ɥ	j
k	k
x	x
w	u
h	h
a	a
o	o
e	e

Casia uses a logography for most purposes. The glyphs are not made up of radicals or smaller components, but are based on a 3x2 grid. Each character shows a root word or a prepositional prefix. Diacritics show all other grammatical categories and derivational affixes. This way, it is very compact. The following image shows some of the characters:



The following image reads:

My sister has made biscuits. (I can smell them)

sister.ERG.SG.DEF 1.GEN.SG.DEF

IND.NONVIS.TEL.DUR.TRANS.make.HODPST.COMP biscuit.ABS.PL.DEF

Due to changes in the diacritics, it is no longer an accurate transcription.

6. Phonotactics

Maximal syllable structure could be summarised as CCVCC. Noun and verb roots are always one syllable. This rule is only violated in the case of some loanwords. Roots never begin with a vowel, but can end with them. Different consonant clusters are allowed in initial and final positions. Legal initial clusters are: all stops followed by any consonant other than an affricate, apart from < ts cq ty tz >, all fricatives and affricates followed by an approximant apart from < cj ci gj gi qi qj > and all nasals followed by an approximant.

Legal final clusters are all stops or affricates preceded by any other consonant other than a non-lateral approximant, nasals preceded by < l r > and fricatives preceded by a nasal or < l r >. For these purposes, the trill is a type of approximant. All consonants can appear in an initial position, but < j i u h > cannot appear in a final position.

7. Phonological Processes



There are several phonological processes that consonants go through in Casia, that change their value.

Apocope, or elision, occurs often in compound words. The last syllable is sometimes lost, but usually the last vowel and any consonants following it are removed when another word is added on to it.

Consonants are often assimilated with each other when they meet (or come into contact) during compounding. Assimilation affects nasals only. /n/ becomes /m/ when in contact with a labial consonant /m p f/. /m/ becomes /n/ before an alveolar consonant /n t s ts r l tʃ ʃ/. Assimilation does not occur between suffixes.

8. Prosody

Casia is not a tonal language, but has an unmarked stress system. It is spoken at an unusually fast speed. This section will look at the prosody of Casia: elements of speech that are not individual phonetic segments (vowels and consonants) but are properties of syllables and larger units of speech.

There are three main registers of speech in Casia. The first is the normal register, used in everyday and family settings. Youths have their own variations on the normal register. There is the storytelling register, which is used at informal gatherings to recite memorised tales. It can often be less distinct. The last is the formal register, used at formal meetings and public events, which is much clearer and enunciated. Stress is usually on the penultimate syllable of the root word and is usually not affected by prefixes. However, when the prefix is being used to form a new word, stress moves to it. In a diphthong, the first vowel is always stressed.

Casia is often spoken very quickly, at around 300 words per minute in everyday speech. This can change significantly depending on the type of register used. In the storytelling register, speech can speed up to about 400 words per minute, while in the formal register, speech is much slower

9. Forming Plurals

There are two number categories in Casia: singular and plural. Plural nouns are formed very irregularly, but the most easily identifiable pattern is the reversing of diphthongs.

jok, joak- robin

krean, kraen- fire

Irregular plurals can be formed by changing the stressed long or a consonant, or by the addition of another long. Some plurals do not fit to any of these patterns or simply bear no relation to their singular form. For this reason, dictionaries of Casia list nouns in both their singular and plural form.

cson, gon- crocus

muom, hopa- lavender

jeod, joed- rain

A few nouns, such as countries and places, have no distinct plural form because it would not be needed.

pretane- Britain

pega- Africa

10. Case and Definiteness Suffixes

Case suffixes have several different forms. This depends on whether the last consonant of the singular or plural form of the noun is light, grey or dark and whether the noun is definite. When the noun does not end with a vowel, the final consonants are removed and the case suffix is added if an illegal consonant would be formed. Otherwise, the suffix is simply added on.

The oblique case is the case used on actions and in dictionaries. It is unmarked in the definite form and could be considered the "default" form of a noun.

The ergative case is used to mark an agent or subject. The absolutive case shows a patient. The affective case marks an experiencer that goes through a non-volitional process. Examples of this sort of process include bodily actions. They show an element of unconsciousness or lack of control. The dative case is used to show the recipient of an action or a beneficiary. The effectuative case is used to mark the role of enabler: an indirect cause of the action.

The instrumental case shows a tool or instrument that is used by the agent to carry out the action. The genitive case is used to show a possessor of another noun. This can also refer to a general association or a source of an object. The partitive case indicates part of the noun, not the whole. It corresponds to the word "some" in English. Based on context, it can also be used to show that another noun is composed or made out of the noun. The essive case denotes a form as a temporary location, state of being, or character in which the subject was at a given time.

Case/ Definiteness	Light	Grey	Dark
Oblique Definite			

Oblique Indefinite	p	n	k
Ergative Definite	f	t	x
Ergative Indefinite	m	s	lk
Absolutive Definite	b	d	rk
Absolutive Indefinite	mt	nt	lx
Affective Definite	mb	l	rx
Affective Indefinite	b	ld	qc
Effectuative Definite	rm	ln	mk
Effectuative Indefinite	lm	rw	nx
Dative Definite	lb	z	y
Dative Indefinite	np	v	lq
Instrumental Definite	lp	y	q
Instrumental Indefinite	rp	rn	xk
Genitive Definite	nb	r	c
Genitive Indefinite	rb	g	lw
Partitive Definite	mf	w	yc
Partitive Indefinite	bp	st	rw
Essive Definite	mp	nv	nq
Essive Indefinite	fp	nz	nc

11. Kinship Terms

Casia uses a very simple, non-standard kinship system. The kinship terms are:

Kinship	
Mother	tamf, tmaf
Father	mae, mea
Sister	coe, gen
Brother	lyea, ceo
Wife	kep, kiesp
Husband	soa, sao
Son	voe, zeo
Daughter	tjo, cio

These are compounded to create more terms:

maetamf- paternal grandmother *tamfcoe*- maternal aunt *soamae*-
father in-law

12. Colour

There are five colour terms in Casia.

ploe	white
ioa	red
yop	yellow

jet	green
yjerm	black/blue

The colour terms can be combined to create more colours, but this is rarely done. Most texts only use the above five terms. Compound terms are only used when a distinction is necessary.

yopioa

"orange"

/zɔbjoa/

13. Tense Suffixes

The first suffix on Casia's verbs is a combination of tense and basic aspectual categories. For these purposes, it is referred to simply as a tense suffix. There are an unusual number of tense categories in Casia. There are two hodiernal (today) categories: past and non-past, a crastinal tense (tomorrow), a far future (beyond tomorrow, hesternal tense (yesterday) and a far past (before yesterday). These tense categories make it easy to refer to the time where something happens very precisely. It is very useful when writing accounts or diary entries.

There are three primary (basic) aspectual categories: completive, progressive and imminent. The completive aspect shows an action that has already been completed, but the progressive aspect shows an action that is still taking place. The imminent aspect denotes an action that is going to take place.

The tense suffix is a single consonant and is added in the same way as a case and definiteness suffix. The hodiernal non-past is unmarked.

Light	Completive	Progressive	Imminent
Hodiernal Past	mp	m	rm
Hodiernal Non-Past	p		fp
Crastinal	lf	f	bp
Far Future	np	mb	nb
Hesternal	lp	b	rb
Far Past	rp	lb	mf

Grey	Completive	Progressive	Imminent
Hodiernal Past	t	n	nt
Hodiernal Non-Past	v		vt
Crastinal	rt	s	st

Far Future	rd	d	sd
Hesternal	vd	r	ls
Far Past	zd	z	ns

Dark	Completive	Progressive	Imminent
Hodiernal Past	c	q	xc
Hodiernal Non-Past	w		qc
Crastinal	lg	g	lq
Far Future	rq	k	xk
Hesternal	rw	x	lw
Far Past	yk	y	yc

14. Aspect Suffixes

There is yet another suffix for further aspects that can be combined with the first tense suffix. This is the last suffix on a Casian verb.

Habitual	a
Iterative	o
Inchoative	e
Terminative	ao
Reversive	ea

The habitual aspect is used for general statements about actions that occur usually. The iterative aspect denotes the idea of something happening "again". The inchoative aspect shows an action beginning or starting, while the terminative aspect shows an action ending or finishing. The inchoative aspect is used to show changes of state or the initiation of an action. Reversive aspect refers to the undoing of an action.

15. Classifier Prefixes

The first verb prefix on a verb is a classifier that shows aktionsart, or lexical aspect, and transitivity. It has an important role in deriving more meaning from a verb stem. The classifiers also show positive and negative polarity.

Positive	Transitive	Intransitive	Ditransitive
Accomplishment	a	ao	ie
Achievement	e	io	uo
Semelfactive	ae	ea	jo
State	o		oe
Activity	oa	eo	ja
Negative	Transitive	Intransitive	Ditransitive
Accomplishment	ia	iao	ioa
Achievement	je	iea	ioe

Semelfactive	uae	ieo	joa
State	ue	uoe	jeo
Activity	ua	uea	joa

For example:

<i>tak</i>	<i>uatak</i>	<i>aotak</i>
"to be burning"	"to not burn something"	"to burn down"
/tak/	/wadak/	/aodak/

16. Epistemic Mood and Evidentiality

Epistemic mood and evidentiality is shown by a consonantal prefix that comes before the classifier. Epistemic mood refers to how the state of affairs could be, rather than expressing how they are or their intended meaning. Several mood categories are distinguished.

The indicative mood is used when the clause denotes an actual state of affairs, but the subjunctive mood shows a possible state of affairs. The subjunctive mood shows possibilities and opinions. Indicative is the default mood. The hypothetical mood is used for verbs that are theoretical ideas and speculations, or could have happened, but did not. Dubitative mood shows that an action is unlikely or doubted, but the potential mood shows that an action can easily happen or is likely.

The assumed evidentiality is used for statements that are simply known to be true for whatever reason. It is the default evidential. Inferential evidentiality was inferred from indirect evidence, but visual and non-visual evidentiality are two ways of expressing that the statement is backed up by direct evidence. Reportative evidentiality shows that the statement is known through hearsay or from another individual.

	Assumed	Inferential	Visual	Non-Visual	Reportative
Indicative		m	q	b	v
Subjunctive	y	al	om	l	od
Hypothetical	w	c	t	s	n
Dubitative	p	x	eg	f	es
Potential	h	ap	z	or	aw

17. Deontic Mood

On the other hand, deontic mood shows the meaning of the verb or how the state of affairs actually is. It can be combined with epistemic mood. Depending on whether

the following prefix begins with a consonant (some epistemic prefixes) or a vowel (the other epistemic prefixes or a classifier), the prefix has different forms. It has a vocal form (before consonants) and a consonantal form (before vowels).

The conditional mood marks a verb that depends on another condition. The hortative mood encourages an action: it is an intensive form of request. The obligative mood shows that the action should take place. The imperative mood shows a command, but can also be used to show a request for something depending on context. It, along with the other deontic modalities (hortative and obligative) and the conditional mood, does not combine with any evidential categories. The necessitative mood shows a requirement, while the desiderative mood shows a desire that is not needed. The permissive mood shows that the verb is being allowed.

	Consonantal	Vocal
Conditional	g	a
Hortative	r	o
Imperative	k	e
Obligative	d	ao
Necessitative	el	ea
Desiderative	ox	oe
Permissive	on	oa

In total, there are 673,920 possible forms of a verb in Casia.

18. Adjective Morphology

While adjectives are not a true distinct word class in Casia, noun roots are modified by various prefixes that show degree. They can show comparison as well as superlatives. The prefixes also contrast two polarities: positive and negative. Intensive adjectives denote "very" or an extreme form of the adjective, but a diminutive shows a weaker form of the adjective.

	Negative	Positive
Superlative	oe	oa
Comparative	ao	o
Intensive	a	ae
Diminutive	e	ea

Here is an example of these prefixes in use:

<i>bielm-noise</i>	<i>abielm- quieter</i>	<i>aebielm- very loud</i>
<i>oebielm- quietest (silent)</i>	<i>obielm- louder</i>	<i>ebielm- a little quiet</i>
<i>oabielm- loudest</i>	<i>abielm- very quiet</i>	<i>eabielm- quite loud</i>

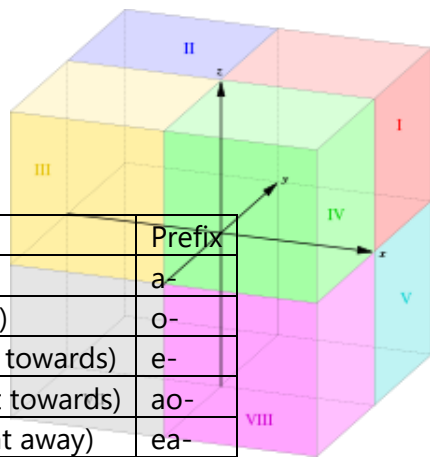
There is no contrast at all between adjectives and adverbs.

19. Adpositions

There are very many distinct prepositions used in Casia, making it very specific about location and direction. The table shows the prepositions that refer to location. Casia uses a system of absolute direction that is not based on any relative system. It divides up the space around the observer into octants, based on compass direction as well as vertical position.

There are also prepositions for being exactly on one of the x,y or z axes that divides up the octants. The x axis is based on the E/W axis, while the y axis is based on the N/S axis.

There are three points on each axis in Casia, 0, +1 and -1. Each of these combines to make one of the root prepositions. Prepositions have prefixes to show various forms of movement. The prefixes can also be added to actions and nouns.



Movement	Prefix
Locative (in)	a-
Orientative (-wards)	o-
Procurive (aligned towards)	e-
Allative (movement towards)	ao-
Ablative (movement away)	ea-
Perlative (movement along)	oa-

Octant	Preposition
1	epze
2	qor
3	ioaz
4	tseo
5	foap
6	vjo
7	acyo
8	wia

eapretane

British (from Britain)

Location (x,y,z)	Preposition
0,0,0	cgo
0,0,+	doy
0,0,-	zle
0,+0	xem
0,+,+	loa
0,+,-	heaf
0,-0	pbe
0,-,+	ief
0,-,-	goa
+0,0	qio
+0,+	yuo
+0,-	qro
+,+0	sao
+,+,+	fuoc
+,+,-	qla
+0,-	jac
+,-+	jab
+,-,-	gaol
-0,0	foe
-0,+	cga
-0,-	voaf
-,+0	pjea
-,+,+	kvoa
-,+,-	kgea
-,-0	foem
-,-+	que
-,-,-	veo

20. Pronouns

The four Casia pronouns are a closed class of nouns. They decline regularly in the same way as other nouns. They contrast clusivity as shown in the table below:

	Addressee	No Addressee
Speaker	no, nom (inclusive we)	mo, mol (exclusive we/I)
No Speaker	tmeo, noe (you)	ne, ha (they/he/she/it)

21. Demonstratives

In the same way as pronouns do so, demonstratives behave like normal nouns. There is a three-way contrast in proximity for time and space deixis. The table shows Casia's demonstratives.

Proximity	Time	Space
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Proximal	ca	je
Medial	vo	he
Distal	vot	ohe

Medial proximity usually refers to objects within view, but distal objects are beyond view.

je zveot

ohe vet

"this apple"

"those (far away) apples"

ca

"now"

22. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are used to connect phrases. In Efo, there are relatively few of them.

A list of objects is expressed with "iev" and a list of events is expressed with "veb". The particle is put around the list, showing the beginning and end of it.

iev vet cson jok iev

"apples, a crocus and a robin"

A rationale or reason is expressed with "xiao". This corresponds to the English "because". An alternative or contrast is expressed with "kio". A consequence is expressed with "pet". Yes/no questions are begun with "hiod". Open questions are begun with "uot". A negated word has the particle "ne" before it.

All relative clauses are formed with the particle "e". There is no variation depending on whether the clause refers to a person or an object etc.

23. Passivity

Passive constructions are not shown grammatically, but are instead shown through word order. When the sentence denotes passive voice, the object is seen as the focus of the clause or the most prominent part. Casia shows passivity by moving the object to the start of the clause. In active clauses, the object comes later on, usually after the verb.

mof eajaom

mob eajaom

"I touch"

"I was touched"

24. Derivation

Casia has a wide variety of derivational affixes that, along with grammatical affixes, produce a wide variety of contrasts from one stem. Nouns are usually prefixed, but verbs are usually not subject to derivational processes that create new verbs. Verbs are usually only changed to nouns. This table shows productive noun prefixes.

Prefix	Example	Meaning
re-	pqa- "to serve" repqa- "deacon"	Masculine or Neutral Agent
tmao-	iar- "to fly" tmaoiar- "female pilot"	Feminine Agent
go-	cva- "to cut" gocva- "knife"	Tool
ka-	fa- "book" kafa- "library"	Location
no-	qnagc- "word" noqnagc- "alphabet"	System made from smaller parts
sa-	vom- "bird" savam- "flock"	Group treated as a unit
sue-	qam- "to cry" sueqam- "to mourn"	Formalised action
wa	beg- "wisdom" wabeg- "wise man"	One that has x
bea-	cfolh- "water" beacfolh- "lake"	Creates aggregate nouns from mass nouns

Words can also be compounded to create new words. These can only be noun-noun compounds. There are fewer verb-verb compounds: most of the distinctions in them are shown by grammatical categories.

neos- "wind"
gle- "to grind"
ragle- "grinder or mill"
neoragle- "windmill"

25. Calendar

Casia uses a calendar system based on the cycles of the sun and moon. It is lunisolar, but does not combine these two cycles like most other lunisolar calendars. It tracks the time since the full moon and since the December solstice separately. Instead of measuring these times in days, it works on periods of roughly 12 hours that

correspond to day and night, between sunset and sunrise. While the calendar system is reasonably accurate, it is not very practical and multiple times can be referred to by the same Casian date. For the purposes of the calendar, the December solstice occurs on December 21 06:00. Here is an analysis of the date at the start of this document:

Begun on the 230th since the sun and 51st since the moon

This means that the December solstice was 2760 (230×12) hours ago and that the full moon was 612 (51×12) hours ago. The December solstice occurs on December 21 06:00, meaning that the date referred to is Sunday, 15 April, between 6:00 and 18:00. 612 hours before this is 20 March 18:00-21 March 6:00, which is the date of the last full moon.

Consulting a table of moon phases shows that the full moon occurs during this period in 2019, 2038, 2057 and 2095. This means that the date at the start of the document could refer to four dates within one century (a rather average figure).